

112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 924

To amend the Small Business Act to establish a Veterans Business Center program, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 3, 2011

Mr. HEINRICH introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Small Business

A BILL

To amend the Small Business Act to establish a Veterans 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 “Jobs for Veterans Act
5 of 2011”.

6 **SEC. 2. VETERANS BUSINESS CENTER PROGRAM.**

7 Section 32 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C.
8 657b) is amended—

1 (1) in subsection (f), by inserting “(other than
2 subsections (g), (h), and (i))” after “this section”;
3 and

4 (2) by adding at the end the following:

5 “(g) VETERANS BUSINESS CENTER PROGRAM.—

6 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall es-
7 tablish a Veterans Business Center program within
8 the Administration to provide entrepreneurial train-
9 ing and counseling to veterans in accordance with
10 this subsection.

11 “(2) DIRECTOR AND REGIONAL COORDINA-
12 TORS.—

13 “(A) DIRECTOR.—The Administrator shall
14 appoint a Director of the Veterans Business
15 Center program, who shall implement and over-
16 see such program and who shall report directly
17 to the Associate Administrator for Veterans
18 Business Development.

19 “(B) REGIONAL COORDINATORS.—The Di-
20 rector may appoint regional veterans business
21 center coordinators to oversee and coordinate
22 the efforts of veterans business centers.

23 “(3) DESIGNATION OF VETERANS BUSINESS
24 CENTERS.—The Director shall establish by regula-
25 tion an application, review, and notification process

1 to designate entities as veterans business centers for
2 purposes of this section. The Director shall make
3 publicly known the designation of an entity as a vet-
4 erans business center and the award of a grant to
5 such center under this subsection.

6 “(4) FUNDING FOR VETERANS BUSINESS CEN-
7 TERS.—

8 “(A) INITIAL GRANTS.—The Director is
9 authorized to make a grant (hereinafter in this
10 subsection referred to as an ‘initial grant’) to
11 each veterans business center each year, for not
12 more than 5 years, in the amount of \$200,000.

13 “(B) GROWTH FUNDING GRANTS.—After a
14 veterans business center has received 5 years of
15 initial grants under subparagraph (A), the Di-
16 rector is authorized to make a grant (herein-
17 after in this subsection referred to as a ‘growth
18 funding grant’) to such center each year, for
19 not more than 3 years, in the amount of
20 \$150,000. After such center has received 3
21 years of growth funding grants, the Director
22 shall require such center to meet performance
23 benchmarks established by the Director to be
24 eligible for growth funding grants in subsequent
25 years.

1 “(5) CENTER RESPONSIBILITIES.—Each vet-
2 erans business center receiving a grant under this
3 subsection shall use the funds primarily on veteran
4 entrepreneurial development, counseling of veteran-
5 owned small businesses through one-on-one instruc-
6 tion and classes, and providing government procure-
7 ment assistance to veterans.

8 “(6) MATCHING FUNDS.—Each veterans busi-
9 ness center receiving a grant under this subsection
10 shall be required to provide a non-Federal match of
11 50 percent of the Federal funds such center receives
12 under this subsection. The Director may issue to a
13 veterans business center, upon request, a waiver of
14 all or a portion of such matching requirement upon
15 a determination of hardship. The Director may
16 waive the matching funds requirement under this
17 paragraph with respect to veterans business centers
18 that serve communities with a per capita income
19 that is less than 75 percent of the national per cap-
20 ita income and an unemployment rate that is at
21 least 150 percent higher than the national average.

22 “(7) TARGETED AREAS.—The Director shall
23 give priority to applications for designations and
24 grants under this subsection that will establish a
25 veterans business center in a geographic area, as de-

1 terminated by the Director, that is not currently
2 served by a veterans business center and in which—

3 “(A) the population of veterans exceeds the
4 national median of such measure; or

5 “(B) the population of veterans of Oper-
6 ation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Free-
7 dom, or Operation New Dawn exceeds the na-
8 tional median of such measure.

9 “(8) TRAINING PROGRAM.—The Director shall
10 develop and implement, directly or by contract, an
11 annual training program for the staff and personnel
12 of designated veterans business centers to provide
13 education, support, and information on best prac-
14 tices with respect to the establishment and operation
15 of such centers. The Director shall develop such
16 training program in consultation with veterans busi-
17 ness centers, the interagency task force established
18 under subsection (c), and veterans service organiza-
19 tions.

20 “(9) INCLUSION OF OTHER ORGANIZATIONS IN
21 PROGRAM.—Upon the date of the enactment of this
22 subsection, each Veterans Business Outreach Center
23 established by the Administrator under the authority
24 of section 8(b)(17) and each center that received
25 funds during fiscal year 2006 from the National

1 Veterans Business Development Corporation estab-
2 lished under section 33 and that remains in oper-
3 ation shall be treated as designated as a veterans
4 business center for purposes of this subsection and
5 shall be eligible for grants under this subsection.

6 “(10) RURAL AREAS.—The Director shall sub-
7 mit annually to the Administrator a report on
8 whether a sufficient percentage, as determined by
9 the Director, of veterans in rural areas have ade-
10 quate access to a veterans business center. If the Di-
11 rector submits a report under this paragraph that
12 does not demonstrate that a sufficient percentage of
13 veterans in rural areas have adequate access to a
14 veterans business center, the Director shall give pri-
15 ority during the one-year period following the date
16 of the submission of such report to applications for
17 designations and grants under this subsection that
18 will establish veterans business centers in rural
19 areas.

20 “(11) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—
21 There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out
22 this subsection \$12,000,000 for fiscal year 2012 and
23 \$14,000,000 for fiscal year 2013.

24 “(h) ADDITIONAL GRANTS AVAILABLE TO VETERANS
25 BUSINESS CENTERS.—

1 “(1) ACCESS TO CAPITAL GRANT PROGRAM.—

2 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the
3 Veterans Business Center program shall estab-
4 lish a grant program under which the Director
5 is authorized to make, to veterans business cen-
6 ters designated under subsection (g), grants for
7 the following:

8 “(i) Developing specialized programs
9 to assist veteran-owned small businesses to
10 secure capital and repair damaged credit.

11 “(ii) Providing informational seminars
12 on securing loans to veteran-owned small
13 businesses.

14 “(iii) Providing one-on-one counseling
15 to veteran-owned small businesses to im-
16 prove the financial presentations of such
17 businesses to lenders.

18 “(iv) Facilitating the access of vet-
19 eran-owned small businesses to both tradi-
20 tional and non-traditional financing
21 sources.

22 “(v) Providing one-on-one or group
23 counseling to owners of small business con-
24 cerns who are members of the reserve com-
25 ponents of the Armed Forces, as specified

1 in section 10101 of title 10, United States
2 Code, to assist such owners to effectively
3 prepare their small businesses for periods
4 when such owners are deployed in support
5 of a contingency operation.

6 “(vi) Developing specialized programs
7 to assist unemployed veterans to become
8 entrepreneurs.

9 “(B) AWARD SIZE.—The Director may not
10 award to any one veterans business center more
11 than \$75,000 in grants under this paragraph.

12 “(C) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIA-
13 TIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated
14 to carry out this paragraph \$1,500,000 for each
15 of fiscal years 2012 and 2013.

16 “(2) PROCUREMENT ASSISTANCE GRANT PRO-
17 GRAM.—

18 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Director shall es-
19 tablish a grant program under which the Direc-
20 tor is authorized to make, to veterans business
21 centers designated under subsection (g), grants
22 for the following:

23 “(i) Assisting veteran-owned small
24 businesses to identify contracts that are
25 suitable to such businesses.

1 “(ii) Preparing veteran-owned small
2 businesses to be ready as subcontractors
3 and prime contractors for contracts made
4 available through the American Recovery
5 and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Public
6 Law 111–5) through training and business
7 advisement, particularly with respect to the
8 construction trades.

9 “(iii) Providing veteran-owned small
10 businesses technical assistance with respect
11 to the Federal procurement process, in-
12 cluding assisting such businesses to comply
13 with Federal regulations and bonding re-
14 quirements.

15 “(B) AWARD SIZE.—The Director may not
16 award to any one veterans business center more
17 than \$75,000 in grants under this paragraph.

18 “(C) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIA-
19 TIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated
20 to carry out this paragraph \$1,500,000 for each
21 of fiscal years 2012 and 2013.

22 “(3) SERVICE-DISABLED VETERAN-OWNED
23 SMALL BUSINESS GRANT PROGRAM.—

24 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Director shall es-
25 tablish a grant program under which the Direc-

1 tor is authorized to make, to veterans business
2 centers designated under subsection (g), grants
3 for the following:

4 “(i) Developing outreach programs for
5 service-disabled veterans to promote self-
6 employment opportunities.

7 “(ii) Providing training to service-dis-
8 abled veterans with respect to business
9 plan development, marketing, budgeting,
10 accounting, and merchandising.

11 “(iii) Assisting service-disabled vet-
12 eran-owned small businesses to locate and
13 secure business opportunities.

14 “(B) AWARD SIZE.—The Director may not
15 award to any one veterans business center more
16 than \$75,000 in grants under this paragraph.

17 “(C) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIA-
18 TIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated
19 to carry out this paragraph \$1,500,000 for each
20 of fiscal years 2012 and 2013.

21 “(i) VETERANS ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT
22 SUMMIT.—

23 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the Vet-
24 erans Business Center program is authorized to
25 carry out an event, once every 2 years, for the pur-

1 pose of providing networking opportunities, out-
2 reach, education, training, and support to veterans
3 business centers funded under this section, veteran-
4 owned small businesses, veterans service organiza-
5 tions, and other entities as determined appropriate
6 for inclusion by the Director. Such event shall in-
7 clude education and training with respect to improv-
8 ing outreach to veterans in areas of high unemploy-
9 ment.

10 “(2) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

11 There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out
12 this subsection \$450,000 for fiscal years 2012 and
13 2013.

14 “(j) INCLUSION OF SURVIVING SPOUSES.—For pur-
15 poses of subsections (g), (h), and (i) the following apply:

16 “(1) The term ‘veteran’ includes a surviving
17 spouse of the following:

18 “(A) A member of the Armed Forces, in-
19 cluding a reserve component thereof.

20 “(B) A veteran.

21 “(2) The term ‘veteran-owned small business’
22 includes a small business owned by a surviving
23 spouse of the following:

24 “(A) A member of the Armed Forces, in-
25 cluding a reserve component thereof.

1 “(B) A veteran.

2 “(k) INCLUSION OF RESERVE COMPONENTS.—For
3 purposes of subsections (g), (h), and (i) the following
4 apply:

5 “(1) The term ‘veteran’ includes a member of
6 the reserve components of the Armed Forces as
7 specified in section 10101 of title 10, United States
8 Code.

9 “(2) The term ‘veteran-owned small business’
10 includes a small business owned by a member of the
11 reserve components of the Armed Forces as specified
12 in section 10101 of title 10, United States Code.”.

13 **SEC. 3. REPORTING REQUIREMENT FOR INTERAGENCY**
14 **TASK FORCE.**

15 Section 32(c) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C.
16 657b(c)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

17 “(4) REPORT.—The Administrator shall submit
18 to Congress biannually a report on the appointments
19 made to and activities of the task force.”.

20 **SEC. 4. COMPTROLLER GENERAL STUDY OF SMALL BUSI-**
21 **NESS CONCERNS OWNED AND CONTROLLED**
22 **BY VETERANS.**

23 The Comptroller General shall carry out a study on
24 the effects of this Act and the amendments made by this
25 Act on small business concerns owned and controlled by

1 veterans and shall submit to Congress a report on the re-
2 sults of such study. Such report shall include the rec-
3 ommendations of the Comptroller General with respect to
4 how this Act and the amendments made by this Act may
5 be implemented to more effectively serve small business
6 concerns owned and controlled by veterans.

