
DIGEST

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HB 395 Engrossed

2025 Regular Session

Brass

Abstract: Expands eligible programs for an M.J. Foster Promise Award.

Present law establishes the M.J. Foster Promise Award Program, which provides financial awards towards the costs of tuition and required fees to certain students pursuing an associate degree or shorter-term postsecondary credential required for certain high-demand, high-wage occupations aligned to the state's workforce priorities. Proposed law retains present law.

Present law provides for several initial eligibility requirements, including that an applicant meets one of the following:

- (1) Has a family income that does not exceed 300% of the applicable federal poverty guideline as published in the Federal Register by the United States Department of Health and Human Services.
- (2) Can certify unemployment or underemployment for at least six months prior to receiving the award.

Proposed law repeals present law.

Present law requires the La. Workforce Commission (LWC) to establish an advisory council to identify programs in which an eligible student may enroll to receive an award, which shall be designated as "qualified programs". Proposed law retains present law. Proposed law requires, as part of its process for selecting qualified programs, the council to conduct a review of the public postsecondary education and proprietary school programs, at the associate degree level and below, that offer credentials and degrees that are related to Louisiana Economic Development (LED) projects. Further requires the council to give priority to programs that are related to LED projects in such process. Requires the Bd. of Regents, as the administering agency of the program, to implement an expedited review process taking no longer than 45 days for LED projects with urgent workforce needs.

Present law requires the council to convene annually for program updates and every three years to review workforce priorities. Proposed law retains present law and further requires the council to meet as needed to review and respond to workforce needs or priorities associated with LED projects, respectively.

Present law requires the secretaries of LED and LWC to serve as members on the council. Proposed

law retains present law. Further requires the following of the LED secretary:

- (1) Maintain a list of priority programs, at the associate degree level and below, that support workforce needs for LED projects.
- (2) Notify the other members of the council and the commissioner of higher education when new LED projects are approved that will require workforce development support.
- (3) Annually report to the other members of the council on the effectiveness of LED programs in meeting workforce and economic development goals, as determined by LED.

Proposed law authorizes the Bd. of Regents to enter into data sharing agreements with LED and the LWC as necessary to assist the council in its selection of qualified postsecondary education programs for the M.J. Foster Promise Program, and the review process for the creation of new associate degree programs pursuant to proposed law.

(Amends R.S. 17:3047.1(C) and (D); Adds R.S. 17:3047.1(E)(4), (G)(3), (H), and (I); Repeals R.S. 17:3047.2(A)(13))

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Education to the original bill:

1. Authorize the Bd. of Regents to enter into data sharing agreements with LED and the LWC to assist the M.J. Foster advisory council in its selection of qualified postsecondary education programs for the M.J. Foster Promise Program, and the review process for the creation of new associate degree programs pursuant to proposed law.
2. Require, as part of its process for selecting qualified programs, the council to conduct a review of the public postsecondary education and proprietary school programs, at the associate degree level and below, that offer credentials and degrees that are related to LED projects, instead of associate degree level or below.
3. Require the secretary of LED to maintain a list of priority programs, at the associate degree level and below, that support workforce needs for LED projects, instead of associate degree level or below.