

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 1870

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Promoting economic development by increasing opportunities for local communities to secure federal funding.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Barnard, Ryu, Leavitt, Connors, Couture, Schmidt, Duerr, Slatter, Reed, Chapman, Graham, Ormsby, Timmons, Donaghy, Paul, Doglio, Reeves, Hackney and Griffey).

House Committee on Innovation, Community & Economic Development, & Veterans
House Committee on Appropriations
Senate Committee on Business, Financial Services, Gaming & Trade
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Background:

The Department of Commerce's (Commerce) responsibilities include soliciting private and federal grants for economic and community development programs and maximizing the impact of federal funding for economic development through coordination with research facilities to leverage federal funding for research, development, innovation of new technologies, and transfer of technology to the private sector to promote business development and jobs in Washington.

Federal grant opportunities address multiple aspects of economic development, including broadband, clean and efficient energy, climate change resiliency, disaster mitigation and recovery, housing and homelessness, public infrastructure, semiconductor technology, transportation, and water and waste management. The majority of the federal grant opportunities require the applicant to provide a percentage of matching funds, also referred to as cost sharing. State funds may be used to meet federal match requirements in limited circumstances, including the Public Works Assistance Account and the Statewide Broadband Account.

Training and Technical Assistance to Local Communities.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Commerce provides training and technical assistance to local communities to promote local development and encourage economic growth and opportunity, including developing and implementing strategic development plans, assisting businesses, encouraging investment in public infrastructure, and expanding employment opportunities. Commerce is required to make training and technical assistance available through centralized and user-friendly information and referral, and coordinated community and economic development efforts. Local communities most in need of assistance must be prioritized for training.

Associate Development Organization Grant Program.

By July 1, 2024, Commerce is required to establish a grant program to recruit, hire, and retain grant writers for associate development organizations. An "associate development organization" is a local economic development nonprofit corporation that is broadly representative of community interests. After the grant program is established, Commerce is required to award grants annually, and to prioritize grants for distressed areas.

Inventory of Grant Opportunities for Entities Engaged in Economic Development Activities.

Commerce inventories grant opportunities that are available for entities engaged in economic development activities. The inventory includes grant and project opportunities in the federal register. Commerce may consult with federal agencies on prospects for federal funds for Washington's economic development purposes, including the Small Business Administration, the Department of Labor, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Ecology. Commerce facilitates joint efforts that will increase the likelihood of success in applicants seeking grants.

Summary:

Technical Assistance for Federal Grant Applications.

The Department of Commerce (Commerce) must provide technical assistance to local communities developing applications for federal funding in Commerce's training and technical assistance that it provides to local communities, community-based nonprofit organizations, regional areas, and businesses. To the extent funding is made available, Commerce may provide the technical assistance through contracts with external parties.

Prioritized Grants for Federal Funds in Associate Development Organization Grant Program.

Commerce's grant program supporting associate development organizations must prioritize grants for applications for federal funds, in addition to grants for distressed areas.

Federal Resource Guide Included in Inventory of Grant Opportunities.

Commerce may include a resource guide for applicants for federal grants in its existing inventory of grant opportunities. The resource guide should include links to federal applications and relevant resources, as well as contact information for Commerce staff for grant applicants in need of assistance.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	97	0	
Senate	49	0	(Senate amended)
House	93	0	(House concurred)

Effective: June 6, 2024