

HB 1701-FN - AS INTRODUCED

2026 SESSION

26-3141

06/09

HOUSE BILL            ***1701-FN***

AN ACT                reestablishing the New Hampshire college graduate retention incentive partnership program and making an appropriation therefor.

SPONSORS:            Rep. Manohar, Hills. 9; Rep. Chourasia, Hills. 11; Rep. Damon, Sull. 8; Rep. Gregg, Hills. 7; Rep. Spier, Hills. 6; Sen. Innis, Dist 7; Sen. Perkins Kwoka, Dist 21; Sen. Rosenwald, Dist 13

COMMITTEE:          Education Funding

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ANALYSIS

This bill reestablishes and makes modifications to the New Hampshire college graduate retention incentive partnership (NH GRIP) which provides financial incentives to college graduates who are hired by participating employers and makes an appropriation to the department of business and economic affairs for that purpose.

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Explanation:          Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics***.  
Matter removed from current law appears ~~[in brackets and struckthrough.]~~  
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

*In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty-Six*

AN ACT reestablishing the New Hampshire college graduate retention incentive partnership program and making an appropriation therefor.

*Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:*

1 1 New Hampshire College Graduate Retention Incentive Partnership. RSA 12-O:46 to 12-O:50  
2 is repealed and reenacted to read as follows:

3 12-O:46 Definitions. In this subdivision:

4 I. "Commissioner" means the commissioner of the department of business and economic  
5 affairs (DBEA).

6 II. "Department" means the department of business and economic affairs.

7 III. "Eligible institution of higher education" means any public or private institution of  
8 higher education authorized to grant 2-year or 4-year degrees in this state by the higher education  
9 commission pursuant to RSA 21-N:8-a.

10 IV. "Graduate" means a student who graduates from an eligible institution of higher  
11 education in May 2019 or thereafter.

12 V. "Incentive" means a monetary award given each year for not more than 4 years by a  
13 participating employer to a graduate which the graduate may elect to be paid to the graduate or to  
14 an entity servicing the graduate's student loans.

15 VI. "Participating employer" means any person, firm, corporation, partnership, association,  
16 the state or political subdivision of the state, or any other entity which enters into a participating  
17 employer agreement to provide an incentive to a graduate.

18 VII. "Participating employer agreement" or "agreement" means an agreement prepared  
19 jointly by the department of business and economic affairs in consultation with the New Hampshire  
20 College and University Council and the Business and Industry Association of New Hampshire.

21 12-O:47 New Hampshire College Graduate Retention Incentive Partnership Established. There  
22 is established the New Hampshire college graduate retention incentive partnership (NH GRIP)  
23 which shall be administered by the department. The purpose of NH GRIP is to recruit and retain  
24 graduates from eligible institutions of higher education and provide incentives to those graduates to  
25 work in New Hampshire.

26 12-O:47-a Implementation.

27 I. The department shall relaunch and administer NH GRIP in accordance with this  
28 subdivision.

29 II. The department shall develop and publish application procedures and eligibility  
30 guidelines for participating employers, including but not limited to:

- 1 (a) Criteria for employer participation;
- 2 (b) Terms of graduate employment and retention;
- 3 (c) Documentation and reporting requirements; and
- 4 (d) Any other rules necessary to carry out the purposes of the program.

5 12-O:47-b Prioritization. In administering NH GRIP, the department shall give priority to  
6 employers headquartered or principally located in New Hampshire that qualify as small businesses  
7 under federal or state definitions; and employers in sectors experiencing documented workforce  
8 shortages, including but not limited to health care, skilled trades, and technology.

9 12-O:48 Requirements and Procedure. Each participating employer shall compile a list of  
10 positions which qualify for an incentive under NH GRIP. The participating employer shall publish  
11 the list of qualifying positions on the employer's public Internet site and on any Internet  
12 employment search site used by the participating employer. A graduate who obtains employment in  
13 a qualifying position with a participating employer and who executes an agreement, shall receive an  
14 incentive of not less than \$1,000 each year for the first 4 years of the graduate's employment with  
15 the participating employer. The agreement shall be signed by an authorized agent of the  
16 participating employer. The participating employer shall retain a copy of each signed agreement in  
17 its files.

18 12-O:49 Advertising. The department shall, in cooperation with the Business and Industry  
19 Association of New Hampshire, the New Hampshire College and University Council, the New  
20 Hampshire Higher Education Assistance Fund, the New Hampshire Coalition for Business and  
21 Education, and Stay, Work, Play NH, advertise to New Hampshire employers and New Hampshire  
22 college students the details of NH GRIP, through print and electronic media. The department shall  
23 maintain a list of employers who have a valid participating employer agreement and shall make the  
24 list available on the department's public Internet site as well as in writing.

25 12-O:50 Funding. For the biennium beginning July 1, 2027, and each biennium thereafter, the  
26 commissioner shall include any requests for appropriations related to NH GRIP in the biennial  
27 agency budget requests pursuant to RSA 9:4.

28 12-O:50-a Reporting.

29 I. The department shall publish an annual report detailing program participation, costs, and  
30 outcomes.

31 II. On or before November 1 of each year in which NH GRIP is active, the department shall  
32 submit a report to the speaker of the house of representatives, the president of the senate, the house  
33 and senate finance committees, and the house and senate commerce committees. The report shall  
34 include:

- 35 (a) The number of participating employers and graduates;
- 36 (b) Retention outcomes and geographic distribution of participants;
- 37 (c) Program expenditures and administrative costs; and

**HB 1701-FN - AS INTRODUCED**  
**- Page 3 -**

1           (d) Recommendations for program continuation, expansion, or modification.

2           III. A comprehensive review of program efficacy shall be conducted every 5 years by the  
3 department.

4           12-O:50-b Rulemaking. The department of business and economic affairs, in consultation with  
5 the New Hampshire lottery commission and the department of revenue administration, shall have  
6 the authority to adopt rules, pursuant to RSA 541-A, necessary for implementation of this  
7 subdivision.

8           2 Appropriations. The sum of \$1 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026 and the sum of \$1 for  
9 the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027, are hereby appropriated to the department of business and  
10 economic affairs for the purpose of advertising and disseminating information to New Hampshire  
11 college students and graduates regarding the New Hampshire college graduate retention and  
12 incentive partnership (NH GRIP) established in RSA 12-O:47 through 50-b. The governor is  
13 authorized to draw a warrant for said sums out of any money in the treasury not otherwise  
14 appropriated.

15           3 Effective Date. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.

**HB 1701-FN- FISCAL NOTE  
AS INTRODUCED**

AN ACT reestablishing the New Hampshire college graduate retention incentive partnership program and making an appropriation therefor.

**FISCAL IMPACT: This bill does not provide funding, nor does it authorize new positions.**

<b>Estimated State Impact</b>				
	<b>FY 2026</b>	<b>FY 2027</b>	<b>FY 2028</b>	<b>FY 2029</b>
<b>Revenue</b>	\$0	Indeterminable Increase \$0 to \$10,000	Indeterminable Increase \$0 to \$10,000	Indeterminable Increase \$0 to \$10,000
<i>Revenue Fund(s)</i>	General Fund			
<b>Expenditures*</b>	\$0	Indeterminable Increase \$100,000 to \$500,000	Indeterminable Increase \$100,000 to \$500,000	Indeterminable Increase \$100,000 to \$500,000
<i>Funding Source(s)</i>	General Fund			
<b>Appropriations*</b>	\$0	\$1	\$1	\$0
<i>Funding Source(s)</i>	General Fund			

\*Expenditure = Cost of bill

\*Appropriation = Authorized funding to cover cost of bill

**METHODOLOGY:**

This bill reestablishes and makes modifications to the New Hampshire College Graduate Retention Incentive Partnership (NH GRIP). The program provides an annual incentive of not less than \$1,000 per year for up to four years to eligible graduates employed by participating employers. These incentive payments are made by participating employers, not the State, but the Department of Business and Economic Affairs is responsible for administering and overseeing program activities. The bill includes appropriations of \$1 for FY 2026 and \$1 for FY 2027 to the Department of Business and Economic Affairs for advertising and outreach related to NH GRIP. Under RSA 12-O:50, for the biennium beginning July 1, 2027 and each biennium thereafter, the Department is required to include any additional appropriation needs for administering NH GRIP in its biennial budget submission.

The Department states this bill reestablishes the NH GRIP program and requires the Department to implement and administer all program functions, including developing procedures, verifying eligibility, maintaining agreements, advertising, coordinating with partner organizations, and producing annual reports. The Department indicates these responsibilities

cannot be absorbed within its current operating budget and that the program would require at least one full-time position or a third-party contractor to create program infrastructure, design application systems, establish documentation requirements, and perform ongoing oversight and reporting. The Department estimates annual costs between \$100,000 and \$500,000 depending on staffing or contracting decisions. However, this bill does not provide full funding for FY 2027 or authorization of positions.

The Department states this bill leaves several areas unclear, which adds administrative complexity and affects fiscal impact. The bill does not explain how the Department should verify that a participating employer has entered into a valid employer agreement with an eligible graduate, nor does it specify what documentation the Department must use to determine employee eligibility or enforce participation conditions. The Department notes that employer agreements may constitute contracts between a state agency and private entities, which may require approval by Governor and Council, but the bill does not clarify this process. The Department further states that the bill assigns rulemaking authority but does not provide sufficient statutory definition for several required program elements, including verification procedures, compliance standards, and data requirements. Because these key areas are undefined, the Department anticipates additional administrative work to resolve procedural questions and ensure that the program can be implemented consistently.

The Department also indicates that public-private partnerships referenced in the bill may generate small amounts of revenue or in-kind support, although the extent of such contributions is unknown. Based on prior experience, the Department expects such contributions would likely be less than \$10,000 per year and would not materially offset program administration costs.

Lastly, the appropriations in Section 2 do not function as drafted because the bill becomes effective July 1, 2026, but the bill appropriates funds for FY 2026 prior to the effective date. Additionally, the bill requires rulemaking in consultation with the Department of Revenue Administration and the Lottery Commission, but the bill does not clearly define their role, which may require clarification.

**AGENCIES CONTACTED:**

Department of Business and Economic Affairs