

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8687

To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to award grants to establish, or expand upon, master's degree programs in orthotics and prosthetics, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AUGUST 9, 2022

Mr. CARTWRIGHT (for himself, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. NORTON, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CARSON, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. BILIRAKIS, and Mr. GALLEG0) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to award grants to establish, or expand upon, master's degree programs in orthotics and prosthetics, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Wounded Warrior
5 Workforce Enhancement Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. ORTHOTICS AND PROSTHETICS EDUCATION IM-** 7 **PROVEMENT.**

8 (a) GRANTS REQUIRED.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans
2 Affairs shall award grants to eligible institutions to
3 enable the eligible institutions—

4 (A) to establish a master’s degree program
5 in orthotics and prosthetics; or

6 (B) to expand upon an existing master’s
7 degree program in orthotics and prosthetics, in-
8 cluding by admitting more students, further
9 training faculty, expanding facilities, or increas-
10 ing cooperation with the Department of Vet-
11 erans Affairs and the Department of Defense.

12 (2) PRIORITY.—The Secretary shall give pri-
13 ority in the award of grants under this section to eli-
14 gible institutions that have entered into a partner-
15 ship with a medical center or clinic administered by
16 the Department of Veterans Affairs or a facility ad-
17 ministered by the Department of Defense, including
18 by providing clinical rotations at such medical cen-
19 ter, clinic, or facility.

20 (3) GRANT AMOUNTS.—Grants awarded under
21 this section shall be in amounts of not less than
22 \$1,000,000 and not more than \$1,500,000.

23 (b) REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS.—

24 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days
25 after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not

1 less frequently than annually thereafter for two
2 years, the Secretary shall issue a request for pro-
3 posals from eligible institutions for grants under this
4 section.

5 (2) PROPOSALS.—An eligible institution that
6 seeks the award of a grant under this section shall
7 submit an application therefor to the Secretary at
8 such time, in such manner, and accompanied by
9 such information as the Secretary may require, in-
10 cluding—

11 (A) demonstration of a willingness and
12 ability to participate in a partnership described
13 in subsection (a)(2); and

14 (B) a commitment, and demonstration of
15 an ability, to maintain an accredited orthotics
16 and prosthetics education program after the
17 end of the grant period.

18 (c) GRANT USES.—

19 (1) IN GENERAL.—An eligible institution
20 awarded a grant under this section shall use grant
21 amounts to carry out any of the following:

22 (A) Building new or expanding existing
23 orthotics and prosthetics master's degree pro-
24 grams.

1 (B) Training doctoral candidates in fields
2 related to orthotics and prosthetics to prepare
3 them to instruct in orthotics and prosthetics
4 programs.

5 (C) Training faculty in orthotics and pros-
6 thetics education or related fields for the pur-
7 pose of instruction in orthotics and prosthetics
8 programs.

9 (D) Salary supplementation for faculty in
10 orthotics and prosthetics education.

11 (E) Financial aid that allows eligible insti-
12 tutions to admit additional students to study
13 orthotics and prosthetics, with a priority given
14 to covered veterans.

15 (F) Funding faculty research projects or
16 faculty time to undertake research in the areas
17 of orthotics and prosthetics for the purpose of
18 furthering their teaching abilities.

19 (G) Renovation of buildings or minor con-
20 struction to house orthotics and prosthetics
21 education programs.

22 (H) Purchasing equipment for orthotics
23 and prosthetics education.

24 (2) LIMITATION ON CONSTRUCTION.—An eligi-
25 ble institution awarded a grant under this section

1 may use not more than 50 percent of the grant
2 amount to carry out paragraph (1)(G).

3 (3) ADMISSIONS PREFERENCE.—An eligible in-
4 stitution awarded a grant under this section shall
5 give preference in admission to the orthotics and
6 prosthetics master’s degree programs to veterans, to
7 the extent practicable.

8 (4) FINANCIAL AID PREFERENCE.—An eligible
9 institution awarded a grant under this section shall
10 give preference in awarding financial awarded to
11 students in the orthotics and prosthetics master’s
12 degree programs to covered veterans.

13 (5) PERIOD OF USE OF FUNDS.—An eligible in-
14 stitution awarded a grant under this section may use
15 the grant amount for a period of three years after
16 the award of the grant.

17 (d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

18 (1) The term “eligible institution” means an
19 educational institution that offers an orthotics and
20 prosthetics education program that—

21 (A) is accredited by the National Commis-
22 sion on Orthotic and Prosthetic Education in
23 cooperation with the Commission on Accredita-
24 tion of Allied Health Education Programs; or

1 (B) demonstrates an ability to meet the ac-
2 creditation requirements for orthotic and pros-
3 thetic education from the National Commission
4 on Orthotic and Prosthetic Education in co-
5 operation with the Commission on Accreditation
6 of Allied Health Education Programs if the in-
7 stitution receives a grant under this section.

8 (2) The term “veteran” has the meaning given
9 that term in section 101 of title 38, United States
10 Code.

11 (3) The term “covered veteran” means a vet-
12 eran with lived experience with limb loss or mobility
13 impairment.

14 (e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be
16 appropriated for fiscal year 2023 for the Depart-
17 ment of Veterans Affairs, \$15,000,000 to carry out
18 this section. The amount so authorized to be appro-
19 priated shall remain available for obligation until
20 September 30, 2025.

21 (2) UNOBLIGATED AMOUNTS TO BE RETURNED
22 TO THE TREASURY.—Any amounts authorized to be
23 appropriated by paragraph (1) that are not obligated
24 by the Secretary as of September 30, 2025, shall be
25 returned to the Treasury of the United States.

1 **SEC. 3. CENTER OF EXCELLENCE IN ORTHOTIC AND PROS-**
2 **THETIC EDUCATION.**

3 (a) GRANT FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF CENTER.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans
5 Affairs shall award a grant to an eligible institution
6 to enable the eligible institution—

7 (A) to establish the Center of Excellence in
8 Orthotic and Prosthetic Education (in this sec-
9 tion referred to as the “Center”); and

10 (B) to enable the eligible institution to im-
11 prove orthotic and prosthetic outcomes for vet-
12 erans, members of the Armed Forces, and civil-
13 ians by conducting evidence-based research
14 on—

15 (i) the knowledge, skills, and training
16 most needed by clinical professionals in the
17 field of orthotics and prosthetics; and

18 (ii) how to most effectively prepare
19 clinical professionals to provide effective,
20 high-quality orthotic and prosthetic care.

21 (2) PRIORITY.—The Secretary shall give pri-
22 ority in the award of a grant under this section to
23 an eligible institution that has in force, or dem-
24 onstrates the willingness and ability to enter into, a
25 memoranda of understanding with the Department
26 of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Defense, or

1 other appropriate Federal agency, or a cooperative
2 agreement with an appropriate private sector entity,
3 which memorandum of understanding or cooperative
4 agreement provides for either, or both, of the fol-
5 lowing:

6 (A) The provision of resources, whether in
7 cash or in-kind, to the Center.

8 (B) Assistance to the Center in conducting
9 research and disseminating the results of such
10 research.

11 (3) GRANT AMOUNT.—The grant awarded
12 under this section shall be in the amount of
13 \$5,000,000.

14 (b) REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after
16 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary
17 shall issue a request for proposals from eligible insti-
18 tutions for the grant under this section.

19 (2) PROPOSALS.—An eligible institution that
20 seeks the award of the grant under this section shall
21 submit an application therefor to the Secretary at
22 such time, in such manner, and accompanied by
23 such information as the Secretary may require.

24 (c) GRANT USES.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—The eligible institution
2 awarded the grant under this section shall use the
3 grant amount as follows:

4 (A) To develop an agenda for orthotics and
5 prosthetics education research.

6 (B) To fund research in the area of
7 orthotics and prosthetics education.

8 (C) To publish or otherwise disseminate
9 research findings relating to orthotics and pros-
10 thetics education.

11 (2) PERIOD OF USE OF FUNDS.—The eligible
12 institution awarded the grant under this section may
13 use the grant amount for a period of five years after
14 the award of the grant.

15 (d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

16 (1) The term “eligible institution” means an
17 educational institution that—

18 (A) has a robust research program;

19 (B) offers an orthotics and prosthetics
20 education program that is accredited by the Na-
21 tional Commission on Orthotic and Prosthetic
22 Education in cooperation with the Commission
23 on Accreditation of Allied Health Education
24 Programs;

1 (C) is well recognized in the field of
2 orthotics and prosthetics education; and

3 (D) has an established association with—

4 (i) a medical center or clinic of the
5 Department of Veterans Affairs; and

6 (ii) a local rehabilitation hospital.

7 (2) The term “veteran” has the meaning given
8 that term in section 101 of title 38, United States
9 Code.

10 (e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
11 authorized to be appropriated for fiscal year 2023 for the
12 Department of Veterans Affairs, \$5,000,000 to carry out
13 this section.

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