



26 |       awarding employer-based grants to certain training  
 27 |       programs; authorizing the use of certain grant funds  
 28 |       for certain purposes; requiring the department to set  
 29 |       aside a certain percentage of funds for a certain  
 30 |       purpose; prohibiting the department from awarding  
 31 |       employer-based grants in excess of a certain amount;  
 32 |       providing that certain accreditation or licensure  
 33 |       meets a certain qualification requirement; revising  
 34 |       residency requirements that a training program  
 35 |       participant must meet to receive a certain grant from  
 36 |       the department; revising the requirements for  
 37 |       employer-based training programs established in the  
 38 |       Everglades Agricultural Area; providing that certain  
 39 |       provisions shall control in the event of certain  
 40 |       conflicts; providing an effective date.

41 |

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

43 |

44 |       Section 1. Paragraph (h) is added to subsection (1) of  
 45 |       section 215.971, Florida Statutes, to read:

46 |       215.971 Agreements funded with federal or state  
 47 |       assistance.—

48 |       (1) An agency agreement that provides state financial  
 49 |       assistance to a recipient or subrecipient, as those terms are  
 50 |       defined in s. 215.97, or that provides federal financial

51 assistance to a subrecipient, as defined by applicable United  
 52 States Office of Management and Budget circulars, must include  
 53 all of the following:

54 (h) If the agency agreement provides federal or state  
 55 financial assistance to a county or municipality that is a rural  
 56 community or rural area of opportunity, as those terms are  
 57 defined in s. 288.0656(2), such agreement must include a  
 58 provision that allows the agency to provide for the payment of  
 59 invoices to the county or municipality for verified and eligible  
 60 performance that has been completed in accordance with the terms  
 61 and conditions set forth in the agreement. This provision is  
 62 included to alleviate the financial hardships that certain rural  
 63 counties and municipalities encounter when administering  
 64 agreements and shall be utilized by the agency based on  
 65 demonstrated financial hardship. This paragraph may not be  
 66 construed to alter or limit any other provisions of federal or  
 67 state law, rule, or other regulation.

68 Section 2. Paragraphs (d) and (e) of subsection (2) of  
 69 section 288.018, Florida Statutes, are redesignated as  
 70 paragraphs (b) and (c), respectively, and paragraphs (b), (c),  
 71 and (d) of subsection (1) and present paragraphs (b) and (c) of  
 72 subsection (2) of that section are amended to read:

73 288.018 Regional Rural Development Grants Program.—

74 (1)

75 (b) The department shall establish a ~~matching~~ grant

76 program to provide funding to regional economic development  
77 organizations for the purpose of building the professional  
78 capacity of those organizations. Building the professional  
79 capacity of a regional economic development organization  
80 includes hiring professional staff to develop, deliver, and  
81 provide needed economic development professional services,  
82 including technical assistance, education and leadership  
83 development, marketing, and project recruitment. ~~Matching~~ Grants  
84 may also be used by a regional economic development organization  
85 to provide technical assistance to local governments, local  
86 economic development organizations, and existing and prospective  
87 businesses.

88 (c) A regional economic development organization may apply  
89 annually to the department for a ~~matching~~ grant. The department  
90 is authorized to approve, on an annual basis, grants to such  
91 regional economic development organizations. The maximum amount  
92 an organization may receive in any year will be \$50,000, or  
93 \$250,000 for any three regional economic development  
94 organizations that serve an entire region of a rural area of  
95 opportunity designated pursuant to s. 288.0656(7) if they are  
96 recognized by the department as serving such a region.

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

101 (2) In approving the participants, the department shall  
 102 consider the demonstrated need of the applicant for assistance  
 103 and require the following:

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

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

109 Section 3. Paragraphs (b) and (c) of subsection (2) of  
 110 section 288.0655, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

111 288.0655 Rural Infrastructure Fund.—

112 (2)

113 (b) To facilitate access of rural communities and rural  
 114 areas of opportunity as defined by the Rural Economic  
 115 Development Initiative to infrastructure funding programs of the  
 116 Federal Government, such as those offered by the United States  
 117 Department of Agriculture and the United States Department of  
 118 Commerce, and state programs, including those offered by Rural  
 119 Economic Development Initiative agencies, and to facilitate  
 120 local government or private infrastructure funding efforts, the  
 121 department may award grants for up to 75 ~~50~~ percent of the total  
 122 infrastructure project cost, or up to 100 percent of the total  
 123 infrastructure project cost for a project located in a rural  
 124 community or a rural area of opportunity, as those terms are  
 125 defined in s. 288.0656(2), which is also located in a fiscally

126 constrained county as described in s. 218.67(1). Eligible  
127 projects must be related to specific job-creation or job-  
128 retention opportunities. Eligible projects may also include  
129 improving any inadequate infrastructure that has resulted in  
130 regulatory action that prohibits economic or community growth,  
131 reducing the costs to community users of proposed infrastructure  
132 improvements that exceed such costs in comparable communities,  
133 and improving access to and the availability of broadband  
134 Internet service. Eligible uses of funds shall include  
135 improvements to public infrastructure for industrial or  
136 commercial sites, upgrades to or development of public tourism  
137 infrastructure, and improvements to broadband Internet service  
138 and access in unserved or underserved rural communities.  
139 Improvements to broadband Internet service and access must be  
140 conducted through a partnership or partnerships with one or more  
141 dealers, as defined in s. 202.11(2), and the partnership or  
142 partnerships must be established through a competitive selection  
143 process that is publicly noticed. Authorized infrastructure may  
144 include the following public or public-private partnership  
145 facilities: storm water systems; telecommunications facilities;  
146 broadband facilities; roads or other remedies to transportation  
147 impediments; nature-based tourism facilities; or other physical  
148 requirements necessary to facilitate tourism, trade, and  
149 economic development activities in the community. Authorized  
150 infrastructure may also include publicly or privately owned

151 self-powered nature-based tourism facilities, publicly owned  
152 telecommunications facilities, and broadband facilities, and  
153 additions to the distribution facilities of the existing natural  
154 gas utility as defined in s. 366.04(3)(c), the existing electric  
155 utility as defined in s. 366.02, or the existing water or  
156 wastewater utility as defined in s. 367.021(12), or any other  
157 existing water or wastewater facility, which owns a gas or  
158 electric distribution system or a water or wastewater system in  
159 this state where:

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

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

166 (c) To facilitate timely response and induce the location  
167 or expansion of specific job creating opportunities, The  
168 department may award grants for infrastructure feasibility  
169 studies, design and engineering activities, or other  
170 infrastructure planning and preparation activities. Authorized  
171 grants shall be up to \$50,000 for an employment project with a  
172 business committed to create at least 100 jobs; up to \$150,000  
173 for an employment project with a business committed to create at  
174 least 300 jobs; and up to \$300,000 for a project in a rural area  
175 of opportunity. Grants awarded under this paragraph may be used

176 in conjunction with grants awarded under paragraph (b), ~~provided~~  
 177 ~~that the total amount of both grants does not exceed 30 percent~~  
 178 ~~of the total project cost.~~ In evaluating applications under this  
 179 paragraph, the department shall consider the extent to which the  
 180 application seeks to minimize administrative and consultant  
 181 expenses.

182 Section 4. Subsection (5) of section 288.9604, Florida  
 183 Statutes, is amended to read:

184 288.9604 Creation of the corporation.—

185 (5) Effective July 1, 2023, the corporation may not  
 186 establish new residential Property Assessed Clean Energy  
 187 agreements. The corporation may only service existing agreements  
 188 until the completion of the original terms of such agreements  
 189 ~~This section is repealed July 1, 2023, and July 1 of every~~  
 190 ~~fourth year thereafter, unless reviewed and saved from repeal by~~  
 191 ~~the Legislature.~~

192 Section 5. Subsection (1) of section 288.8017, Florida  
 193 Statutes, is amended to read:

194 288.8017 Awards.—

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

200 (a) Ad valorem tax rate reduction within



201 disproportionately affected counties.~~†~~

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

204 (c) Public infrastructure projects for construction,  
 205 expansion, or maintenance which are shown to enhance economic  
 206 recovery, diversification, and enhancement of the  
 207 disproportionately affected counties. Such public infrastructure  
 208 projects may include public infrastructure support for  
 209 construction or expansion of workforce housing properties owned  
 210 by a local government located in a disproportionately affected  
 211 county. For the purposes of this paragraph, the term:

212 1. "Infrastructure support" means site improvements.

213 2. "Workforce housing" means rented or leased housing for  
 214 residents of the eight disproportionately affected counties who  
 215 are employed full time or who are active duty servicemembers of  
 216 a branch of the United States Armed Forces. Local governments,  
 217 or their agents, may rent or lease housing to persons or  
 218 families who have household incomes that do not exceed 150  
 219 percent of the local median income. Renters or lessors are  
 220 required to provide documentation of full-time employment, or  
 221 full-time status for self-employed individuals, of 35 hours or  
 222 more per week.~~†~~

223 (d) Grants to local governments in the disproportionately  
 224 affected counties to establish and maintain equipment and  
 225 trained personnel for local action plans of response to respond

226 | to disasters, such as plans created for the Coastal Impacts  
 227 | Assistance Program.‡

228 |       (e) Grants to support programs that prepare students for  
 229 | future occupations and careers at K-20 institutions that have  
 230 | campuses in the disproportionately affected counties. Eligible  
 231 | programs include those that increase students' technology skills  
 232 | and knowledge; encourage industry certifications; provide  
 233 | rigorous, alternative pathways for students to meet high school  
 234 | graduation requirements; strengthen career readiness  
 235 | initiatives; fund high-demand programs of emphasis at the  
 236 | bachelor's and master's level designated by the Board of  
 237 | Governors; and, similar to or the same as talent retention  
 238 | programs created by the Chancellor of the State University  
 239 | System and the Commission of Education, encourage students with  
 240 | interest or aptitude for science, technology, engineering,  
 241 | mathematics, and medical disciplines to pursue postsecondary  
 242 | education at a state university or a Florida College System  
 243 | institution within the disproportionately affected counties.‡

244 |       (f) Grants to support programs that provide participants  
 245 | in the disproportionately affected counties with transferable,  
 246 | sustainable workforce skills that are not confined to a single  
 247 | employer.~~‡~~and

248 |       (g) Grants to the tourism entity created under s. 288.1226  
 249 | for the purpose of advertising and promoting tourism and Fresh  
 250 | From Florida, and grants to promote workforce and

251 infrastructure, on behalf of all of the disproportionately  
 252 affected counties.

253 Section 6. Section 446.71, Florida Statutes, is amended to  
 254 read:

255 446.71 Everglades Restoration Agricultural Community  
 256 Employment Training Program.—

257 (1) As used in this section, the term:

258 (a) "Department" means the Department of Economic  
 259 Opportunity.

260 (b) "Employer-based training program" means a program  
 261 established by, or to be established by, a business in this  
 262 state that provides training for in-demand, nonagricultural  
 263 occupations for its employees.

264 (c) "Everglades Agricultural Area" has the same meaning as  
 265 in s. 373.4592(15).

266 (d) "Institution-based training program" means a  
 267 certificate program or other program of study provided by a  
 268 public or private university, college, or technical or  
 269 vocational training institution that provides training for in-  
 270 demand, nonagricultural occupations.

271 (e) "Program" means the Everglades Restoration  
 272 Agricultural Community Employment Training Program.

273 (2)~~(1)~~ The Department of Economic Opportunity, in  
 274 cooperation with the state board as defined in s. 445.002, shall  
 275 establish the Everglades Restoration Agricultural Community

276 Employment Training Program within the Department of Economic  
277 Opportunity. The Department of Economic Opportunity shall use  
278 funds appropriated to the program by the Legislature to provide  
279 grants to stimulate and support training and employment programs  
280 that seek to match persons who complete such training programs  
281 to nonagricultural employment opportunities in the Everglades  
282 Agricultural Area as defined in s. 373.4592(2) and rural areas  
283 of opportunity as defined in s. 288.0656(2) ~~areas of high~~  
284 ~~agricultural unemployment~~, and to provide other training,  
285 educational, and information services necessary to stimulate the  
286 creation of jobs in the Everglades Agricultural Area and rural  
287 areas of opportunity ~~areas of high agricultural unemployment~~. In  
288 determining whether to provide funds to a particular program,  
289 the Department of Economic Opportunity shall consider the  
290 location of the program in proximity to the program's intended  
291 participants. The department shall prioritize awarding employer-  
292 based grants to training programs located in rural areas of  
293 opportunity in counties with a boundary that is within 75 miles  
294 of the Everglades Agricultural Area.

295 ~~(3)-(2)~~ The Legislature supports projects that improve the  
296 economy in the Everglades Agricultural Area and in rural areas  
297 of opportunity in counties that provide for water storage and  
298 dispersed water storage as part of Everglades restoration  
299 efforts. In recognition of the employment opportunities and  
300 economic development generated by new and expanding industries

301 in such areas ~~the area~~, such as the Airglades Airport in Hendry  
 302 County and the development of an inland port in Palm Beach  
 303 County, the Legislature finds that training the citizens of the  
 304 state to fill the needs of these industries significantly  
 305 enhances the economic viability of such areas ~~the region~~.

306 (4)-(3) Funds may be used for grants for tuition for public  
 307 or private technical or vocational programs and matching grants  
 308 to employers to conduct employer-based training programs. Grant  
 309 funds provided to employer-based training programs may be used,  
 310 ~~or~~ for the purchase of equipment to be used for training  
 311 purposes, the hiring of instructors, or any other purpose  
 312 directly associated with the program. For the first 6 months of  
 313 each fiscal year, the Department of Economic Opportunity shall  
 314 set aside up to 50 percent of the amount appropriated by the  
 315 Legislature to fund employer-based training programs. Any  
 316 unencumbered funds remaining undisbursed from the set-aside  
 317 amount at the end of the 6-month period may be used to provide  
 318 funding for tuition. The allocation of funds must be included in  
 319 the notice of grant opportunities.

320 (5)-(4) The Department of Economic Opportunity may not  
 321 award an employer-based ~~a~~ grant to any given training program  
 322 which exceeds 50 percent of the total cost of the program,  
 323 unless the training program is located within a rural area of  
 324 opportunity, in which case the grant may exceed 50 percent of  
 325 the total cost of the program and up to 100 percent. Matching

326 contributions may include in-kind services, including, but not  
327 limited to, the provision of training instructors, equipment,  
328 and training facilities.

329 ~~(6)~~~~(5)~~ Before granting a request for funds made in  
330 accordance with this section, the Department of Economic  
331 Opportunity shall enter into a grant agreement with the  
332 requester of funds and the training institution receiving  
333 funding through the program. Such agreement must include all of  
334 the following information:

335 (a) An identification of the personnel necessary to  
336 conduct the instructional program, the qualifications of such  
337 personnel, and the respective responsibilities of the parties  
338 for paying costs associated with the employment of such  
339 personnel. National accreditation or licensure of an  
340 instructional program by the Commission for Independent  
341 Education is sufficient to meet the qualifications requirement.

342 (b) An identification of the estimated length of the  
343 instructional program.

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

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

349 ~~(7)~~~~(6)~~ The Department of Economic Opportunity may grant up  
350 to 100 percent of the tuition for a training program participant

351 who currently resides, and has resided for the preceding 12  
 352 months ~~at least 3 of the 5 immediately preceding years, in~~  
 353 ~~within~~ the Everglades Agricultural Area or as described in a  
 354 rural area of opportunity s. 373.4592 and in a county ~~counties~~  
 355 that provides ~~provide~~ for water storage and dispersed water  
 356 storage as part of Everglades restoration efforts ~~that are~~  
 357 ~~located in rural areas of opportunity as described in s.~~  
 358 ~~288.0656.~~

359 (8)(7) Employer-based training programs established in the  
 360 Everglades Agricultural Area must include opportunities to  
 361 obtain the qualifications and skills necessary for jobs related  
 362 to federal and state restoration projects, the Airglades Airport  
 363 in Hendry County, an inland port in Palm Beach County, or other  
 364 industries with verifiable, demonstrated interest in operating  
 365 in within the Everglades Agricultural Area or in rural areas of  
 366 opportunity ~~and~~ in counties that provide for water storage and  
 367 dispersed water storage as part of Everglades restoration  
 368 efforts ~~that are located in rural areas of opportunity as~~  
 369 ~~described in s. 288.0656.~~

370 (9)(8) The Department of Economic Opportunity shall adopt  
 371 rules to implement this section.

372 Section 7. In the event of a conflict of any provision of  
 373 this act with the provisions of House Bill 5, 2023 Regular  
 374 Session, or similar legislation, the provisions of House Bill 5,  
 375 2023 Regular Session, or similar legislation, shall control to

CS/CS/CS/HB 1209

2023

376 | the extent of such conflict.

377 |       Section 8. This act shall take effect July 1, 2023.