

By the Committee on Commerce and Economic Opportunities

310-1958-00

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to economic development;
3 providing legislative intent; providing for
4 creation and purpose of the Toolkit for
5 Economic Development; defining the term
6 "economically distressed"; requiring the
7 appointment of liaisons from agencies and
8 organizations; providing for requirements and
9 duties; creating coordinating partners to serve
10 as the program's executive committee; providing
11 for duties; providing for waivers of permit
12 processing fees and state-required matching
13 funds requirements; requiring an inventory of
14 programs that help economically distressed
15 communities; requiring the inventory be
16 categorized; creating the Start-Up Initiative
17 to promote the use of the inventory; providing
18 for identification of communities; providing
19 for solicitation of proposals; providing for
20 proposal content; providing for review process
21 and evaluation criteria; providing for funding
22 and budget amendments; providing for the use of
23 lifelines by coordinating partners; providing
24 an appropriation to the coordinating partners;
25 providing for use of funds and certification;
26 providing for monitoring and reporting;
27 providing for expiration; providing an
28 effective date.

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30 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
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1 Section 1. Toolkit for Economic Development.--
2 (1) LEGISLATIVE INTENT.--The Legislature finds that
3 the state has numerous economically distressed communities
4 with a high proportion of needy families who are current or
5 former recipients of public assistance or who are at risk of
6 becoming dependent upon public assistance. The Legislature
7 also finds that the existence of safe and strong communities
8 with prosperous economies is crucial to reduce dependence on
9 public assistance and to promote employment retention and
10 self-sufficiency. It is the intent of the Legislature to
11 reduce reliance on public assistance, to promote employment
12 retention, and to increase self-sufficiency by providing
13 easily accessed and useable tools that support local
14 initiatives that create economically prosperous communities
15 for needy families.
16 (2) CREATION; PURPOSE.--There is created a program to
17 be known as the "Toolkit for Economic Development," the
18 purpose of which is to enable economically distressed
19 communities to access easily, and use effectively, federal and
20 state tools to improve conditions in the communities and
21 thereby help needy families in the communities avoid public
22 assistance, retain employment, and become self-sufficient.
23 (3) DEFINITIONS.--For the purposes of this section, a
24 community is "economically distressed" if the community is
25 experiencing conditions affecting its economic viability and
26 hampering the self-sufficiency of its residents, including,
27 but not limited to, low per capita income, low property
28 values, high unemployment, high under-employment, low weekly
29 wages compared to the state average, low housing values
30 compared to the state average, high percentage of the
31 population receiving public assistance, high poverty levels

1 compared to the state average, high percentage of needy
2 families, and a lack of year-round stable employment
3 opportunities.

4 (4) LIAISONS.--

5 (a) By August 1, 2000, the head of each of the
6 following agencies or organizations shall designate a
7 high-level staff person from within the agency or organization
8 to serve as a liaison to this program:

9 1. Office of Tourism, Trade, and Economic Development;

10 2. Office of Urban Opportunity;

11 3. Department of Community Affairs;

12 4. Department of Law Enforcement;

13 5. Department of Juvenile Justice;

14 6. Department of Transportation;

15 7. Department of Environmental Protection;

16 8. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services;

17 9. Department of State;

18 10. Department of Health;

19 11. Department of Children and Family Services;

20 12. Department of Corrections;

21 13. Department of Labor and Employment Security;

22 14. Department of Education;

23 15. Department of Military Affairs;

24 16. Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission;

25 17. Florida Housing Finance Corporation;

26 18. Florida State Rural Development Council;

27 19. Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences;

28 20. Florida Tourism Industry Marketing Corporation;

29 21. Keep Florida Beautiful, Inc.;

30 22. Enterprise Florida, Inc.;

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1 23. Workforce Development Board of Enterprise Florida,
2 Inc.;

3 24. Executive Office of the Governor; and

4 25. Any other agencies or organizations as determined
5 by the Office of Tourism, Trade, and Economic Development.

6 (b) An alternate for each designee shall also be
7 chosen, and the names of the designees and alternates shall be
8 sent to the Office of Tourism, Trade, and Economic
9 Development, which shall convene the liaisons as necessary.

10 (c) Each liaison must have a comprehensive knowledge
11 of the functions, whether regulatory or service-based, of his
12 or her agency or organization. The liaison shall be the
13 primary contact for the agency or organization for the Toolkit
14 for Economic Development, assisting in expediting proposal
15 review, resolving problems, promoting flexible assistance, and
16 identifying opportunities for support within the agency or
17 organization.

18 (d) As deemed necessary by the Office of Tourism,
19 Trade, and Economic Development, liaisons shall review
20 proposals from economically distressed communities to
21 determine whether they would be properly referred or submitted
22 to their agencies or organizations. If such referral and
23 submittal is appropriate, the liaison shall then assist the
24 community as an ombudsman.

25 (e) The liaisons shall work at the request of the
26 Office of Tourism, Trade, and Economic Development to review
27 statutes and rules for their adverse effects on economically
28 distressed communities and to develop alternative proposals to
29 mitigate these effects.

30 (f) Liaisons shall review their agencies' or
31 organizations' evaluation and scoring procedures for grant,

1 loan, and aid programs to ensure that economically distressed
2 communities are not unfairly disadvantaged, hampered, or
3 handicapped in competing for awards because of community
4 economic hardship. If they are, new evaluation criteria and
5 scoring procedures shall be considered which recognize
6 disproportionate requirements that an application process
7 makes of a community that lacks the resources of other more
8 prosperous communities. The evaluation criteria should weight
9 contribution in proportion to the amount of resources
10 available at the local level.

11 (g) Annually, the Office of Tourism, Trade, and
12 Economic Development shall report to the Governor and the head
13 of each agency or organization on the work and accomplishments
14 of the liaisons, recommending commendation or compensation.

15 (5) COORDINATING PARTNERS.--The liaisons from the
16 Office of Tourism, Trade, and Economic Development, the Office
17 of Urban Opportunity, the Department of Community Affairs,
18 Enterprise Florida, Inc., and the Workforce Development Board
19 of Enterprise Florida, Inc., shall serve as the coordinating
20 partners of the Toolkit for Economic Development and act as an
21 executive committee for the liaisons. The coordinating
22 partners shall review any request from a Front Porch Community
23 and shall provide whatever assistance that this section can
24 afford to them.

25 (6) FEE WAIVERS AND MATCHING-FUNDS
26 OPTIONS.--Notwithstanding any other provision of law, an
27 agency or organization shall waive permit processing fees for
28 an economically distressed community and any state-required
29 matching funds requirements at the request of the coordinating
30 partners. In addition, in-kind matches shall be allowed and
31 applied as matching funds at the request of the coordinating

1 partners. Fee reductions or waivers must be requested on the
2 basis of fiscal hardship or need for a particular project or
3 activity. The coordinating partners must unanimously endorse
4 each request to an agency or organization. Any other funds
5 appropriated and available to the coordinating partners may be
6 used to meet matching funds requirements or fees for federal,
7 state, or foundation application requirements.

8 (7) INVENTORY.--The coordinating partners shall
9 develop, in consultation with the liaisons, an inventory of
10 recommended federal and state tax credits, incentives,
11 inducements, programs, opportunities, demonstrations or pilot
12 programs, grants, and other resources available through the
13 agencies and organizations which could assist economically
14 distressed communities. Each entry in the inventory must
15 include a summary; a contact person; a simple description of
16 the application process and a timetable; a profile of funding
17 awards and funds availability; and a complexity ranking. The
18 inventory shall be organized into seven categories, including:

19 (a) Leadership.--Entries that promote the skills and
20 capacities of local leaders, volunteers, organizations, and
21 employees that work on other categories of the inventory.
22 These entries shall include, for example, grants;
23 scholarships; Individual Training Accounts; Retention
24 Incentive Training Account programs; and other programs that
25 build the resident capacity to create a better community.
26 These entries shall include educational-based institutes that
27 can assist with research, consulting, technical assistance,
28 capacity building, training, and program assistance to
29 communities.

30 (b) Safety.--Entries that increase safety and reduce
31 crime. These entries shall include, for example, the training

1 and employment of public safety employees and volunteers;
2 establishing safer businesses and neighborhoods; training
3 residents in safety practices; organizing safety networks and
4 cooperatives; improving lighting; improving the safety of
5 homes, buildings, and streets; and providing for community
6 police and safety projects, including those designed to
7 protect youth in the community. Other entries may be included
8 that reinforce community and local law enforcement.

9 (c) Clean Up.--Entries that support clean up and
10 enhancement projects that quickly create visible improvements
11 in neighborhoods, including the demolition of drug havens and
12 abandoned buildings. These entries shall include, for example,
13 projects that plan, design, or implement clean up strategies;
14 main street redevelopment; and renovation projects. These
15 entries may also include planning and implementation for
16 larger neighborhood revitalization and economic development
17 projects.

18 (d) Business.--Entries that support small business
19 development, including, for example, attraction of national
20 franchises; micro-loans; guaranteed commercial loans;
21 technical assistance; self-employment; linked deposit; loan
22 loss reserves; business incubators; and other activities that
23 support the market economy.

24 (e) Schools.--Entries that upgrade schools through
25 repair or renovation, as well as training and employment
26 entries to assist with school transportation, services, and
27 security. These entries shall include, for example, programs
28 that enable school-based childcare; before, after, and summer
29 school programs; programs that broaden the use of school
30 facilities as a hub and haven within the community;
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1 scholarships; and grant programs that assist families and
2 individuals to complete and enhance their education.

3 (f) Partners.--Entries that provide tax credits,
4 incentives, and other inducements to businesses that
5 contribute to community projects, such as the community
6 contribution tax credit under sections 220.183 and 624.5105,
7 Florida Statutes. These entries shall include any programs
8 that help raise federal or foundation grant funds.

9 (g) Redevelopment.--Entries that support the planning,
10 preparation, construction, marketing, and financing of
11 residential, mixed-use, and commercial redevelopment, as well
12 as residential and business infrastructure projects. These
13 entries shall include the workforce development programs that
14 influence business decisions such as the Quick-Response
15 Training Program and Quick-Response Training Program for Work
16 and Gain Economic Self-sufficiency (WAGES) participants.

17 (8) START-UP INITIATIVE.--

18 (a) Subject to legislative appropriation and the
19 provisions of this act, the Start-Up Initiative is created to
20 promote the use of the inventory, to boost a community's
21 efforts, and to ensure that federal funds do not go unexpended
22 or unobligated, or are not returned to federal agencies.

23 (b) The coordinating partners, in consultation with
24 the liaisons, local economic development organizations, and
25 regional workforce development boards, shall identify 15
26 communities, seven of which must be from the state's seven
27 largest counties, three of which must be from rural counties,
28 and five of which must be from other counties in the state.
29 These communities must be compact, congruent, and contiguous
30 census tracts that have high concentrations of needy families
31 who are current, former, or likely recipients of public

1 assistance. To the maximum extent possible, these communities
2 should coincide with federal empowerment zones, enterprise
3 zones established under chapter 290 or chapter 370, Florida
4 Statutes, Neighborhood Improvement Districts established under
5 chapter 163, Florida Statutes, community redevelopment areas
6 established under chapter 163, Florida Statutes, and Urban
7 High Crime Areas or Rural Job Tax Credit Areas established
8 under chapter 212, Florida Statutes. The coordinating partners
9 must contract with an independent entity to certify that these
10 15 communities comply with the requirements of this section.

11 (c) The coordinating partners shall solicit proposals
12 from Front Porch Advisory Committees, community-based
13 organizations, local governments, and neighborhood
14 associations located in the communities identified in
15 paragraph (b) and Front Porch Communities. The coordinating
16 partners shall provide each applicant with the inventory and
17 recommendations on proposals that can be funded.

18 (d) Communities may prepare a proposal to access and
19 use various entries from the inventory which will launch or
20 boost their economic development efforts. Proposals must be no
21 more than 20 pages long and include:

22 1. A brief description of how the community would use
23 entries from the inventory in the community's economic
24 development strategy;

25 2. Specific evidence of community support for the
26 proposal from community-based organizations, local government,
27 regional workforce development boards, and local economic
28 development organizations;

29 3. Identification and commitment of local resources
30 for the proposal from community-based organizations, local
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1 government, regional workforce development boards, and local
2 economic development organizations;

3 4. Identification of the specific entity or person
4 responsible for coordinating the community's proposal; and

5 5. Identification of a local fiscal entity for
6 contracting, administration, and accountability.

7 (e) The coordinating partners shall appoint a liaison
8 to assist each community with the proposal and its
9 implementation, if awarded. These liaisons shall have the
10 assistance of the Executive Office of the Governor, the
11 agencies of state government, and their employees. If a state
12 employee is not able to assist a liaison because of state law
13 or regulation, the liaison shall notify the coordinating
14 partners and the Office of Program Policy Analysis and
15 Government Accountability concerning the impasse and develop a
16 strategy to resolve such impasse. Upon a written request of a
17 liaison, the Governor may, by executive order or emergency
18 rule, address a regulatory or procedural impasse, enabling
19 prompt implementation of a community's proposal, if awarded.

20 (f) The coordinating partners shall design an
21 impartial and competitive proposal-review process and
22 evaluation criteria. Based on the evaluation criteria, up to
23 nine communities shall be designated to participate in the
24 Start-Up Initiative. Once a community is designated, the
25 coordinating partners and the community's liaison will work to
26 finalize the proposal, including the addition of funding
27 sources for each inventory entry. The finalized proposal shall
28 serve as the contract between the community and the Start-Up
29 Initiative. If sufficient funding does not exist for an entry
30 that is essential for the community's proposal or a community
31 is ineligible for a specific inventory entry, the coordinating

1 partners may direct funding that is under their control to
2 fulfill the entry or may seek additional funding for the entry
3 as provided in this section. The proposal must be operational
4 within 3 months after approval.

5 (g) Proposals that would mainly result in
6 gentrification of the community, that would not employ a
7 preponderance of residents, and that predominately create
8 residences or businesses that are beyond the anticipated
9 income level of the working residents of the community are not
10 eligible. Proposal awards shall be obligated to the community
11 and the funds carried forward until the completion of the
12 proposal. Such obligated and carried forward funds are
13 considered appropriated for budgeting purposes notwithstanding
14 any other provision in law. The coordinating partners may
15 direct funding that is appropriated to their control to fund
16 this initiative and, if necessary, may seek budget amendments
17 to redirect funding to this initiative. Any federal Temporary
18 Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant funding
19 appropriated to assist needy families, or to promote job
20 placement and employment retention, which is in excess of
21 revenues necessary to fulfill the appropriated purpose and
22 which may not be obligated during the budget year may be
23 redirected to this initiative to support an approved proposal.
24 Any federal funds must be used for purposes consistent with
25 applicable federal law; however, the coordinating partners,
26 with the assistance of the Department of Children and Family
27 Services, shall aggressively pursue innovative uses of federal
28 funds to support projects that train community leaders,
29 upgrade individuals skills, promote safety, clean up
30 communities, beautify neighborhoods, encourage small business,
31 stimulate employment, increase educational opportunity,

1 promote community partnering, advance community redevelopment,
2 and upgrade housing because it assists needy families,
3 promoting self-sufficiency and job retention. The coordinating
4 partners shall adopt procedures for the Start-Up Initiative
5 and may, if necessary, adopt, through the Department of
6 Community Affairs, emergency rules to govern the submission of
7 proposals, the evaluation of proposals, the initiative awards,
8 and the implementation procedures for administration of
9 awards.

10 (9) LIFELINES.--Annually, the coordinating partners
11 may recommend to agencies or organizations five lifelines for
12 specific communities. Such lifelines shall indicate that, in
13 the unanimous judgment of the coordinating partners, a
14 proposal submitted to the head of an agency or organization
15 will have a transforming positive impact on the economically
16 distressed community. The head of the agency or organization
17 may, based on his or her concurrence with the recommendation
18 and after consultation with the Governor, the President of the
19 Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives,
20 recommend approval of the proposal to the Cabinet. The Cabinet
21 may, notwithstanding any other law or regulation, approve the
22 proposal. Any such lifeline recommendations and approvals must
23 be adopted in a public meeting, and all records, documents,
24 and contacts relating to that project will be assembled and
25 available to the public at the meetings. No community shall be
26 eligible or receive a second lifeline recommendation.

27 (10) FUNDING.--

28 (a) To implement the provisions of this act, the
29 coordinating partners are authorized and appropriated up to
30 \$25 million from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

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1 (TANF) Block Grant through the TANF administrative entity at
2 the Department of Management Services.

3 (b) Any expenditure from the TANF Block Grant shall be
4 in accordance with the requirements and limitations of Title
5 IV of the Social Security Act, as amended, or any other
6 applicable federal requirement or limitation in law. Prior to
7 any expenditure of such funds, the Workforce Development Board
8 of Enterprise Florida, Inc., and the secretary of the
9 Department of Children and Family Services, or his or her
10 designee, shall certify that controls are in place to ensure
11 that such funds are expended and reported in accordance with
12 the requirements and limitations of federal law. It shall be
13 the responsibility of any entity to which funds are awarded to
14 obtain the required certification prior to any expenditure of
15 funds.

16 (11) MONITORING AND REPORTING.--

17 (a) The independent entity selected by the
18 coordinating partners shall certify performance by the
19 designated communities identified under subsection (8) for the
20 Start-Up Initiative. This independent entity shall also
21 identify three other similar communities to serve as a control
22 group to compare performance and impact. The independent
23 entity must measure performance trends and impact in the three
24 control group communities, the six communities that applied
25 for the Start-Up Initiative but were not selected, and the
26 communities selected to participate in the Start-Up
27 Initiative. The three control group communities shall be known
28 only to the independent entity until the completion of the
29 entity's review. The independent entity shall develop, working
30 with the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government
31 Accountability and the coordinating partners, measures and

1 criteria by October 1, 2001, for evaluating the effectiveness
2 of the Toolkit for Economic Development, including the
3 liaisons, coordinating partners, waivers and matching options,
4 inventory, Start-Up Initiative, and lifelines.

5 (12) REPEAL.--This section expires June 30, 2002.

6 Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a
7 law.

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1 STATEMENT OF SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES CONTAINED IN
2 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR
3 SB 418

4 This committee substitute replaces the Comeback Communities
5 grant program created in the bill with a program called the
6 Toolkit for Economic Development (TED), for the purpose of
7 creating jobs and promoting self-sufficiency among residents
8 of Front Porch Florida communities and other economically
9 distressed communities. TED creates various initiatives to
10 achieve this purpose, which include:

11 -Liaisons: Requires 24 agencies to name liaisons who will work
12 together to cut red tape for programs that can help
13 economically distressed communities.

14 -Coordinating Partners: The Office of Tourism, Trade, and
15 Economic Development, the Office of Urban Opportunity, the
16 Department of Community Affairs, Enterprise Florida, Inc., and
17 the state Workforce Development Board must work together as a
18 team to manage assistance that is available for these
19 communities.

20 -Fee Waivers & Matching Fund Options: The coordinating
21 partners can request waivers or pay the application fees or
22 local matching requirements of economically distressed
23 communities for federal, state, or foundation programs.

24 -Inventory: The coordinating partners, in consultation with
25 the liaisons, must assemble the best and most easily used
26 programs that federal and state government authorize, and
27 provide that inventory and application help to economically
28 distressed communities.

29 -Start-Up Initiative: The coordinating partners must identify
30 15 distressed communities and Front Porch Communities and
31 allow them to apply for nine Start-up Initiative Awards. These
communities must pledge local resources and plan to use the
inventory's programs to make their community rapidly become
more economically self-sufficient. The coordinating partners
must provide assistance with inventory programs and back-up
funding to effectuate the nine communities' proposals.

-Lifelines: If the coordinating partners identify a proposal
with potential to transform a community, which proposal cannot
be tackled with the other five tools, they can recommend a
"lifeline" for the community. If an appropriate agency head
concurs with the recommendation, after consultation with the
Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the
House of Representatives, the agency head can recommend
approval of the project and the Cabinet can approve it to go
forward.