

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2023 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 669
Finance

(Senator Rosapepe)

Registered Nurse Degree Apprenticeship Program Workgroup

This bill establishes the Registered Nurse (RN) Degree Apprenticeship Program Workgroup, staffed jointly by the Maryland Department of Labor (MDL) and the Maryland Department of Health (MDH). 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 the framework for apprenticeship programs that begin in high school and continue through all levels of education needed for different categories of nurses and on sustainable funding models for the program. By April 1, 2024, 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, 2023, and terminates June 30, 2024.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: MDH and MDL can likely staff the commission with existing budgeted resources. Expense reimbursement are assumed to be minimal and reimbursable with existing budgeted resources. No effect on revenues.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

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 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.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education; Maryland Department of Health; Maryland Department of Labor; Department of Legislative Services

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km/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 and may be administered solely by the employer or jointly by management and labor groups. 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 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. Apprenticeships last from one to six years, although most are three to four years, and involve a minimum of 144 hours of classroom instruction per year 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 [26 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 December 2021, there were 11,404 apprentices registered, and there were 3,833 participating employers. During calendar 2021, the State added 23 new apprenticeship programs.