

1 AN ACT concerning finance.

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

4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the
5 Women's Business Ownership Act of 2015.

6 Section 5. Women's Business Ownership Council. The Women's
7 Business Ownership Council is created within the Department of
8 Commerce and Economic Opportunity. The Council shall consist of
9 9 members, with 5 persons appointed by the Governor, one of
10 whom shall be the Director of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
11 or his or her designee, one person appointed by the President
12 of the Senate, one person appointed by the Minority Leader of
13 the Senate, one person appointed by the Speaker of the House of
14 Representatives, and one person appointed by the Minority
15 Leader of the House of Representatives.

16 Appointed members shall be uniquely qualified by
17 education, professional knowledge, or experience to serve on
18 the Council and shall reflect the ethnic, cultural, and
19 geographic diversity of the State. Of the 9 members, at least 5
20 shall be women business owners. As used in this Act, "woman
21 business owner" means a woman who is either:

22 (1) the principal of a company or business concern, at
23 least 51% of which is owned, operated, and controlled by

1 women; or

2 (2) a senior officer or director of a company or
3 business concern who also has either:

4 (A) material responsibility for the daily
5 operations and management of the overall company or
6 business concern; or

7 (B) material responsibility for the policy making
8 of the company or business concern.

9 Of the initial appointments, members shall be randomly
10 assigned to staggered terms; 3 members shall be appointed for a
11 term of 3 years, 3 members shall be appointed for a term of 2
12 years, and 3 members shall be appointed for a term of one year.
13 Upon the expiration of each member's term, a successor shall be
14 appointed for a term of 3 years. In the case of a vacancy in the
15 office of any member, a successor shall be appointed for the
16 remainder of the unexpired term by the person designated as
17 responsible for making the appointment. No member shall serve
18 more than 3 consecutive terms. Members shall serve without
19 compensation but shall be reimbursed for expenses incurred in
20 connection with the performance of their duties as members.

21 One of the members shall be designated as Chairperson by
22 the Governor. In the event the Governor does not appoint the
23 Chairperson within 60 days after the effective date of this
24 Act, the Council shall convene and elect a Chairperson by a
25 simple majority vote. Upon a vacancy in the position of
26 Chairperson, the Governor shall have 30 days from the date of

1 the resignation to appoint a new Chairperson. In the event the
2 Governor does not appoint a new Chairperson within 30 days, the
3 Council shall convene and elect a new Chairperson by a simple
4 majority vote.

5 The first meeting of the Council shall be held within 90
6 days after the effective date of this Act. The Council shall
7 meet quarterly and may hold other meetings on the call of the
8 Chairperson. Five members shall constitute a quorum. The
9 Council may adopt rules it deems necessary to govern its own
10 procedures. The Department of Commerce and Economic
11 Opportunity shall cooperate with the Council to fulfill the
12 purposes of this Act and shall provide the Council with
13 necessary staff and administrative support. The Council may
14 apply for grants from the public and private sector and is
15 authorized to accept grants, gifts, and donations, which shall
16 be deposited into the Women's Business Ownership Fund.

17 Section 10. Duties and responsibilities of the Council.

18 (a) The Council shall conduct hearings, as necessary, and
19 issue an annual report to the Governor and the General Assembly
20 regarding the status of women business owners within the State.
21 In that regard, the Council shall review the following:

22 (1) The status of women-owned businesses statewide,
23 including progress made and barriers that remain, in order
24 to assist these businesses to enter the mainstream of the
25 Illinois economy.

1 (2) The role of State and local government in assisting
2 and promoting aid to, and the promotion of, women-owned
3 businesses.

4 (3) Data collected by private and public sector
5 entities relating to women-owned businesses.

6 (4) Any other government initiatives that may exist
7 relating to women-owned businesses, including but not
8 limited to those relating to State and local procurement.

9 (b) The Council shall recommend to the Governor and the
10 General Assembly, on an annual basis, all of the following:

11 (1) New private sector initiatives that would provide
12 management and technical assistance to women-owned
13 businesses.

14 (2) Ways to promote greater access to public and
15 private sector financing and procurement opportunities for
16 these businesses.

17 (3) Detailed multi-year plans of action, with specific
18 goals and timetables, for both public and private sector
19 actions needed to overcome discriminatory barriers to full
20 participation in the economic mainstream.

21 (c) The Council may hold hearings, take testimony, and
22 request information from State agencies.

23 Section 15. The Women's Business Ownership Fund. The
24 Women's Business Ownership Fund is created as a special fund in
25 the State treasury. The Fund shall consist of all public and

1 private moneys donated to further the work of the Council under
2 this Act. All moneys deposited into the Fund shall be subject
3 to appropriation by the General Assembly.

4 Section 90. The State Finance Act is amended by adding
5 Section 5.866 as follows:

6 (30 ILCS 105/5.866 new)

7 Sec. 5.866. The Women's Business Ownership Fund.

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