

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2020 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

Senate Bill 498

FISCAL
NOTE

BY SENATOR HAMILTON, STOLLINGS, SMITH, BALDWIN,

WOELFEL, FACEMIRE, AND ROMANO

[Introduced January 15, 2020; referred
to the Committee on Economic Development; and
then to the Committee on Finance]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new section,
 2 designated §5B-1-9, relating to creating the New Worker Relocation Incentive Program;
 3 providing an incentive for workers to move to West Virginia; establishing conditions for the
 4 incentive; defining terms; and requiring rulemaking.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 1. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE.

§5B-1-9. New Worker Relocation Incentive Program.

1 (a) The Department of Commerce shall design and implement a New Worker Relocation
 2 Incentive Program to award incentive grants to new workers as provided in this section and
 3 subject to the policies and procedures the department adopts to implement the program.

4 (b) A new worker may be eligible for a \$5,000 grant under the program for qualifying
 5 expenses.

6 (c) The secretary shall propose rules for legislative approval in accordance with §29A-3-1
 7 et seq. of this code to implement this section, including, but not limited to:

8 (1) Adopting procedures for implementing the program, which shall include a simple
 9 certification process to certify new workers and qualifying expenses;

10 (2) Promoting awareness of the program, including through coordination with relevant
 11 trade groups and by integration into the department’s economic development marketing
 12 campaigns;

13 (3) Awarding grants on a first-come, first-served basis beginning January 1, 2021, subject
 14 to available funding; and

15 (4) Adopting measurable goals, performance measures, and an audit strategy to assess
 16 the utilization and performance of the program.

17 (d) As used in this section:

18 “New worker” means an individual who on or after January 1, 2021:

19 (A) Becomes a full-time resident of this state;

20 (B) Becomes a full-time employee of a business domiciled or authorized to do business
21 in this state;

22 (C)(i) Is employed in an occupation identified by the Department of Labor in its 2016–2026
23 Long Term Occupational Projections as one of the top occupations at each level of educational
24 attainment typical for entry; or

25 (ii) Who the department determines should otherwise receive an incentive grant under the
26 program because the worker possesses exceptional education, skills, or training or due to other
27 extraordinary circumstances; and

28 (D) Whose gross wage for the position equals or exceeds:

29 (i) One hundred sixty percent of the state minimum wage; or

30 (ii) If the employer is located in a labor market area in which the average annual
31 unemployment rate is higher than the average annual unemployment rate for the state, 140
32 percent of the state minimum wage.

33 “Qualifying expenses” means the actual costs that a new worker incurs for one or more of
34 the following:

35 (A) Relocation expenses, which may include closing costs for a primary residence, rental
36 security deposit, first month’s rent payment, and other expenses established in the department’s
37 guidelines; and

38 (B) Expenses necessary for a new worker to perform his or her employment duties,
39 including connectivity costs, specialized tools and equipment, and other expenses established in
40 the department’s guidelines.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to creates the New Worker Relocation Incentive Program. The bill provides an incentive, up to \$5,000, for workers to move to West Virginia. The bill establishes conditions for the incentive, defines terms, and requires rulemaking.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.