

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2024 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 4822

By Delegates Maynor, Clark, Willis, Hite, Riley, Ward,

Hornby, Hardy, Criss, Householder, and Rohrbach

[Introduced January 16, 2024; Referred

to the Committee on Economic Development and Tourism then Finance]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §5B-2-19 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating
2 to modifying the monetary amount of grants issued under the Certified Sites and
3 Development Readiness Program under the Department of Economic Development.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 2. DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

§5B-2-19. Certified Sites and Development Readiness Program.

1 (a)(1) The Certified Sites and Development Readiness Program is hereby created and is to
2 be administered as a program within the Department of Economic Development with appropriate
3 rules as necessary. The program shall establish evaluation criteria and site certification levels
4 based upon developmental readiness of an applicant's site. In developing the program, the
5 department shall consider utilizing all available resources and technical support, both public and
6 private.

7 (2) The department shall establish an application process and forms through which an
8 applicant may begin to participate in the program and identify and describe potential sites for
9 economic development and investment. The application process and forms should include site
10 specific information such as property ownership and control, descriptions and mapping, historical
11 and current uses, access to various forms of transportation, availability of various utility services,
12 environmental studies, conceptual plans, marketing materials, and all other information requested
13 by the department.

14 (3) Applicants may include only state, county, municipal, or regional governmental entities
15 such as, without limitation, economic development authorities, economic development
16 corporations, economic development alliances, or economic development partnerships.

17 (4) The department shall select applicant's sites to participate in the program from the
18 application materials. The department will select sites to participate in the program, evaluate the
19 selected sites, and certify each site based upon its readiness to be developed from the established
20 criteria. After evaluation, the department shall provide a report to the applicant detailing the results

21 of the site evaluation, identifying site deficiencies and strengths, and suggesting a prioritized list of
22 site improvements which may be made to improve the site's readiness to develop. The department
23 may thereafter reevaluate and recertify a site as improvements are made to a site and deficiencies
24 cured.

25 (5) The department may provide to applicants funding assistance up to a 50 percent match
26 through a matching grant program which may be spent only for directly improving the
27 developmental readiness of sites which have been selected to participate in the program. The
28 department shall establish criteria and an application process for awarding matching grants to
29 improve an applicant's site readiness: *Provided*, That no single site may receive any amount
30 greater than a maximum amount established by the department through this grant matching
31 program. Applications for this grant matching program must include details which specifically
32 identify what deficiency or deficiencies will be cured and through what means and all other
33 information required by the department. Grant matching funds must be spent, contracted to be
34 spent, or returned to the department within 12 months of the date of receipt of the grant matching
35 funds. Grant matching funds shall be paid back to the department when a participating site is sold
36 or leased for development. The department shall take prudent steps to receive a security interest
37 in a participating site in the amount of the grant matching funds award including, but not limited to,
38 placing of record in the county where the participating site is located, an appropriate lien against
39 the title. All funds repaid under this section shall remain within the program for use on participating
40 sites. The department shall monitor, and request appropriate evidence documenting the cured
41 deficiencies and thereafter reevaluate and recertify a participating site as part of this grant
42 matching program.

43 (6) The department may provide funding assistance to applicants through a micro grant
44 program which may be spent only for directly improving the developmental readiness of sites
45 which have been selected to participate in the program. The department shall establish criteria
46 and an application process for awarding the micro grants to improve an applicant's site readiness:

47 *Provided*, That no single site may receive any amount greater than ~~\$25,000~~ \$75,000 through this
48 micro grant program. Applications for this micro grant program must include details which
49 specifically identify what deficiency or deficiencies will be cured and through what means and all
50 other information required by the department. Micro grant funds must be spent, contracted to be
51 spent, or returned to the department within 12 months of the date of receipt of the micro grant
52 funds. All funds returned under this section shall remain within the program for use on participating
53 sites. The department shall monitor and request appropriate evidence documenting the cured
54 deficiency and thereafter reevaluate and recertify a participating site as part of this micro grant
55 program.

56 (b) (1) The Certified Sites and Development Readiness Fund is hereby created. The fund
57 shall be administered by the Department of Economic Development and shall consist of all
58 moneys made available for the purposes from:

- 59 (A) Appropriations provided by the Legislature;
- 60 (B) Any moneys available from external sources; and
- 61 (C) All interest and other income earned from investment of moneys in the fund.

62 (2) The Department of Economic Development shall use moneys in the fund to support
63 The Certified Sites and Development Readiness Program.

64 (3) Any balance, including accrued interest and any other returns, in the fund at the end of
65 each fiscal year may not expire to the General Revenue Fund but shall remain in the fund and be
66 expended for the purposes provided by this section.

67 (4) Fund balances may be invested under §12-6C-6 of this code. Earnings on the
68 investments shall be used solely for the purposes defined in this section.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to modify the monetary amount of grants issued under the Certified Sites and Development Readiness Program under the Department of Economic Development.

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