



324048

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate

.
.
.
.
.
.

House

Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Tourism, and
Economic Development (Montford) recommended the following:

Senate Amendment (with title amendment)

Delete everything after the enacting clause
and insert:

Section 1. Subsections (1), (3), and (4) of section
288.018, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

288.018 Regional Rural Development Grants Program.—

(1)(a) The department shall establish a matching grant
program to provide funding to regional ~~regionally based~~ economic
development organizations representing rural counties and



324048

communities to build for the purpose of building the professional capacity of such regional economic development ~~their~~ organizations. Building the professional capacity of regional economic development organizations includes hiring professional staff to develop, facilitate the delivery of, and directly provide needed economic development professional services, including technical assistance, education and leadership development, marketing and project recruitment, and other services that are important for rural economic development. ~~Such~~ Matching grants may also be used by a regional ~~an~~ economic development organization to provide technical assistance to local governments, local economic development organizations, and existing and prospective businesses within the rural counties and communities that it serves.

(b) A regional economic development organization may apply to the department for a matching grant each year. The department is authorized to approve an application for a grant up to, ~~on an annual basis, grants:~~

1. Fifty thousand dollars to a regional economic development organization;

2. One hundred fifty thousand dollars to an organization located to such regionally based economic development organizations. ~~The maximum amount an organization may receive in any year will be \$50,000, or \$150,000 in a rural area of opportunity designated pursuant to s. 288.0656; or~~

3. Two hundred fifty thousand dollars to any of the three regional economic development organizations that serve an entire region of a rural area of opportunity designated pursuant to s. 288.0656 and that are recognized by the department as serving



324048

such regions.

(c) Grant funds received by a regional economic development organization recommended by the Rural Economic Development Initiative and designated by the Governor, and must be matched each year by an equivalent amount of nonstate resources in an amount equal to 25 percent of the state contribution.

(3)(a) A contract or agreement that involves the expenditure of grant funds provided under this section must be placed on the contracting regional economic development organization's website at least 14 days before execution.

(b) A contract or agreement that involves the expenditure of grant funds provided under this section, including a contract or agreement entered into between another entity and a regional economic development organization, a unit of local government, or an economic development organization substantially underwritten by a unit of local government, must include:

1. The purpose of the contract or agreement.
2. Specific performance standards and responsibilities for each entity.
3. A detailed project or contract budget, if applicable.
4. The value of any services provided.
5. The projected travel and entertainment expenses for employees and board members, if applicable.

(c) A plain language version of a contract or agreement with a private entity, a municipality, or a vendor of services, supplies, or programs, including marketing, or for the purchase or lease or use of lands, facilities, or properties which involves the expenditure of grant funds provided under this section and which is estimated to exceed \$35,000 must be posted



324048

on the contracting regional economic development organization's website ~~The department may also contract for the development of an enterprise zone web portal or websites for each enterprise zone which will be used to market the program for job creation in disadvantaged urban and rural enterprise zones. Each enterprise zone web page should include downloadable links to state forms and information, as well as local message boards that help businesses and residents receive information concerning zone boundaries, job openings, zone programs, and neighborhood improvement activities.~~

(4) The department may expend up to \$1,000,000 ~~\$750,000~~ each fiscal year from funds appropriated to the Rural Community Development Revolving Loan Fund for the purposes outlined in this section. The department may contract with Enterprise Florida, Inc., for the administration of the purposes specified in this section. Funds released to Enterprise Florida, Inc., for this purpose shall be released quarterly and shall be calculated based on the applications in process.

Section 2. Subsection (5) of section 288.0655, Florida Statutes, is redesignated as subsection (6), paragraph (b) of subsection (2) and subsection (4) of that section are amended, and a new subsection (5) is added to that section, to read:

288.0655 Rural Infrastructure Fund.—

(2)(b) To facilitate access of rural communities and rural areas of opportunity as defined by the Rural Economic Development Initiative to infrastructure funding programs of the Federal Government, such as those offered by the United States Department of Agriculture and the United States Department of Commerce, and state programs, including those offered by Rural



324048

Economic Development Initiative agencies, and to facilitate local government or private infrastructure funding efforts, the department may award grants for up to 50 ~~30~~ percent of the total infrastructure project cost. ~~If an application for funding is for a catalyst site, as defined in s. 288.0656, the department may award grants for up to 40 percent of the total infrastructure project cost.~~ Eligible projects must be related to specific job-creation or job-retention opportunities. Eligible projects may also include improving any inadequate infrastructure that has resulted in regulatory action that prohibits economic or community growth or reducing the costs to community users of proposed infrastructure improvements that exceed such costs in comparable communities, which includes improving access to and the availability of broadband Internet service. Eligible uses of funds shall include improvements to public infrastructure for industrial or commercial sites, and upgrades to or development of public tourism infrastructure, and improvements to broadband Internet service and access in unserved or underserved rural communities. Improvements to broadband Internet service and access must be conducted through a partnership or partnerships with one or more dealers of communications services, as defined in s. 202.11(2), and the partnership must be established by a publicly noticed and competitively selected process. Authorized infrastructure may include the following public or public-private partnership facilities: storm water systems; telecommunications facilities; broadband facilities; roads or other remedies to transportation impediments; nature-based tourism facilities; or other physical requirements necessary to facilitate tourism, trade, and



324048

economic development activities in the community. Authorized infrastructure may also include publicly or privately owned self-powered nature-based tourism facilities, publicly owned telecommunications facilities, and broadband facilities, and additions to the distribution facilities of the existing natural gas utility as defined in s. 366.04(3)(c), the existing electric utility as defined in s. 366.02, or the existing water or wastewater utility as defined in s. 367.021(12), or any other existing water or wastewater facility, which owns a gas or electric distribution system or a water or wastewater system in this state where:

1. A contribution-in-aid of construction is required to serve public or public-private partnership facilities under the tariffs of any natural gas, electric, water, or wastewater utility as defined herein; and

2. Such utilities as defined herein are willing and able to provide such service.

(4) By September 1, 2019 ~~2012~~, the department shall, in consultation with the organizations listed in subsection (3), and other organizations, reevaluate existing guidelines and criteria governing submission of applications for funding, review and evaluation of such applications, and approval of funding under this section. The department shall consider factors including, but not limited to, the project's potential for enhanced job creation or increased capital investment, the demonstration and level of local public and private commitment, whether the project is located ~~in an enterprise zone~~, in a community development corporation service area, or in an urban high-crime area as designated under s. 212.097, the unemployment



324048

rate of the county in which the project would be located, and the poverty rate of the community.

(5) (a) A contract or agreement that involves the expenditure of grant funds provided under this section must be placed on the department's website at least 14 days before execution.

(b) A contract or agreement that includes the expenditure of grant funds provided under this section, including a contract or agreement entered into between an entity and a regional economic development organization, a unit of local government, or an economic development organization substantially underwritten by a unit of local government, must include:

1. The purpose of the contract or agreement.

2. Specific performance standards and responsibilities for each entity.

3. A detailed project or contract budget, if applicable.

4. The value of any services provided.

5. The projected travel and entertainment expenses for employees and board members, if applicable.

(c) A plain language version of a contract or agreement with a private entity, a municipality, or a vendor of services, supplies, or programs, including marketing, or for the purchase or lease or use of lands, facilities, or properties which involves the expenditure of grant funds provided under this section and which is estimated to exceed \$35,000 must be posted on the department's website.

Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2018.

===== T I T L E A M E N D M E N T =====



324048

And the title is amended as follows:

Delete everything before the enacting clause
and insert:

A bill to be entitled

An act relating to regional rural development grants;
amending s. 288.018, F.S.; providing that regional
rural development grants may be used to hire regional
economic development organization professional staff;
authorizing the use of matching grant funds to provide
technical assistance to certain entities; increasing
the annual maximum amount of grant funding that
specified economic development organizations may
receive; revising the amount of nonstate matching
funds required; increasing the amount the Department
of Economic Opportunity may expend each fiscal year
for the program; requiring that contracts or
agreements involving the expenditure of grant funds be
placed on a certain website for a specified time
period; requiring that certain information be included
in a contract or agreement involving the expenditure
of grant funds; requiring that a plain language
version of certain contracts or agreements be placed
on a certain website; deleting an obsolete provision
authorizing the Department of Economic Opportunity to
contract for the development of certain enterprise
zone web portals or websites; amending s. 288.0655,
F.S.; increasing the maximum percent of total
infrastructure project costs for which the department
may award a grant; repealing a provision for increased



324048

maximum percent of total infrastructure project costs that may be awarded for a catalyst site; providing that improving access to and availability of broadband Internet service may be included in a project that is eligible for rural infrastructure grant funds; providing that grants for improvements to broadband Internet service and access must be conducted through certain partnerships; extending the date by which the department is required to reevaluate certain guidelines and criteria; requiring that contracts or agreements involving the expenditure of grant funds be placed on a certain website for a specified time period; requiring that certain information be included in a contract or agreement involving the expenditure of grant funds; requiring that a plain language version of certain contracts or agreements be placed on a certain website; providing an effective date.