

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 470

BY REPRESENTATIVE JORDAN

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: Enacts the Louisiana Workforce Development Equity and Opportunity Act

1 AN ACT

2 To enact Chapter 11-B of Title 23 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, to be
3 comprised of R.S. 23:1821 through 1830, relative to workforce development; to
4 create the Louisiana Workforce Development Equity and Opportunity Program; to
5 provide for legislative findings and purpose; to provide grants for training providers
6 and participant support; to create the Industry Advisory Council; to provide funding;
7 to provide for performance metrics reporting; to provide definitions; and to provide
8 for related matters.

9 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

10 Section 1. Chapter 11-B of Title 23 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950,
11 comprised of R.S. 23:1821 through 1830, is hereby enacted to read as follows:

12 CHAPTER 11-B. THE LOUISIANA WORKFORCE AND DEVELOPMENT EQUITY

13 AND OPPORTUNITY ACT

14 §1821. Short title

15 This Chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Louisiana Workforce
16 and Development Equity and Opportunity Act".

17 §1822. Legislative findings and purpose

18 A. The legislature hereby finds all of the following:

1 (1) Louisiana's economy is undergoing significant transformation, with rapid
2 growth projected in clean energy, information technology, healthcare, and advanced
3 manufacturing sectors.

4 (2) African American and other minority workers are systematically
5 underrepresented in these high-wage growth sectors, resulting in a perpetuation and
6 widening of the racial income gap.

7 (3) The primary barriers to minority participation in these sectors include
8 access to credentialing programs, geographic proximity to training, costs of living
9 during training, and historical exclusion from apprenticeship and industry networks.

10 (4) Targeted workforce development investment represents the
11 highest-return strategy for long-term wealth building in minority communities.

12 B. It is the purpose of this Chapter to provide targeted workforce
13 development grants and support services to prepare underrepresented Louisianans
14 for high-wage employment in growth sectors.

15 §1823. Definitions

16 (1) "Department" means the Louisiana Works.

17 (2) "High-growth sector" means any of the following industries identified
18 by the department as projecting ten percent or greater employment growth over the
19 succeeding five years in this state:

20 (a) Clean and renewable energy including solar, wind, battery storage, and
21 energy efficiency.

22 (b) Information technology and cybersecurity.

23 (c) Healthcare and healthcare technology.

24 (d) Advanced manufacturing and industrial technology.

25 (e) Logistics and supply chain technology.

26 (3) "Program" means the Louisiana Workforce Equity and Opportunity
27 Program established pursuant to this Chapter.

28 (4) "Targeted participant" means an individual who meets all of the
29 following requirements:

1 (a) Is a resident of this state.

2 (b) Has a household income at or below one hundred and fifty percent of the
3 federal poverty level.

4 (c) Is a member of a population underrepresented in the applicable
5 high-growth sector, as determined by the department using current sector
6 demographic data.

7 (5) "Training provider" means a community college, technical college,
8 Historically Black College and University, registered apprenticeship program, or
9 industry-certified training program approved by the department to deliver
10 high-growth sector training.

11 §1824. Louisiana Workforce Equity and Opportunity Program; establishment

12 A. There is hereby established the Louisiana Workforce Equity and
13 Opportunity Program herein referred to as "the program", which shall be
14 administered by the department in coordination with Louisiana Economic
15 Development and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

16 B. The program shall do all of the following:

17 (1) Provide grants to eligible training providers to develop and deliver
18 high-growth sector training programs designed for and accessible to targeted
19 participants.

20 (2) Provide direct financial support to targeted participants enrolled in
21 approved training programs.

22 (3) Establish employer partnerships to create guaranteed interview pathways
23 from program completion to employment.

24 (4) Develop bridge programs and supplemental supports to address barriers
25 to participation and completion.

26 §1825. Training provider grants

27 A. The department shall award competitive grants to approved training
28 providers for any of the following purposes:

1 (1) Developing or expanding high-growth sector training curricula aligned
2 with industry credentials.

3 (2) Providing equipment, technology, and infrastructure needed to deliver
4 training.

5 (3) Providing salaries of qualified instructors with industry experience.

6 (4) Providing outreach and recruitment in targeted communities.

7 (5) Providing wraparound services including childcare partnerships,
8 transportation assistance, and tutoring.

9 B. Grant amounts shall not exceed five hundred thousand dollars per
10 program per fiscal year.

11 C. Grant recipients shall demonstrate that a minimum of sixty percent of
12 enrolled participants in each funded program are targeted participants.

13 D. Grants shall be conditioned on training providers maintaining employer
14 partnerships that provide all of the following:

15 (1) Guaranteed interviews to all program graduates.

16 (2) Prevailing wage employment upon successful completion.

17 (3) Mentorship and on-the-job training for program graduates during their
18 first year of employment.

19 §1826. Participant support grants

20 A. The department shall provide direct financial support to targeted
21 participants enrolled in approved training programs for any of the following:

22 (1) Training cost stipend: Up to five thousand dollars per participant per
23 program toward tuition, fees, books, and materials not covered by federal financial
24 aid.

25 (2) Living expense stipend: Up to one thousand dollars per month for the
26 duration of training, not to exceed twelve months.

27 (3) Certification examination fees: Full coverage of the cost of
28 industry-standard certification examinations upon completion of training.

1 B. Participant support grants shall not be considered taxable income for
2 purposes of state income tax.

3 §2167. Priority in grant selection towards Historically Black Colleges and
4 Universities; community colleges

5 The department shall give priority in grant selection to training programs
6 offered by Historically Black Colleges and Universities herein referred to as
7 "HBCU" and community and technical colleges located in parishes with high
8 concentrations of low- or moderate-income households or minority residents. A
9 minimum of thirty percent of total program grants shall be awarded to
10 HBCU-affiliated training programs.

11 §1828. Industry Advisory Council; established; membership

12 A. The department shall establish an Industry Advisory Council herein
13 referred to as "the council" for each designated high-growth sector consisting of all
14 of the following members:

15 (1) Representatives of at least five major employers in the sector operating
16 in this state.

17 (2) Representatives of labor unions or worker organizations, if applicable.

18 (3) Representatives of approved training providers.

19 (4) At least two representatives of communities disproportionately
20 underrepresented in the sector.

21 (5) A representative designated by the department.

22 B. Each council shall meet quarterly and shall advise the department on
23 curriculum alignment, employer hiring needs, credentialing standards, and the
24 effectiveness of the program.

25 §1829. Funding and appropriation

26 A. There is hereby appropriated funds from the Incumbent Worker Training
27 Program and other funds as designated for workforce development programs, subject
28 to appropriation by the legislature, ten million dollars annually for the program.

1 B. The department shall actively pursue federal Workforce Innovation and
2 Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds and other federal workforce grants to supplement
3 program funding.

4 C. Funding for the program shall be allocated as follows:

5 (1) Training provider grants: sixty percent.

6 (2) Participant support grants: thirty percent.

7 (3) Administration, evaluation, and reporting: ten percent.

8 §1830. Performance metrics and reporting

9 A. The department shall establish performance benchmarks for each funded
10 training program, including but not limited to all of the following:

11 (1) Program completion rate goal: eighty percent or higher.

12 (2) Credential attainment rate goal: eighty-five percent or higher.

13 (3) Job placement rate within ninety days of completion goal: seventy-five
14 percent or higher.

15 (4) Average wage of placed program graduates goal: one hundred twenty
16 percent or higher of pre-program wages.

17 (5) Employer retention rate at twelve months goal: seventy percent or
18 higher.

19 B. The department shall submit an annual report to the legislature no later
20 than January first of each year detailing program performance, participant
21 demographics, employer partnerships, and recommendations for improvement.

22 C. Grant funding shall be reduced or terminated for training providers that
23 fail to meet benchmarks for two consecutive years, absent documented extraordinary
24 circumstances.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

HB 470 Original

2026 Regular Session

Jordan

Abstract: Enacts the La. Workforce Development Equity and Opportunity Act.

Proposed law provides that proposed law shall be known and may be cited as the "La. Workforce Development Equity and Opportunity Act".

Proposed law provides for legislative findings and purpose of proposed law.

Proposed law defines "department", "high-growth sector", "program", "targeted participant", and "training provider".

Proposed law provides for the establishment of the La. Workforce Equity and Opportunity Program (program), which shall be administered by La. Works in coordination with Louisiana Economic Development and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Proposed law requires the program to do all of the following:

- (1) Provide grants to eligible training providers to develop and deliver high-growth sector training programs designed for and accessible to targeted participants.
- (2) Provide direct financial support to targeted participants enrolled in approved training programs.
- (3) Establish employer partnerships to create guaranteed interview pathways from program completion to employment.
- (4) Develop bridge programs and supplemental supports to address barriers to participation and completion.

Proposed law requires the department to award competitive grants to approved training providers for any of the following purposes:

- (1) Developing or expanding high-growth sector training curricula aligned with industry credentials.
- (2) Providing equipment, technology, and infrastructure needed to deliver training.
- (3) Providing salaries of qualified instructors with industry experience.
- (4) Providing outreach and recruitment in targeted communities.
- (5) Providing wraparound services including childcare partnerships, transportation assistance, and tutoring.

Proposed law prohibit grant amounts from exceeding \$500,000 per program per fiscal year.

Proposed law requires grants to be conditioned on training providers maintaining employer partnerships that provide all of the following:

- (1) Guaranteed interviews to all program graduates.

- (2) Prevailing wage employment upon successful completion.
- (3) Mentorship and on-the-job training for program graduates during their first year of employment.

Proposed law requires La. Works to provide direct financial support to targeted participants enrolled in approved training programs for training costs, living expenses, and certification examination fees.

Proposed law provides that participant support grants shall not be considered taxable income for purposes of state income tax.

Proposed law requires La. Works to give priority in grant selection to training programs offered by Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and community and technical colleges located in parishes with high concentrations of low- or moderate-income households or minority residents.

Proposed law provides that a minimum of 30% of total program grants shall be awarded to HBCU-affiliated training programs.

Proposed law requires La. Works to establish an Industry Advisory Council (council) for each designated high-growth sector. Proposed law further requires the council to be composed of the following members:

- (1) Representatives of at least five major employers in the sector operating in this state.
- (2) Representatives of labor unions or worker organizations, if applicable.
- (3) Representatives of approved training providers.
- (4) At least two representatives of communities disproportionately underrepresented in the sector.
- (5) A representative designated by La. Works.

Proposed law requires the council to meet quarterly and to advise La. Works on curriculum alignment, employer hiring needs, credentialing standards, and the effectiveness of the program.

Proposed law provides that funding from the program shall be appropriated from the Incumbent Worker Training Program and from other funds as designated for workforce development programs. Proposed law further provides that \$10,000,000 shall be annually appropriated to the program.

Proposed law requires La. Works to actively pursue federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds and other federal workforce grants to supplement program funding.

Proposed law provides for how funding for the program shall be allocated.

Proposed law requires La. Works to establish performance benchmarks for each funded training program.

Proposed law requires La. Works to submit an annual report to the legislature no later than Jan. 1st of each year detailing program performance, participant demographics, employer partnerships, and recommendations for improvement.

Proposed law provides that grant funding shall be reduced or terminated for training providers that failed to meet benchmarks for two consecutive years, absent documented extraordinary circumstances.

(Adds R.S. 23:1821-1830)