

1 A bill to be entitled
 2 An act relating to the Regional Rural Development
 3 Grants Program; amending s. 288.018, F.S.; removing
 4 the requirement that certain grants received by a
 5 regional economic development organization must be
 6 matched in a certain manner; removing a provision
 7 requiring a certain consideration; removing certain
 8 demonstration requirements of program applicants;
 9 providing an effective date.

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

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 13 Section 1. Paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) of subsection (1)
 14 and subsection (2) of section 288.018, Florida Statutes, are
 15 amended to read:

16 288.018 Regional Rural Development Grants Program.—

17 (1)

18 (b) The department shall establish a ~~matching~~ grant
 19 program to provide funding to regional economic development
 20 organizations for the purpose of building the professional
 21 capacity of those organizations. Building the professional
 22 capacity of a regional economic development organization
 23 includes hiring professional staff to develop, deliver, and
 24 provide needed economic development professional services,
 25 including technical assistance, education and leadership

26 development, marketing, and project recruitment. ~~Matching~~ Grants
 27 may also be used by a regional economic development organization
 28 to provide technical assistance to local governments, local
 29 economic development organizations, and existing and prospective
 30 businesses.

31 (c) A regional economic development organization may apply
 32 annually to the department for a ~~matching~~ grant. The department
 33 is authorized to approve, on an annual basis, grants to such
 34 regional economic development organizations. The maximum amount
 35 an organization may receive in any year will be \$50,000, or
 36 \$250,000 for any three regional economic development
 37 organizations that serve an entire region of a rural area of
 38 opportunity designated pursuant to s. 288.0656(7) if they are
 39 recognized by the department as serving such a region.

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

44 (2) In approving the participants, the department shall
 45 ~~consider the demonstrated need of the applicant for assistance~~
 46 ~~and~~ require the following:

47 (a) Documentation of official commitments of support from
 48 each of the units of local government represented by the
 49 regional organization.

50 ~~(b) Demonstration that each unit of local government has~~

51 | ~~made a financial or in-kind commitment to the regional~~
 52 | ~~organization.~~

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

55 | (b)-(d) Demonstration that the organization is in existence
 56 | and actively involved in economic development activities serving
 57 | the region.

58 | (c)-(e) Demonstration of the manner in which the
 59 | organization is or will coordinate its efforts with those of
 60 | other local and state organizations.

61 | Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2024.