

1 AN ACT concerning State government.

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

4 Section 5. The Department of Commerce and Economic
5 Opportunity Law of the Civil Administrative Code of Illinois
6 is amended by changing Section 605-503 as follows:

7 (20 ILCS 605/605-503)

8 (This Section may contain text from a Public Act with a
9 delayed effective date)

10 Sec. 605-503. Entrepreneurship assistance centers.

11 (a) The Department shall establish and support, subject to
12 appropriation, entrepreneurship assistance centers, including
13 the issuance of grants, at career education agencies and
14 not-for-profit corporations including, but not limited to,
15 local development corporations, chambers of commerce,
16 community-based business outreach centers, and other
17 community-based organizations. The purpose of the centers
18 shall be to train minority group members, women, individuals
19 with a disability, dislocated workers, ~~and~~ veterans, and youth
20 entrepreneurs in the principles and practice of
21 entrepreneurship in order to prepare those persons to pursue
22 self-employment opportunities and to pursue a minority
23 business enterprise or a women-owned business enterprise. The

1 centers shall provide for training in all aspects of business
2 development and small business management as defined by the
3 Department.

4 (b) The Department shall establish criteria for selection
5 and designation of the centers which shall include, but not be
6 limited to:

7 (1) the level of support for the center from local
8 post-secondary education institutions, businesses, and
9 government;

10 (2) the level of financial assistance provided at the
11 local and federal level to support the operations of the
12 center;

13 (3) the applicant's understanding of program goals and
14 objectives articulated by the Department;

15 (4) the plans of the center to supplement State and
16 local funding through fees for services which may be based
17 on a sliding scale based on ability to pay;

18 (5) the need for and anticipated impact of the center
19 on the community in which it will function;

20 (6) the quality of the proposed work plan and staff of
21 the center; and

22 (7) the extent of economic distress in the area to be
23 served.

24 (c) Each center shall:

25 (1) be operated by a board of directors representing
26 community leaders in business, education, finance and

1 government;

2 (2) be incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation;

3 (3) be located in an area accessible to eligible
4 clients;

5 (4) establish an advisory group of community business
6 experts, at least one-half of whom shall be representative
7 of the clientele to be served by the center, which shall
8 constitute a support network to provide counseling and
9 mentoring services to minority group members, women,
10 individuals with a disability, dislocated workers, ~~and~~
11 veterans, and youth entrepreneurs from the concept stage
12 of development through the first one to 2 years of
13 existence on a regular basis and as needed thereafter; and

14 (5) establish a referral system and linkages to
15 existing area small business assistance programs and
16 financing sources.

17 (d) Each entrepreneurship assistance center shall provide
18 needed services to eligible clients, including, but not
19 limited to: (i) orientation and screening of prospective
20 entrepreneurs; (ii) analysis of business concepts and
21 technical feasibility; (iii) market analysis; (iv) management
22 analysis and counseling; (v) business planning and financial
23 planning assistance; (vi) referrals to financial resources;
24 (vii) referrals to existing educational programs for training
25 in such areas as marketing, accounting, and other training
26 programs as may be necessary and available; and (viii)

1 referrals to business incubator facilities, when appropriate,
2 for the purpose of entering into agreements to access shared
3 support services.

4 (e) Applications for grants made under this Section shall
5 be made in the manner and on forms prescribed by the
6 Department. The application shall include, but shall not be
7 limited to:

8 (1) a description of the training programs available
9 within the geographic area to be served by the center to
10 which eligible clients may be referred;

11 (2) designation of a program director;

12 (3) plans for providing ongoing technical assistance
13 to program graduates, including linkages with providers of
14 other entrepreneurial assistance programs and with
15 providers of small business technical assistance and
16 services;

17 (4) a program budget, including matching funds,
18 in-kind and otherwise, to be provided by the applicant;
19 and

20 (5) any other requirements as deemed necessary by the
21 Department.

22 (f) Grants made under this Section shall be disbursed for
23 payment of the cost of services and expenses of the program
24 director, the instructors of the participating career
25 education agency or not-for-profit corporation, the faculty
26 and support personnel thereof, and any other person in the

1 service of providing instruction and counseling in furtherance
2 of the program.

3 (g) The Department shall monitor the performance of each
4 entrepreneurial assistance center and require quarterly
5 reports from each center at such time and in such a manner as
6 prescribed by the Department.

7 The Department shall also evaluate the entrepreneurial
8 assistance centers established under this Section and report
9 annually beginning on January 1, 2023, and on or before
10 January 1 of each year thereafter, the results of the
11 evaluation to the Governor and the General Assembly. The
12 report shall discuss the extent to which the centers serve
13 minority group members, women, individuals with a disability,
14 dislocated workers, ~~and~~ veterans, and youth entrepreneurs; the
15 extent to which the training program is coordinated with other
16 assistance programs targeted to small and new businesses; the
17 ability of the program to leverage other sources of funding
18 and support; and the success of the program in aiding
19 entrepreneurs to start up new businesses, including the number
20 of new business start-ups resulting from the program. The
21 report shall recommend changes and improvements in the
22 training program and in the quality of supplemental technical
23 assistance offered to graduates of the training programs. The
24 report shall be made available to the public on the
25 Department's website. Between evaluation due dates, the
26 Department shall maintain the necessary records and data

1 required to satisfy the evaluation requirements.

2 (h) For purposes of this Section:

3 "Entrepreneurship assistance center" or "center" means the
4 business development centers or programs which provide
5 assistance to primarily minority group members, women,
6 individuals with a disability, dislocated workers ~~and~~
7 veterans, and youth entrepreneurs under this Section.

8 "Disability" means, with respect to an individual: (i) a
9 physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or
10 more of the major life activities of an individual; (ii) a
11 record of such an impairment; or (iii) being regarded as
12 having an impairment.

13 "Minority business enterprise" has the same meaning as
14 provided for "minority-owned business" under Section 2 of the
15 Business Enterprise for Minorities, Women, and Persons with
16 Disabilities Act.

17 "Minority group member" has the same meaning as provided
18 for "minority person" under Section 2 of the Business
19 Enterprise for Minorities, Women, and Persons with
20 Disabilities Act.

21 "Women-owned business enterprise" has the same meaning as
22 provided for "women-owned business" under Section 2 of the
23 Business Enterprise for Minorities, Women, and Persons with
24 Disabilities Act.

25 "Veteran" means a person who served in and who has
26 received an honorable or general discharge from, the United

1 States Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, or
2 reserves thereof, or who served in the Army National Guard,
3 Air National Guard, or Illinois National Guard.

4 "Youth entrepreneur" means a person who is between the
5 ages of 16 and 29 years old that is seeking community support
6 to start a business in Illinois.

7 (Source: P.A. 102-272, eff. 1-1-22.)