

By: Senator(s) Tate

To: Economic and Workforce
Development

SENATE BILL NO. 2370

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-153-57, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
2 TO ALLOW THE PARTICIPATION OF VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS IN THE
3 ACCELERATE MISSISSIPPI WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM; AND FOR
4 RELATED PURPOSES.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

6 **SECTION 1.** Section 37-153-57, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
7 amended as follows:

8 37-153-57. (1) There is established the Accelerate
9 Mississippi Workforce Development Program, which shall be directed
10 by the office for the purpose of providing education and training
11 to citizens seeking employment in high-wage, high-demand
12 industries in the state, including, but not limited to, the
13 nursing and healthcare fields, which were impacted by the
14 disruption to the economy and workforce caused by COVID-19, and,
15 beginning July 1, 2023, providing training to volunteer
16 firefighters. This program shall be subject to the availability
17 of funds appropriated by the Legislature using Coronavirus State
18 Fiscal Recovery Funds made available under ARPA or any other funds
19 appropriated by the Legislature.



20 (2) As used in this section, the following words have the
21 meanings ascribed unless the context requires otherwise:

22 (a) "Recipient" means a community college, institution
23 of higher learning, or trainee recipient of grant funding under
24 this section.

25 (b) "Trainee" means an individual receiving training or
26 other services through programs under this article with the goal
27 of becoming employed in a high-wage, high-demand industry. From
28 and after July 1, 2023, "trainee" shall also include a volunteer
29 firefighter.

30 (c) "High-wage, high-demand industry" means those
31 industries paying above Mississippi's median annual income and
32 prioritized by the office and the four (4) local workforce areas.

33 (d) "Eligible expenses" means a cost incurred by a
34 recipient, pursuant to this article, to include:

35 (i) Necessary equipment or other supplies;

36 (ii) Curricula or other academic or training
37 materials;

38 (iii) Remote learning or other classroom
39 technology;

40 (iv) Stipends for teaching staff or faculty for
41 workforce development programs;

42 (v) Trainee support, including tuition expenses
43 and childcare or transportation assistance;

44 (vi) Coaching or mentoring services;



- 45 (vii) Job placement services;
- 46 (viii) Apprenticeship programs; and
- 47 (ix) Recruitment programs.

48 (3) The Department of Employment Security shall serve as
49 fiscal agent in administering the funds.

50 (4) Subject to appropriation by the Legislature, allocations
51 to recipients shall be awarded by the office through an
52 application process, which shall require the applicant to provide:

53 (a) A detailed explanation of the program the applicant
54 intends to use awarded funds to create or expand, including:

55 (i) A description of the high-wage, high-demand
56 field or workforce shortage area the program is intended to
57 address, or, if applicable, a statement that the awarded funds
58 will be used to train volunteer firefighters;

59 (ii) The number of trainees who will be served by
60 the program; and

61 (iii) Except with respect to volunteer
62 firefighters, the average wage rate for trainees receiving
63 employment after completing the program;

64 (b) A proposed budget on how awarded funds will be
65 expended, including a plan to consistently report expenditures to
66 the office throughout the funding commitment;

67 (c) A plan to provide data on participation and
68 outcomes of the program, including a plan to report outcomes to
69 the office throughout the funding commitment; and



70 (d) Other relevant information as determined
71 appropriate by the office.

72 (5) Applicants agreeing to commit a portion of their federal
73 COVID-19 relief funds, if they received federal COVID-19 relief
74 funds directly, or other state, federal or private funds as
75 supplemental matching funds to offset the total cost of the
76 approved program will be prioritized for approval.

77 (6) The office shall:

78 (a) Inform each recipient of its portion of the funds
79 appropriated to the grant program;

80 (b) Develop regulations and procedures to govern the
81 administration of the grant program;

82 (c) Prioritize high-wage, high-skill industries,
83 including, but not limited to, nursing jobs or other jobs within
84 the healthcare field; and

85 (d) Coordinate with the Department of Employment
86 Security to share information to identify individuals who were
87 furloughed, unemployed, underemployed or otherwise displaced due
88 to COVID-19.

89 (7) The office may use a maximum of two percent (2%) of
90 funds allocated for this article for the administration of the
91 grant program, to the extent permissible under federal law.

92 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
93 and after July 1, 2023.

