

LEGISLATIVE BILL 961

Approved by the Governor April 12, 2010

Introduced by Council, 11; Ashford, 20; Carlson, 38; Coash, 27; Cook, 13; Giese, 17; Gloor, 35; Harms, 48; Karpisek, 32; Langemeier, 23; Lautenbaugh, 18; McCoy, 39; McGill, 26; Mello, 5; Pirsch, 4; Price, 3; Rogert, 16; Schilz, 47; Stuthman, 22; Sullivan, 41; Utter, 33; Wallman, 30; White, 8; Conrad, 46; Dubas, 34.

FOR AN ACT relating to economic development; to amend sections 81-1203, 81-1205, and 81-1207, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, and section 81-1201.21, Revised Statutes Supplement, 2009, as amended by section 72, Legislative Bill 3, One Hundred First Legislature, First Special Session, 2009; to change provisions relating to certain training grants; to harmonize provisions; and to repeal the original sections.

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

Section 1. Section 81-1201.21, Revised Statutes Supplement, 2009, as amended by section 72, Legislative Bill 3, One Hundred First Legislature, First Special Session, 2009, 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) (iv) 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. ~~Any unexpended or unobligated balance remaining within such subaccount on July 1, 2014, shall be transferred by the State Treasurer to the Cash Reserve Fund no later than July 10, 2014. Any obligated amount not transferred from the subaccount that remains unexpended on July 1, 2013, shall be transferred by the State Treasurer to the Cash Reserve Fund no later than December 31, 2015. Transfers may be made from the Job Training Cash Fund to the General Fund at the direction of the Legislature.~~

(2) The department shall use the Job Training Cash Fund or the subaccount established in subsection (1) of this section 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, or to provide upgrade skills training of the existing labor force necessary to adapt to new technology or the introduction of new product lines.

(3) The department shall establish a subaccount within the fund to provide job training grants targeted to small employers, rural employers, and poverty area employers meeting one of the following criteria: (a) Employ twenty-five or fewer employees, (b) located in rural areas of Nebraska, or (c) located in areas of high concentration of poverty within the corporate limits of a city or village consisting of one or more contiguous census tracts, as determined by the most recent federal decennial census, which contain a percentage of persons below the poverty line of greater than thirty percent, and all census tracts contiguous to such tract or tracts, as determined by the most recent federal decennial census. 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 small, rural, or poverty area employer grants. training grants under this subsection.

(4) Any money in the 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. 2. Section 81-1203, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

81-1203 (1) A business applying for a job training grant, other than a grant provided under subsection (3) of section 81-1201.21, shall submit a business plan to the Department of Economic Development which includes, but is not limited to:

(a) The number of jobs to be created or the number of existing positions that will be retrained;

(b) The nature of the business and the type of jobs to be created or positions to be retrained;

(c) The estimated wage levels of the jobs to be created or positions to be retrained; and

(d) A program schedule for the job training project.

(2) A business applying for a job training grant, other than a grant provided under subsection (3) of section 81-1201.21, must demonstrate that the job training project to be conducted pursuant to the grant meets the following criteria:

(a) The wage level of the jobs created will meet the local prevailing average;

(b) The jobs created will diversify the local economy;

(c) The goods or services produced by the company will be export-oriented;

(d) Seventy-five percent of the jobs created will be full-time jobs; and

(e) The new jobs will be created within three calendar years.

(3) A business applying for a job training grant under subsection (3) of section 81-1201.21 may partner with a postsecondary educational institution; a private, nonprofit organization holding a certificate of exemption under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code; or a learning community coordinating council or school district and at least one that has partnered with a private, nonprofit organization, whose purpose is providing basic job and life skills training to individuals in high-poverty areas. Such projects shall be focused on job training and job creation for persons residing in high-poverty areas within the boundaries of the partnering learning community or school district. The application shall specify the role of the partnering coordinating council or school district and the private, nonprofit organization entity in identifying and training potential job applicants for the applicant business.

(4) A business applying for a training grant under subsection (3) of section 81-1201.21 may apply as a business that has established a program under which residents of rural areas or high-poverty areas are trained for employment or potential employment by documenting:

(a) That the business has established a program designed to fill a minimum of four positions in rural areas and a minimum of eight positions in high-poverty areas for such business;

(b) A program schedule for the training project;

(c) The nature of the business and the number of positions available or to be created;

(d) That the wage level of the positions available or to be created will meet the local prevailing average;

(e) The value of the positions available or to be created in diversifying the local economy;

(f) That a minimum of seventy-five percent of the positions available or to be created will be full-time jobs;

(g) That the business will accept funding on behalf of trainees and will provide a match of a minimum of twenty-five percent of the value of the grant, either monetarily or through in-kind services, as part of the training for each trainee;

(h) That any new position created will be done within three calendar years;

(i) That the number of trainees will not exceed one hundred twenty-five percent of the number of positions that will be available at the time of application; and

(j) That the goods or services produced by the business are generally exportable in nature resulting in additional money to the community or the state and the positions available or to be created are not local retail positions.

(5) Each business participating in a training grant under subsection (3) of section 81-1201.21 shall be subject to an audit by the Department of Economic Development and shall annually report or provide to the department the following information:

(a) The percentage of trainees who have successfully completed the training;

(b) The percentage of trainees that such business hired;

(c) An itemized description of such business's match including expenditures per trainee; and

(d) A copy of the training curriculum.

(6) For purposes of this subsection, subsections (3) through (5) of this section:

(a) High-poverty area means an area consisting of one or more

contiguous census tracts, as determined by the most recent federal decennial census, which contain a percentage of persons with incomes below the poverty line of greater than thirty percent, and all census tracts contiguous to such tract or tracts, as determined by the most recent federal decennial census; and

(b) ~~private~~, Private, nonprofit organization means an organization whose purpose is providing basic job and life skills training to individuals in need of such training in rural or high-poverty areas.

Sec. 3. Section 81-1205, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

81-1205 A business which is awarded a job training grant or a training grant shall provide annual performance reports to the Department of Economic Development and a final performance report upon the completion of the project. The department shall provide an annual report by December 1 of each year to the Appropriations Committee of the Legislature. The report shall include information on each active grant, including specific information regarding the number of positions to be trained, whether new or existing employees are to be trained, the length of time that the project has been active, the amount of funding committed to the project, the amount of funding paid out to date, and the projected completion date. The report shall also provide information on grants closed during the reporting year, including the total number of employees trained, whether new or existing employees were trained, total project expenditures, and the duration time of the project. The department shall also provide information summarizing the use of community college areas to provide training services and list specific projects where a community college area is providing all or a component of the training services. If private or inhouse training services are used, the department shall provide information regarding the name of the private or inhouse training service and the qualifications of the training service.

Sec. 4. Section 81-1207, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

81-1207 (1) If a business which receives a job training grant creates fewer jobs than stated in the business plan, the business shall repay the job training grant as provided in this section- subsection. If less than fifty percent of the proposed jobs are created, one hundred percent of the grant shall be repaid. If fifty percent or more but less than seventy percent of the proposed jobs are created, fifty percent of the grant shall be repaid. If seventy percent or more but less than ninety percent of the proposed jobs are created, twenty-five percent of the grant shall be repaid. If ninety percent or more of the proposed jobs are created, no repayment is required.

(2) If a business receives a training grant and fewer trainees than stated in the business plan complete the training, the business shall repay the grant as provided in this subsection. For every trainee who does not complete the training, the business shall repay fifty percent of the prorated share of such trainee's uncompleted training costs.

Sec. 5. Original sections 81-1203, 81-1205, and 81-1207, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, and section 81-1201.21, Revised Statutes Supplement, 2009, as amended by section 72, Legislative Bill 3, One Hundred First Legislature, First Special Session, 2009, are repealed.