A bill to be entitled
An act relating to the Architect Education Minority Assistance Program; creating s. 481.2095, F.S.; creating the program within the Department of Business and Professional Regulation; providing a purpose for the program; requiring the Architect Education Minority Assistance Advisory Council to assist the Board of Architecture and Interior Design with administering the program; providing funding requirements for scholarships provided under the program; requiring that funds be deposited into a specified account in the Professional Regulation Trust Fund; capping the amount of funds that the department may spend annually on the program; requiring that funds for scholarships be disbursed twice each year; authorizing the Chief Financial Officer to invest funds in the program account in a specified manner; requiring that all earned interest from such investments be credited to the program account; requiring the board to adopt rules; specifying that certain determinations made by the board are not agency actions for the purposes of the Administrative Procedure Act; prohibiting a person or his or her agent from knowingly filing documents with the board which contain false information or material
misstatements of fact; providing criminal penalties; creating the council within the department; providing requirements for council membership; specifying that the council membership of a member with certain absences is void; requiring council members to serve without compensation; providing an exception; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Section 481.2095, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

481.2095 The Architect Education Minority Assistance Program; Architect Education Minority Assistance Advisory Council.—
(1) The Architect Education Minority Assistance Program is created within the department for the purpose of providing scholarships to minority persons as defined in s. 288.703 who are residents of this state and who are students enrolled in their fifth year of an architectural education program accredited by the National Architecture Accrediting Board at an institution in this state. The Architect Education Minority Assistance Advisory Council created in subsection (6) shall assist the board in administering the program.
(2) All funds used to provide scholarships under the
program must be derived from a portion of existing license fees established under s. 481.207, not to exceed $10 per license, and must be deposited into the Professional Regulation Trust Fund in a separate account maintained for that purpose. The department may spend up to $200,000 per year from such account for the program but may not allocate overhead charges to the account. Funds for scholarships must be disbursed twice each year as recommended by the advisory council and approved by the board, based on eligibility criteria adopted by board rule and a comparative evaluation of all applicants. The Chief Financial Officer may invest funds in the program account, subject to the same limitations that apply to the investment of other state funds, and all interest earned thereon must be credited to the program account.

(3) The board shall adopt rules to administer the program, including rules relating to the following:

(a) Eligibility criteria for receipt of a scholarship, which, at a minimum, must include the following factors:

1. Financial need;
2. Status as a minority person as defined in s. 288.703;
and
3. Scholastic ability and performance.

(b) Scholarship application procedures.

(c) Scholarship amounts, the timeframe for payments or partial payments, and criteria governing how scholarship funds
(d) The total amount of scholarship funds which can be awarded each year.

(e) The minimum balance that must be maintained in the program account.

(4) Determinations made by the board regarding recipients of scholarship funds are not agency actions for purposes of chapter 120.

(5) A person or his or her agent may not knowingly file with the board any notice, statement, or other document that is false or that contains any material misstatement of fact. A person who violates this subsection commits a misdemeanor of the second degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083.

(6) The Architect Education Minority Assistance Advisory Council, an advisory council as defined in s. 20.03(7), is created within the department to assist the board in administering the program. Except as otherwise provided in this section, the advisory council shall operate in a manner consistent with s. 20.052. The council membership must be diverse and representative of minority persons as defined in s. 288.703.

(a) The council shall consist of five architects licensed under this chapter appointed by the board. Of the five council members, one must be a board member, who shall serve as chair of...
the council; two must be representatives of the American Institute of Architects, Florida Section; one must be a representative of the National Organization of Minority Architects; and one must be appointed as a member-at-large. At least one member of the council must be a woman.

(b) The board shall determine the terms for initial appointments, which must be staggered, and appointments thereafter.

(c) Any vacancy on the council must be filled in the same manner as the initial appointment. Any member appointed to fill a vacancy of an unexpired term shall be appointed for the remainder of that term.

(d) The council membership of any member who has three consecutive absences or absences constituting 50 percent or more of the council's meetings within any 12-month period is void and the member's position is deemed vacant.

(e) Council members shall serve without compensation, and any necessary and actual expenses incurred by a member while engaged in the business of the council must be borne by such member or by the organization or agency such member represents. However, a board member who serves as a member of the council must be compensated in accordance with ss. 112.061 and 455.207(4).

Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2022.