

1 AN ACT relating to robotics.

2 *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:*

3 ➔SECTION 1. A NEW SECTION OF KRS CHAPTER 158 IS CREATED TO
4 READ AS FOLLOWS:

5 (1) As used in this section:

6 (a) "Advanced manufacturing" means the development of a robot beyond its
7 prefabricated components through student-driven design, fabrication,
8 fundamental additive and subtractive manufacturing, or the integration of
9 custom manufactured parts for the purpose of a robotics competition;

10 (b) "Committee" means the Robotics Funding Selection Committee established
11 in subsection (3) of this section;

12 (c) "Competition sponsor" means a qualified robotics organization that is the
13 primary facilitator of a robotics competition, but does not include a
14 qualified robotics organization that solely supplies the facility where a
15 robotics competition is to be hosted;

16 (d) "Eligible robotics team" means a Kentucky-based robotics team that
17 includes:

18 1. Team members who are all:

19 a. Students in grades seven (7) to twelve (12); and

20 b. Either:

21 i. Enrolled in an eligible school; or

22 ii. Are members of a qualified robotics organization; and

23 2. Two (2) or more team coaches;

24 (e) "Eligible school" means a:

25 1. Kentucky public school, including a public charter school; or

26 2. Nonpublic school certified by the Kentucky Board of Education in
27 accordance with KRS 156.160(2);

1 (f) "Fund" means the robotics competition fund established in subsection (2)
2 of this section;

3 (g) "Qualified robotics organization" means a nonprofit organization that has:

4 1. Received tax-exempt status from the United States Internal Revenue
5 Service;

6 2. Registered with the Kentucky Secretary of State;

7 3. An organizational purpose of encouraging young people to develop an
8 interest in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; and

9 4. A history of involvement with robotics competitions as an eligible
10 robotics team or a competition sponsor;

11 (h) "Robotics competition" means a competition or event in Kentucky that:

12 1. Requires participating robotics teams to use or significantly integrate
13 advanced manufacturing;

14 2. Provides competition opportunities between robotics teams; and

15 3. Is facilitated by a competition sponsor;

16 (i) "Robotics team" means a Kentucky-based student team organized for
17 project-based advanced manufacturing; and

18 (j) "Team coach" means an adult who is:

19 1. a. An employee of an eligible school; or

20 b. A mentor or coach for a qualified robotics organization;

21 2. Designated by an eligible school or qualified robotics organization to
22 manage a robotics team; and

23 3. Verified by the team coach's eligible school or qualified robotics
24 organization to have, within the past three (3) years, submitted to a
25 national and state criminal background check by the Department of
26 Kentucky State Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, have a
27 clear CA/N check as defined in KRS 160.380, and does not meet any

1 disqualifying factor under KRS 160.380(5).

2 (2) (a) There is hereby established in the State Treasury a trust and agency
3 account to be known as the robotics competition fund, which shall consist of
4 moneys received from state appropriations, gifts, grants, federal funds, and
5 any other funds both public and private.

6 (b) The State Treasurer shall invest the fund as all other state funds are
7 invested and income from investment of the fund shall be credited to the
8 fund.

9 (c) The fund shall be attached to the Kentucky Department of Education for
10 administrative and reporting purposes.

11 (d) As funds are available, amounts deposited in the fund shall be used as
12 follows:

13 1. Awarding grants to eligible robotics teams to develop and implement
14 competitive robotics designs for robotics competitions approved by the
15 committee to provide the following:

16 a. Payment of a stipend for one (1) or more team coach;

17 b. Fees, kits, and supplies required to establish or maintain an
18 eligible robotics team and participate in a robotics competition;

19 c. Expenses associated with attendance at a robotics competition;
20 and

21 d. Other expenses deemed necessary by the committee to be
22 necessary for use by an eligible robotics team;

23 2. Awarding grants to competition sponsors for robotics competitions
24 approved by the committee to provide the following:

25 a. Infrastructure necessary for a robotics competition;

26 b. Operational costs of a robotics competition; and

27 c. Other expenses directly associated with the administration of a

1 robotics competition being facilitated by the competition sponsor;
2 and

3 3. Paying the administrative costs of the department in carrying out this
4 section, not to exceed five percent (5%) of available funds or seventy-
5 five thousand dollars (\$75,000), whichever is less, each fiscal year.

6 (e) Notwithstanding KRS 45.229, fund amounts not expended at the close of a
7 fiscal year shall not lapse but shall be carried forward into the next fiscal
8 year.

9 (3) (a) The Robotics Funding Selection Committee is hereby established for the
10 purpose of awarding and establishing requirements for grants from the
11 fund to eligible robotics teams and competition sponsors to expand
12 opportunities, increase interest, and improve skills in science, technology,
13 engineering, and mathematics through robotics competitions that:

14 1. Provide hands-on learning experiences;
15 2. Establish community partnerships to increase awareness of local
16 workforce and postsecondary opportunities;
17 3. Highlight career opportunities through adult mentors; and
18 4. Prioritize a connection to advanced manufacturing skills for students
19 in grades nine (9) to twelve (12).

20 (b) The committee shall be composed of the following five (5) voting members:
21 1. One (1) representative of the Council on Postsecondary Education
22 appointed by the president of the council;
23 2. One (1) representative of the Kentucky Community and Technical
24 College System appointed by the president of the system;
25 3. One (1) representative of the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board
26 appointed by the chair of the board;
27 4. One (1) representative of the Office of Career and Technical

1 Education appointed by the commissioner of education; and

2 5. One (1) representative of the Kentucky Science and Technology
3 Corporation appointed by the president of the Kentucky Science and
4 Technology Corporation.

5 (c) 1. The chair and vice chair of the committee shall be elected annually by
6 the members of the committee.

7 2. Except for initial appointments, appointments shall be for three (3)
8 year terms or until successors are duly appointed. Vacancies in the
9 composition of the committee shall be filled in the same manner as
10 original appointments. Appointments to fill vacancies occurring
11 before the expiration of a term shall be for the remainder of the
12 unexpired term.

13 (d) By April 1, 2027, the department shall, based on recommendations from the
14 committee, promulgate administrative regulations in accordance with KRS
15 Chapter 13A to establish procedures to receive and review grant
16 applications and requirements to award grants to eligible robotics teams
17 and competition sponsors for allowable expenses. The administrative
18 regulations shall include:

19 1. An approval process for robotics competitions. A list of approved
20 robotics competitions shall be posted on the department's website at
21 least thirty (30) days prior to the opening of the application period;

22 2. A grant application for eligible robotics teams and competition
23 sponsors;

24 3. Application selection criteria based on the required application
25 elements for an eligible robotics team under subsection (4) of this
26 section and for competition sponsors under subsection (5) of this
27 section;

- 1 4. An established maximum grant award allotment for an eligible
2 robotics team;
- 3 5. An established maximum grant award allotment for a competition
4 sponsor, which shall not exceed two hundred thousand dollars
5 (\$200,000) during a five (5) year period;
- 6 6. An annual application timeline which shall include a period of ninety
7 (90) days during which the committee shall accept grant applications;
- 8 7. A safety policy that ensures the safety of all attendees of a robotics
9 competition to include:
 - 10 a. A prohibition against robot designs or robotics competition
11 activities that present an unreasonable risk of injury, except
12 when comprehensive safety controls and containment measures
13 are established for those activities;
 - 14 b. Safeguards to prevent bodily injury for any person who attends a
15 robotics competition;
 - 16 c. A requirement for competition sponsors to provide a facility-
17 specific emergency action plan for a robotics competition; and
 - 18 d. A requirement for competition sponsors to carry adequate
19 liability insurance against negligence in such amount as the
20 committee determines is adequate. The insurance shall be issued
21 by an insurance company authorized to transact business in this
22 state and shall bind the company to pay any final judgment, not
23 to exceed the limits of the policy, rendered against the insured
24 for loss or damage to property, personal injury, or death
25 resulting from a robotics competition; and
- 26 8. Conditions for a grant award agreement between the committee and
27 an eligible robotics team or competition sponsor and consequences for

1 failure to meet the conditions of the agreement. An award shall not be
2 disbursed without having first an agreement signed by both parties
3 that complies with this paragraph.

4 (e) The committee shall award grants in a manner that prioritizes:

- 5 1. Maximizing the number of eligible robotics teams to receive funds,
6 with an emphasis on increasing the number of eligible robotics teams
7 that include high school students; and
8 2. Expanding the geographic distribution of eligible robotics teams.

9 (f) The committee shall be attached to the Kentucky Department of Education
10 for administrative and reporting purposes.

11 (4) The grant application for an eligible robotics team shall contain the following:

12 (a) Identification of eligible robotics team membership, team coaches, and the
13 grade level of eligible robotics team members;

14 (b) A statement of need;

15 (c) Eligible robotics team history, including previous participation in a robotics
16 competition, if any;

17 (d) A financial strategy and budget detailing the proposed use of the requested
18 funds;

19 (e) Registration for an approved robotics competition, including level and
20 complexity, and a commitment by the eligible robotics team to participate in
21 all robotics competitions for which it is registered or assigned, except in
22 instances when circumstances beyond the reasonable control of the eligible
23 robotics team prevent participation;

24 (f) Proof of at least a twenty-five percent (25%) match of the total grant
25 amount requested, which may consist of monetary or in-kind contributions;

26 (g) A commitment to creating an original, iteratively designed robot that
27 incorporates features of advanced manufacturing aligned with the

1 manufacturing industry's best practices;

2 (h) A letter of endorsement for the eligible robotics team from the eligible
3 school in which the students are enrolled in or the qualified robotics
4 organization in which the students are members; and

5 (i) An attestation to abide by the safety policy established in subsection (3)(d)7.
6 of this section.

7 (5) The grant application for a competition sponsor for purposes of facilitating a
8 robotics competition shall include:

9 (a) A statement of need for the robotics competition, including level and
10 complexity of competition;

11 (b) The competition sponsor's history of hosting robotics competitions, if any;

12 (c) Proof of the competition sponsor's prioritization of advanced
13 manufacturing;

14 (d) A financial strategy and budget for the robotics competition in which the
15 competition sponsor is requesting funds describing the proposed use of the
16 requested funds;

17 (e) Proof of at least a twenty-five percent (25%) match of the total grant
18 amount requested, which may consist of monetary or in-kind contributions;

19 (f) An accommodation plan for a robotics competition that complies with the
20 requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. sec.
21 12101 et seq., as amended; and

22 (g) An attestation to abide by the safety policy established in subsection (3)(d)7.
23 of this section.

24 (6) An eligible school or qualified robotics organization shall not restrict or withhold
25 a stipend designated for a team coach who is designated to receive funds in
26 accordance with the grant award agreement established in subsection (3)(d)8. of
27 this section.

1 (7) By August 1, 2027, and annually thereafter, the department shall report to the
2 Legislative Research Commission for referral to the appropriate interim joint
3 committees the income and expenditures of the fund for the immediately
4 preceding state fiscal year, including the number of:

5 (a) Eligible robotics teams awarded, including the grade levels of participating
6 students, from the fund;

7 (b) Competition sponsors awarded from the fund; and

8 (c) Robotics competitions facilitated with awards from the fund, including the
9 total number of students and robotics teams that attended each robotics
10 competition.

11 ➔Section 2. (1) Initial appointments of members to the Robotics Funding
12 Selection Committee under subsection (3)(b) of Section 1 of this Act shall be made and
13 submitted to the Department of Education by September 1, 2026, and shall be staggered
14 as follows:

15 (a) Members appointed under subsection (3)(b)1. and 2. shall serve three-year
16 terms;

17 (b) Members appointed under subsection (3)(b)3. and 4. shall serve two-year
18 terms; and

19 (c) The member appointed under subsection (3)(b)5. shall serve a one-year term.

20 Following initial appointments, all members shall serve three-year terms in
21 accordance with subsection (3)(c)2. of Section 1 of this Act.

22 (2) The committee shall hold its first meeting no later than October 15, 2026, at
23 which the committee shall elect from its members a chair and a vice chair.

24 ➔Section 3. This Act may be cited as the Advanced Manufacturing Through
25 Robotics Education Act.