

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

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:

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

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:*

*b. Operational costs of a robotics competition: and*

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

robotics competition being facilitated by the competition sponsor;  
and

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

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

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

## **1. Provide hands-on learning experiences;**

**2. Establish community partnerships to increase awareness of local workforce and postsecondary opportunities;**

### 3. *Highlight career opportunities through adult mentors; and*

**4. Prioritize a connection to advanced manufacturing skills for students in grades nine (9) to twelve (12).**

20 (b) *The committee shall be composed of the following five (5) voting members:*

1. One (1) representative of the Council on Postsecondary Education appointed by the president of the council:

2. One (1) representative of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System appointed by the president of the system:

3. One (1) representative of the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board appointed by the chair of the board;

4 One (1) representative of the Office of Career and Technical

**Education appointed by the commissioner of education; and**

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

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

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

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

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

## 2. A grant application for eligible robotics teams and competition sponsors:

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

### **manufacturing industry's best practices;**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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