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## DIGEST

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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. 1<sup>st</sup> 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)