

By: Senator(s) Parker, McCaughn

To: Economic and Workforce
Development; Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2371
(As Sent to Governor)

1 AN ACT TO CREATE THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA)
2 NURSE/ALLIED HEALTH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND RETENTION ACT; TO
3 STATE LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND INTENT; TO ESTABLISH THE ACCELERATE
4 MISSISSIPPI NURSING/ALLIED HEALTH GRANT PROGRAM; TO ESTABLISH THE
5 ACCELERATE MISSISSIPPI PHYSICIAN RESIDENCY AND FELLOWSHIP START-UP
6 GRANT PROGRAM; TO ESTABLISH AND ADMINISTER THE MISSISSIPPI ALLIED
7 HEALTH COLLEGE AND CAREER NAVIGATOR GRANT PROGRAM; TO OUTLINE
8 REQUIREMENTS FOR THE APPLICATIONS AND FOR THE GRANT AWARDS; TO
9 ALLOW THE OFFICE OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TO USE A MAXIMUM OF 2%
10 OF FUNDS APPROPRIATED FOR THE ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES OF THE GRANT
11 PROGRAMS, TO THE EXTENT PERMISSIBLE UNDER FEDERAL LAW; TO DIRECT
12 THE OFFICE TO TRY TO MINIMIZE ANY EXPENSE OF ADMINISTRATIVE FUNDS
13 BY ESTABLISHING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MIRRORING PAST PROGRAMS
14 UTILIZING FEDERAL COVID-19 RELIEF FUNDS; TO REQUIRE THE OFFICE OF
15 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TO CERTIFY TO THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND
16 ADMINISTRATION THAT EACH EXPENDITURE APPROPRIATED TO THE OFFICE IS
17 IN COMPLIANCE WITH UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
18 CRITERIA REGARDING THE USE OF MONIES FROM THE CORONAVIRUS STATE
19 FISCAL RECOVERY FUND; TO PROVIDE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS TO THE
20 GOVERNOR AND THE LEGISLATURE BY OCTOBER 1 OF EACH YEAR; TO PROVIDE
21 THAT GRANT FUNDS SHALL BE AVAILABLE THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2026, OR
22 ON THE DATE OF THE FUND EXPENDITURE DEADLINE PROVIDED BY THE
23 FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, WHICHEVER OCCURS LATER; TO PROVIDE THAT EACH
24 GRANT RECIPIENT SHALL CERTIFY, FOR ANY PROJECT FOR WHICH A GRANT
25 IS AWARDED, THAT IF THE PROJECT IS NOT COMPLETED BY DECEMBER 31,
26 2026, AND THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS DOES NOT ENACT AN EXTENSION
27 OF THE DEADLINE ON THE AVAILABILITY OF ARPA FUNDS, THEN THE GRANT
28 RECIPIENT WILL COMPLETE THE PROJECT THROUGH OTHER FUNDS; AND FOR
29 RELATED PURPOSES.

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



31 **SECTION 1.** (1) This article shall be known and may be cited
32 as the "American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Nurse/Allied Health
33 Workforce Development and Retention Act." Under this article, the
34 Legislature creates the "Accelerate Mississippi Nursing/Allied
35 Health Grant Program," the "Accelerate Mississippi Physician
36 Residency and Fellowship Start-Up Grant Program" and the
37 "Mississippi Allied Health College and Career Navigator Grant
38 Program."

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

41 **SECTION 2.** (1) The Mississippi Legislature finds that:

42 (a) The public health crisis related to COVID-19
43 resulted in a general disruption in the Mississippi economy and
44 workforce, particularly in hospitals, clinics, long-term care
45 facilities and other health care facilities across the state;

46 (b) Workforce shortages exist in the health care
47 industry; and

48 (c) The availability of unprecedented federal funding
49 to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the workforce and economy
50 has created a unique opportunity for the office, working with
51 community colleges, to provide education and training to help
52 Mississippians find employment in the nursing, allied health and
53 other health care fields, including paramedics.

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



55 (a) To provide funding for outreach efforts to connect
56 citizens seeking employment in nursing, allied health, and other
57 health care fields, including paramedics, with the education and
58 training required to obtain necessary skills for relevant
59 employment in the state;

60 (b) To provide funding for new and increased capacity
61 in existing nursing and allied health training programs, including
62 accredited paramedic programs, or to help retain and graduate
63 nursing and allied health students, including students in an
64 accredited paramedic program, to include any required equipment or
65 supplies, at community and junior colleges or through other
66 entities facilitating healthcare-focused workforce training
67 programs across the state;

68 (c) To provide funding for new and increased capacity
69 in physician residency and fellowship programs in hospitals across
70 the state; and

71 (d) To gauge the effectiveness of these programs by
72 gathering data related to participation and wage and employment
73 outcomes in order to replicate successful efforts in future
74 workforce development programs.

75 **SECTION 3.** (1) There is established the Accelerate
76 Mississippi Nursing/Allied Health Grant Program, which shall be
77 directed by the office for the purpose of increasing capacity in
78 nursing and allied health training programs, including accredited



79 paramedic programs, job sectors which were severely impacted by
80 the disruption to the economy and workforce caused by COVID-19.

81 (2) For purposes of this section, the following words shall
82 have the meanings ascribed herein unless the context requires
83 otherwise:

84 (a) "Grant program" means the program established in
85 this section, which provides funding, as determined by the office,
86 from federal COVID-19 relief funds to sustain and increase
87 capacity in nursing and allied health education and training
88 programs, including accredited paramedic programs, or to help
89 retain and graduate nursing and allied health students, at
90 community and junior colleges or other entities facilitating
91 healthcare-focused training programs as determined by the office.

92 (b) "Recipient" means a community or junior college or
93 other entities facilitating healthcare-focused training programs
94 as determined by the office.

95 (c) "Trainee" means an individual receiving training or
96 other services through the grant program under this article with
97 the goal of becoming employed in the nursing or allied health
98 field, including as a licensed paramedic.

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

100 (e) "Federal COVID-19 relief funds" means funds
101 allocated to the State of Mississippi from the Coronavirus State
102 Fiscal Recovery Fund in Section 9901 of the American Rescue Plan
103 Act of 2021 (Public Law No. 117-2).



104 (f) "High-wage, high-demand industry" means those
105 nursing or allied health jobs, including paramedics, paying above
106 Mississippi's median annual income and prioritized by the office.

107 (g) "Eligible expenses" means a cost incurred by a
108 recipient under this article, to include:

109 (i) Necessary equipment or other supplies to
110 sustain or increase capacity in nursing or allied health training
111 programs, including accredited paramedic programs;

112 (ii) Necessary infrastructure, including building
113 renovation or construction, for increasing capacity in nursing or
114 allied health training programs, including accredited paramedic
115 programs;

116 (iii) Curricula or other academic or training
117 materials to sustain or increase capacity in nursing or allied
118 health training programs, including accredited paramedic programs;

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

122 (v) Job placement services for nursing or allied
123 health students and graduates, including those in accredited
124 paramedic programs;

125 (vi) Recruitment programs for nursing or allied
126 health students and graduates, including those in accredited
127 paramedic programs;



128 (vii) Other services aimed at helping retain and
129 graduate current nursing and allied health students, including
130 those in accredited paramedic programs.

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

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

136 (a) A detailed explanation of the program the applicant
137 intends to use awarded funds to create or expand, to include:

138 (i) A description of the nursing or allied health
139 workforce shortage the program is intended to address, including
140 specific information from hospitals, clinics, long-term care
141 facilities or other health care providers in the region;

142 (ii) Any relevant waitlist or other information
143 demonstrating high demand for graduates from the relevant nursing
144 or allied health program;

145 (iii) The number of nursing or allied health
146 students who will be served by the program; and

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

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



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

155 (d) Other relevant information as determined
156 appropriate by the office.

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

162 (6) The office shall:

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

165 (b) Develop regulations and procedures to govern the
166 administration of the grant program;

167 (c) Prioritize jobs within the nursing or allied health
168 fields which are currently experiencing staffing shortages in
169 hospitals, clinics, long-term care facilities and other health
170 care providers across the state; and

171 (d) Prioritize jobs which are high-wage, high-demand
172 jobs within the nursing and allied health fields, including the
173 paramedic field.

174 (7) Seventy-five percent (75%) of the funds provided through
175 the appropriations process for this program shall be reserved for
176 community and junior colleges. A maximum of twenty-five percent



177 (25%) of the funds provided through the appropriations process for
178 this program may be awarded to recipients other than a community
179 or junior college which facilitate healthcare-focused training
180 programs as determined by the office.

181 **SECTION 4.** (1) There is established the Accelerate
182 Mississippi Physician Residency and Fellowship Start-Up Grant
183 Program, which shall be directed by the office for the purpose of
184 creating new or increasing capacity in existing physician
185 residency and fellowship programs in hospitals, which were
186 severely impacted by the disruption to the economy and workforce
187 caused by COVID-19.

188 (2) For purposes of this section, the following words shall
189 have the meanings ascribed herein unless the context requires
190 otherwise:

191 (a) "Grant program" means the program established in
192 this section, which provides funding, as determined by the office,
193 from federal COVID-19 relief funds to create new or increase
194 capacity in existing physician residency and fellowship programs
195 at general acute care hospitals in the State of Mississippi which
196 are licensed by the Mississippi State Department of Health.

197 (b) "Recipient" means a general acute care hospital in
198 the State of Mississippi which is licensed by the Mississippi
199 State Department of Health.

200 (c) "Residency and fellowship programs" means advanced
201 training programs in medical or surgical specialty areas which are



202 accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical
203 Education or a similar accreditation body.

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

205 (e) "Federal COVID-19 relief funds" means funds
206 allocated to the State of Mississippi from the Coronavirus State
207 Fiscal Recovery Fund in Section 9901 of the American Rescue Plan
208 Act of 2021 (Public Law No. 117-2).

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

211 (i) Equipment or other supplies necessary for
212 accreditation;

213 (ii) Necessary infrastructure, including building,
214 renovation or construction, for accreditation;

215 (iii) Curricula or other academic or training
216 materials necessary for accreditation;

217 (iv) Stipends for the recruitment, hiring and
218 development of program directors, program coordinators, faculty
219 and/or teaching staff and clinic staff necessary for
220 accreditation; and

221 (v) Remote learning or other classroom technology.

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

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



227 (a) Evidence that the applicant is in the process of
228 preparing for accreditation, has applied for accreditation or has
229 received accreditation for a new residency or fellowship program,
230 or increased capacity in an existing residency or fellowship
231 program;

232 (b) A detailed explanation of the residency or
233 fellowship program the applicant intends to use awarded funds to
234 create or expand, to include:

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

238 (ii) Any relevant waitlist or other information
239 demonstrating high demand for medical school graduates to enter
240 the residency or fellowship program;

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

243 (iv) The budget for the residency or fellowship
244 program, including a plan showing sustainability after
245 accreditation and any required federal approval of the program;
246 and

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

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



252 (d) A plan to provide data on participation and
253 outcomes of the residency or fellowship program, including a plan
254 to report outcomes to the office throughout the funding
255 commitment; and

256 (e) Other relevant information as determined
257 appropriate by the office.

258 (5) Applicants agreeing to commit a portion of their federal
259 COVID-19 relief funds, if they received federal COVID-19 relief
260 funds directly, or other state, federal or private funds as
261 supplemental matching funds to offset the total cost of the
262 approved program shall be prioritized for approval.

263 (6) The office shall:

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

266 (b) Develop regulations and procedures to govern the
267 administration of the grant program;

268 (c) Prioritize residency or fellowship programs within
269 medical or surgical specialties which are currently experiencing
270 staffing shortages in hospitals, clinics, long-term care
271 facilities and other health care providers across the state;

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

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



276 (f) Ensure that every effort be made, in accordance
277 with the priorities in this subsection, to provide funds for the
278 placement of one (1) resident with each recipient before
279 considering awarding funds for the placement of additional
280 residents in the same round of consideration.

281 **SECTION 5.** (1) There is established the Mississippi Allied
282 Health College and Career Navigator Grant Program, which shall be
283 directed by the office for the purpose of hiring professionals, or
284 navigators, to provide individual assistance and guidance to
285 students to assist them in many areas, from maneuvering challenges
286 while enrolled in college programs and understanding the job
287 market to working through course challenges, and to help retain
288 and graduate nursing and allied health students, at community and
289 junior colleges. Such navigators must be at least a registered
290 nurse with at least two (2) years of experience in nursing. The
291 grant program shall be funded from monies appropriated by the
292 Legislature for that purpose.

293 (2) The office shall prescribe the terms and conditions of
294 the grant program. To be eligible to receive a grant from the
295 office under the grant program, a community college shall provide
296 the following information:

297 (a) The number of nursing or allied health students who
298 will be served by the program;



299 (b) A plan to provide data on participation and
300 outcomes of the program, including a plan to report outcomes to
301 the office throughout the funding commitment; and

302 (c) Any other information that the office determines is
303 necessary.

304 **SECTION 6.** The office may use a maximum of two percent (2%)
305 of funds appropriated for the administrative expenses of the grant
306 programs authorized in Sections 3, 4 and 5 of this act, to the
307 extent permissible under federal law. The office shall try to
308 minimize any expense of administrative funds by establishing
309 policies and procedures mirroring past programs utilizing federal
310 COVID-19 relief funds.

311 **SECTION 7.** The office shall certify to the Department of
312 Finance and Administration that each expenditure of the funds
313 appropriated to the office under this article is in compliance
314 with the guidelines, guidance, rules, regulations and/or other
315 criteria, as may be amended from time to time, of the United
316 States Department of the Treasury regarding the use of monies from
317 the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund in Section 9901 of the
318 American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (Public Law No. 117-1).

319 **SECTION 8.** The office shall provide a comprehensive report
320 on the use and effectiveness of funds distributed under the grant
321 programs created in this article, to include wage data and
322 employment outcomes for residents, to the Governor, Lieutenant
323 Governor, Speaker of the House, Chairs of the Senate and House



324 Appropriations Committees, Chair of the Senate Economic and
325 Workforce Development Committee, and Chair of the House Workforce
326 Development Committee by October 1 of each year of the existence
327 of the program and for at least three (3) years after the program
328 ceases.

329 **SECTION 9.** Grant funds shall be available under this article
330 through December 31, 2026, or on the date of the fund expenditure
331 deadline provided by the federal government, whichever occurs
332 later. Each grant recipient shall certify, for any project for
333 which a grant is awarded, that if the project is not completed by
334 December 31, 2026, and the United States Congress does not enact
335 an extension of the deadline on the availability of ARPA funds,
336 then the grant recipient will complete the project through other
337 funds.

338 **SECTION 10.** If any section, paragraph, sentence, clause,
339 phrase or part of this article is declared to be in conflict with
340 federal law, or if for any reason is declared to be invalid or of
341 no effect, the remaining sections, paragraphs, sentences, clauses,
342 phrases or parts thereof shall be in no matter affected thereby
343 but shall remain in full force and effect.

344 **SECTION 11.** Sections 1 through 9 of this act shall be
345 codified as a new article in Title 37, Chapter 153, Mississippi
346 Code of 1972.

347 **SECTION 12.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
348 and after July 1, 2023.

