

1 HOUSE BILL NO. 944
2 INTRODUCED BY P. TUSS

3
4 A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE MONTANA IN-DEMAND SKILLED TRADES
5 INVESTMENT PILOT PROGRAM; ESTABLISHING A MULTIFACETED GRANT PROGRAM ADMINISTERED
6 BY THE COMMISSIONER OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO STRENGTHEN CAREER AND TECHNICAL
7 EDUCATION PIPELINES; PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION; ESTABLISHING REPORTING
8 REQUIREMENTS; PROVIDING DEFINITIONS; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE AND A
9 TERMINATION DATE."

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11 WHEREAS, the 2019 Legislature, through House Bill No. 754, formed a special commission during the
12 2019-2020 interim to study the 2-year programs of the Montana University System with an emphasis on career
13 and technical education; and

14 WHEREAS, one recommendation of the Montana University System 2-Year Commission was to
15 "[e]ncourage investment in providing start-up funds for 2-year campuses for new CTE programs that
16 demonstrate industry need and support"; and

17 WHEREAS, another recommendation of the commission was to "[f]ind a way to provide state support
18 for shorter-duration credential and noncredit workforce programs"; and

19 WHEREAS, yet another recommendation of the commission was to "[s]trengthen dual enrollment
20 opportunities for high school students pursuing postsecondary CTE programs and certifications"; and

21 WHEREAS, the commission's final recommendation was to "[e]ncourage appropriators (the Legislature,
22 the Board of Regents, campuses) to view funding for workforce programs as an investment".

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24 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

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26 NEW SECTION. **Section 1. Montana in-demand skilled trades investment pilot program. (1)**

27 There is a Montana in-demand skilled trades investment pilot program administered by the commissioner of
28 higher education. The purpose of the program is to strengthen career and technical education pipelines to

1 ensure a skilled workforce in the trades and especially in those trades facing workforce shortages in the state.

2 (2) (a) The Montana in-demand skilled trades investment pilot program must involve:

3 (i) a targeted effort at no more than three postsecondary CTE campuses;

4 (ii) collaboration between school districts and postsecondary CTE campuses in developing career
5 and technical education pathways;

6 (iii) the opportunity for students to take career and technical education dual credit courses while in
7 high school; and

8 (iv) the opportunity for students to engage in work-based learning opportunities within career and
9 technical education pathways.

10 (b) The program must allow and encourage small and proximate school districts to collaborate with
11 postsecondary CTE campuses to participate in the Montana in-demand skilled trades investment pilot program.

12 (3) Contingent on appropriation by the legislature, the commissioner shall create and administer
13 the Montana in-demand skilled trades investment pilot program, including:

14 (a) a grant program for school districts to develop a Montana in-demand skilled trades investment
15 pilot program that encourages students to pursue a career in the skilled trades and that includes the ability for
16 high school students to take dual credit career and technical education courses;

17 (b) a grant program for postsecondary CTE campuses to develop or enhance career and technical
18 education programs in the specific areas that are most impacted by skilled trades workforce shortages; and

19 (c) a Montana in-demand skilled trades investment scholarship program that provides a last-dollar
20 grant of up to \$5,000 a year, not to exceed the cost of attendance, and not to exceed \$10,000 total for any
21 student, to students who:

22 (i) have participated in a Montana in-demand skilled trades investment pilot program, as
23 described in subsection (3)(a), and have earned at least 6 postsecondary career and technical education
24 credits while in high school;

25 (ii) are currently enrolled in a career and technical education program that leads to a credential
26 and employment in an in-demand skilled trade; and

27 (iii) commit to working in the state.

28 (4) The commissioner shall convert a grant under subsection (3)(c) to a loan if the recipient of the

1 grant:

2 (a) does not complete a career and technical education program within 5 years of receiving a
3 grant; or

4 (b) does not work for 3 or more years in the state in an in-demand skilled trade within 5 years of
5 completing a career and technical education program.

6 (5) (a) The legislature intends that grants made to school districts and postsecondary CTE
7 campuses pursuant to subsections (3)(a) and (3)(b) are one-time startup grants that include:

8 (i) a matching component provided by the school district or postsecondary CTE campus; and

9 (ii) a plan by the school district or postsecondary CTE campus to sustain programs beyond the
10 term of the grant.

11 (b) The matching component and sustainability plan may be supported by outside entities,
12 including but not limited to individuals, employers, industry associations, or trade unions.

13 (6) In accordance with 5-11-210, the commissioner shall report annually to the education interim
14 committee on the status and impacts of the Montana in-demand skilled trades investment scholarship program.

15 (7) For the purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

16 (a) "In-demand skilled trade" means an occupation on a list of no more than six occupations
17 developed collaboratively between the commissioner of higher education and the commissioner of labor and
18 industry that:

19 (i) faces workforce shortages in the state;

20 (ii) demands specific skills, abilities, and knowledge; and

21 (iii) requires specialized training beyond secondary school that leads to a credential or license,
22 including credentials or licenses earned through short-duration, nondegree programs.

23 (b) "Postsecondary CTE campus" means a 2-year campus or program of the Montana university
24 system or a tribal college or community college located in the state that offers career and technical education
25 programs.

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27 **NEW SECTION. Section 2. Appropriation.** (1) There is appropriated \$1,115,000 from the general
28 fund to the commissioner of higher education for the biennium beginning July 1, 2023, for the purposes of

1 [section 1].

2 (2) The legislature intends that the appropriation in this section be considered a part of the ongoing
3 base for the next legislative session.

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5 NEW SECTION. Section 3. Codification instruction. [Section 1] is intended to be codified as an
6 integral part of Title 20, chapter 25, part 1, and the provisions of Title 20, chapter 25, part 1, apply to [section 1].

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8 NEW SECTION. Section 4. Effective date. [This act] is effective July 1, 2023.

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10 NEW SECTION. Section 5. Termination. [Section 1] terminates June 30, 2027.

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