

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 | revising residency requirements that a training
 33 | program participant must meet to receive a certain
 34 | grant from the department; revising the requirements
 35 | for employer-based training programs established in
 36 | the Everglades Agricultural Area or in certain rural
 37 | areas of opportunity; providing that certain
 38 | provisions shall control in the event of certain
 39 | conflicts; providing an effective date.

40 |
 41 | Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
 42 |

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

45 | 215.971 Agreements funded with federal or state
 46 | assistance.—

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

51 States Office of Management and Budget circulars, must include
52 all of the following:

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

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

72 288.018 Regional Rural Development Grants Program.—

73 (1)

74 (b) The department shall establish a ~~matching~~ grant
75 program to provide funding to regional economic development

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

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

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

100 (2) In approving the participants, the department shall

101 consider the demonstrated need of the applicant for assistance
 102 and require the following:

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

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

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

110 288.0655 Rural Infrastructure Fund.—

111 (2)

112 (b) To facilitate access of rural communities and rural
 113 areas of opportunity as defined by the Rural Economic
 114 Development Initiative to infrastructure funding programs of the
 115 Federal Government, such as those offered by the United States
 116 Department of Agriculture and the United States Department of
 117 Commerce, and state programs, including those offered by Rural
 118 Economic Development Initiative agencies, and to facilitate
 119 local government or private infrastructure funding efforts, the
 120 department may award grants for up to 75 ~~50~~ percent of the total
 121 infrastructure project cost, or up to 100 percent of the total
 122 infrastructure project cost for a project located in a rural
 123 community or a rural area of opportunity, as those terms are
 124 defined in s. 288.0656(2), which is also located in a fiscally
 125 constrained county as described in s. 218.67(1). Eligible

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

183 288.9604 Creation of the corporation.—

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

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

193 288.8017 Awards.—

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

199 (a) Ad valorem tax rate reduction within
200 disproportionately affected counties.†

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

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

211 1. "Infrastructure support" means site improvements.

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

222 (d) Grants to local governments in the disproportionately
 223 affected counties to establish and maintain equipment and
 224 trained personnel for local action plans of response to respond
 225 to disasters, such as plans created for the Coastal Impacts

226 Assistance Program.‡

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

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

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

251 affected counties.

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

254 446.71 Everglades Restoration Agricultural Community
 255 Employment Training Program.—

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

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

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

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

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

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

272 (2)-(1) The Department of Economic Opportunity, in
 273 cooperation with the state board as defined in s. 445.002, shall
 274 establish the Everglades Restoration Agricultural Community
 275 Employment Training Program within the Department of Economic

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

294 ~~(3)(2)~~ The Legislature supports projects that improve the
 295 economy in the Everglades Agricultural Area and in rural areas
 296 of opportunity with a boundary that is within 75 miles of the
 297 Everglades Agriculture Area 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 or institution-based training
 310 programs may be used, ~~or~~ for the purchase of equipment to be
 311 used for training purposes, the hiring of instructors, or any
 312 other purpose directly associated with the program. For the
 313 first 6 months of each fiscal year, the department shall set
 314 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 institution-based training programs. The allocation
 319 of funds must be included in 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 employer or training institution
 333 receiving funding through the program. Such agreement must
 334 include all of 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.

340 (b) An identification of the estimated length of the
 341 instructional program.

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

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

347 ~~(7)-(6)~~ The department ~~of Economic Opportunity~~ may grant up
 348 to 100 percent of the tuition for a training program participant
 349 who currently resides, and has resided for the preceding 12
 350 months ~~at least 3 of the 5 immediately preceding years, in~~

351 ~~within~~ the Everglades Agricultural Area or as described in a
352 rural area of opportunity with a boundary that is within 75
353 miles of the Everglades Agricultural Area s. 373.4592 and in
354 ~~counties~~ that provides ~~provide~~ for water storage and dispersed
355 water storage as part of Everglades restoration efforts that are
356 ~~located in rural areas of opportunity as described in s.~~
357 ~~288.0656.~~

358 (8)-(7) Employer-based training programs established in the
359 Everglades Agricultural Area or in a rural area of opportunity
360 with a boundary that is within 75 miles of the Everglades
361 Agriculture Area must include opportunities to obtain the
362 qualifications and skills necessary for jobs related to federal
363 and state restoration projects, the Airglades Airport in Hendry
364 County, an inland port in Palm Beach County, or other industries
365 with verifiable, demonstrated interest in operating in within
366 the Everglades Agricultural Area or in a rural area of
367 opportunity with a boundary that is within 75 miles of the
368 Everglades Agriculture Area and in counties that provide for
369 water storage and dispersed water storage as part of Everglades
370 restoration efforts ~~that are located in rural areas of~~
371 ~~opportunity as described in s. 288.0656.~~

372 (9)-(8) The department ~~of Economic Opportunity~~ shall adopt
373 rules to implement this section.

374 Section 7. In the event of a conflict of any provision of
375 this act with the provisions of House Bill 5, 2023 Regular

376 | Session, or similar legislation, the provisions of House Bill 5,
377 | 2023 Regular Session, or similar legislation, shall control to
378 | the extent of such conflict.

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