

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2021 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 3007

**FISCAL
NOTE**

BY DELEGATES YOUNG, THOMPSON, HORNBUCKLE,

WILLIAMS AND BATES

[Introduced March 09, 2021; Referred to the
Committee on Workforce Development then Finance]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new article,
 2 designated §5B-6-1, §5B-6-2, §5B-6-3, §5B-6-4, §5B-6-5, and §5B-6-6, all relating to
 3 establishing a pilot program to provide grants to workers who relocate to West Virginia as
 4 remote workers; creating program; defining terms; specifying eligibility criteria, and
 5 limitations on grant awards; requiring the Department of Commerce to implement a simple
 6 application procedure, to market the program; and to determine appropriate measures to
 7 evaluate the benefits of the program; authorizing promulgation of emergency rules;
 8 requiring an annual report; and specifying a date for the end of the pilot program.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 6. REMOTE WORKER RELOCATION GRANT PROGRAM.

§5B-6-1. Creation of Remote Worker Relocation Grant Program.

1 There is hereby established a Remote Worker Relocation Grant Program, to be
 2 administered by the Department of Commerce, as a pilot program with the purpose of providing
 3 incentives in the form of cash grants to workers who come to this state to reside and work as
 4 remote workers or teleworkers.

§5B-6-2. Definitions.

1 As used in this article:

2 “New remote worker” means an individual who:

3 (1) Is a full-time employee of a business with its domicile or primary place of business
 4 within or outside West Virginia;

5 (2) Becomes a full-time resident of this state on or after January 1, 2022; and

6 (3) Performs the majority of his or her employment duties remotely from a home office or
 7 a co-working space located in this state; and

8 “Program” means the Remote Worker Relocation Grant Program established by the
 9 article;

10 “Qualifying remote worker expenses” means actual costs that a new remote worker incurs

11 for one or more of the following that are necessary to perform his or her employment duties:

12 (1) Relocation to this state;

13 (2) Computer software and hardware acquired incident to relocation in this state;

14 (3) Broadband Internet access or upgrade; and

15 (4) Membership in a co-working facility or similar space.

§5B-6-3. Eligibility; grant awards.

1 (a) A new remote worker may be eligible for a grant under the program for qualifying
2 remote worker expenses in the amount of not more than \$5,000 per year apportioned as follows:

3 (1) The amount of \$2,000 awarded upon relocation with documentation of proof of
4 employment and of residency;

5 (2) An additional amount of \$1,000 to be awarded after six months of residency; and

6 (3) An additional amount of up to \$2,000 for qualifying remote expenses upon the
7 completion of one year of residency.

8 (b) Grants shall be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis, subject to available funding
9 as appropriated by the Legislature. An initial award of \$2,000 does not entitle the grantee to
10 subsequent payments under subsection (a) of this section if funds are not available to pay all
11 awards.

§5B-6-4. Department duties; rule-making authority.

1 (a) The Department of Commerce shall create and adopt a simple procedure to implement
2 this program including, but not limited to, an application process, evidence necessary for proof of
3 residence and qualifying remote work expenses, grant accounting, and recipient tracking.

4 (b) The Department of Commerce shall promote awareness of the program through
5 marketing and coordination with other state economic development campaigns.

6 (c) The Department of Commerce shall adopt measurable goals, performance measures,
7 and an audit strategy to assess the utilization and performance of the program.

8 (d) In order to implement this pilot program by July 1, 2021, the Department of Commerce

9 is authorized to promulgate emergency legislative rules, pursuant to §29A-3-15 of this code, to
10 carry out the provisions of this act.

§5B-6-5. Annual report required.

1 The Department of Commerce shall file a report with the Legislature's Joint Committee on
2 Government and Finance, the Legislative Oversight Commission on Workforce Investment for
3 Economic Development, and the Governor at the end of each fiscal year for the life of the program,
4 commencing June 30, 2022. This report shall include the following:

- 5 (1) The number of persons receiving grants under the program;
6 (2) The average grant amount awarded and the average salary of grant recipients;
7 (3) The locations within this state of recipients of program grants and of their original
8 residences prior to relocation;
9 (4) The locations of the companies with whom grant recipients are employed; and
10 (5) The types of work or professions in which grant recipients are employed.

§5B-6-6. Termination of pilot program.

1 Unless extended or revived by act of the Legislature, the pilot program shall terminate on
2 June 30, 2024.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to create a pilot program to provide grants to workers who relocate to West Virginia as remote workers or teleworkers.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.