

CHAPTER 2026-101

Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 1246

An act relating to the Linking Industry to Nursing Education Fund; amending s. 1009.8962, F.S.; revising the Legislative intent for the Linking Industry to Nursing Education (LINE) Fund; revising the definition of the term “health care partner”; authorizing the inclusion of nonmonetary contributions to institutions for purposes of proposals for LINE Fund matching funds; requiring monetary contributions to receive priority in the award of matching funds; revising the authorized uses of awarded funds; requiring proposals for participation in the fund to be submitted by specified persons; providing allowable nonmonetary contributions; providing requirements for the acceptance of nonmonetary contributions as health care matching funds; prohibiting a proposal to participate in the fund from being comprised solely of nonmonetary contributions; revising the criteria the Board of Governors and the Department of Education must use to review proposals; requiring grant funds awarded based on nonmonetary contributions to be based on such contribution’s fair market value; authorizing the Board of Governors and the Department of Education to provide multiyear awards under certain circumstances; providing notification requirements for such awards; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Section 1009.8962, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1009.8962 Linking Industry to Nursing Education (LINE) Fund.—

(1) This section shall be known and may be cited as the “Linking Industry to Nursing Education (LINE) Fund Act.”

(2) Recognizing that the state has a persistent and growing nursing shortage, it is the intent of the Legislature to address this critical workforce need by incentivizing collaboration between nursing education programs and health care partners that contribute monetary or nonmonetary contributions through the establishment of the LINE Fund. This fund is intended to meet local, regional, and state workforce demand by recruiting faculty and clinical preceptors, increasing the capacity of high-quality nursing education programs, and increasing the number of nursing education program graduates who are prepared and licensed to enter the workforce.

(3) As used in this section, the term:

(a) “Health care partner” means a health care provider as defined in s. 768.38(2) which is licensed to operate in this state.

(b) “Institution” means a school district career center under s. 1001.44; a charter technical career center under s. 1002.34; a Florida College System institution; a state university; an independent nonprofit college or university located and chartered in this state and accredited by an agency or association that is recognized by the database created and maintained by the United States Department of Education to grant baccalaureate degrees; or an independent school, college, or university with an accredited program as defined in s. 464.003 which is located in this state and licensed by the Commission for Independent Education pursuant to s. 1005.31, or an institution authorized under s. 1009.521, which has a nursing education program that meets or exceeds the following:

1. For a certified nursing assistant program, a completion rate of at least 70 percent for the prior year.

2. For a licensed practical nurse, associate of science in nursing, and bachelor of science in nursing program, a first-time passage rate on the National Council of State Boards of Nursing Licensing Examination of at least 75 percent for the prior year based on a minimum of 10 testing participants.

(c) “Student” means a person who is a resident for tuition purposes pursuant to s. 1009.21 and enrolled in a nursing education program at an institution.

(4) The LINE Fund shall be administered by the Board of Governors for state universities and the Department of Education for all other institutions.

(5) Subject to available funds, for every monetary or nonmonetary contribution dollar contributed to an institution by a health care partner or other person or entity, the fund shall provide a dollar-to-dollar match to the participating institution to implement the activities outlined in the institution’s approved proposal. Monetary contributions from health care partners shall receive priority when awarding matching funds to institutions.

(6)(a) Funds may be used for student scholarships; recruitment of additional faculty and preceptors; increasing program enrollment, program completion, and licensure examination passage rates; equipment; ~~and simulation centers;~~ and internships to advance high-quality nursing education programs throughout the state.

(b) Funds may not be used for the construction of new buildings, but may be used to expand, retrofit, or upgrade existing facilities if the proposal will result in increased program enrollments or improved or modernized educational or simulation space for an institution’s nursing education program students.

(7)(a) To participate, an institution’s president, chief administrative officer, or designee ~~institution~~ must submit a timely and completed proposal

to the Board of Governors or Department of Education, in a format prescribed by the Board of Governors or Department of Education, as applicable.

(b) The proposal must identify a health care partner located and licensed to operate in the state whose ~~monetary~~ contributions will be matched by the fund on a dollar-to-dollar basis.

(c) Allowable nonmonetary contributions are limited to the following:

1. The value of the donated use of health care partner employees as nursing education program instructors or preceptors.

2. The value of the donated use of a health care partner’s space or equipment by a nursing education program.

3. The value of donated educational or simulation equipment.

4. Other similar quantifiable donated goods and services deemed by the Board of Governors or Department of Education, as applicable, to be good faith contributions that support the goals of the LINE Fund.

(d) To accept nonmonetary contributions as health care matching funds, the applicant and Board of Governors or Department of Education, as applicable, must quantify the fair market value of the contribution in dollars and certify that the proposed contribution directly supports the goals of the LINE Fund outlined in subsection (2).

(e) A proposal may not be comprised solely of nonmonetary contributions.

(8) The Board of Governors or Department of Education, as applicable, must review and evaluate each completed and timely submitted proposal according to the following minimum criteria, where applicable:

(a) Whether ~~monetary and nonmonetary contributions funds~~ committed by the health care partner will contribute to an eligible purpose.

(b) How the institution plans to use the funds or nonmonetary contribution, including how such funds or nonmonetary contribution will be utilized to increase student enrollment and program completion.

(c) How the health care partner will onboard and retain graduates or otherwise improve the likelihood that graduates will successfully join the state or local workforce.

(d) How the funds or nonmonetary contribution will be used to expand the institution’s nursing education programs to meet local, regional, or state workforce demands. If applicable, this shall include advanced education nursing programs and how the funds or nonmonetary contribution will

increase the number of faculty and clinical preceptors and planned efforts to utilize the clinical placement process established in s. 14.36.

(9)(a) Each institution with an approved proposal shall notify the Board of Governors or Department of Education, as applicable, upon receipt of the health care partner provided funds or nonmonetary contribution identified in the proposal. The Board of Governors or Department of Education, as applicable, shall release grant funds, on a dollar-for-dollar basis, up to the amount of funds or the fair market value of the nonmonetary contribution received by the institution, including notifications made on a rolling or periodic basis.

(b) If deemed to meet the long-term goals of the LINE Fund, the Board of Governors or Department of Education, as applicable, may, but are not required to, award funds for an approved proposal for up to 2 academic years immediately following the academic year within which the initial approval is granted. If the Board of Governors or Department of Education, as applicable, approves a multiyear award to an institution, it must notify the recipient that the award amount in subsequent years is subject to a LINE Fund appropriation and the continued notification of the health care partner's contribution to match the multiyear award of state funds.

~~(c)~~ Annually, by February 1, each institution awarded grant funds in the previous fiscal year shall submit a report to the Board of Governors or Department of Education, as applicable, that demonstrates the expansion as outlined in the proposal and the use of funds. At minimum, the report must include, by program level, the number of additional nursing education students enrolled; if scholarships were awarded using grant funds, the number of students who received scholarships and the average award amount; and the outcomes of students as reported by the Office of Reimagining Education and Career Help pursuant to s. 14.36(3)(1).

(10) The Board of Governors shall adopt regulations and the State Board of Education shall adopt rules to administer the fund, establish dates for the submission and review of proposals, award funds, and other regulations and rules necessary to implement this section.

Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.

Approved by the Governor May 22, 2026.

Filed in Office Secretary of State May 22, 2026.