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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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SENATE BILL

No. 962 Session of  
2021

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INTRODUCED BY LANGERHOLC, STEFANO, ARGALL, GORDNER, MENSCH,  
SCHWANK AND COSTA, DECEMBER 1, 2021

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REFERRED TO COMMUNITY, ECONOMIC AND RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT,  
DECEMBER 1, 2021

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AN ACT

1 Establishing the Rural Coworking and Innovation Center Grant  
2 Program, providing for requirements and imposing duties on  
3 the Department of Community and Economic Development.

4 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
5 hereby enacts as follows:

6 Section 1. Short title.

7 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Rural  
8 Coworking and Innovation Center Grant Program Act.

9 Section 2. Definitions.

10 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall  
11 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the  
12 context clearly indicates otherwise:

13 "Coworking and innovation center." A facility designed to  
14 provide individuals with the infrastructure and equipment to  
15 participate in an online workforce.

16 "Department." The Department of Community and Economic  
17 Development of the Commonwealth.

18 "Entity." A municipality, institution of higher education,

1 private business, a nonprofit corporation organized for  
2 community development purposes under section 501(c)(3) of the  
3 Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (Public Law 99-514, 26 U.S.C. § 1  
4 et seq.) or a redevelopment authority created and organized  
5 under the act of May 24, 1945 (P.L.991, No.385), known as the  
6 Urban Redevelopment Law.

7 "Grant." A grant awarded as part of the Rural Coworking and  
8 Innovation Center Grant Program.

9 "Grant program." The Rural Coworking and Innovation Center  
10 Grant Program.

11 "Municipality." A county, city, borough, incorporated town,  
12 township or home rule, optional plan or optional charter  
13 municipality, municipal authority in this Commonwealth and an  
14 entity formed under 53 Pa.C.S. Ch. 23 Subch. A (relating to  
15 intergovernmental cooperation).

16 "Rural county." A county that is defined as rural by the  
17 Center for Rural Pennsylvania according to the most recent  
18 census.

19 Section 3. The Rural Coworking and Innovation Center Grant  
20 Program.

21 (a) Establishment.--The Rural Coworking and Innovation  
22 Center Grant Program is established and shall be administered by  
23 the department.

24 (b) Objectives.--The department may accomplish the following  
25 objectives when administering the grant program:

26 (1) Construct or renovate a facility in one or more  
27 rural counties to create one or more coworking and innovation  
28 centers.

29 (2) Extend and improve utilities and broadband service  
30 connections to a coworking and innovation center in a rural

1 county.

2 (3) Purchase equipment, furniture and security systems  
3 as part of a coworking and innovation center in a rural  
4 county.

5 Section 4. Requirements.

6 (a) Regulations.--The department may promulgate rules and  
7 regulations establishing criteria for an entity to receive a  
8 grant under this act. The rules and regulations shall include:

9 (1) The application form for submission to the  
10 department.

11 (2) Entities that are eligible to apply for a grant.

12 (3) The method and formula for determining a grant  
13 award amount.

14 (4) The reporting requirements of grant recipients.

15 (b) Prioritization.--In determining the amount of a grant  
16 award, the department may prioritize projects:

17 (1) That will serve underserved communities.

18 (2) That demonstrate comprehensive planning by an  
19 applicant that has limited access to financial resources,  
20 including financial resources from local or county  
21 government.

22 (3) That maximize economic development opportunities in  
23 collaboration with the economic development needs or plans of  
24 an educational institution, county or municipality.

25 (c) Limitations.--A grant award may not be more than  
26 \$500,000 and may only be awarded:

27 (1) If the grant program recipient agrees to provide a  
28 combination of funds, land, buildings or in-kind work in an  
29 amount equal to at least 25% of the grant award.

30 (2) For a grant awarded for construction or renovation

1 of a coworking and innovation center, if the center will be  
2 open and offered for an individual's use for seven or more  
3 years in the rural county where the center is located.

4 (3) For a grant awarded for extending or improving  
5 utilities or broadband service connections to a coworking and  
6 innovation center or for purchasing equipment, furniture or  
7 security systems for a coworking and innovation center, if  
8 the center will be open and offered for an individual's use  
9 for five or more years in the rural county where the center  
10 is located.

11 (d) Ongoing operation.--Grant money may not be awarded for  
12 the ongoing operation or maintenance of a coworking and  
13 innovation center.

14 (e) Audit.--Grant money awarded under this act shall be  
15 subject to audit by the department.

16 Section 5. Effective date.

17 This act shall take effect in 90 days.