

6A-10.0352 Linking Industry to Nursing Education (LINE) Fund.

(1) Purpose. The purpose of this rule is to set forth the requirements relating to the Linking Industry to Nursing Education (LINE) Fund, which 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 to enter the workforce.

(2) Definitions.

(a) "Health care partner" means a health care provider as defined in Section 768.38(2), F.S. For purposes of the LINE Fund, the health care partner must be located and licensed to operate in the state and make a monetary contribution to the postsecondary institution.

(b) "Department" means the Florida Department of Education.

(c) "Institution" means a school district career center under Section 1001.44, F.S., a charter technical career center under Section 1002.34, F.S., a Florida College System institution, or 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, 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 seventy (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 seventy (70) percent for the prior year.

(d) "Student" means a person who is a resident for tuition purposes pursuant to Section 1009.21, F.S., and enrolled in a nursing education program at an institution.

(e) "Eligible purpose" means student scholarships, recruitment of additional faculty, equipment, and simulation centers. Construction of new facilities are not considered eligible.

(f) "Match" means the LINE funds provided to the institution on a dollar-to-dollar basis, subject to funds availability, to the health care partner's contribution.

(g) "Health care partner's contribution" means the dollars provided by an eligible health care partner to an eligible postsecondary institution.

(3) Notification of Funding Opportunity. Each year that the LINE Fund is funded by the legislature, the Department will publish notice of the availability of grants and Request for Proposals at <https://www.fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/funding-opportunities> at least fifteen (15) days prior to the notice of intent submission. For the 2022-2023 year, the notification of funding opportunity will be posted no later than September 15. The notification of funding opportunity will include:

(a) Grant period. For Fiscal Year 2022-2023, the grant period is July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023.

(b) Date to submit a notice of intent to apply for a grant. The notice of intent will be due fifteen (15) days following publication of the notification of funding opportunity.

(c) Earliest and latest date to apply for the grant. Proposals will be accepted as early as thirty (30) days following the notice of intent deadline and will continue to be accepted for another fifteen (15) days or until all appropriated funds are awarded, whichever comes first.

(d) The dollar amount of available grant funds.

(4) Proposals. If funds are designated in the General Appropriations Act, the Department shall solicit proposals for LINE funds. To be eligible for an allocation, proposals must include the following components which will be used to prioritize funding along with the criteria established in subsection (5).

(a) The total proposed budget for the program, which includes the health care partner contribution and the amount of LINE Funds requested. The proposed budget includes personnel costs, operating expenses, equipment costs and training expenses, and other allowable expenses.

(b) Narrative explaining how the institution plans to use the health care partner contribution and LINE matching funds to address the criteria in subsection (5).

(c) Statement of assurances that statutory requirements will be satisfied.

(d) Documentation of health care partner's contribution. Documentation must indicate the cash amount the health care partner plans to contribute ("pledged") or has contributed ("fulfilled"). If the contribution has been pledged but not been fulfilled at the time of application, acceptable documentation includes a scope of work, copies of irrevocable pledge letters, or letters of intent; the documentation must indicate the timeline for the fulfillment of the contribution. If the contribution has been pledged and fulfilled at the time of application, acceptable documentation includes financial statements, bank statements, budget reports, or bank letters that show the cash transaction(s).

(5) Review Process.

(a) The Department will evaluate and rank, by institution type, each completed and timely submitted proposal on the extent to which the application supports the following minimum criteria.

1. Whether funds committed by the health care partner will contribute to an eligible purpose.

2. How the institution plans to use the funds, including how such funds will be utilized to increase student enrollment and program completion.

3. How the health care partner will onboard and retain graduates.

4. How the funds will 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 will increase the number of faculty and clinical preceptors and planned efforts to utilize the clinical placement process established in Section 14.36, F.S.

(b) Once the proposals are evaluated and ranked pursuant to paragraph (5)(a), the Department will consider the strength of the proposed programs, the geographic location of the proposals and statewide workforce demands in order to promote the distribution of funds and avoid a concentration of funds in a small number of institutions.

(6) Award Notice. The Department will award grant funding on a dollar-to-dollar basis, subject to available funds, to eligible institutions based on subsections (4) and (5). The Department will notify institutions of the approved proposals and award amounts.

(7) Disbursements. Prior to the release of funds to an institution that has been awarded LINE funds, the institution must provide to the Department documentation of the health care partner providing the cash contribution to the institution. Acceptable documentation includes financial statements, bank statements, budget reports, or bank letters that show the cash transaction(s). Funds will be released on no more than a quarterly basis.

(8) Required Reporting.

(a) Quarterly, institutions that have been awarded LINE funds must report to the Department the amount and use of funds, as outlined in the proposal, expended in the prior three months. Quarterly submissions are due on January 15, April 15, July 15, and October 15 of each year. No later than thirty (30) days before the submission deadline, the Department will release guidelines for institutions to securely transmit an electronic file to meet this requirement.

(b) Annually, by February 1, institutions that have been awarded LINE funds must report to the Department all

information required by Section 1009.896(9)(b), F.S. Minimally, 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 Florida Talent Development Council pursuant to Section 1004.015(6), F.S. No later than thirty (30) days before the submission deadline, the Department will release guidelines for institutions to transmit an electronic file to meet this requirement.

Rulemaking Authority 1001.02(1), (2)(n), 1009.8962(10) FS. Law Implemented 1009.8962 FS. History--New