

By: Senator(s) Parker

To: Economic and Workforce
Development; Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2718

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-153-201, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
2 TO REMOVE THE MISSISSIPPI ALLIED HEALTH COLLEGE AND CAREER
3 NAVIGATOR GRANT PROGRAM; TO AMEND SECTION 37-153-203, MISSISSIPPI
4 CODE OF 1972, TO NOTE MAJOR WORKFORCE SHORTAGES WHICH IMPACT THE
5 QUALITY OF PATIENT CARE AND AVAILABILITY OF HEALTH CARE, TO NOTE
6 THE AVAILABILITY OF FEDERAL FUNDS TO MAXIMIZE THE USE OF
7 TECHNOLOGY TO IMPROVE PATIENT CARE AND ADDRESS WORKFORCE
8 SHORTAGES, AND TO NOTE THAT THE LEGISLATURE INTENDS TO PROVIDE
9 FUNDING FOR EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT VIRTUAL
10 NURSING AND OTHER PROGRAMS NECESSARY TO IMPROVING PATIENT CARE AND
11 ADDRESSING WORKFORCE SHORTAGES; TO AMEND SECTION 37-153-205,
12 MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO ALLOW THE ACCELERATE MISSISSIPPI
13 NURSING/ALLIED HEALTH GRANT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE GRANTS TO HOSPITALS
14 FOR EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT VIRTUAL NURSING
15 AND OTHER PROGRAMS, TO DEFINE TERMS, TO REMOVE CERTAIN
16 DEFINITIONS, TO DESIGNATE SCHOLARSHIPS FOR TUITION AN ELIGIBLE
17 EXPENSE, TO CLARIFY WHAT INFORMATION SHOULD BE INCLUDED ON AN
18 APPLICATION FOR FUNDS, AND TO REMOVE THE STIPULATION THAT 75% OF
19 THE FUNDS PROVIDED SHALL BE RESERVED FOR COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR
20 COLLEGES; TO AMEND SECTION 37-153-207, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
21 TO REDEFINE THE ACCELERATE MISSISSIPPI PHYSICIAN RESIDENCY AND
22 FELLOWSHIP START-UP GRANT PROGRAM AND ITS RESPONSIBILITIES AND TO
23 STIPULATE THAT APPLICANTS AGREEING TO COMMIT A PORTION OF ANY
24 FUNDS AS SUPPLEMENTAL MATCHING FUNDS TO OFFSET THE TOTAL COST OF
25 THE APPROVED PROGRAM WILL BE PRIORITIZED FOR APPROVAL; TO REPEAL
26 SECTION 37-153-209, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, WHICH ESTABLISHES
27 THE MISSISSIPPI ALLIED HEALTH COLLEGE AND CAREER NAVIGATOR GRANT
28 PROGRAM; TO AMEND SECTION 37-153-211, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
29 REQUIRE THAT THE OFFICE MINIMIZE ANY EXPENSE OF ADMINISTRATIVE
30 FUNDS BY ESTABLISHING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MIRRORING PAST
31 PROGRAMS UTILIZING OTHER FEDERAL AND STATE FUNDS; TO AMEND SECTION
32 37-153-217, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO NOTE THAT FEDERAL GRANT
33 FUNDS THROUGH THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT SHALL BE AVAILABLE
34 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2026, OR ON THE DATE OF THE FUND EXPENDITURE



35 DEADLINE PROVIDED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT; TO BRING FORWARD
36 SECTION 37-153-215, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, FOR PURPOSES OF
37 POSSIBLE AMENDMENT; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

39 **SECTION 1.** Section 37-153-201, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
40 amended as follows:

41 37-153-201. (1) This article shall be known and may be
42 cited as the "American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Nurse/Allied Health
43 Workforce Development and Retention Act." Under this article, the
44 Legislature creates the "Accelerate Mississippi Nursing/Allied
45 Health Grant Program * * *" and the "Accelerate Mississippi
46 Physician Residency and Fellowship Start-Up Grant Program * * *."

47 (2) As used in this article, "office" means the Office of
48 Workforce Development established in Section 37-153-7.

49 **SECTION 2.** Section 37-153-203, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
50 amended as follows:

51 37-153-203. (1) The Mississippi Legislature finds that:

52 (a) * * * Mississippi hospitals, clinics, long-term
53 care facilities and other health care facilities across the state
54 are experiencing major workforce shortages which impact the
55 quality of patient care and availability of healthcare generally
56 in the state; and

57 * * *

58 (* * *b) The availability of * * * federal
59 funding * * * and continued focus on workforce and economy has
60 created a unique opportunity for the office, working with
61 community colleges and other partners, to provide education and



62 training to help Mississippians find employment in the nursing,
63 allied health and other health care fields, including paramedics,
64 and working with hospitals to maximize the use of technology to
65 improve patient care and address workforce shortages.

66 (2) Therefore, the intent of the Mississippi Legislature is:

67 (a) To provide funding for outreach efforts to connect
68 citizens seeking employment in nursing, allied health, and other
69 health care fields, including paramedics, with the education and
70 training required to obtain necessary skills for relevant
71 employment in the state;

72 (b) To provide funding for new and increased capacity
73 in existing nursing and allied health training programs, including
74 accredited paramedic programs, or to help retain and graduate
75 nursing and allied health students, including students in an
76 accredited paramedic program, to include any required equipment or
77 supplies, at community and junior colleges or through other
78 entities facilitating healthcare-focused workforce training
79 programs across the state;

80 (c) To provide funding for new and increased capacity
81 in physician residency and fellowship programs in hospitals across
82 the state; * * *

83 (d) To provide funding for equipment and training
84 necessary to implement virtual nursing and other programs
85 necessary to improve patient care and addressing workforce
86 shortages; and



87 (* * *e) To gauge the effectiveness of these programs
88 by gathering data related to participation and wage and employment
89 outcomes in order to replicate successful efforts in future
90 workforce development programs.

91 **SECTION 3.** Section 37-153-205, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
92 amended as follows:

93 37-153-205. (1) There is established the Accelerate
94 Mississippi Nursing/Allied Health Grant Program, which shall be
95 directed by the office for the purpose of increasing capacity in
96 nursing and allied health training programs, including accredited
97 paramedic programs, job sectors which were severely impacted by
98 the disruption to the economy and workforce caused by COVID-19 and
99 providing grants to hospitals for equipment and training necessary
100 to implement virtual nursing and other programs aimed at improving
101 patient care and addressing workforce shortages.

102 (2) For purposes of this section, the following words shall
103 have the meanings ascribed herein unless the context requires
104 otherwise:

105 (a) "Grant program" means the program established in
106 this section, which provides funding, as determined by the
107 office, * * * to sustain and increase capacity in nursing and
108 allied health education and training programs, including
109 accredited paramedic programs, or to help retain and graduate
110 nursing and allied health students, at community and junior
111 colleges or other entities facilitating healthcare-focused



112 training programs as determined by the office, and to hospitals
113 for equipment and training necessary to implement virtual nursing
114 and other programs aimed at improving patient care and addressing
115 workforce shortages.

116 (b) "Hospital" means general acute care hospitals in
117 the State of Mississippi which are licensed by the Mississippi
118 State Department of Health.

119 (* * * c) "Recipient" means a community or junior
120 college or other entities facilitating healthcare-focused training
121 programs as determined by the office or a hospital.

122 (* * * d) "Trainee" means an individual receiving
123 training or other services through the grant program under this
124 article with the goal of becoming employed in the nursing or
125 allied health field, including as a licensed paramedic.

126 * * *

127 (* * * e) "High-wage, high-demand industry" means those
128 nursing or allied health jobs, including paramedics, paying above
129 Mississippi's median annual income and prioritized by the office.

130 (* * * f) "Eligible expenses" means a cost incurred by
131 a recipient under this article, to include:

132 (i) Necessary equipment or other supplies to
133 sustain or increase capacity in nursing or allied health training
134 programs, including accredited paramedic programs, or to implement
135 virtual nursing programs in hospitals;



136 (ii) Necessary infrastructure, including building
137 renovation or construction, for increasing capacity in nursing or
138 allied health training programs, including accredited paramedic
139 programs;

140 (iii) Curricula or other academic or training
141 materials to sustain or increase capacity in nursing or allied
142 health training programs, including accredited paramedic programs,
143 or to implement virtual nursing programs in hospitals;

144 (iv) Remote learning or other classroom technology
145 to sustain or increase capacity in nursing or allied health
146 training programs, including accredited paramedic programs;

147 (v) Job placement services for nursing or allied
148 health students and graduates, including those in accredited
149 paramedic programs;

150 (vi) Recruitment programs for nursing or allied
151 health students and graduates, including those in accredited
152 paramedic programs;

153 (vii) Scholarships for tuition for
154 certification-based programs for which no other aid is available,
155 as determined by the Office of Workforce Development, such as
156 accredited paramedic programs; and

157 (* * * viii) Other services aimed at helping
158 retain and graduate current nursing and allied health students,
159 including those in accredited paramedic programs.



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

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

165 (a) A detailed explanation of the program the applicant
166 intends to use awarded funds * * *, to include, if applicable:

167 (i) A description of the nursing or allied health
168 workforce shortage the program is intended to address, including
169 specific information from hospitals, clinics, long-term care
170 facilities or other health care providers in the region, or a
171 description of the virtual nursing program grant funds will
172 support;

173 (ii) Any relevant waitlist or other information
174 demonstrating high demand for graduates from the relevant nursing
175 or allied health program, or a description of workforce shortages
176 experienced by the hospital;

177 (iii) The number of nursing * * * students, allied
178 health students, patients or others who will be served by the
179 program; and

180 (iv) The average wage rate for nursing or allied
181 health students receiving employment after completing the program;

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



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

188 (d) Other relevant information as determined
189 appropriate by the office.

190 (5) Applicants agreeing to commit a portion of * * * any
191 state, federal or private funds as supplemental matching funds to
192 offset the total cost of the approved program will be prioritized
193 for approval.

194 (6) The office shall:

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

197 (b) Develop regulations and procedures to govern the
198 administration of the grant program;

199 (c) Prioritize jobs within the nursing or allied health
200 fields, including the paramedic field, which are currently
201 experiencing staffing shortages in hospitals, clinics, long-term
202 care facilities and other health care providers across the state;
203 and

204 (d) Prioritize jobs which are high-wage, high-demand
205 jobs within the nursing and allied health fields, including the
206 paramedic field.

207 * * *

208 **SECTION 4.** Section 37-153-207, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
209 amended as follows:



210 37-153-207. (1) There is established the Accelerate
211 Mississippi Physician Residency and Fellowship Start-Up Grant
212 Program, which shall be directed by the office for the purpose of
213 creating new or increasing capacity in existing physician
214 residency and fellowship programs in hospitals, * * *.

215 (2) For purposes of this section, the following words shall
216 have the meanings ascribed herein unless the context requires
217 otherwise:

218 (a) "Grant program" means the program established in
219 this section, which provides funding, as determined by the
220 office, * * * to create new or increase capacity in existing * * *
221 residency and fellowship programs at general acute care hospitals
222 in the State of Mississippi which are licensed by the Mississippi
223 State Department of Health.

224 (b) "Recipient" means a general acute care hospital in
225 the State of Mississippi which is licensed by the Mississippi
226 State Department of Health.

227 (c) "Residency and fellowship programs" means advanced
228 training programs in medical or surgical specialty areas,
229 optometry, or psychiatry which are accredited by the Accreditation
230 Council for Graduate Medical Education or a similar accreditation
231 body.

232 (d) "COVID-19" means the Coronavirus Disease 2019.

233 (e) "Federal COVID-19 relief funds" means funds
234 allocated to the State of Mississippi from the Coronavirus State



235 Fiscal Recovery Fund in Section 9901 of the American Rescue Plan
236 Act of 2021 (Public Law No. 117-2).

237 (f) "Eligible expenses" means a cost incurred by a
238 recipient, pursuant to this article, to include:

239 (i) Equipment or other supplies necessary for
240 accreditation;

241 (ii) Necessary infrastructure, including building,
242 renovation or construction * * *;

243 (iii) Curricula or other academic or training
244 materials necessary for accreditation;

245 (iv) Stipends for the recruitment, hiring and
246 development of program directors, program coordinators, faculty
247 and/or teaching staff and clinic staff necessary for
248 accreditation; and

249 (v) Remote learning or other classroom technology.

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

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

255 (a) Evidence that the applicant is in the process of
256 preparing for accreditation, has applied for accreditation or has
257 received accreditation for a new residency or fellowship program,
258 or increased capacity in an existing residency or fellowship
259 program;



260 (b) A detailed explanation of the residency or
261 fellowship program the applicant intends to use awarded funds to
262 create or expand, to include:

263 (i) A description of the workforce shortage the
264 residency or fellowship program is intended to address, including
265 specific information from health care providers in the region;

266 (ii) Any relevant waitlist or other information
267 demonstrating high demand for * * * graduates to enter the
268 residency or fellowship program;

269 (iii) The number of residents who will be served
270 by the residency or fellowship program;

271 (iv) The budget for the residency or fellowship
272 program, including a plan showing sustainability after
273 accreditation and any required federal approval of the program;
274 and

275 (v) The average wage rate for residents or fellows
276 receiving employment after completing the program;

277 (c) A proposed budget on how awarded funds will be
278 expended, including a plan to consistently report expenditures to
279 the office throughout the funding commitment;

280 (d) A plan to provide data on participation and
281 outcomes of the residency or fellowship program, including a plan
282 to report outcomes to the office throughout the funding
283 commitment; and



284 (e) Other relevant information as determined
285 appropriate by the office.

286 (5) * * * Applicants agreeing to commit a portion of any
287 state, federal or private funds as supplemental matching funds to
288 offset the total cost of the approved program will be prioritized
289 for approval.

290 (6) The office shall:

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

293 (b) Develop regulations and procedures to govern the
294 administration of the grant program;

295 (c) Prioritize residency or fellowship programs
296 within * * * areas which are currently experiencing staffing
297 shortages in hospitals, clinics, long-term care facilities and
298 other health care providers across the state;

299 (d) Prioritize residency or fellowship programs which
300 produce graduates in high-demand medical and surgical fields;

301 (e) Establish a schedule of application deadlines and a
302 system for considering applications on a rotating basis; and

303 (f) Ensure that every effort be made, in accordance
304 with the priorities in this subsection, to provide funds for the
305 placement of one (1) resident with each recipient before
306 considering awarding funds for the placement of additional
307 residents in the same round of consideration.



308 **SECTION 5.** Section 37-153-209, which establishes the
309 Mississippi Allied Health College and Career Navigator Grant
310 program, is hereby repealed.

311 **SECTION 6.** Section 37-153-211, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
312 amended as follows:

313 37-153-211. The office may use a maximum of two percent (2%)
314 of funds appropriated for the administrative expenses of the grant
315 programs authorized in Sections * * * 37-153-205, 37-153-207 and
316 37-153-209, to the extent permissible under federal law. The
317 office shall try to minimize any expense of administrative funds
318 by establishing policies and procedures mirroring past programs
319 utilizing * * * other federal and state funds.

320 **SECTION 7.** Section 37-153-217, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
321 amended as follows:

322 37-153-217. Federal grant funds apportioned via the American
323 Rescue Plan Act shall be available under this article through
324 December 31, 2026, or on the date of the fund expenditure deadline
325 provided by the federal government, whichever occurs later. Each
326 grant recipient shall certify, for any project for which a grant
327 is awarded, that if the project is not completed by December 31,
328 2026, and the United States Congress does not enact an extension
329 of the deadline on the availability of ARPA funds, then the grant
330 recipient will complete the project through other funds.

331 **SECTION 8.** Section 37-153-215, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
332 brought forward as follows:



333 37-153-215. The office shall provide a comprehensive report
334 on the use and effectiveness of funds distributed under the grant
335 programs created in this article, to include wage data and
336 employment outcomes for residents, to the Governor, Lieutenant
337 Governor, Speaker of the House, Chairs of the Senate and House
338 Appropriations Committees, Chair of the Senate Economic and
339 Workforce Development Committee, and Chair of the House Workforce
340 Development Committee by October 1 of each year of the existence
341 of the program and for at least three (3) years after the program
342 ceases.

343 **SECTION 9.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
344 and after July 1, 2024.

