



Fiscal Note

Legislative Council Staff

Nonpartisan Services for Colorado’s Legislature

SB 25-120: NUCLEAR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & ED PROGRAM

Prime Sponsors:

Sen. Liston; Marchman
Rep. Soper

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Fiscal note status: The fiscal note reflects the introduced bill.

Summary Information

Overview. The bill creates a grant program in the Department of Higher Education to distribute funds to institutions of higher education to expand programs related to nuclear energy.

Types of impacts. The bill is projected to affect the following areas through FY 2032-33:

- State Expenditures
- State Revenue

Appropriations. Conditional on the receipt of sufficient gifts, grants and donations, the bill requires an appropriation of \$500,000 to the Department of Higher Education in FY 2025-26.

**Table 1
State Fiscal Impacts**

| Type of Impact | Budget Year FY 2025-26 | Out Year FY 2026-27 |
|---|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| State Revenue (Cash Funds – Gifts, Grants & Donations) | \$500,000 | \$500,000 |
| State Expenditures (Cash Funds – Gifts, Grants & Donations) | \$500,000 | \$500,000 |
| Transferred Funds | \$0 | \$0 |
| Change in TABOR Refunds | \$0 | \$0 |
| Change in State FTE | 1.0 FTE | 1.0 FTE |

Summary of Legislation

The bill creates the Colorado Nuclear Workforce Development and Education Program in the Department of Higher Education (CDHE). This program provides grants to institutions of higher education (IHEs) to develop or expand nuclear engineering degree programs.

The bill creates a seven-member council in the CDHE to make recommendations to the CDHE on grant applications and appropriate award amounts. The council consists of energy experts and department representatives appointed by the Governor and legislative leadership. Members of the council are not compensated but may be reimbursed for expenses. The council must meet once in 2026 and quarterly in subsequent years.

The bill creates the Nuclear Workforce Development and Education Cash Fund, which may receive gifts, grants and donations. The CDHE may only begin awarding grants to IHEs once the cash fund balance reaches at least \$500,000.

Assumptions

The bill specifies that CDHE must only begin awarding grants once \$500,000 in gifts, grants, and donations has been received and that no General Fund appropriations may be made for the program. The fiscal note assumes that the council will not meet and no administrative expenditures will be incurred until sufficient gifts, grants, and donations are received. If sufficient funding is not received, the fiscal note assumes that the program will not be implemented.

State Revenue

The bill may increase state revenue from gifts, grants, and donations to the Nuclear Workforce Development and Education Cash Fund. At least \$500,000 must be received for the program to be implemented. For informational purposes, the fiscal note indicates \$500,000 per year starting in FY 2025-26, but actual revenue may vary. At the time of writing, no sources of funding have been identified. The grant program will not be implemented until the balance in the cash fund balance is at least that amount is received. Gifts, grants and donations are not subject to the state's TABOR revenue limit.

State Expenditures

Conditional upon the receipt of sufficient gifts, grants, and donations, the bill increases state expenditures in the Department of Higher Education paid from the Nuclear Workforce Development and Education Cash Fund. If funding is received, the program will have costs of at least \$500,000 in one fiscal year. For informational purposes, the fiscal note shows program costs if \$500,000 in gifts, grants, or donations is received each year starting in FY 2025-26, as listed in Table 2 and discussed below. The bill also minimally affects workload the Office of the Governor.

Table 2
State Expenditures
Department of Higher Education

| Cost Component | Budget Year FY 2025-26 | Out Year FY 2026-27 |
|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Personal Services | \$101,229 | \$101,229 |
| Operating Expenses | \$1,280 | \$1,280 |
| Capital Outlay Costs | \$6,670 | \$0 |
| Meeting Expenses | \$1,575 | \$2,100 |
| Grants to Institutions of Higher Education | \$367,408 | \$373,553 |
| Centrally Appropriated Costs | \$21,838 | \$21,838 |
| Total Costs | \$500,000 | \$500,000 |
| Total FTE | 1.0 FTE | 1.0 FTE |

Department of Higher Education

Staff

CDHE requires 1.0 FTE Project Manager to implement this bill. This Project Manager will coordinate policy, establish guidelines and provide technical assistance to the council and to institutions. This project manager will also disburse funds, review grant applications and write required reports. Costs include standard operating and capital outlay costs.

Meeting Expenses

If funding is received, the council is assumed to meet 3 times in FY 2025-26 and quarterly thereafter. The fiscal note assumes that each of the seven council members will incur an average of \$75 per meeting to reimburse travel expenses to attend meetings and conduct stake holding with institutions of higher education. This results in \$2,604 in FY 2025-26 and \$3,472 in FY 2026-27 through FY 2032-33.

Grants to Institutions

Assuming \$500,000 in revenue per year, about \$367,000 in FY 2025-26 and about \$374,000 in subsequent years is expected to be available for grants to institutions of higher education, after administrative expenses. The actual amount awarded will depend on available funding.

Governor's Office

Workload will minimally increase for the Governor's Office of Boards and Commissions to make the required appointment under the bill. This work can be accomplished within existing appropriations.

Institutions of Higher Education

Institutions that apply for grants will have an increase in workload and expenditures to develop or expand nuclear programs.

Centrally Appropriated Costs

Pursuant to a Joint Budget Committee policy, certain costs associated with this bill are addressed through the annual budget process and centrally appropriated in the Long Bill or supplemental appropriations bills, rather than in this bill. These costs, which may include employee insurance, supplemental employee retirement payments, leased space, and indirect cost assessments, are shown in the expenditure table(s) above.

Effective Date

The bill takes effect 90 days following adjournment of the General Assembly sine die, assuming no referendum petition is filed.

State Appropriations

Conditional on the receipt of sufficient gifts, grants and donations, for FY 2025-26, the bill requires an appropriation of \$500,000 from the Nuclear Workforce Development and Education Cash Fund to the Department of Higher Education, and 1.0 FTE.

Departmental Difference

The Department of Higher Education estimates that the bill requires an additional \$73,226 and 1.0 FTE to administer the grant program. This estimate includes 1.0 FTE Accountant to manage the cash fund and distribute grants to institutions of higher education.

The fiscal note differs from this estimate by assuming that the accounting functions can be accomplished by existing CDHE staff or by the Project Manager included in the State Expenditures section.

State and Local Government Contacts

Governor's Office

Higher Education

Treasury