



26 requiring the department to prioritize awarding  
 27 employer-based grants to certain training programs;  
 28 providing that certain accreditation or licensure  
 29 meets a certain qualification requirement; revising  
 30 requirements for the location in which a training  
 31 program participant must reside to receive a certain  
 32 grant from the department; revising the requirements  
 33 for employer-based training programs established in  
 34 the Everglades Agricultural Area; providing that  
 35 certain provisions shall control in the event of  
 36 certain conflicts; providing an effective date.

37  
 38 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

39  
 40 Section 1. Paragraphs (d) and (e) of subsection (2) of  
 41 section 288.018, Florida Statutes, are redesignated as  
 42 paragraphs (b) and (c), respectively, and paragraphs (b), (c),  
 43 and (d) of subsection (1) and present paragraphs (b) and (c) of  
 44 subsection (2) of that section are amended to read:

45 288.018 Regional Rural Development Grants Program.—

46 (1)

47 (b) The department shall establish a ~~matching~~ grant  
 48 program to provide funding to regional economic development  
 49 organizations for the purpose of building the professional  
 50 capacity of those organizations. Building the professional

51 capacity of a regional economic development organization  
52 includes hiring professional staff to develop, deliver, and  
53 provide needed economic development professional services,  
54 including technical assistance, education and leadership  
55 development, marketing, and project recruitment. ~~Matching~~ Grants  
56 may also be used by a regional economic development organization  
57 to provide technical assistance to local governments, local  
58 economic development organizations, and existing and prospective  
59 businesses.

60 (c) A regional economic development organization may apply  
61 annually to the department for a ~~matching~~ grant. The department  
62 is authorized to approve, on an annual basis, grants to such  
63 regional economic development organizations. The maximum amount  
64 an organization may receive in any year will be \$50,000, or  
65 \$250,000 for any three regional economic development  
66 organizations that serve an entire region of a rural area of  
67 opportunity designated pursuant to s. 288.0656(7) if they are  
68 recognized by the department as serving such a region.

69 ~~(d) Grant funds received by a regional economic~~  
70 ~~development organization must be matched each year by nonstate~~  
71 ~~resources in an amount equal to 25 percent of the state~~  
72 ~~contribution.~~

73 (2) In approving the participants, the department shall  
74 consider the demonstrated need of the applicant for assistance  
75 and require the following:

76 ~~(b) Demonstration that each unit of local government has~~  
 77 ~~made a financial or in-kind commitment to the regional~~  
 78 ~~organization.~~

79 ~~(c) Demonstration that the private sector has made~~  
 80 ~~financial or in-kind commitments to the regional organization.~~

81 Section 2. Paragraphs (b) and (c) of subsection (2) of  
 82 section 288.0655, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

83 288.0655 Rural Infrastructure Fund.—

84 (2)

85 (b) To facilitate access of rural communities and rural  
 86 areas of opportunity as defined by the Rural Economic  
 87 Development Initiative to infrastructure funding programs of the  
 88 Federal Government, such as those offered by the United States  
 89 Department of Agriculture and the United States Department of  
 90 Commerce, and state programs, including those offered by Rural  
 91 Economic Development Initiative agencies, and to facilitate  
 92 local government or private infrastructure funding efforts, the  
 93 department may award grants for up to 75 ~~50~~ percent of the total  
 94 infrastructure project cost, or up to 100 percent of the total  
 95 infrastructure project cost for a project located in a rural  
 96 community or a rural area of opportunity, as those terms are  
 97 defined in s. 288.0656(2), which is also located in a fiscally  
 98 constrained county as described in s. 218.67(1). Eligible  
 99 projects must be related to specific job-creation or job-  
 100 retention opportunities. Eligible projects may also include

101 improving any inadequate infrastructure that has resulted in  
102 regulatory action that prohibits economic or community growth,  
103 reducing the costs to community users of proposed infrastructure  
104 improvements that exceed such costs in comparable communities,  
105 and improving access to and the availability of broadband  
106 Internet service. Eligible uses of funds shall include  
107 improvements to public infrastructure for industrial or  
108 commercial sites, upgrades to or development of public tourism  
109 infrastructure, and improvements to broadband Internet service  
110 and access in unserved or underserved rural communities.  
111 Improvements to broadband Internet service and access must be  
112 conducted through a partnership or partnerships with one or more  
113 dealers, as defined in s. 202.11(2), and the partnership or  
114 partnerships must be established through a competitive selection  
115 process that is publicly noticed. Authorized infrastructure may  
116 include the following public or public-private partnership  
117 facilities: storm water systems; telecommunications facilities;  
118 broadband facilities; roads or other remedies to transportation  
119 impediments; nature-based tourism facilities; or other physical  
120 requirements necessary to facilitate tourism, trade, and  
121 economic development activities in the community. Authorized  
122 infrastructure may also include publicly or privately owned  
123 self-powered nature-based tourism facilities, publicly owned  
124 telecommunications facilities, and broadband facilities, and  
125 additions to the distribution facilities of the existing natural

126 gas utility as defined in s. 366.04(3)(c), the existing electric  
 127 utility as defined in s. 366.02, or the existing water or  
 128 wastewater utility as defined in s. 367.021(12), or any other  
 129 existing water or wastewater facility, which owns a gas or  
 130 electric distribution system or a water or wastewater system in  
 131 this state where:

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

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

138 (c) To facilitate timely response and induce the location  
 139 or expansion of specific job creating opportunities, The  
 140 department may award grants for infrastructure feasibility  
 141 studies, design and engineering activities, or other  
 142 infrastructure planning and preparation activities. Authorized  
 143 grants shall be up to \$50,000 for an employment project with a  
 144 business committed to create at least 100 jobs; up to \$150,000  
 145 for an employment project with a business committed to create at  
 146 least 300 jobs; and up to \$300,000 for a project in a rural area  
 147 of opportunity. Grants awarded under this paragraph may be used  
 148 in conjunction with grants awarded under paragraph (b), ~~provided~~  
 149 ~~that the total amount of both grants does not exceed 30 percent~~  
 150 ~~of the total project cost.~~ In evaluating applications under this

151 paragraph, the department shall consider the extent to which the  
 152 application seeks to minimize administrative and consultant  
 153 expenses.

154 Section 3. Subsection (5) of section 288.9604, Florida  
 155 Statutes, is amended to read:

156 288.9604 Creation of the corporation.—

157 (5) Effective July 1, 2023, the corporation may not  
 158 establish new residential Property Assessed Clean Energy  
 159 agreements. The corporation may only service existing agreements  
 160 until the completion of the original terms of such agreements  
 161 ~~This section is repealed July 1, 2023, and July 1 of every~~  
 162 ~~fourth year thereafter, unless reviewed and saved from repeal by~~  
 163 ~~the Legislature.~~

164 Section 4. Subsection (1) of section 288.8017, Florida  
 165 Statutes, is amended to read:

166 288.8017 Awards.—

167 (1) Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc., shall make awards from  
 168 available funds to projects or programs that meet the priorities  
 169 for economic recovery, diversification, and enhancement of the  
 170 disproportionately affected counties. Awards may be provided for  
 171 any of the following:

172 (a) Ad valorem tax rate reduction within  
 173 disproportionately affected counties.†

174 (b) Local match requirements ~~of s. 288.0655~~ for projects  
 175 in the disproportionately affected counties.†

176 (c) Public infrastructure projects for construction,  
177 expansion, or maintenance which are shown to enhance economic  
178 recovery, diversification, and enhancement of the  
179 disproportionately affected counties. Such public infrastructure  
180 projects include projects for workforce housing, which means  
181 housing that is affordable to natural persons or families whose  
182 total annual household income does not exceed 80 percent of the  
183 median annual adjusted gross income for households within the  
184 metropolitan statistical area or, if not within a metropolitan  
185 statistical area, within the county in which the person or  
186 family resides. The recipient of an award for workforce housing  
187 construction, expansion, or maintenance must be a local  
188 government in a disproportionately affected county. For purposes  
189 of this paragraph, the term:

190 1. "Adjusted gross income" means all wages, assets,  
191 regular cash or noncash contributions or gifts from persons  
192 outside the household, and such other resources and benefits as  
193 may be determined to be income by the United States Department  
194 of Housing and Urban Development, adjusted for family size, less  
195 deductions allowable under s. 62 of the Internal Revenue Code.

196 2. "Affordable" means that monthly rents or monthly  
197 mortgage payments including taxes, insurance, and utilities do  
198 not exceed 30 percent of that amount which represents the  
199 percentage of the median adjusted gross annual income for the  
200 households.†



201 (d) Grants to local governments in the disproportionately  
 202 affected counties to establish and maintain equipment and  
 203 trained personnel for local action plans of response to respond  
 204 to disasters, such as plans created for the Coastal Impacts  
 205 Assistance Program.†

206 (e) Grants to support programs that prepare students for  
 207 future occupations and careers at K-20 institutions that have  
 208 campuses in the disproportionately affected counties. Eligible  
 209 programs include those that increase students' technology skills  
 210 and knowledge; encourage industry certifications; provide  
 211 rigorous, alternative pathways for students to meet high school  
 212 graduation requirements; strengthen career readiness  
 213 initiatives; fund high-demand programs of emphasis at the  
 214 bachelor's and master's level designated by the Board of  
 215 Governors; and, similar to or the same as talent retention  
 216 programs created by the Chancellor of the State University  
 217 System and the Commission of Education, encourage students with  
 218 interest or aptitude for science, technology, engineering,  
 219 mathematics, and medical disciplines to pursue postsecondary  
 220 education at a state university or a Florida College System  
 221 institution within the disproportionately affected counties.†

222 (f) Grants to support programs that provide participants  
 223 in the disproportionately affected counties with transferable,  
 224 sustainable workforce skills that are not confined to a single  
 225 employer.†~~and~~

226 (g) Grants to the tourism entity created under s. 288.1226  
 227 for the purpose of advertising and promoting tourism and Fresh  
 228 From Florida, and grants to promote workforce and  
 229 infrastructure, on behalf of all of the disproportionately  
 230 affected counties.

231 Section 5. Section 446.71, Florida Statutes, is amended to  
 232 read:

233 446.71 Everglades Restoration Agricultural Community  
 234 Employment Training Program.—

235 (1) The Department of Economic Opportunity, in cooperation  
 236 with the state board as defined in s. 445.002, shall establish  
 237 the Everglades Restoration Agricultural Community Employment  
 238 Training Program within the Department of Economic Opportunity.  
 239 The Department of Economic Opportunity shall use funds  
 240 appropriated to the program by the Legislature to provide grants  
 241 to stimulate and support training and employment programs that  
 242 seek to match persons who complete such training programs to  
 243 nonagricultural employment opportunities in the Everglades  
 244 Agricultural Area as defined in s. 373.4592(2) and rural areas  
 245 of opportunity as defined in s. 288.0656(2) ~~areas of high~~  
 246 ~~agricultural unemployment~~, and to provide other training,  
 247 educational, and information services necessary to stimulate the  
 248 creation of jobs in the Everglades Agricultural Area and rural  
 249 areas of opportunity ~~areas of high agricultural unemployment~~. In  
 250 determining whether to provide funds to a particular program,

251 the Department of Economic Opportunity shall consider the  
 252 location of the program in proximity to the program's intended  
 253 participants.

254 (2) The Legislature supports projects that improve the  
 255 economy in the Everglades Agricultural Area and in rural areas  
 256 of opportunity in counties that provide for water storage and  
 257 dispersed water storage as part of Everglades restoration  
 258 efforts. In recognition of the employment opportunities and  
 259 economic development generated by new and expanding industries  
 260 in such areas ~~the area~~, such as the Airglades Airport in Hendry  
 261 County and the development of an inland port in Palm Beach  
 262 County, the Legislature finds that training the citizens of the  
 263 state to fill the needs of these industries significantly  
 264 enhances the economic viability of such areas ~~the region~~.

265 (3) Funds may be used for grants for tuition for public or  
 266 private technical or vocational programs and matching grants to  
 267 employers to conduct employer-based training programs. Grant  
 268 funds provided to employer-based training programs may be used  
 269 ~~or~~ for the purchase of equipment to be used for training  
 270 purposes, the hiring of instructors, or any other purpose  
 271 directly associated with the program. For the first 6 months of  
 272 each fiscal year, the Department of Economic Opportunity shall  
 273 set aside up to 50 percent of the amount appropriated by the  
 274 Legislature to fund employer-based training programs. Any  
 275 unencumbered funds remaining undisbursed from the set-aside

276 amount at the end of the 6-month period may be used to provide  
277 funding for tuition. The allocation of funds must be included in  
278 the notice of grant opportunities.

279 (4) The Department of Economic Opportunity may not award  
280 an employer-based a grant to any given training program which  
281 exceeds 50 percent of the total cost of the program, unless the  
282 training program is located within a rural area of opportunity,  
283 in which case the grant may exceed 50 percent of the total cost  
284 of the program and up to 100 percent. Matching contributions may  
285 include in-kind services, including, but not limited to, the  
286 provision of training instructors, equipment, and training  
287 facilities. The department shall prioritize awarding employer-  
288 based grants to training programs located in rural areas of  
289 opportunity in counties that provide for water storage and  
290 dispersed water storage as part of Everglades restoration  
291 efforts.

292 (5) Before granting a request for funds made in accordance  
293 with this section, the Department of Economic Opportunity shall  
294 enter into a grant agreement with the requester of funds and the  
295 training institution receiving funding through the program. Such  
296 agreement must include all of the following information:

297 (a) An identification of the personnel necessary to  
298 conduct the instructional program, the qualifications of such  
299 personnel, and the respective responsibilities of the parties  
300 for paying costs associated with the employment of such

301 personnel. National accreditation or licensure of an  
 302 instructional program by the Commission for Independent  
 303 Education is sufficient to meet the qualifications requirement.

304 (b) An identification of the estimated length of the  
 305 instructional program.

306 (c) An identification of all direct, training-related  
 307 costs, including tuition and fees, curriculum development, books  
 308 and classroom materials, and overhead or indirect costs.

309 (d) An identification of special program requirements that  
 310 are not otherwise addressed in the agreement.

311 (6) The Department of Economic Opportunity may grant up to  
 312 100 percent of the tuition for a training program participant  
 313 who currently resides, and has resided for at least 3 of the 5  
 314 immediately preceding years, in ~~within~~ the Everglades  
 315 Agricultural Area or as described in a rural area of opportunity  
 316 ~~s. 373.4592 and in a county counties that provides provide~~ for  
 317 water storage and dispersed water storage as part of Everglades  
 318 restoration efforts that are located in rural areas of  
 319 ~~opportunity as described in s. 288.0656.~~

320 (7) Employer-based training programs established in the  
 321 Everglades Agricultural Area must include opportunities to  
 322 obtain the qualifications and skills necessary for jobs related  
 323 to federal and state restoration projects, the Airglades Airport  
 324 in Hendry County, an inland port in Palm Beach County, or other  
 325 industries with verifiable, demonstrated interest in operating

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326 | in ~~within~~ the Everglades Agricultural Area or in rural areas of  
327 | opportunity ~~and~~ in counties that provide for water storage and  
328 | dispersed water storage as part of Everglades restoration  
329 | efforts ~~that are located in rural areas of opportunity as~~  
330 | ~~described in s. 288.0656.~~

331 | (8) The Department of Economic Opportunity shall adopt  
332 | rules to implement this section.

333 | Section 6. In the event of a conflict of any provision of  
334 | this act with the provisions of House Bill 5, 2023 Regular  
335 | Session, or similar legislation, the provisions of House Bill 5,  
336 | 2023 Regular Session, or similar legislation, shall control to  
337 | the extent of such conflict.

338 | Section 7. This act shall take effect July 1, 2023.