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**SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1783**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2023 Regular Session**

**By** House Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Sandlin, Maycumber, Couture, Chapman, Dent, Eslick, and Volz)

AN ACT Relating to supporting economic development in distressed areas through hiring of grant writers; adding a new section to chapter 43.330 RCW; and creating a new section.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature finds that access to economic development assistance from government and philanthropic sources typically requires careful and skilled writing of grant applications. The legislature finds that trained and skilled grant writers are scarce, and particularly difficult to find in distressed areas with higher rates of unemployment that need economic development assistance. Therefore, the legislature intends to provide the department of commerce with the authority and resources necessary to ensure each county associate development organization can recruit and retain a full-time grant writer.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 43.330 RCW to read as follows:

(1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, by July 1, 2024, the department shall establish a grant program to support associate development organizations in the recruiting, hiring, and retention of full-time grant writers. The department must award grants on an annual basis and must prioritize grants for distressed areas as defined under RCW 43.168.020.

(2) Associate development organizations must apply for the grant program in a manner to be determined by the department.

(3) Associate development organizations that receive awards under this section must provide information on the use of the funds, including a description of the associate development organization's recruiting and hiring efforts and, if applicable, the number and types of grants applied for by the grant writers funded by the state, in their annual reports to the department required under RCW 43.330.082.

(4) Beginning December 31, 2026, the department must include information on grant award funding and use in its reports to the legislature on associate development organizations contracts required under RCW 43.330.082.

(5) The department shall adopt rules to implement this section.

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