WEST virginia legislature

**FISCAL NOTE**

2021 regular session

Introduced

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Senate Bill 47

By Senators Hamilton, Baldwin, and Nelson

[Introduced February 10, 2021; referred
to the Committee on Economic Development; and then to the Committee on Finance]

A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new section, designated §5B-1-11, relating to creating the New Worker Relocation Incentive Program; providing an incentive for workers to move to West Virginia; establishing conditions for the incentive; defining terms; and requiring rulemaking.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 1. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE.

§5B-1-11. New Worker Relocation Incentive Program.

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

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

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

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

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

(3) Awarding grants on a first-come, first-served basis beginning January 1, 2022, subject to available funding; and

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

(d) As used in this section:

“New worker” means an individual who on or after January 1, 2022:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to create 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.