

# VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2000 SESSION

## CHAPTER 749

*An Act to amend and reenact § 15.2-1309 of the Code of Virginia, relating to the Regional Competitiveness Act.*

[H 887]

Approved April 8, 2000

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1. That § 15.2-1309 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 15.2-1309. Eligibility criteria for incentive payments.

The Department of Housing and Community Development, in setting the criteria for eligibility for incentive payments under § 15.2-1308, shall require that:

1. A regional partnership shall exist and effectively function in the applicant region, and membership shall include as broad a representation as is practical of local government, elementary and secondary education, higher education, the business community, and civic groups. The partnership should include as many of the following as is practical: the mayor or chair and the chief administrative officer of each member locality, president of each institution of higher education, corporate leaders of the region, and leaders of local civic associations. The Department shall issue guidelines on the structure and organization of the regional partnership.

2. Each regional partnership shall develop a regional strategic economic development plan which identifies critical issues of economic competitiveness for the region. The plan shall contain, at a minimum, a comparison of the following criteria for the region, and the primary competitor regions in the southeast United States:

a. Median family income;

b. Job creation; and

c. Differences in median family income levels among the localities in the region.

3. Each regional partnership shall issue an annual report, including, at a minimum, the region's progress towards improvement according to the criteria identified in subdivision 2 and its progress in addressing the critical issues of economic competitiveness identified in the regional strategic economic development plan.

4. Each regional partnership shall identify the existing and proposed joint activities within the region, and the joint activities shall have a combined point total of at least twenty points, based on the values established in § 15.2-1310, in order for the region to qualify for any incentive payments.

5. Subject to the provisions of § 15.2-1308, once a region becomes eligible for the annual incentive payments, it shall receive such payments for at least five years, so long as regional partnerships continue to exist and effectively function. The region may reapply before or at the end of the five-year period for requalification to continue to receive annual incentive payments.

6. Joint activities existing prior to the enactment of this section or prior to requalification may be considered by the Department of Housing and Community Development for an award up to the full value established in § 15.2-1310. Existing joint activities which are expanded in scope or number of localities may be considered a new joint activity but shall not receive the full value of points as established in § 15.2-1310. Points for existing activities (*those initiated prior to July 1, 1996, of the year in which the initial qualification or prior to the requalification is sought*) may not constitute more than fifty percent of the total points assigned.

7. The year for incentive payments shall be the Commonwealth's fiscal year following the calendar year in which the region qualifies, with payments made annually by the Comptroller upon certification by the Department of Housing and Community Development. Eligible regions shall receive incentive funds in an amount equal to the percentage of the funds appropriated for incentive payments for such fiscal year that represents the region's percentage of the total population of all eligible regions. Within eligible regions, the incentive funds shall be distributed to the localities on the basis of a formula mutually agreed to by all of the localities of the region.