
DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT

TourismOhio

- Renames the office within the Department of Development (DEV) responsible for promoting Ohio tourism from TourismOhio to the State Marketing Office, and charges the Office with promoting not just tourism, but also “living, learning, and working” in Ohio.

Microcredential assistance program

- Increases the maximum reimbursement amount for microcredential training providers participating in DEV’s Individual Microcredential Assistance Program from \$250,000 to \$500,000 per fiscal year.

Ohio Residential Broadband Expansion Grant Program funding

- Requires gifts, grants, and contributions provided to the DEV Director for the Ohio Residential Broadband Expansion Grant Program to be deposited in the Ohio Residential Broadband Expansion Grant Program Fund.
- Specifies that if the use of these deposits or the appropriation of nonstate funds is contingent upon meeting application, scoring, or other requirements that are different from existing law Broadband Grant Program requirements, DEV must adopt the different requirements.
- Requires a description of any differences in Broadband Grant Program requirements adopted by DEV as described above to be made available with the Broadband Grant Program application on the DEV website at least 30 days before the beginning of the application submission period.

TourismOhio name and mission

(R.C. 122.07, 122.071, 122.072, 122.073, and 149.309)

The bill renames the office within DEV responsible for promoting Ohio tourism from TourismOhio to the State Marketing Office. In addition, it charges the Office with promoting not just tourism, but also “living, learning, and working” in Ohio. The Director of the Office is also not required to be the equivalent rank of deputy director of DEV, as was the Director of TourismOhio.

The bill also renames the existing TourismOhio Advisory Board as the State Marketing Advisory Board. However, that board continues to focus on advising the state on strategies to promote tourism.

Microcredential assistance program reimbursement

(R.C. 122.1710)

The bill increases the maximum reimbursement amount for a training provider from the Individual Microcredential Assistance Program (IMAP) from \$250,000 to \$500,000 per fiscal year.

Under continuing law, approved training providers may seek reimbursement through IMAP for the cost to provide training that allows an individual to receive a microcredential, i.e., an industry-recognized credential or certificate, approved by the Chancellor of Higher Education, that a person can complete in one year or less.²² Continuing law limits a training provider's IMAP reimbursement to \$3,000 per training credential that an individual receives.

Ohio Residential Broadband Expansion Grant Program funding

(R.C. 122.4017, 122.4037, and 122.4040)

Ongoing law requires the Ohio Broadband Expansion Program Authority to award grants under the Ohio Residential Broadband Expansion Grant Program using funds from the Ohio Residential Broadband Expansion Grant Program Fund. The bill specifies that any gift, grant, and contribution received by the DEV Director for the Broadband Grant Program must be deposited in the fund. (Currently, the only funds that the law expressly requires to be deposited in the fund are payments from certain broadband providers that fail to provide tier two service as described in a challenge upheld by the Authority.²³)

Under the bill, if an appropriation for the Broadband Grant Program includes funds that are not state funds, or if the Director receives funds that are in the form of a gift, grant, or contribution to the fund, the Authority must award grants from those funds. However, if those funds are contingent on meeting application, scoring, or other requirements that are different from existing law requirements under the Broadband Grant Program, the following must occur:

- DEV must adopt the different requirements and publish a description of them with the program application on the DEV website.
- A description of any differences in application, scoring, or other program requirements must be available with the application on the DEV website at least 30 days before the beginning of the application submission period.

Background

The Broadband Grant Program awards grants to broadband providers for projects to provide "tier two broadband service" to residences in areas of the state that are "tier one areas" or "unserved areas." DEV administers the program and works in conjunction with the Authority, the entity that awards the grants according to a weighted scoring system developed by DEV in consultation with the Authority.

"Tier two broadband service" is retail wireline or wireless broadband service capable of delivering internet access at speeds of at least 25 megabits per second downstream and 3 megabits per second upstream. A "tier one area" is an area with "tier one broadband service,"

²² R.C. 122.178, not in the bill.

²³ R.C. 122.4036 and 122.4037, not in the bill.

internet access delivered at speeds of at least 10 but less than 25 megabits per second downstream and at least 1 but less than 3 megabits upstream. An “unserved area” is an area without access to tier one service or tier two service, excluding an area where construction of a network to provide tier one service or tier two service is in progress and scheduled to be completed within a two-year period.²⁴

²⁴ R.C. 122.40 to 122.4077, all but R.C. 122.4017, 122.4037, and 122.4040, not in the bill.