

LEGISLATIVE BILL 87

Approved by the Governor April 24, 2019

Introduced by Wayne, 13.

A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to the Department of Economic Development; to amend section 81-12,149, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, and sections 58-708, 81-1201.21, and 81-12,156, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2018; to authorize the distribution of funds from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, from the Job Training Cash Fund, from the Site and Building Development Fund, and under the Business Innovation Act relating to opportunity zones as prescribed; and to repeal the original sections.
Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

Section 1. Section 58-708, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2018, is amended to read:

58-708 (1) During each calendar year in which funds are available from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund for use by the Department of Economic Development, the department shall make its best efforts to allocate not less than thirty percent of such funds to each congressional district. The department shall announce a grant and loan application period of at least ninety days duration for all projects. In selecting projects to receive trust fund assistance, the department shall develop a qualified allocation plan and give first priority to financially viable projects that serve the lowest income occupants for the longest period of time. The qualified allocation plan shall:

(a) Set forth selection criteria to be used to determine housing priorities of the housing trust fund which are appropriate to local conditions, including the community's immediate need for affordable housing, proposed increases in home ownership, private dollars leveraged, level of local government support and participation, and repayment, in part or in whole, of financial assistance awarded by the fund; and

(b) Give first priority in allocating trust fund assistance among selected projects to those projects which are located in whole or in part within an enterprise zone designated pursuant to the Enterprise Zone Act or an opportunity zone designated pursuant to the federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, Public Law 115-97, serve the lowest income occupant, and are obligated to serve qualified occupants for the longest period of time.

(2) The department shall fund in order of priority as many applications as will utilize available funds less actual administrative costs of the department in administering the program. In administering the program the department may contract for services or directly provide funds to other governmental entities or instrumentalities.

(3) The department may recapture any funds which were allocated to a qualified recipient for an eligible project through an award agreement if such funds were not utilized for eligible costs within the time of performance under the agreement and are therefor no longer obligated to the project. The recaptured funds shall be credited to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

Sec. 2. Section 81-1201.21, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2018, is amended to read:

81-1201.21 (1) There is hereby created the Job Training Cash Fund. The fund shall be under the direction of the Department of Economic Development. Money may be transferred to the fund pursuant to subdivision (1)(b)(iii) of section 48-621 and from the Cash Reserve Fund at the direction of the Legislature. The department shall establish a subaccount for all money transferred from the Cash Reserve Fund to the Job Training Cash Fund on or after July 1, 2005.

(2) The money in the Job Training Cash Fund or the subaccount established in subsection (1) of this section shall be used (a) to provide reimbursements for job training activities, including employee assessment, preemployment training, on-the-job training, training equipment costs, and other reasonable costs related to helping industry and business locate or expand in Nebraska, (b) to provide upgrade skills training of the existing labor force necessary to adapt to new technology or the introduction of new product lines, (c) as provided in section 79-2308, or (d) as provided in section 48-3405. The department shall give a preference to job training activities carried out in whole or in part within an enterprise zone designated pursuant to the Enterprise Zone Act or an opportunity zone designated pursuant to the federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, Public Law 115-97.

(3) The department shall establish a subaccount within the fund to provide training grants for training employees and potential employees of businesses that (a) employ twenty-five or fewer employees on the application date, (b) employ, or train for potential employment, residents of rural areas of Nebraska, or (c) are located in or employ, or train for potential employment, residents of high-poverty areas as defined in section 81-1203. The department shall calculate the amount of prior year investment income earnings accruing to the fund and allocate such amount to the subaccount for training grants under this subsection. The subaccount shall also be used as provided in the Teleworker Job Creation Act. The department shall give a preference to training

grants for businesses located in whole or in part within an enterprise zone designated pursuant to the Enterprise Zone Act.

(4) On April 5, 2018, any funds that were dedicated to carrying out sections 81-1210.01 to 81-1210.03 but were not yet expended shall be transferred to the Intern Nebraska Cash Fund.

(5) Any money in the Job Training Cash Fund available for investment shall be invested by the state investment officer pursuant to the Nebraska Capital Expansion Act and the Nebraska State Funds Investment Act.

Sec. 3. Section 81-12,149, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

81-12,149 (1) During each calendar year in which funds are available from the Site and Building Development Fund for use by the Department of Economic Development, the department shall allocate a specific amount of funds, not less than forty percent, to nonmetropolitan areas. For purposes of this section, nonmetropolitan areas means counties with fewer than one hundred thousand inhabitants according to the most recent federal decennial census. In selecting projects to receive fund assistance, the department shall develop a qualified action plan by January 1 of each even-numbered year. The plan shall give first priority to financially viable projects that have an agreement with a business that will locate a site within ninety days of the signed agreement and to financially viable projects located in whole or in part within an enterprise zone designated pursuant to the Enterprise Zone Act or an opportunity zone designated pursuant to the federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, Public Law 115-97. The plan shall set forth selection criteria to be used to determine priorities of the fund which are appropriate to local conditions, including the community's immediate need for site and building development, proposed increases in jobs and investment, private dollars leveraged, level of local government support and participation, and repayment, in part or in whole, of financial assistance awarded by the fund. The Director of Economic Development shall submit the plan to the Governor for approval.

(2) The department shall fund in order of priority as many applications as will utilize available funds less actual administrative costs of the department in administering the program. In administering the program the department may contract for services or directly provide funds to other governmental entities or instrumentalities.

Sec. 4. Section 81-12,156, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2018, is amended to read:

81-12,156 When selecting projects for funding under the Business Innovation Act, the department shall give a preference to projects located in whole or in part within an enterprise zone designated pursuant to the Enterprise Zone Act or an opportunity zone designated pursuant to the federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, Public Law 115-97.

Sec. 5. Original section 81-12,149, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, and sections 58-708, 81-1201.21, and 81-12,156, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2018, are repealed.