

S.162

An act relating to promoting economic development

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

\* \* \* Recruitment and Relocation \* \* \*

Sec. 1. 3 V.S.A. § 2476 is amended to read:

§ 2476. DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM AND MARKETING

\* \* \*

(c) Economic development marketing. The Department shall be responsible for the promotion of Vermont as great place to live, work, and do business in order to increase the benefits of economic development marketing, including:

- (1) attracting additional private investment in Vermont businesses;
- (2) recruiting new businesses;
- (3) attracting more innovators and entrepreneurs to locate in Vermont;
- (4) attracting, recruiting, and growing the workforce to fill existing vacancies in growing businesses and to retain workers and their families; and
- (5) promoting and supporting Vermont businesses, goods, and services.

\* \* \*

Sec. 2. NEW WORKER RELOCATION INCENTIVE PROGRAM

(a) The Agency of Commerce and Community Development shall design and implement the New Worker Relocation Incentive Program, which shall

include a simple certification process to certify new workers and certify qualifying expenses for a grant under this section.

(b) A new worker may be eligible for a grant under the Program for qualifying expenses in the amount of not more than \$7,500.00, consistent with the following limitations, and subject to available funding and procedures the Agency adopts to implement the program:

(1) A base grant for relocation to any area in Vermont shall be \$5,000.00.

(2) A grant for relocation to a designated labor market area may be enhanced, not to exceed \$7,500.00.

(3) The Agency shall assess applications on a rolling basis and give first priority, at any point in the application process, to workers in identified priority sectors, which may include health care, early child care and learning, lodging and restaurant industry, manufacturing, technology, and construction trades.

(4) A new worker may apply for a grant beginning January 1, 2020 and shall be paid when proof of residency and tax liability reaches the equivalent of the amount claimed.

(5) A remote worker may apply for a grant under the Program when all funds from the New Remote Worker Grant Program created in 2018 Acts and Resolves No. 197, Sec. 1 are encumbered.

(c) The Agency shall:

(1) adopt procedures for implementing the Program;

(2) promote awareness of the Program, including through coordination with relevant trade groups and by integration into the Agency's economic development marketing campaigns; and

(3) adopt measurable goals, performance measures, and an audit strategy to assess the utilization and performance of the Program.

(d) As used in this section:

(1) "New worker" means an individual who:

(A)(i) is a full-time employee of a business with its domicile or primary place of business outside Vermont and performs the majority of his or her employment duties remotely from a home office or a coworking space located in this State; or

(ii) is a full-time employee of a business located in Vermont and

(B) becomes a full-time resident of this State on or after January 1, 2020.

(2) "Qualifying expenses" mean actual costs that a new worker incurs for:

(A) moving expenses;

(B) payment of student loan debt;

(C) down payment assistance; and

(D) initial rental deposits.

(e) On or before October 1, 2020, the Agency shall submit a report to the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development and the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs concerning the implementation of this section, including:

(1) a description of the procedures adopted to implement the Program;

(2) the promotion and marketing of the Program;

(3) any additional recommendations for qualifying new worker expenses or qualifying workers that should be eligible under the Program, and

(4) any recommendations for the maximum amount of the grant.

### Sec. 3. DUTIES CONTINGENT UPON FUNDING

The duties imposed on the Agency of Commerce and Community Development in Sec. 2 of this act are contingent upon the appropriation of funds in fiscal year 2020 for the purposes specified.

\* \* \* Vermont Employment Growth Incentive Program \* \* \*

### Sec. 4. REPEAL

32 V.S.A. § 3336 (enhanced incentive for workforce training) is repealed.

### Sec. 5. ENHANCED INCENTIVES; BACKGROUND GROWTH; SMALL BUSINESS PARTICIPATION

On or before December 15, 2020, the Vermont Economic Progress Council shall submit to the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and

General Affairs and to the House Committee on Commerce and Economic

Development a report addressing:

(1) the use of the enhanced incentive for environmental technology businesses in the Vermont Employment Growth Incentive Program and shall specifically address the effectiveness, costs, and benefits of modifying the background growth rate when calculating the value of the enhanced incentives;  
and

(2) specific recommendations for reducing the administrative burdens and other barriers to participation in the Program for small businesses.

Sec. 6. VERMONT EMPLOYMENT GROWTH INCENTIVE; STUDY

On or before January 15, 2020, the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, in consultation with the State Auditor, shall study and report to the House Committees on Commerce and Economic Development and on Ways and Means and to the Senate Committees on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs and on Finance concerning the Vermont Employment Growth Incentive Program, specifically addressing the following:

(1) the internal controls and methods used to evaluate whether the program is working as intended;

(2) the procedures used to select, vet, and approve participants and projects;

(3) the controls and due diligence surrounding the application of the “but for” test;

(4) the specific outcomes of the Program in each year, including the net revenue gain to the State and the net increase in jobs, payroll, and capital investment; and

(5) the procedures and controls for measuring and verifying those Program outcomes.

\* \* \* Effective Date \* \* \*

Sec. 7. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2019.