
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO AN EARLY LEARNING APPRENTICESHIP GRANT PROGRAM.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that establishing an
2 early learning apprenticeship grant program within the
3 university of Hawaii is a matter of statewide concern pursuant
4 to article X, section 6, of the Hawaii State Constitution.

5 The legislature finds that quality learning experiences
6 during a child's earliest years improve long-term, multi-general
7 outcomes and contribute to a strong, skilled workforce. High-
8 quality early learning programs support the growth and
9 development of children, a working family's ability to secure
10 and sustain employment and economic vitality, promote the
11 creation of jobs and workforce support, and generate substantial
12 revenue for the State.

13 The legislature notes that despite the growing demand for
14 well-trained early learning professionals, the field is
15 experiencing a shortage of qualified and well-compensated
16 workers. Therefore, the legislature recognizes that it is
17 necessary to support the recruitment, retention, and



1 professional development of early learning professionals as an
2 investment in the workforce that supports the State's youngest
3 children and working families, which will contribute to the
4 current and future prosperity of the State.

5 The legislature further finds that registered
6 apprenticeship programs are proven models which create skilled
7 workforces tailored to the specialized needs of their respective
8 industries while fostering economic growth. Registered
9 apprenticeship programs are high-quality, industry-driven career
10 pathways that combine on-the-job training with classroom
11 instruction to prepare workers for skilled careers. Registered
12 apprenticeship programs ensure businesses have access to
13 well-trained and qualified employees while also ensuring that
14 employees are fairly compensated commensurate to the necessary
15 qualifications. Furthermore, apprenticeship programs offer an
16 accessible pathway to stable careers, assist in developing
17 technical skills, upskill the existing workforce, and encourage
18 a culture of lifelong learning and continuous professional
19 development.

20 The legislature also finds that the first
21 federally-approved early learning apprenticeship program



1 recently launched to serve as a critical recruitment and
2 retention pathway for prospective early learning professionals
3 and increase access to early learning opportunities. However,
4 the legislature recognizes that due to the significant labor
5 costs required of the industry, many early learning program
6 service providers have difficulty maintaining the federal
7 compensation requirement and therefore, are disincentivized in
8 participating in an early learning apprenticeship program.

9 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to establish an
10 early learning apprenticeship grant program, to be administered
11 by the university of Hawaii, to assist publicly- or
12 privately-run early learning program service providers to
13 participate in state- and federally-approved early learning
14 apprenticeship programs.

15 SECTION 2. Chapter 304A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
16 amended by adding a new section to subpart M of part IV to be
17 appropriately designated and to read as follows:

18 "§304A- Early learning apprenticeship grant program;
19 established. (a) There is established an early learning
20 apprenticeship grant program to be administered by the
21 university to provide financial support for early learning



1 program service providers in the State to participate in early
2 learning apprenticeship programs.

3 (b) The university shall award grants to an early learning
4 program service provider licensed or registered to provide child
5 care in the State that participates in a state- or
6 federally-approved early learning apprenticeship program as an
7 employer or sponsor; provided that priority shall be given to an
8 early learning program service provider that:

9 (1) Is licensed or registered to provide care for infants
10 and toddlers; and

11 (2) Enrolls children under the age of three.

12 (c) The university shall award the grant amount per
13 license; provided that the university shall consider the
14 following factors when determining the grant amount:

15 (1) The size of an early learning program service provider
16 participating in a state- or federally-approved early
17 learning apprenticeship program as an employer;

18 (2) The difference between the statutorily-required wage
19 rates or prevailing industry standard wage rates,
20 whichever is higher, and the early learning program
21 service provider's current wage rates; and



1 (3) Other factors, including but not limited to stipend
2 bonuses or wage supplements.

3 (d) The university shall award grants based on criteria
4 developed by the university in consultation with the executive
5 office on early learning.

6 (e) The grant program shall provide financial assistance
7 to eligible early learning program service providers to cover
8 the costs associated with their participation in a state- or
9 federally-approved early learning apprenticeship program,
10 including but not limited to:

- 11 (1) Personnel expenses and wages;
- 12 (2) Training expenses;
- 13 (3) Mentorship stipends;
- 14 (4) Administrative costs; and
- 15 (5) Wage or salary increases, wage supplements, or other
16 compensation enhancements as needed to attract and
17 retain qualified employees within the state- or
18 federally-approved apprenticeship framework, including
19 apprentice and other early learning employees;

1 provided that the wages shall match statutorily-required wage
2 requirements or prevailing industry standards, whichever is
3 higher.

4 (f) The university may cooperate with the counties to
5 administer the grant program.

6 (g) The university shall submit a report of its findings
7 and recommendations, including any proposed legislation
8 regarding the grant program to the legislature, no later than
9 twenty days prior to the convening of each regular session. The
10 report shall include at minimum:

11 (1) The number of early learning program service providers
12 receiving grants pursuant to the program;

13 (2) The number of apprentices hired by early learning
14 program service providers receiving grants under the
15 program;

16 (3) Total amount of funds awarded to early learning
17 program service providers pursuant the program; and

18 (4) The purposes for which the early learning program
19 service providers used the awarded grants, including
20 documentation on wages paid or wage increases given to
21 qualified employees within the state- or



1 federally-approved apprenticeship framework, including
2 apprentices and other early learning employees.

3 (h) For the purposes of this section:

4 "Early learning" has the same meaning as defined in section
5 302L-1.

6 "Early learning program" means a publicly- or privately-run
7 program within the State's early learning system governed
8 pursuant to chapter 302L. "Early learning program" includes
9 center-based programs, family child care programs, family-child
10 interaction learning programs, and home-based instruction
11 programs.

12 "Grant program" means the early learning apprenticeship
13 program."

14 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
15 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
16 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and
17 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
18 year 2026-2027 for the university of Hawaii to implement and
19 administer the early learning apprenticeship grant program.

20 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the university
21 of Hawaii for the purposes of this Act.



- 1 SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.
- 2 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 31, 2050.



Report Title:

UH; Early Learning Apprenticeship Grant Program; Childcare;
Early Learning Opportunities; Professions and Occupations;
Reports; Appropriations

Description:

Establishes an Early Learning Apprenticeship Grant Program to be administered by the University of Hawaii to provide financial support for early learning program service providers in the State to participate in state- or federally-approved early learning apprenticeship programs. Requires an annual report to the Legislature. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/31/2050.
(SD1)

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