

1 H.494

2 An act relating to making appropriations for the support of government

3 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

4 * * * Purpose, Definitions, Legend * * *

5 Sec. A.100 SHORT TITLE

6 (a) This bill may be referred to as the BIG BILL – Fiscal Year 2024
7 Appropriations Act.

1 Sec. F.17 10 V.S.A. § 2 is added to read:

2 § 2. SMALL BUSINESS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE EXCHANGE

3 (a) There is created the Small Business Technical Assistance Exchange, a
4 business assistance program through which the regional development
5 corporations shall provide small- and mid-sized businesses with professional
6 and technical assistance:

7 (1) through in-house Business Navigators;

8 (2) through partnerships with organizations specializing in outreach to
9 mature workers, youth, individuals with disabilities, individuals who have been
10 involved with the correction system, Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color
11 Vermonters, New Americans, and other historically marginalized populations;
12 and

1 (3) through grants to private providers for professional services,

2 including:

3 (A) business operations, financial management, and grant writing;

4 (B) digital strategies;

5 (C) architecture and physical space design;

6 (D) reconfiguring manufacturing equipment and processes and

7 incorporating safety measures;

8 (E) technology and software consulting;

9 (F) legal and other professional services; and

10 (G) other technical assistance.

11 (b)(1) Through the Exchange, the regional development corporations shall
12 maintain a directory of, and build connections to, Vermont technical assistance
13 providers who have demonstrated the ability and expertise to assist businesses
14 with critical tools to grow and adapt their businesses to the ever-changing
15 business climate.

16 (2) The Exchange shall award technical assistance grants of not more
17 than \$5,000 per business for technical services from approved providers.

18 (3) To be eligible to receive technical assistance through the Exchange,
19 a business:

20 (A) must be a for-profit entity located in Vermont; and

21 (B) must have at least \$5,000 and not more than \$5,000,000 in average

annual revenue; and

(C) must have operated the business for at least one year.

~~1 (4) A business whose owner's income is higher than the federal labor
2 market area in which the business operates, as evidenced by a self-attestation
3 provided by the owner, shall provide a 50 percent match for the costs of
4 professional services funded by a grant.~~

(c) The regional development corporations shall:

(1) operate the Exchange to produce benefits for both the client
7 companies as well as the vendors providing the assistance; and

(2) conduct outreach and direct engagement to promote participation by
9 businesses in rural areas of this State and businesses owned by mature workers,
10 youth, individuals with disabilities, individuals who have been involved with
11 the correction system, Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color Vermonters,
12 New Americans, and other historically marginalized populations.; and

~~13 (3) supporting businesses in anticipating and addressing changing
14 workforce needs and availability through creative solutions, including split
15 shifts, shorter workweeks, and cross training.~~

(d) The regional development corporations shall publish a report on the
17 activities and performance of the Exchange on or before January 15 and July
18 15 each year.

AS PASSED BY HOUSE
2023

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