

## State Vertical Aviation Workforce Development Act

SHORT TITLE, – This Act may be cited as the “”.

DEFINITIONS. – As used in this Act, the term:

**"Aviation"** means the operation, maintenance, or manufacturing of aircraft or other aerospace equipment, aerospace initiatives and efforts, and products related to aerospace and aviation.

**"Aviation industry partner"** means any organization, business, educational institution, or government entity that contributes to the aviation and aerospace sectors, including employers, manufacturers, operators, training providers, and industry associations focused on workforce development.

**"Aviation program"** means an in-state educational or training program that supports aeronautical education and awareness or issues eligible aviation credentials. This includes public high school vocational programs, such as the Rotor Pathway Program.

**"Vertical Aviation"** refers to aircraft capable of vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL), which includes helicopters, tiltrotor aircraft, and other advanced air mobility (AAM) vehicles designed to take off, hover, and land vertically.

**"Powered-lift"** aircraft is capable of vertical takeoff, vertical landing, and low speed flight. After vertical takeoff, aircraft in the powered-lift category can then fly like an airplane during cruise flight. Powered lift operations include air taxis, cargo delivery and a variety of operations within urban and rural areas.

**Section 1: Purpose** The intent of this Act is to incentivize collaboration between vertical aviation and aerospace educational programs, industry partners, and state agencies to grow and strengthen the workforce pipeline of vertical aviation professionals in this state. The legislature seeks to:

- Expand the capacity of the state's general and vertical aviation sectors to meet workforce demands.
- Raise public awareness and interest in vertical aviation careers.
- Address financial and logistical barriers to entering vertical aviation fields.
- Improve career pathways between high school programs, technical schools, and vertical aviation industry employment.
- Encourage aviation industry partners to invest in the career growth and development of their workforce.

### Section 2: Vertical Aviation Workforce Development Committee

1. The Vertical Aviation Workforce Development Committee (hereinafter "the Committee") is hereby established within the state Department of Transportation (DOT).

2. **Committee Composition:** The Committee shall include:

- The Commissioner of the Department of Aviation.
- Members appointed by the state DOT, including:
  - A Vertical aviation manufacturing expert.
  - A vertical aviation engineer.
  - A representative with expertise in airport management or FAA compliance.

- A member from the state's Aviation Association.
- A licensed Helicopter & power-lift Airline Transport Pilot (ATP-H)
- A licensed airframe and powerplant mechanic.
- An employee of a public aviation program.
- A representative from the vertical aviation industry.

### **Section 3: Vertical Aviation Workforce Fund**

1. There is hereby established the "Vertical Aviation Workforce Fund," to be administered by the state for the advancement to vertical aviation education.
2. The Fund **may/will/shall** be used for the following purposes:
  - Public and private partnerships to provide vertical aviation training scholarships aimed at reducing financial barriers for state residents seeking vertical aviation credentials.
  - Public and private partnerships to provide grants for vertical aviation and aerospace equipment to ensure state aviation programs can meet workforce capacity needs.
  - Covering the state's administrative, research, consulting, fundraising, and planning costs for implementing the Act.
3. The state encourages private sector financial and philanthropic support of the Fund.

**Section 4: Workforce Development Initiatives** To address workforce needs and prepare the next generation of vertical aviation professionals, the state shall:

- **Foster partnerships** among pre-university schools, technical programs, community colleges, and aviation employers to establish clear career pathways for roles in vertical aviation, such as pilots, engineers, maintenance technicians, and aerospace workers.
- **Involve the aviation industry** in curriculum development to align training programs with industry needs, including opportunities for dual enrollment programs.
- **Expand scholarship programs** for state residents pursuing vertical aviation-related degrees and certifications, with a focus on increasing diversity in the aviation workforce.
- **Support apprenticeship and internship programs** with aviation companies to provide students and workers with hands-on experience.

**Section 5: Reporting and Accountability** The Committee shall:

- Submit an annual report to the legislature detailing progress on aviation workforce development, scholarship distribution, equipment grant allocations, and overall industry participation.
- Make recommendations on future workforce needs, including potential legislative or regulatory changes to improve the workforce pipeline.

**Section 6: Effective Date** This Act shall take effect immediately upon passage.