

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 5361

To amend the Small Business Act to improve the women’s business center program, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 8, 2023

Ms. DAVIDS of Kansas (for herself and Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Small Business

A BILL

To amend the Small Business Act to improve the women’s business center program, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Women’s Business
5 Centers Improvement Act of 2023”.

6 **SEC. 2. AMENDMENTS TO WOMEN’S BUSINESS CENTER**
7 **PROGRAM.**

8 Section 29 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 656)
9 is amended to read as follows:

1 **“SEC. 29. WOMEN’S BUSINESS CENTER PROGRAM.**

2 “(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

3 “(1) ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR.—The term
4 ‘Assistant Administrator’ means the Assistant Ad-
5 ministrator of the Office of Women’s Business Own-
6 ership established under subsection (k).

7 “(2) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term ‘eligible en-
8 tity’ means—

9 “(A) an organization described in section
10 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986
11 and exempt from taxation under section 501(a)
12 of such Code;

13 “(B) a State, regional, or local economic
14 development organization, if the organization
15 certifies that grant funds received under this
16 section will not be commingled with other
17 funds;

18 “(C) an institution of higher education (as
19 defined in section 101 of the Higher Education
20 Act of 1965), unless such institution has re-
21 ceived a grant under section 21;

22 “(D) a development, credit, or finance cor-
23 poration chartered by a State, if such corpora-
24 tion certifies that grant funds received under
25 this section will not be commingled with other
26 funds; or

1 “(E) an entity that is a combination of en-
2 tities listed in subparagraphs (A) through (D).

3 “(3) RESOURCE PARTNERS.—The term ‘re-
4 source partners’ means small business development
5 centers, chapters of the Service Corps of Retired Ex-
6 ecutives (established under section 8(b)(1)(B)), and
7 Veteran Business Outreach Centers (described under
8 section 32).

9 “(4) SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN OWNED AND
10 CONTROLLED BY WOMEN.—The term ‘small business
11 concern owned and controlled by women’ has the
12 meaning given under section 3(n).

13 “(5) STATE.—The term ‘State’ means each
14 State of the United States, the District of Columbia,
15 and each commonwealth, territory, or possession of
16 the United States.

17 “(6) WOMEN’S BUSINESS CENTER.—The term
18 ‘women’s business center’ means an entity operated
19 by an eligible entity that provides entrepreneurial
20 counseling and training to small business concerns
21 owned and controlled by women and to women en-
22 trepreneurs.

23 “(7) WOMEN’S BUSINESS CENTER ASSOCIA-
24 TION.—The term ‘Women’s Business Center Asso-
25 ciation’ means a membership organization formed by

1 women’s business centers to pursue matters of com-
2 mon concern.

3 “(b) AUTHORITY.—

4 “(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established a
5 program to be known as the ‘Women’s Business
6 Center Program’ under which the Administrator
7 may enter into a cooperative agreement with an eli-
8 gible entity to provide a grant to such eligible entity
9 to operate one or more women’s business centers.

10 “(2) WOMEN’S BUSINESS CENTER REQUIRE-
11 MENTS.—A women’s business center established
12 using funds made available under this section shall
13 be designed to provide entrepreneurial counseling
14 and training that meets the particular needs of small
15 business concerns owned and controlled by women,
16 especially such concerns owned and controlled by
17 women who are socially and economically disadvan-
18 taged, and of women entrepreneurs, and shall pro-
19 vide—

20 “(A) counseling and training on how to
21 form and develop a business;

22 “(B) financial assistance, including coun-
23 seling and training on how to—

24 “(i) apply for and secure business
25 credit and investment capital;

1 “(ii) prepare and present financial
2 statements; and

3 “(iii) manage cash flow and other fi-
4 nancial operations of a small business con-
5 cern;

6 “(C) management assistance, including
7 counseling and training on how to plan, orga-
8 nize, staff, direct, and control each major activ-
9 ity and function of a small business concern;

10 “(D) marketing assistance, including coun-
11 seling and training on how to—

12 “(i) identify and segment domestic
13 and international market opportunities;

14 “(ii) prepare and execute marketing
15 plans;

16 “(iii) develop pricing strategies;

17 “(iv) locate contract opportunities;

18 “(v) negotiate contracts; and

19 “(vi) use various public relations and
20 advertising techniques; and

21 “(E) other services, as determined by the
22 Administrator.

23 “(3) TYPES OF GRANTS.—

24 “(A) INITIAL GRANT.—The amount of an
25 initial grant, which shall be for a 5-year term,

provided under this subsection to an eligible entity shall be not more than \$300,000 annually (as such amount is annually adjusted by the Administrator to reflect the change in inflation).

“(B) CONTINUATION GRANTS.—The Administrator may award a continuation grant, which shall be for a 5-year term beginning on the day after the last date of the initial grant term, of not more than \$300,000 annually (as such amount is annually adjusted by the Administrator to reflect the change in inflation) to an eligible entity that received an initial grant under subparagraph (A). There shall be no limitation on the number of continuation grants an eligible entity may receive under this section.

“(c) APPLICATION.—

“(1) INITIAL GRANTS AND CONTINUATION GRANTS.—To receive an initial grant or continuation grant under this section, an eligible entity shall submit an application to the Administrator in such form, in such manner, and containing such information as the Administrator may require, including—

“(A) a certification that the eligible entity—

1 “(i) has designated an executive direc-
2 tor or program manager, who may be com-
3 pensated using grant funds awarded under
4 this section or other sources, to manage
5 each women’s business center for which a
6 grant under subsection (b) is sought; and

7 “(ii) meets accounting and reporting
8 requirements established by the Director of
9 the Office of Management and Budget;

10 “(B) information demonstrating the expe-
11 rience and effectiveness of the eligible entity
12 in—

13 “(i) providing entrepreneurial coun-
14 seling and training described under sub-
15 section (b)(2);

16 “(ii) providing training and services to
17 a representative number of women who are
18 socially and economically disadvantaged;
19 and

20 “(iii) working with resource partners,
21 offices of the Administration, and other en-
22 tities; and

23 “(C) a 5-year plan that—

24 “(i) includes information relating to
25 the assistance to be provided by each wom-

1 en's business center in the area in which
2 each such center is located;

3 “(ii) describes the ability of the eligi-
4 ble entity to meet the needs of the market
5 to be served by a women's business center;

6 “(iii) describes the ability of the eligi-
7 ble entity to obtain the matching funds re-
8 quired under subsection (e); and

9 “(iv) describes the ability of the eligi-
10 ble entity to provide entrepreneurial coun-
11 seling and training described under sub-
12 section (b)(2), including to a representative
13 number of women who are socially and eco-
14 nomically disadvantaged.

15 “(2) RECORD RETENTION.—

16 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator
17 shall maintain a copy of each application sub-
18 mitted under this subsection for not less than
19 5 years.

20 “(B) PAPERWORK REDUCTION.—The Ad-
21 ministrator shall take steps to reduce, to the
22 maximum extent practicable, the paperwork
23 burden associated with carrying out subpara-
24 graph (A).

1 “(d) SELECTION OF ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—In select-
2 ing recipients of initial grants, the Administrator shall
3 consider—

4 “(1) the experience of the applicant in pro-
5 viding entrepreneurial counseling and training;

6 “(2) the amount of time needed for the appli-
7 cant to commence operation of a women’s business
8 center (if applicable);

9 “(3) in consultation with a Women’s Business
10 Center Association, the capacity of the applicant to
11 meet the accreditation standards established under
12 subsection (k)(4) in a timely manner;

13 “(4) the ability of the applicant to sustain oper-
14 ations, including the applicant’s ability to obtain
15 matching funds under subsection (e), for the 5-year
16 period of such initial grant;

17 “(5) the location of a women’s business center
18 to be operated by the applicant and the location’s
19 proximity to resource partners;

20 “(6) the population density of the area to be
21 served by the women’s business center operated by
22 the applicant; and

23 “(7) the advice and counsel of a Women’s Busi-
24 ness Center Association to determine areas with a
25 lack of services for small business concerns owned

1 and controlled by women who are socially and eco-
2 nomically disadvantaged.

3 “(e) MATCHING REQUIREMENTS.—

4 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (6),
5 upon approval of an application submitted under
6 subsection (c), the eligible entity shall agree to ob-
7 tain contributions from non-Federal sources—

8 “(A) in the first and second year of the
9 term of an initial grant, if applicable, 1 non-
10 Federal dollar for every 2 Federal dollars; and

11 “(B) in each subsequent year of the term
12 of an initial grant, if applicable, or for the term
13 of a continuation grant, 1 non-Federal dollar
14 for each Federal dollar.

15 “(2) FORM OF MATCHING FUNDS.—Not more
16 than one-half of non-Federal matching funds de-
17 scribed under paragraph (1) may be in the form of
18 in-kind contributions that are budget line items only,
19 including office equipment and office space.

20 “(3) SOLICITATION.—Notwithstanding any
21 other provision of law, an eligible entity may—

22 “(A) solicit cash and in-kind contributions
23 from private individuals and entities to be used
24 to operate a women’s business center; and

1 “(B) use amounts made available by the
2 Administrator under this section for the cost of
3 such solicitation and management of the con-
4 tributions received.

5 “(4) ADVANCE DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS.—
6 The Administrator may disburse an amount not
7 greater than 25 percent of the total amount of a
8 grant awarded to an eligible entity before such eligi-
9 ble entity obtains the matching funds described
10 under paragraph (1).

11 “(5) ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS.—

12 “(A) INITIAL GRANTS.—If an eligible enti-
13 ty fails to obtain the required matching funds
14 described under paragraph (1), the eligible enti-
15 ty may not be eligible to receive advance dis-
16 bursements pursuant to paragraph (4) during
17 the remainder of the term, if applicable, of an
18 initial grant awarded under this section.

19 “(B) CONTINUATION GRANTS.—Before ap-
20 proving such eligible entity for a continuation
21 grant under this section, the Administrator
22 shall make a written determination, including
23 the reasons for such determination, of whether
24 the Administrator believes that the eligible enti-
25 ty will be able to obtain the requisite matching

1 funding under paragraph (1) for such continu-
2 ation grant.

3 “(6) WAIVER OF NON-FEDERAL SHARE.—

4 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Upon request by an
5 eligible entity and in accordance with this para-
6 graph, the Administrator may waive, in whole
7 or in part, the requirement to obtain matching
8 funds under paragraph (1) for a grant awarded
9 under this section for the eligible entity for a 1-
10 year term of the grant.

11 “(B) CONSIDERATIONS.—In determining
12 whether to issue a waiver under this paragraph,
13 the Administrator shall consider—

14 “(i) the economic conditions affecting
15 the eligible entity;

16 “(ii) the demonstrated ability of the
17 eligible entity to obtain non-Federal funds;
18 and

19 “(iii) the performance of the eligible
20 entity under the initial grant.

21 “(C) LIMITATION.—The Administrator
22 may not issue a waiver under this paragraph if
23 the Administrator determines that granting the
24 waiver would undermine the credibility of the
25 Women’s Business Center Program.

1 “(7) EXCESS NON-FEDERAL DOLLARS.—The
2 amount of non-Federal dollars obtained by an eligi-
3 ble entity that is greater than the amount that is re-
4 quired to be obtained by the eligible entity under
5 this subsection shall not be subject to the require-
6 ments of part 200 of title 2, Code of Federal Regu-
7 lations, or any successor thereto, if such amount of
8 non-Federal dollars—

9 “(A) is not used as matching funds for
10 purposes of implementing the Women’s Busi-
11 ness Center Program; and

12 “(B) was not obtained by using funds
13 granted under the Women’s Business Center
14 Program.

15 “(8) CARRYOVER.—An eligible entity may use
16 excess non-Federal dollars described in paragraph
17 (7) to satisfy the matching funds requirement under
18 paragraph (1) for a subsequent 1-year grant term,
19 if applicable, except that such excess non-Federal
20 dollars shall be subject to the requirements of part
21 200 of title 2, Code of Federal Regulations, or any
22 successor thereto.

23 “(f) OTHER REQUIREMENTS.—

24 “(1) SEPARATION OF FUNDS.—An eligible enti-
25 ty that receives a grant under this section shall—

1 “(A) operate a women’s business center
2 under this section separately from other
3 projects, if any, of the eligible entity; and

4 “(B) separately maintain and account for
5 any grant funds received under this section.

6 “(2) EXAMINATION OF ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—

7 “(A) REQUIRED SITE VISIT.—Before re-
8 ceiving an initial grant under this section, each
9 applicant shall have a site visit by an employee
10 of the Administration, in order to ensure that
11 the applicant has sufficient resources to provide
12 the services for which the grant is being pro-
13 vided.

14 “(B) ANNUAL REVIEW.—An employee of
15 the Administration shall—

16 “(i) conduct an annual programmatic
17 and financial examination of each eligible
18 entity, as described in subsection (g); and

19 “(ii) provide the results of such exam-
20 ination to the eligible entity.

21 “(3) REMEDIATION OF PROBLEMS.—

22 “(A) PLAN OF ACTION.—If an examination
23 of an eligible entity conducted under paragraph
24 (2)(B) identifies any problems, the eligible enti-
25 ty shall, within 45 calendar days of receiving a

1 copy of the results of such examination, provide
2 the Assistant Administrator with a plan of ac-
3 tion, including specific milestones, for cor-
4 recting such problems.

5 “(B) PLAN OF ACTION REVIEW BY THE AS-
6 SISTANT ADMINISTRATOR.—The Assistant Ad-
7 ministrator shall review each plan of action sub-
8 mitted under subparagraph (A) within 30 cal-
9 endar days after receipt of such plan. If the As-
10 sistant Administrator determines that such
11 plan—

12 “(i) will bring the eligible entity into
13 compliance with all the terms of a coopera-
14 tive agreement described in subsection (b),
15 the Assistant Administrator shall approve
16 such plan; or

17 “(ii) is inadequate to remedy the
18 problems identified in the annual examina-
19 tion to which the plan of action relates, the
20 Assistant Administrator shall set forth
21 such reasons in writing and provide such
22 determination to the eligible entity within
23 15 calendar days of such determination.

24 “(C) AMENDMENT TO PLAN OF ACTION.—
25 An eligible entity receiving a determination

1 under subparagraph (B)(ii) shall have 30 cal-
2 endar days from the receipt of the determina-
3 tion to amend the plan of action to remedy the
4 problems identified by the Assistant Adminis-
5 trator and resubmit such plan to the Assistant
6 Administrator.

7 “(D) AMENDED PLAN REVIEW BY THE AS-
8 SISTANT ADMINISTRATOR.—Within 15 calendar
9 days of the receipt of an amended plan of ac-
10 tion under subparagraph (C), the Assistant Ad-
11 ministrator shall either approve or reject such
12 plan and provide such approval or rejection in
13 writing to the eligible entity.

14 “(E) APPEAL OF ASSISTANT ADMINIS-
15 TRATOR DETERMINATION.—

16 “(i) IN GENERAL.—If the Assistant
17 Administrator rejects an amended plan
18 under subparagraph (D), the eligible entity
19 shall have the opportunity to appeal such
20 decision to the Administrator, who may
21 delegate such appeal to an appropriate of-
22 ficer of the Administration.

23 “(ii) OPPORTUNITY FOR EXPLA-
24 NATION.—Any appeal described under
25 clause (i) shall provide an opportunity for

1 the eligible entity to provide, in writing, an
2 explanation of why the eligible entity's
3 amended plan remedies the problems identified in the annual examination conducted
4 under paragraph (2)(B).

6 “(iii) NOTICE OF DETERMINATION.—

7 The Administrator shall provide to the eligible entity a determination of the appeal,
8 in writing, not later than 15 calendar days
9 after the eligible entity files an appeal
10 under this subparagraph.
11

12 “(iv) EFFECT OF FAILURE TO ACT.—

13 If the Administrator fails to act on an appeal made under this subparagraph within
14 the 15-day period specified under clause
15 (iii), the eligible entity's amended plan of
16 action submitted under subparagraph (C)
17 shall be deemed to be approved.
18

19 “(4) TERMINATION OF GRANT.—

20 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator
21 shall terminate a grant to an eligible entity
22 under this section if the eligible entity fails to
23 comply with—

1 “(i) a plan of action approved by the
2 Assistant Administrator under paragraph
3 (3)(B)(i); or

4 “(ii) an amended plan of action ap-
5 proved by the Assistant Administrator
6 under paragraph (3)(D) or approved on
7 appeal under paragraph (3)(E).

8 “(B) APPEAL OF TERMINATION.—An eligi-
9 ble entity shall have the opportunity to chal-
10 lenge the termination of a grant under subpara-
11 graph (A) on the record and after an oppor-
12 tunity for a hearing.

13 “(C) FINAL AGENCY ACTION.—A deter-
14 mination made pursuant to subparagraph (B)
15 shall be considered final agency action for the
16 purposes of chapter 7 of title 5, United States
17 Code.

18 “(5) CONSULTATION WITH MAJORITY WOMEN’S
19 BUSINESS CENTER ASSOCIATION.—If on the date of
20 the enactment of this subsection, a majority of wom-
21 en’s business centers that are operating pursuant to
22 agreements with the Administration are members of
23 an individual Women’s Business Center Association,
24 the Administrator shall—

1 “(A) recognize the existence and activities
2 of such Association; and

3 “(B) consult with the Association on the
4 development of documents with respect to—

5 “(i) announcing the annual scope of
6 activities pursuant to this section;

7 “(ii) requesting proposals to deliver
8 assistance as provided in this section; and

9 “(iii) governing the general operations
10 and administration of women’s business
11 centers, specifically including the develop-
12 ment of regulations and a uniform nego-
13 tiated cooperative agreement for use on an
14 annual basis when entering into individual
15 cooperative agreements with women’s busi-
16 ness centers.

17 “(6) ENFORCEMENT.—

18 “(A) GRANTS.—The Assistant Adminis-
19 trator shall develop policies and procedures to
20 minimize the possibility of awarding a grant to
21 an eligible entity that will operate a women’s
22 business center that likely will not remain in
23 compliance with program and financial require-
24 ments.

1 “(B) INDIVIDUAL COOPERATIVE AGREE-
2 MENTS.—The Assistant Administrator shall en-
3 force the terms of any individual cooperative
4 agreement described in paragraph (5)(B)(iii).

5 “(g) PROGRAM EXAMINATION.—

6 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall—

7 “(A) develop and implement an annual
8 programmatic and financial examination of
9 each eligible entity receiving a grant under this
10 section, under which each such eligible entity
11 shall provide to the Administration—

12 “(i) an itemized cost breakdown of ac-
13 tual expenditures for costs incurred during
14 the preceding year relating to activities
15 funded by a grant under this section; and

16 “(ii) documentation regarding the
17 amount of matching assistance from non-
18 Federal sources obtained and expended by
19 the eligible entity during the preceding
20 year in order to meet the requirements of
21 subsection (e) and, with respect to any in-
22 kind contributions described in subsection
23 (e)(2) that were used to satisfy the re-
24 quirements of subsection (e), verification of

1 the existence and valuation of those con-
2 tributions; and

3 “(B) analyze the results of each such ex-
4 amination and, based on that analysis, make a
5 determination regarding the programmatic and
6 financial viability of each women’s business cen-
7 ter operated by the eligible entity.

8 “(2) CONDITIONS FOR CONTINUED FUNDING.—
9 In determining whether to award a continuation
10 grant to an eligible entity, the Administrator—

11 “(A) shall consider the results of the most
12 recent examination of the eligible entity under
13 paragraph (1);

14 “(B) shall determine if—

15 “(i) the eligible entity has failed to
16 provide, or provided inadequate, informa-
17 tion under paragraph (1)(A); or

18 “(ii) the eligible entity has failed to
19 provide any information required to be pro-
20 vided for purposes of the report required
21 under subsection (m)(1), or the informa-
22 tion provided is inadequate; and

23 “(C) shall consider the accreditation status
24 as described in subsection (k)(4).

1 “(3) ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENT.—After
2 the end of the 2-year period beginning on the date
3 of the enactment of this subsection, the Administra-
4 tion may not award a continuation grant under this
5 section unless the applicable eligible entity has been
6 approved under the accreditation program conducted
7 pursuant to subsection (k), except that the Assistant
8 Administrator for the Office of Women’s Business
9 Ownership may waive such accreditation require-
10 ment upon a showing that the eligible entity is mak-
11 ing a good faith effort to obtain accreditation.

12 “(4) ADDITIONAL OVERSIGHT.—The Assistant
13 Administrator shall work with the Women’s Busi-
14 ness Center Association recognized under subsection
15 (f)(5) (as applicable) to develop, implement, and
16 maintain policies and procedures for conducting fi-
17 nancial examinations under this subsection and to
18 maintain internal controls that ensure that such fi-
19 nancial examinations are conducted properly.

20 “(h) RULEMAKING.—

21 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator may
22 only make a change to the rules or standards of the
23 Women’s Business Center Program, including such
24 rules or standards relating to how an eligible entity
25 obtains or maintains grants under this section, the

standards for accreditation, or any other requirement for the operation of a women’s business center, if the Administrator first provides notice and the opportunity for public comment, as set forth in section 553(b) of title 5, United States Code, without regard to any exceptions provided for under such section.

“(2) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this paragraph may be construed to prohibit the Administrator from modifying the rules or standards of the Women’s Business Center Program, after providing an opportunity for notice and comment, as such rules and standards apply to an opportunity under the Women’s Business Center Program that the Administrator has not yet publicly announced pursuant to subsection (l)(1).

“(i) ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS.—

“(1) ELIGIBILITY FOR OTHER FEDERAL AWARDS.—An eligible entity that receives a grant under this section may enter into a contract with a Federal department or agency to provide specific assistance to small business concerns owned and controlled by women, if performance of such a contract does not hinder the ability of the eligible entity to carry out the terms of a grant received under this section.

1 “(2) WRITTEN NOTICE.—The Administrator
2 shall not suspend, terminate, or fail to renew or ex-
3 tend any cooperative agreement entered into under
4 this section unless the Administrator provides the
5 applicant with written notification setting forth the
6 reasons therefore and affords the applicant an op-
7 portunity for a hearing, appeal, or other administra-
8 tive proceeding under chapter 5 of title 5, United
9 States Code.

10 “(j) PRIVACY REQUIREMENTS.—

11 “(1) IN GENERAL.—A women’s business center
12 or an eligible entity may not disclose the name, ad-
13 dress, telephone number, or email address of any in-
14 dividual or small business concern receiving assist-
15 ance under this section, or the nature of content of
16 such assistance, to any State, local, or Federal agen-
17 cy, or to any third party, without the consent of
18 such individual or small business concern, unless—

19 “(A) the Administrator orders such disclo-
20 sure after the Administrator is ordered to make
21 such a disclosure by a court in any civil or
22 criminal enforcement action initiated by a Fed-
23 eral or State agency; or

24 “(B) the Administrator considers such a
25 disclosure to be necessary for the purpose of

1 conducting a financial audit of a women’s busi-
2 ness center, except that such a disclosure shall
3 be limited to the information necessary for such
4 audit.

5 “(2) ADMINISTRATION USE OF INFORMATION.—

6 This subsection shall not—

7 “(A) restrict Administration access to
8 deidentified data on women’s business centers;
9 or

10 “(B) prevent the Administration from
11 using information about individuals who, or
12 concerns that, use women’s business centers to
13 conduct surveys of such individuals or concerns.

14 “(k) OFFICE OF WOMEN’S BUSINESS OWNERSHIP.—

15 “(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established
16 within the Administration an Office of Women’s
17 Business Ownership, which shall be responsible for
18 the administration of the Administration’s programs
19 for the development of women’s business enterprises
20 (as defined in section 408 of the Women’s Business
21 Ownership Act of 1988). The Office of Women’s
22 Business Ownership shall be administered by an As-
23 sistant Administrator, who shall be appointed by the
24 Administrator.

1 “(2) ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE OF-
2 FICE OF WOMEN’S BUSINESS OWNERSHIP.—

3 “(A) QUALIFICATION.—The position of As-
4 sistant Administrator shall be a Senior Execu-
5 tive Service position under section 3132(a)(2)
6 of title 5, United States Code. The Assistant
7 Administrator shall serve as a noncareer ap-
8 pointee (as defined in section 3132(a)(7) of
9 that title).

10 “(B) DUTIES.—The Assistant Adminis-
11 trator shall administer the programs and serv-
12 ices of the Office of Women’s Business Owner-
13 ship and perform the following functions:

14 “(i) Recommend the annual adminis-
15 trative and program budgets of the Office
16 and eligible entities receiving a grant
17 under the Women’s Business Center Pro-
18 gram.

19 “(ii) Review the annual budgets sub-
20 mitted by each eligible entity receiving a
21 grant under the Women’s Business Center
22 Program, as required under standard oper-
23 ating procedures of the Administration.

24 “(iii) Collaborate with other Federal
25 departments and agencies, State and local

1 governments, not-for-profit organizations,
2 and for-profit organizations to maximize
3 utilization of taxpayer dollars and reduce
4 (or eliminate) any duplication among the
5 programs administered by the Office of
6 Women’s Business Ownership and those of
7 other entities that provide similar services
8 to women entrepreneurs.

9 “(iv) Maintain a clearinghouse to pro-
10 vide for the dissemination and exchange of
11 information between women’s business cen-
12 ters.

13 “(v) Serve as the vice chairperson of
14 the Interagency Committee on Women’s
15 Business Enterprise and as the liaison for
16 the National Women’s Business Council.

17 “(3) MISSION.—The mission of the Office of
18 Women’s Business Ownership shall be to assist
19 women entrepreneurs to start and grow businesses
20 and compete in global markets by providing quality
21 support with access to capital, access to markets, job
22 creation, growth, and counseling by—

23 “(A) fostering participation of women en-
24 trepreneurs in the economy by overseeing a net-

1 work of women’s business centers throughout
2 the States;

3 “(B) creating public-private partnerships
4 to support women entrepreneurs and conduct
5 outreach and education to small business con-
6 cerns owned and controlled by women; and

7 “(C) working with other programs of the
8 Administration to—

9 “(i) ensure women are well-rep-
10 resented in those programs and being
11 served by those programs; and

12 “(ii) identify gaps where participation
13 by women in those programs could be in-
14 creased.

15 “(4) ACCREDITATION PROGRAM.—

16 “(A) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than
17 270 days after the date of enactment of this
18 paragraph, the Administrator shall publish
19 standards for a program to accredit eligible en-
20 tities that receive a grant under this section.

21 “(B) PUBLIC COMMENT; TRANSITION.—
22 Before publishing the standards under subpara-
23 graph (A), the Administrator—

1 “(i) shall provide a period of not less
2 than 60 days for public comment on such
3 standards; and

4 “(ii) may not terminate a grant under
5 this section absent evidence of fraud or
6 other criminal misconduct by the recipient.

7 “(C) CONTRACTING AUTHORITY.—The Ad-
8 ministrator may provide financial support, by
9 contract or otherwise, to a Women’s Business
10 Center Association to provide assistance in es-
11 tablishing the standards required under sub-
12 paragraph (A) or for carrying out an accredita-
13 tion program pursuant to such standards.

14 “(5) ANNUAL CONFERENCE.—Each women’s
15 business center shall participate in annual profes-
16 sional development at an annual conference facili-
17 tated by the Administrator, in consultation with a
18 Women’s Business Center Association.

19 “(I) NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE
20 WOMEN’S BUSINESS CENTER PROGRAM.—The Adminis-
21 trator shall provide the following:

22 “(1) A public announcement of any opportunity
23 for the award of a grant under this section, to in-
24 clude the selection criteria under subsection (d) and
25 any applicable rules or standards.

1 “(2) To any applicant for a grant under this
2 section that failed to obtain such a grant, an oppor-
3 tunity to debrief with the Administrator to review
4 the reasons for the applicant’s failure.

5 “(3) To an eligible entity that receives an initial
6 grant under this section, if a site visit under sub-
7 section (f)(2) or review of the eligible entity is car-
8 ried out by an officer or employee of the Administra-
9 tion (other than the Inspector General), a copy of
10 the site visit report or evaluation, as applicable,
11 within 30 calendar days of the completion of such
12 visit or evaluation.

13 “(m) ANNUAL MANAGEMENT REPORT.—

14 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall
15 prepare and submit to the Committee on Small
16 Business of the House of Representatives and the
17 Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship
18 of the Senate an annual report on the effectiveness
19 of women’s business centers operated through a
20 grant awarded under this section.

21 “(2) CONTENTS.—Each report submitted under
22 paragraph (1) shall include—

23 “(A) information concerning, with respect
24 to each women’s business center established
25 pursuant to a grant awarded under this section,

1 the most recent analysis of the annual pro-
2 grammatic and financial examination of the ap-
3 plicable women’s business center, as required
4 under subsection (g)(1)(B), and the subsequent
5 determination made by the Administration
6 under that subsection;

7 “(B) the number of persons counseled and
8 trained through the Women’s Business Center
9 Program (referred to in this paragraph as ‘par-
10 ticipants’);

11 “(C) the total number of hours of coun-
12 seling and training provided through such Pro-
13 gram;

14 “(D) the demographics of participants of
15 such Program, including the gender, race, and
16 age of each such participant;

17 “(E) the number of such participants who
18 are veterans;

19 “(F) the number of new businesses started
20 by such participants;

21 “(G) to the extent practicable, the number
22 of jobs created or retained with assistance from
23 women’s business centers;

24 “(H) the amount of capital, including
25 loans and equity investments, secured by each

1 women’s business center to carry out the re-
2 quirements of this section;

3 “(I) the number of participants in the Pro-
4 gram receiving financial assistance, including
5 the type and dollar amount, under the loan pro-
6 grams of the Administration;

7 “(J) an estimate of gross receipts, includ-
8 ing to the extent practicable a description of
9 any change in revenue of small business con-
10 cerns assisted through the Program;

11 “(K) to the maximum extent practicable,
12 increases or decreases in revenues for the as-
13 sisted small business concerns;

14 “(L) the number of referrals made to re-
15 source partners;

16 “(M) the results of satisfaction surveys of
17 participants, including a summary of any com-
18 ments received from such participants; and

19 “(N) any recommendations by the Admin-
20 istrator to improve the delivery of services by
21 women’s business centers.

22 “(n) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

23 “(1) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be
24 appropriated to the Administration to carry out this
25 section, to remain available until expended,

1 \$31,500,000 for each of fiscal years 2024 through
2 2027.

3 “(2) USE OF AMOUNTS.—

4 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in
5 subparagraph (B), amounts made available
6 under this subsection for fiscal year 2024, and
7 each fiscal year thereafter, may only be used for
8 grant awards and may not be used for costs in-
9 curred by the Administration in connection with
10 the management and administration of the pro-
11 gram under this section.

12 “(B) EXCEPTIONS.—Of the amount made
13 available under this subsection for a fiscal year,
14 the following amounts shall be available for
15 costs incurred by the Administration in connec-
16 tion with the management and administration
17 of the program under this section:

18 “(i) For the first fiscal year beginning
19 after the date of the enactment of this sub-
20 paragraph, 2.65 percent.

21 “(ii) For the second fiscal year begin-
22 ning after the date of the enactment of
23 this subparagraph and each fiscal year
24 thereafter through fiscal year 2027, 2.5
25 percent.

1 “(3) EXPEDITED ACQUISITION.—Notwith-
 2 standing any other provision of law, the Adminis-
 3 trator may use such expedited acquisition methods
 4 as the Administrator determines to be appropriate to
 5 carry out this section, except that the Administrator
 6 shall ensure that all small business concerns are pro-
 7 vided a reasonable opportunity to submit proposals.

8 “(4) ACCREDITATION AND ANNUAL CON-
 9 FERENCE.—Not less than \$500,000 of the amounts
 10 appropriated pursuant to paragraph (1) for a fiscal
 11 year shall be available for purposes of carrying out
 12 subsection (k), of which no less than \$50,000 shall
 13 be available to support an annual conference de-
 14 scribed under subsection (k)(5).”.

15 **SEC. 3. EFFECT ON EXISTING GRANTS.**

16 (a) TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—A nonprofit organiza-
 17 tion receiving a grant under section 29(m) of the Small
 18 Business Act (15 U.S.C. 656(m)), as in effect on the day
 19 before the date of the enactment of this Act, shall continue
 20 to receive the grant under the terms and conditions in ef-
 21 fect for the grant on the day before the date of the enact-
 22 ment of this Act, except that the nonprofit organization
 23 may not apply for a continuation of the grant under sec-
 24 tion 29(m)(5) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C.

1 656(m)(5)), as in effect on the day before the date of the
2 enactment of this Act.

3 (b) LENGTH OF CONTINUATION GRANT.—The Ad-
4 ministrator of the Small Business Administration may
5 award a grant under section 29 of the Small Business Act,
6 as amended by this Act, to a nonprofit organization receiv-
7 ing a grant under section 29(m) of the Small Business
8 Act (15 U.S.C. 656(m)), as in effect on the day before
9 the date of the enactment of this Act, for the period—
10 (1) beginning on the day after the last day of
11 the grant agreement under such section 29(m); and
12 (2) ending at the end of the third fiscal year be-
13 ginning after the date of the enactment of this Act.

14 **SEC. 4. REGULATIONS.**

15 Not later than 270 days after the date of the enact-
16 ment of this Act, the Administrator of Small Business Ad-
17 ministration shall issue such rules as are necessary to
18 carry out section 29 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C.
19 656), as amended by this Act, and ensure that a period
20 of public comment for such rules is not less than 60 days.

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