

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.)