

AN ACT concerning State government.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 5. The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity Law of the Civil Administrative Code of Illinois is amended by adding Section 605-1060 as follows:

(20 ILCS 605/605-1060 new)

Sec. 605-1060. Illinois Innovation Voucher Program.

(a) The Department is authorized to establish the Illinois Innovation Voucher Program to be administered in accordance with this Section for the purpose of fostering research and development in key industry clusters leading to the creation of new products and services that can be marketed by Illinois businesses. The Department may award innovation vouchers to eligible businesses to offset a portion of expenses incurred through a collaborative research engagement with an Illinois institution of higher education.

(b) The Department may award matching funds in the form of innovation vouchers up to 75% of the cost of the research engagement not to exceed \$75,000. A business may receive only one innovation voucher under this Section per year.

(c) The Department when administering the Program under this Section:

(1) must encourage participation among small and mid-sized businesses;

(2) must encourage participation in the Program in diverse geographic and economic areas, including urban, suburban, and rural areas of the State; and

(3) must encourage participation in the Program from businesses that operate in key industries, as defined by the Department. These industries include, but are not limited to, the following: (i) agribusiness and agtech; (ii) energy; (iii) information technology; (iv) life sciences and healthcare; (v) manufacturing; and (vi) transportation and logistics.

(d) In order to be eligible for an innovation voucher under this Section, a business must satisfy all of the following conditions:

(1) the business must be an Illinois-based business. For the purposes of this Section, "Illinois-based business" means a business that has its principal place of business in this State or that employs at least 100 full-time employees, as defined under Section 5-5 of the Economic Development for a Growing Economy Tax Credit Act, in this State;

(2) the business must remain in this State for the duration of research engagement; and

(3) the partnering institution of higher education must be an Illinois-based institution of higher education

and non-profit. For the purposes of this Section,
"Illinois-based institution of higher education" means an
institution of higher education that has its main physical
campus in this State.

(e) The Department may adopt any rules necessary to
administer the provisions of this Section.

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon
becoming law.