

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2024 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 137
Finance

(Senator Rosapepe)

Registered Nurse Degree Apprenticeship Program Workgroup

This bill establishes the Registered Nurse (RN) Degree Apprenticeship Program Workgroup, staffed by the Maryland Department of Labor (MDL). The workgroup must study the feasibility of developing and implementing a nurse apprenticeship program in the State and review existing models of apprenticeship programs in other jurisdictions and countries, as specified. The workgroup must make recommendations on (1) the framework for apprenticeship programs that may begin in high school and continue through all levels of education needed for different categories of nurses; (2) the framework for postgraduate transition to specified practice programs; and (3) sustainable funding models for the program. The workgroup must also address implementation questions as specified. By April 1, 2025, the workgroup must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor, the Senate Finance Committee, and the House Health and Government Operations Committee. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2024, and terminates June 30, 2025.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: MDL expenditures increase by \$40,400 only in FY 2025 to hire contractual support to staff the workgroup. Expense reimbursements are assumed to be minimal and reimbursable with existing budgeted resources. No effect on revenues.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: Implementation questions the workgroup must address include: (1) determining the circumstances under which a clinical educator may also be the

student's supervisor in a work setting; (2) evaluating how an apprenticeship model may provide the full range of supervised clinical education experiences; and (3) assessing how an apprenticeship model of education may meet national and State standards to ensure the portability of nursing licensure for Maryland registered nurses.

Current Law: For an overview of registered apprenticeship programs in the State, please see the **Appendix – Apprenticeship**.

Career and Technical Education Committee

Chapter 36 of 2021 (Blueprint for Maryland's Future – Implementation) created the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Committee as a unit within the Governor's Workforce Development Board. The purpose of the committee is to build an integrated, globally competitive framework for providing CTE to Maryland students in public schools, postsecondary institutions, and the workforce.

The CTE Committee must establish for each school year between the 2023-2024 school year and the 2030-2031 school year, statewide goals so that by the 2030-2031 school year, 45% of high students prior to graduation have completed the high school level of a registered apprenticeship or an industry-recognized occupational credential. To the extent practicable, the CTE Committee must ensure the largest number of students achieve this goal by completing a high school level of a registered apprenticeship program approved by the Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL) within MDL. Annually, by December 1 of each year, the committee must report to the Governor, the General Assembly, and the Accountability and Implementation Board on the progress, by high school, toward attaining the goals established by the committee.

Registered Nurses

Generally, an individual must be licensed and/or certified by the Maryland Board of Nursing (MBON) to practice as a nurse or nursing worker.

“Practice registered nursing” means the performance of acts requiring substantial specialized knowledge, judgment, and skill based on the biological, physiological, behavioral, or sociological sciences as the basis for assessment, nursing diagnosis, planning, implementation, and evaluation of the practice of nursing to maintain health, prevent illness, or care for or rehabilitate the ill, injured, or infirm.

An applicant for an RN license must complete and meet all requirements for a diploma or degree from a registered nursing education program approved by MBON, or an education program in registered nursing in any other state or country that MBON finds substantially

equivalent to programs in the State. RN applicants must also pass an examination developed by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, demonstrate English language competency, and be of good moral character.

State Expenditures: As staff in MDL’s DWDAL are largely federally funded, MDL lacks staff who are available to work on State-funded activities. Therefore, general fund expenditures increase by \$40,379 in fiscal 2025, which accounts for a 90-day start-up delay from the bill’s July 1, 2024 effective date.

This estimate reflects the cost of hiring one part-time contractual analyst to staff the workgroup. It includes a salary, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and operating expenses.

Contractual Position	0.5
Salary and Fringe Benefits	\$33,527
Operating Expenses	<u>6,852</u>
Total FY 2025 State Expenditures	\$40,379

This analysis assumes that the contractual position terminates at the end of fiscal 2025, concurrent with the termination of the workgroup. It does not include any health insurance costs that could be incurred for specified contractual employees under the State’s implementation of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Additional Comments: MDL advises that, on September 23, 2022, the U.S. Department of Labor [rescinded the Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Program](#) and devoted all resources exclusively to registered apprenticeships. Therefore, the workgroup may be unable to make recommendations regarding industry-recognized apprenticeship programs.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. see SB 669 of 2023.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Association of County Health Officers; University System of Maryland; Maryland Independent College and University Association; Maryland Department of Health; Maryland Department of Labor; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 9, 2024
js/mcr

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Appendix – Apprenticeship

Generally, apprenticeship is a voluntary, industry-sponsored system that prepares individuals for occupations typically requiring high-level skills and related technical knowledge. Apprenticeships are sponsored by one or more employers or jointly by a labor-management committee. An apprentice receives supervised, structured, on-the-job training under the direction of a skilled journeyman and related technical instruction in a specific occupation. Apprenticeships are designed to meet the workforce needs of the program sponsor. Many industry sponsors use apprenticeship as a method to train employees in the knowledge necessary to become a skilled worker. This also means the number of apprenticeships available is dependent on the current workforce needs of the industry and the capacity and willingness of employers or employer groups to supervise them.

Apprenticeships are available to individuals age 16 and older; an employer, however, may set a higher entry age. By law, individuals must be age 18 to apprentice in hazardous occupations, although there are some exemptions available to minors who are registered as apprentices. Time-based apprenticeships last from one to six years and involve a minimum of 144 hours of related technical instruction and at least 2,000 hours per year of on-the-job training.

A national apprenticeship and training program was established in federal law in 1937 with the passage of the National Apprenticeship Act, also known as the Fitzgerald Act. The purpose of the Act was to promote national standards of apprenticeship and to safeguard the welfare of apprentice workers.

Along with [more than half of other states and the District of Columbia](#), Maryland has chosen to operate its own apprenticeship programs under the federal law. The Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL) within the Maryland Department of Labor is responsible for the daily oversight of State apprenticeship programs. More specifically, DWDAL approves new apprenticeship programs as well as changes to current programs and ensures compliance with State and federal requirements. The approval process involves assessing the appropriateness of an apprenticeship program in a proposed industry, the education that will be provided to the apprentice, the current staffing level of the entity proposing the program to determine whether adequate supervision can be provided, recruitment and retention efforts, and the overall operations of the entity. The Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Council serves in an advisory role for legislation and regulations, recommending changes to update apprenticeship laws.

As of November 28, 2023, there were 11,530 apprentices registered in 125 different occupations, with more than 400 approved registered apprenticeship programs and more than 3,800 employers. There were 1,825 Certificates of Completion for apprentices processed between January 1, 2023, and November 28, 2023. The State added 38 new apprenticeship programs in 2023. The diversity of Maryland's apprenticeship system has also increased since the transfer of the program to DWDAL in 2016. The percentage of minority apprentices increased from 36% in November 2016 to 44% in November 2023. Likewise, the percentage of female apprentices increased from 3.7% in November 2016 to 7.7% in November 2023.

Chapter 168 (Senate Bill 104) of 2023 established the Apprenticeship 2030 Commission. The purpose of the commission is to examine and make recommendations to reduce skill shortages in high-demand occupations and provide affordable training for career pathways for young people by:

- expanding registered apprenticeships in industry sectors with skill shortages;
- growing the number of registered apprentices to at least 60,000 by 2030; and
- reaching the Blueprint for Maryland's Future goal for 45% of high school graduates completing the high school level of a registered apprenticeship.

The Apprenticeship 2030 Commission met four times in 2023 and published the [Interim Report of the Apprenticeship 2030 Commission](#).