

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2024 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 5627

By Delegates Lucas and Linville

[Introduced February 12, 2024; Referred to the
Committee on Economic Development and Tourism
then Finance]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new section,
 2 designated §5B-1-11, relating to creating the West Virginia Small Business COVID Relief
 3 Act to be established under the West Virginia Department of Commerce; providing
 4 legislative findings; creating the act and providing qualifications for relief; and providing an
 5 effective date.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 1. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE.
§5B-1-11. West Virginia Small Business COVID Relief Act.

1 (a) Legislative findings.-- The West Virginia Legislature finds that West Virginians were
 2 greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and are still feeling the effects in 2024.
 3 Among those hardest hit were those West Virginia small businesses. Most small businesses had
 4 to close for a period of time, and some were unable to survive. The Legislature finds that many of
 5 those businesses could use assistance to help get them back on their feet.

6 (b) West Virginia Small Business COVID Relief Act established. -- There shall hereby be
 7 established a grant in an amount not to exceed \$25,000 for small businesses in West Virginia who
 8 were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This grant shall be established by federal relief money
 9 allocated to West Virginia. This grant is intended to assist the most affected businesses across the
 10 state of West Virginia, including, but not limited to:

11 (1) Restaurants;

12 (2) Breweries;

13 (3) Event businesses;

14 (4) Furniture stores;

15 (5) Home furnishings;

16 (6) Clothing stores;

17 (7) Shoe stores;

18 (8) Jewelry, luggage, and leather goods;

19 (9) Sporting goods, hobby, and music instrument stores;

20 (10) Book Stores and news dealers;

21 (11) Florists;

22 (12) Office supplies and gift stores;

23 (13) Used merchandise stores;

24 (14) Motion pictures and video industries;

25 (15) Gyms;

26 (16) Child daycare services;

27 (17) Performing arts companies;

28 (18) Dance companies;

29 (19) Amusement parks and arcades; and

30 (20) Salons and barbers.

31 In order to qualify for this \$25,000 grant, eligible businesses must make no more than \$3
32 million in business earnings per year. Applicants for this relief shall be subject to an audit to
33 determine the amount of need and the amount to be awarded to that small business. A small
34 business must use this grant money for business purposes only.

35 (c) *Effective date.*-- This section shall become effective upon passage.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to create the West Virginia Small Business COVID Relief Act.

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