

## LEGISLATIVE BILL 1088

Approved by the Governor April 15, 2024

Introduced by Linehan, 39; Jacobson, 42; McDonnell, 5.

A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to the Nebraska Advantage Act; to amend sections 77-5723, 77-5727, and 77-5735, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2022; to change the time period in which the required levels of employment and investment must be met for certain projects; to provide for applicability; to harmonize provisions; and to repeal the original sections.

Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

Section 1. Section 77-5723, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2022, is amended to read:

77-5723 (1) In order to utilize the incentives set forth in the Nebraska Advantage Act, the taxpayer shall file an application, on a form developed by the Tax Commissioner, requesting an agreement with the Tax Commissioner.

(2) The application shall contain:

(a) A written statement describing the plan of employment and investment for a qualified business in this state;

(b) Sufficient documents, plans, and specifications as required by the Tax Commissioner to support the plan and to define a project;

(c) If more than one location within this state is involved, sufficient documentation to show that the employment and investment at different locations are interdependent parts of the plan. A headquarters shall be presumed to be interdependent with each other location directly controlled by such headquarters. A showing that the parts of the plan would be considered parts of a unitary business for corporate income tax purposes shall not be sufficient to show interdependence for the purposes of this subdivision;

(d) A nonrefundable application fee of one thousand dollars for a tier 1 project, two thousand five hundred dollars for a tier 2, tier 3, or tier 5 project, five thousand dollars for a tier 4 project, and ten thousand dollars for a tier 6 project. The fee shall be credited to the Nebraska Incentives Fund; and

(e) A timetable showing the expected sales tax refunds and what year they are expected to be claimed. The timetable shall include both direct refunds due to investment and credits taken as sales tax refunds as accurately as possible.

The application and all supporting information shall be confidential except for the name of the taxpayer, the location of the project, the amounts of increased employment and investment, and the information required to be reported by sections 77-5731 and 77-5734.

(3) An application must be complete to establish the date of the application. An application shall be considered complete once it contains the items listed in subsection (2) of this section, regardless of the Tax Commissioner's additional needs pertaining to information or clarification in order to approve or not approve the application.

(4) Once satisfied that the plan in the application defines a project consistent with the purposes stated in the Nebraska Advantage Act in one or more qualified business activities within this state, that the taxpayer and the plan will qualify for benefits under the act, and that the required levels of employment and investment for the project will be met within the applicable time period prescribed in this subsection prior to the end of the fourth year after the year in which the application was submitted for a tier 1, tier 3, or tier 6 project or the end of the sixth year after the year in which the application was submitted for a tier 2, tier 4, or tier 5 project, the Tax Commissioner shall approve the application. For a tier 6 project submitted and approved by the Tax Commissioner prior to December 1, 2020, or for any tier 1 or tier 3 project, the required levels of employment and investment shall be met prior to the end of the fourth year after the year in which the application was submitted. For a tier 6 project submitted and approved by the Tax Commissioner on or after December 1, 2020, or for any tier 2, tier 4, or tier 5 project, the required levels of employment and investment shall be met prior to the end of the sixth year after the year in which the application was submitted. For a tier 5 project that is sequential to a tier 2 large data center project, the required level of investment shall be met prior to the end of the fourth year after the expiration of the tier 2 large data center project entitlement period relating to sales tax exemptions.

(5) The Tax Commissioner shall make his or her determination to approve or not approve an application within one hundred eighty days after the date of the application. If the Tax Commissioner requests, by mail or by electronic means, additional information or clarification from the taxpayer in order to make his or her determination, such one-hundred-eighty-day period shall be tolled from the time the Tax Commissioner makes the request to the time he or she receives the requested information or clarification from the taxpayer. The taxpayer and the Tax Commissioner may also agree to extend the one-hundred-eighty-day period. If the Tax Commissioner fails to make his or her determination within the prescribed one-hundred-eighty-day period, the application shall be deemed

approved.

(6) Within one hundred eighty days after approval of the application, the Tax Commissioner shall prepare and mail a written agreement to the taxpayer for the taxpayer's signature. The taxpayer and the Tax Commissioner shall enter into a written agreement. The taxpayer shall agree to complete the project, and the Tax Commissioner, on behalf of the State of Nebraska, shall designate the approved plan of the taxpayer as a project and, in consideration of the taxpayer's agreement, agree to allow the taxpayer to use the incentives contained in the Nebraska Advantage Act. The application, and all supporting documentation, to the extent approved, shall be considered a part of the agreement. The agreement shall state:

(a) The levels of employment and investment required by the act for the project;

(b) The time period under the act in which the required levels must be met;

(c) The documentation the taxpayer will need to supply when claiming an incentive under the act;

(d) The date the application was filed; and

(e) A requirement that the company update the Department of Revenue annually on any changes in plans or circumstances which affect the timetable of sales tax refunds as set out in the application. If the company fails to comply with this requirement, the Tax Commissioner may defer any pending sales tax refunds until the company does comply.

(7) The incentives contained in section 77-5725 shall be in lieu of the tax credits allowed by the Nebraska Advantage Rural Development Act for any project. In computing credits under the act, any investment or employment which is eligible for benefits or used in determining benefits under the Nebraska Advantage Act shall be subtracted from the increases computed for determining the credits under section 77-27,188. New investment or employment at a project location that results in the meeting or maintenance of the employment or investment requirements, the creation of credits, or refunds of taxes under the Employment and Investment Growth Act shall not be considered new investment or employment for purposes of the Nebraska Advantage Act. The use of carryover credits under the Employment and Investment Growth Act, the Invest Nebraska Act, the Nebraska Advantage Rural Development Act, or the Quality Jobs Act shall not preclude investment and employment from being considered new investment or employment under the Nebraska Advantage Act. The use of property tax exemptions at the project under the Employment and Investment Growth Act shall not preclude investment not eligible for the property tax exemption from being considered new investment under the Nebraska Advantage Act.

(8) A taxpayer and the Tax Commissioner may enter into agreements for more than one project and may include more than one project in a single agreement. The projects may be either sequential or concurrent. A project may involve the same location as another project. No new employment or new investment shall be included in more than one project for either the meeting of the employment or investment requirements or the creation of credits. When projects overlap and the plans do not clearly specify, then the taxpayer shall specify in which project the employment or investment belongs.

(9) The taxpayer may request that an agreement be modified if the modification is consistent with the purposes of the act and does not require a change in the description of the project. An agreement may not be modified to a tier that would grant a higher level of benefits to the taxpayer or to a tier 1 project. Once satisfied that the modification to the agreement is consistent with the purposes stated in the act, the Tax Commissioner and taxpayer may amend the agreement. For a tier 6 project, the taxpayer must agree to limit the project to qualified activities allowable under tier 2 and tier 4.

Sec. 2. Section 77-5727, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2022, is amended to read:

77-5727 (1)(a) If the taxpayer fails either to meet the required levels of employment or investment for the applicable project within the time period prescribed in subsection (4) of section 77-5723 ~~by the end of the fourth year after the end of the year the application was submitted for a tier 1, tier 3, or tier 6 project or by the end of the sixth year after the end of the year the application was submitted for a tier 2, tier 4, or tier 5 project~~ or to utilize such project in a qualified business at employment and investment levels at or above those required in the agreement for the entire entitlement period, all or a portion of the incentives set forth in the Nebraska Advantage Act shall be recaptured or disallowed.

(b) In the case of a taxpayer who has failed to meet the required levels of investment or employment within the required time period, all reduction in the personal property tax because of the act shall be recaptured.

(2) In the case of a taxpayer who has failed to maintain the project at the required levels of employment or investment for the entire entitlement period, any reduction in the personal property tax, any refunds in tax or exemptions from tax allowed under subsection (2) of section 77-5725, and any refunds or reduction in tax allowed because of the use of a credit allowed under section 77-5725 shall be partially recaptured from either the taxpayer or the owner of the improvement to real estate and any carryovers of credits shall be partially disallowed. The amount of the recapture shall be a percentage equal to the number of years the taxpayer did not maintain the project at or above the required levels of investment and employment divided by the number of years of the project's entitlement period multiplied by the refunds and exemptions allowed, reduction in personal property tax, the credits used, and

the remaining carryovers. In addition, the last remaining year of personal property tax exemption shall be disallowed for each year the taxpayer did not maintain such project at or above the required levels of employment or investment.

(3) In the case of a taxpayer qualified under tier 5 who has failed to maintain the average number of equivalent employees at the project at the end of the six years following the year the taxpayer attained the required amount of investment, any refunds or exemptions in tax allowed under subsection (2) of section 77-5725 or any reduction in the personal property tax under section 77-5725 shall be partially recaptured from the taxpayer. The amount of recapture shall be the total amount of refunds, exemptions, and reductions in tax allowed for all years times the reduction in the average number of equivalent employees employed at the end of the entitlement period from the number of equivalent employees employed in the base year divided by the number of equivalent employees employed in the base year. For purposes of this subsection, the average number of equivalent employees shall be calculated at the end of the entitlement period by adding the number of equivalent employees in the year the taxpayer attains the required level of investment and each of the next following six years and dividing the result by seven.

(4) If the taxpayer receives any refund, exemption, or reduction in tax to which the taxpayer was not entitled or which was in excess of the amount to which the taxpayer was entitled, the refund, exemption, or reduction in tax shall be recaptured separate from any other recapture otherwise required by this section. Any amount recaptured under this subsection shall be excluded from the amounts subject to recapture under other subsections of this section.

(5) Any refund, exemption, or reduction in tax due, to the extent required to be recaptured, shall be deemed to be an underpayment of the tax and shall be immediately due and payable. When tax benefits were received in more than one year, the tax benefits received in the most recent year shall be recovered first and then the benefits received in earlier years up to the extent of the required recapture.

(6)(a) Except as provided in subdivision (6)(b) of this section, any personal property tax that would have been due except for the exemption allowed under the Nebraska Advantage Act, to the extent it becomes due under this section, shall be considered delinquent and shall be immediately due and payable to the county or counties in which the property was located when exempted.

(b) For a tier 2 large data center project, any personal property tax that would have been due except for the exemption under the Nebraska Advantage Act, together with interest at the rate provided in section 45-104.01 from the original delinquency date of the tax that would have been due until the date paid, to the extent it becomes due under this section, shall be considered delinquent and shall be immediately payable to the county or counties in which the property was located when exempted.

(c) All amounts received by a county under this section shall be allocated to each taxing unit levying taxes on tangible personal property in the county in the same proportion that the levy on tangible personal property of such taxing unit bears to the total levy of all of such taxing units.

(7) Notwithstanding any other limitations contained in the laws of this state, collection of any taxes deemed to be underpayments by this section shall be allowed for a period of three years after the end of the entitlement period.

(8) Any amounts due under this section shall be recaptured notwithstanding other allowable credits and shall not be subsequently refunded under any provision of the Nebraska Advantage Act unless the recapture was in error.

(9) The recapture required by this section shall not occur if the failure to maintain the required levels of employment or investment was caused by an act of God or national emergency.

Sec. 3. Section 77-5735, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2022, is amended to read:

77-5735 (1) The changes made in sections 77-5703, 77-5708, 77-5712, 77-5714, 77-5715, 77-5723, 77-5725, 77-5726, 77-5727, and 77-5731 by Laws 2008, LB895, and sections 77-5707.01, 77-5719.01, and 77-5719.02 apply to all applications filed on and after April 18, 2008. For all applications filed prior to such date, the provisions of the Nebraska Advantage Act as they existed immediately prior to such date apply.

(2) The changes made in sections 77-5725 and 77-5726 by Laws 2010, LB879, apply to all applications filed on or after July 15, 2010. For all applications filed prior to such date, the taxpayer may make a one-time election, within the time period prescribed by the Tax Commissioner, to have the changes made in sections 77-5725 and 77-5726 by Laws 2010, LB879, apply to such taxpayer's application, or in the absence of such an election, the provisions of the Nebraska Advantage Act as they existed immediately prior to July 15, 2010, apply to such application.

(3) The changes made in sections 77-5707, 77-5715, 77-5719, and 77-5725 by Laws 2010, LB918, apply to all applications filed on or after July 15, 2010. For all applications filed prior to such date, the provisions of the Nebraska Advantage Act as they existed immediately prior to such date apply.

(4) The changes made in sections 77-5701, 77-5703, 77-5705, 77-5715, 77-5723, 77-5725, 77-5726, and 77-5727 by Laws 2012, LB1118, apply to all applications filed on or after March 8, 2012. For all applications filed prior to such date, the provisions of the Nebraska Advantage Act as they existed immediately prior to such date apply.

(5) The changes made in sections 77-5707.01, 77-5709, 77-5712, 77-5719,

77-5720, 77-5723, and 77-5726 by Laws 2013, LB34, apply to all applications filed on or after September 6, 2013. For all applications filed prior to such date, the provisions of the Nebraska Advantage Act as they existed immediately prior to such date apply.

(6) The changes made in section 77-5726 by Laws 2017, LB161, apply to all applications filed before, on, or after August 24, 2017.

(7) The changes made in sections 77-5705, 77-5723, 77-5725, 77-5726, and 77-5727 and in subsections (3), (6), and (7) of section 77-5731 by Laws 2022, LB1150, apply to any agreement entered into under the Nebraska Advantage Act that is still active on January 1, 2023, if the taxpayer makes a one-time election, within the time period prescribed by the Tax Commissioner, to have such changes apply to such taxpayer's agreement. In the absence of such an election, the provisions of such sections and subsections as they existed immediately prior to January 1, 2023, shall apply to such agreement. For each election made under this subsection, the Tax Commissioner shall disclose such election, the identity of the taxpayer, and the location of the taxpayer's project to each municipality in which the project is located. The Tax Commissioner shall make such disclosures within thirty days after the election.

(8) The changes made in sections 77-5723 and 77-5727 by this legislative bill apply to any agreement entered into under the Nebraska Advantage Act that is still active on the effective date of this act if the taxpayer makes a one-time election, within the time period prescribed by the Tax Commissioner, to have such changes apply to such taxpayer's agreement. In the absence of such an election, the provisions of such sections as they existed immediately prior to the effective date of this act shall apply to such agreement.

Sec. 4. Original sections 77-5723, 77-5727, and 77-5735, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2022, are repealed.