



2023 ASSEMBLY BILL 856

December 22, 2023 - Introduced by Representatives DALLMAN, KURTZ, C. ANDERSON, DITTRICH, KITCHENS, KRUG, MURSAU, NOVAK, O'CONNOR, PENTERMAN, PLUMER, SCHRAA, STUBBS, SWEARINGEN and JACOBSON, cosponsored by Senators BALLWEG, BRADLEY, CARPENTER, FEYEN, MARKLEIN, SPREITZER and TESTIN. Referred to Committee on Tourism.

1 **AN ACT to create** 238.143 of the statutes; **relating to:** grants awarded by the
2 Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation for the purpose of attracting
3 opportunities and events to Wisconsin.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

This bill requires the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation to establish and administer an economic development program for the purpose of attracting major opportunities and events to Wisconsin. Any city, village, town, or county, American Indian tribe or band, area visitor and convention bureau, business improvement district, or private entity is an eligible applicant for a grant under the bill.

An eligible applicant must expend all grant moneys on a project to attract to Wisconsin or host in Wisconsin, or both, a major opportunity or event that is open to the public, whether or not free of charge. Specifically, grant moneys may be used to undertake a project to do one or more of the following:

1. Bid against other states or jurisdictions outside Wisconsin to attract an opportunity or event that will draw national exposure and drive economic development and visitors to Wisconsin.

2. Host an opportunity or event that will attract national exposure and drive economic development and visitors to Wisconsin that the eligible applicant has secured through a competitive bid against other states or jurisdictions outside Wisconsin.

Before WEDC awards each grant under the bill, an eligible applicant must provide a project cost-benefit analysis to WEDC and must secure from nonstate

ASSEMBLY BILL 856

sources an amount equal to the amount of the proposed grant. Additionally, the bill provides that WEDC may consult with the Department of Tourism to implement the grant program.

Finally, the bill requires WEDC to submit an annual report to the Joint Committee on Finance that includes a detailed description of each grant awarded under the bill, including the eligible applicant's cost-benefit analysis concerning the proposed opportunity or event.

For further information see the state fiscal estimate, which will be printed as an appendix to this bill.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

1 **SECTION 1.** 238.143 of the statutes is created to read:

2 **238.143 Opportunity attraction and promotion. (1) DEFINITION.** In this
3 section, "eligible applicant" means any of the following in this state:

4 (a) A city, village, town, or county.

5 (b) An American Indian tribe or band in this state.

6 (c) An area visitor and convention bureau.

7 (d) A business improvement district.

8 (e) A private entity.

9 **(2) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.** The corporation shall establish and administer
10 the economic development program under this section for the purpose of attracting
11 opportunities and events to this state.

12 **(3) GRANTS.** (a) The corporation shall award grants to eligible applicants for
13 major opportunities and events projects as provided under par. (b). The corporation
14 shall prescribe the form of application and the information required to be submitted
15 with an application, which shall include an estimate of projected direct and indirect
16 economic benefits of the proposed opportunity or event to the state and a related
17 cost-benefit analysis concerning the opportunity or event.

ASSEMBLY BILL 856

1 (b) An eligible applicant shall expend all grant moneys on a project as specified
2 in the application to attract to this state or host in this state, or both, a major
3 opportunity or event that is open to the public, whether or not free of charge.
4 Specifically, grant moneys may be used to undertake a project to do one or more of
5 the following:

6 1. Bid against other states or jurisdictions outside this state to attract an
7 opportunity or event that will draw national exposure and drive economic
8 development and visitors to this state.

9 2. Host an opportunity or event that will attract national exposure and drive
10 economic development and visitors to this state that the eligible applicant has
11 secured through a competitive bid against other states or jurisdictions outside this
12 state.

13 (c) Grants awarded under this subsection are not subject to s. 238.03 (3) (a).

14 **(4) MATCHING REQUIREMENT.** The corporation may not award a grant under sub.
15 (3) unless the eligible applicant has secured from nonstate sources an amount equal
16 to the amount of the proposed grant.

17 **(5) CONSULTATION WITH DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM.** The corporation may consult
18 with the department of tourism to implement the corporation's duties under this
19 section.

20 **(6) ANNUAL REPORT.** No later than October 1 of each year, the corporation shall
21 submit a report to the joint committee on finance for the previous fiscal year that
22 includes a detailed description of each grant awarded under sub. (3), including the
23 eligible applicant's analysis concerning the opportunity or event.

24

(END)