

RCW 43.330.070 Local development capacity—Training and technical assistance. (1) The department shall work closely with local communities to increase their capacity to respond to economic, environmental, and social problems and challenges. The department shall coordinate the delivery of development services and technical assistance to local communities or regional areas. It shall promote partnerships between the public and private sectors and between state and local officials to encourage appropriate economic growth and opportunity in communities throughout the state. The department shall promote appropriate local development by: Supporting the ability of communities to develop and implement strategic development plans; assisting businesses to start up, maintain, or expand their operations; encouraging public infrastructure investment and private and public capital investment in local communities; supporting efforts to manage growth and provide affordable housing and housing services; providing for the identification and preservation of the state's historical and cultural resources; and expanding employment opportunities.

(2) The department shall define a set of services including training and technical assistance that it will make available to local communities, community-based nonprofit organizations, regional areas, or businesses. The department shall simplify access to these programs by providing more centralized and user-friendly information and referral. The department shall coordinate community and economic development efforts to minimize program redundancy and maximize accessibility. The department shall develop a set of criteria for targeting services to local communities. To the extent funding is made available for this purpose, the department shall provide technical assistance or enter into contracts to provide technical assistance to assist local communities in developing competitive applications for federal funding.

(3) The department shall develop a coordinated and systematic approach to providing training to community-based nonprofit organizations, local communities, and businesses. The approach shall be designed to increase the economic and community development skills available in local communities by providing training and funding for training for local citizens, nonprofit organizations, and businesses. The department shall emphasize providing training in those communities most in need of state assistance. [2024 c 223 s 2; 1993 c 280 s 10.]

Findings—Intent—2024 c 223: "The legislature finds that Washington ranks poorly among all states in the amount of federal grants received relative to income taxes collected from its residents. The legislature also finds that many of Washington's communities, particularly in slow-growing rural areas, face an economic development "chicken and egg" dilemma in which they need to secure matching dollars in order to obtain federal economic development dollars that would increase the local tax base, local revenue, and local employment and incomes.

The legislature further finds that recent federal legislation provides funding for economic development clusters that Washington state has invested in as part of its economic development strategy, including broadband and clean energy, buildings, and transportation. The federal legislation includes the infrastructure investment and jobs act, P.L. 117-58, the creating helpful incentives to produce

semiconductors and science act, P.L. 117-167, and the inflation reduction act, P.L. 117-169.

The legislature further finds that increasing the availability of federal grant dollars in local communities provides a benefit of a reasonably general character to a significant part of the public.

Therefore, the legislature intends to continue and expand its efforts to increase the capacity of the department of commerce to assist local communities in successfully applying for federal grant dollars including through providing local communities with state matching funds for securing federal grants." [2024 c 223 s 1.]