

1 H.277

2 Introduced by Representative Sabilia of Dover

3 Referred to Committee on

4 Date:

5 Subject: Commerce and trade; economic development

6 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to create a Rural  
7 Business Technical Assistance Exchange.

8 An act relating to creating a Rural Business Technical Assistance Exchange

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

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

11 § 1. RURAL BUSINESS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE EXCHANGE

12 (a) There is created a Rural Business Technical Assistance Exchange, a  
13 business assistance program through which the regional development  
14 corporations shall provide small- and mid-sized businesses with professional  
15 and technical assistance:

16 (1) through in-house Business Navigators;

17 (2) through partnerships with organizations specializing in outreach to  
18 historically underserved populations; and

19 (3) through grants to private providers for professional services,  
20 including:

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

2           (B) digital strategies;

3           (C) architecture and physical space design;

4           (D) reconfiguring manufacturing equipment and processes and  
5 incorporating safety measures;

6           (E) technology and software consulting;

7           (F) legal and other professional services; and

8           (G) other technical assistance.

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

14           (2) The Exchange shall award technical assistance grants of not more  
15 than \$5,000.00 per business for technical services from approved providers.

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

18           (A) must be a for-profit entity located in a rural area of Vermont; and

19           (B) must have at least \$5,000.00 in average annual revenue.

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

4           (c) The regional development corporations shall operate the Exchange to  
5           produce benefits for both the client companies as well as the vendors providing  
6           the assistance and to expand the capabilities of the regional development  
7           corporations to serve an even larger portion of the rural business community,  
8           including historically underserved populations.

9           (d) The regional development corporations shall publish a report on the  
10          activities and performance of the Exchange on or before January 15 and July  
11          15 each year.

12          Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

13          This act shall take effect on July 1, 2023.