



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

38

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

40

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

46 288.018 Regional Rural Development Grants Program.—

47 (1)

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

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

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

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

74 (2) In approving the participants, the department shall  
75 consider the demonstrated need of the applicant for assistance

76 and require the following:

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

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

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

84 288.0655 Rural Infrastructure Fund.—

85 (2)

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

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

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

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

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

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

151 ~~of the total project cost.~~ In evaluating applications under this  
 152 paragraph, the department shall consider the extent to which the  
 153 application seeks to minimize administrative and consultant  
 154 expenses.

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

157 288.9604 Creation of the corporation.—

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

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

167 288.8017 Awards.—

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

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

175 (b) Local match requirements ~~of s. 288.0655~~ for projects

176 in the disproportionately affected counties.~~†~~

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

191 1. "Affordable" means that monthly rents or monthly  
 192 mortgage payments including taxes, insurance, and utilities do  
 193 not exceed 30 percent of that amount which represents the  
 194 percentage of the median adjusted gross annual income for the  
 195 households.

196 2. "Adjusted gross income" means all wages, assets, regular  
 197 cash or noncash contributions or gifts from persons outside the  
 198 household, and such other resources and benefits as may be  
 199 determined to be income by the United States Department of  
 200 Housing and Urban Development, adjusted for family size, less



201 deductions allowable under s. 62 of the Internal Revenue Code.~~†~~

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

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

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

226 employer. ~~;~~ and

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

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

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

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

251 determining whether to provide funds to a particular program,  
 252 the Department of Economic Opportunity shall consider the  
 253 location of the program in proximity to the program's intended  
 254 participants.

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

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

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

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

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

298 (a) An identification of the personnel necessary to  
299 conduct the instructional program, the qualifications of such  
300 personnel, and the respective responsibilities of the parties

301 for paying costs associated with the employment of such  
 302 personnel. National accreditation or licensure of an  
 303 instructional program by the Commission for Independent  
 304 Education is sufficient to meet the qualifications requirement.

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

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

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

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

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

326 industries with verifiable, demonstrated interest in operating  
 327 in within the Everglades Agricultural Area or in rural areas of  
 328 opportunity ~~and~~ in counties that provide for water storage and  
 329 dispersed water storage as part of Everglades restoration  
 330 efforts that are located in rural areas of opportunity as  
 331 ~~described in s. 288.0656.~~

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

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

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