

Calendar No. 392

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3564

To amend the Small Business Act to codify the Boots to Business Program,
and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 2, 2022

Ms. DUCKWORTH (for herself and Ms. ERNST) introduced the following bill;
which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Small Business
and Entrepreneurship

MAY 25, 2022

Reported by Mr. CARDIN, with an amendment

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in italic]

A BILL

To amend the Small Business Act to codify the Boots to
Business 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 “Veteran Entrepreneur-
5 ship Training Act of 2022”.

1 **SEC. 2. BOOTS TO BUSINESS PROGRAM.**

2 Section 32 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C.
3 657b) is amended by adding at the end the following:

4 “(h) **BOOTS TO BUSINESS PROGRAM.**—

5 “(1) **COVERED INDIVIDUAL DEFINED.**—In this
6 subsection, the term ‘covered individual’ means—

7 “(A) a member of the Armed Forces, in-
8 cluding the National Guard or Reserves;

9 “(B) an individual who is participating in
10 the Transition Assistance Program established
11 under section 1144 of title 10, United States
12 Code;

13 “(C) an individual who—

14 “(i) served on active duty in any
15 branch of the Armed Forces, including the
16 National Guard or Reserves; and

17 “(ii) was discharged or released from
18 such service under conditions other than
19 dishonorable; and

20 “(D) a spouse or dependent of an indi-
21 vidual described in subparagraph (A), (B), or
22 (C).

23 “(2) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—Beginning on the first
24 October 1 after the date of enactment of this sub-
25 section and for the subsequent 4 fiscal years, the
26 Administrator shall carry out a program to be

1 known as the ‘Boots to Business Program’ to pro-
2 vide entrepreneurship training to covered individ-
3 uals.

4 “(3) GOALS.—The goals of the Boots to Busi-
5 ness Program are to—

6 “(A) provide assistance and in-depth train-
7 ing to covered individuals interested in business
8 ownership; and

9 “(B) provide covered individuals with the
10 tools, skills, and knowledge necessary to identify
11 a business opportunity, draft a business plan,
12 identify sources of capital, connect with local
13 resources for small business concerns, and start
14 up a small business concern.

15 “(4) PROGRAM COMPONENTS.—

16 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Boots to Busi-
17 ness Program may include—

18 “(i) a presentation providing exposure
19 to the considerations involved in self-em-
20 ployment and ownership of a small busi-
21 ness concern;

22 “(ii) an online, self-study course fo-
23 cused on the basic skills of entrepreneur-
24 ship, the language of business, and the

1 considerations involved in self-employment
2 and ownership of a small business concern;

3 “(iii) an in-person classroom instruc-
4 tion component providing an introduction
5 to the foundations of self-employment and
6 ownership of a small business concern; and

7 “(iv) in-depth training delivered
8 through online instruction, including an
9 online course that leads to the creation of
10 a business plan.

11 “(B) COLLABORATION.—The Adminis-
12 trator may—

13 “(i) collaborate with public and pri-
14 vate entities to develop course curricula for
15 the Boots to Business Program; and

16 “(ii) modify program components in
17 coordination with entities participating in a
18 Warriors in Transition program, as defined
19 in section 738(e) of the National Defense
20 Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013
21 (10 U.S.C. 1071 note).

22 “(C) USE OF RESOURCE PARTNERS.—

23 “(i) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator
24 shall—

1 “(I) ensure that Veteran Busi-
2 ness Outreach Centers regularly par-
3 ticipate, on a nationwide basis, in the
4 Boots to Business Program; and

5 “(II) to the maximum extent
6 practicable, use a variety of other re-
7 source partners and entities in admin-
8 istering the Boots to Business Pro-
9 gram.

10 “(ii) GRANT AUTHORITY.—In carrying
11 out clause (i), the Administrator may make
12 grants to Veteran Business Outreach Cen-
13 ters, other resource partners, or other enti-
14 ties to carry out components of the Boots
15 to Business Program.

16 “(D) AVAILABILITY TO DEPARTMENT OF
17 DEFENSE.—The Administrator shall make
18 available to the Secretary of Defense informa-
19 tion regarding the Boots to Business Program,
20 including all course materials and outreach ma-
21 terials related to the Boots to Business Pro-
22 gram; for inclusion on the website of the De-
23 partment of Defense relating to the Transition
24 Assistance Program; in the Transition Assist-
25 ance Program manual; and in other relevant

1 materials available for distribution from the
2 Secretary of Defense.

3 “(E) AVAILABILITY TO VETERANS AF-
4 FAIRS.—In consultation with the Secretary of
5 Veterans Affairs, the Administrator shall make
6 available for distribution and display at local fa-
7 cilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs
8 outreach materials regarding the Boots to Busi-
9 ness Program which shall, at a minimum—

10 “(i) describe the Boots to Business
11 Program and the services provided; and

12 “(ii) include eligibility requirements
13 for participating in the Boots to Business
14 Program.

15 “(5) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after
16 the date of enactment of this subsection and every
17 year thereafter, the Administrator shall submit to
18 the Committee on Small Business and Entrepre-
19 neurship of the Senate and the Committee on Small
20 Business of the House of Representatives a report
21 on the performance and effectiveness of the Boots to
22 Business Program, which may be included as part of
23 another report submitted to such committees by the
24 Administrator, and which shall include—

1 “(A) information regarding grants award-
2 ed under paragraph (4)(C);

3 “(B) the total cost of the Boots to Busi-
4 ness Program;

5 “(C) the number of program participants
6 using each component of the Boots to Business
7 Program;

8 “(D) the completion rates for each compo-
9 nent of the Boots to Business Program;

10 “(E) to the extent possible—

11 “(i) the demographics of program par-
12 ticipants, to include gender, age, race, rela-
13 tionship to military, military occupational
14 specialty, and years of service of program
15 participants;

16 “(ii) the number of small business
17 concerns formed or expanded with assist-
18 ance under the Boots to Business Pro-
19 gram;

20 “(iii) the gross receipts of small busi-
21 ness concerns receiving assistance under
22 the Boots to Business Program;

23 “(iv) the number of jobs created with
24 assistance under the Boots to Business
25 Program;

1 “(v) the number of referrals to other
2 resources and programs of the Administra-
3 tion;

4 “(vi) the number of program partici-
5 pants receiving financial assistance under
6 loan programs of the Administration;

7 “(vii) the type and dollar amount of
8 financial assistance received by program
9 participants under any loan program of the
10 Administration; and

11 “(viii) results of participant satisfac-
12 tion surveys, including a summary of any
13 comments received from program partici-
14 pants;

15 “(F) an evaluation of the effectiveness of
16 the Boots to Business Program in each region
17 of the Administration during the most recent
18 fiscal year;

19 “(G) an assessment of additional perform-
20 ance outcome measures for the Boots to Busi-
21 ness Program, as identified by the Adminis-
22 trator;

23 “(H) any recommendations of the Admin-
24 istrator for improvement of the Boots to Busi-
25 ness Program, which may include expansion of

1 the types of individuals who are covered individ-
 2 uals;

3 “(I) an explanation of how the Boots to
 4 Business Program has been integrated with
 5 other transition programs and related resources
 6 of the Administration and other Federal agen-
 7 cies; and

8 “(J) any additional information the Ad-
 9 ministrator determines necessary.”.

10 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

11 *This Act may be cited as the “Veteran Entrepreneur-*
 12 *ship Training Act of 2022”.*

13 **SEC. 2. BOOTS TO BUSINESS PROGRAM.**

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

16 “(h) **BOOTS TO BUSINESS PROGRAM.**—

17 “(1) **COVERED INDIVIDUAL DEFINED.**—*In this*
 18 *subsection, the term ‘covered individual’ means—*

19 “(A) *a member of the Armed Forces, includ-*
 20 *ing the National Guard or Reserves;*

21 “(B) *an individual who is participating in*
 22 *the Transition Assistance Program established*
 23 *under section 1144 of title 10, United States*
 24 *Code;*

25 “(C) *an individual who—*

1 “(i) served on active duty in any
2 branch of the Armed Forces, including the
3 National Guard or Reserves; and

4 “(ii) was discharged or released from
5 such service under conditions other than
6 dishonorable; and

7 “(D) a spouse or dependent of an indi-
8 vidual described in subparagraph (A), (B), or
9 (C).

10 “(2) *ESTABLISHMENT.*—During the period be-
11 ginning on the date of enactment of this subsection
12 and ending on September 30, 2027, the Administrator
13 shall carry out a program to be known as the ‘Boots
14 to Business Program’ to provide entrepreneurship
15 training to covered individuals.

16 “(3) *GOALS.*—The goals of the Boots to Business
17 Program are to—

18 “(A) provide assistance and in-depth train-
19 ing to covered individuals interested in business
20 ownership; and

21 “(B) provide covered individuals with the
22 tools, skills, and knowledge necessary to identify
23 a business opportunity, draft a business plan,
24 identify sources of capital, connect with local re-

1 *sources for small business concerns, and start up*
2 *a small business concern.*

3 “(4) *PROGRAM COMPONENTS.—*

4 “(A) *IN GENERAL.—The Boots to Business*
5 *Program may include—*

6 “(i) *a presentation providing exposure*
7 *to the considerations involved in self-em-*
8 *ployment and ownership of a small business*
9 *concern;*

10 “(ii) *an online, self-study course fo-*
11 *ocused on the basic skills of entrepreneurship,*
12 *the language of business, and the consider-*
13 *ations involved in self-employment and*
14 *ownership of a small business concern;*

15 “(iii) *an in-person classroom instruc-*
16 *tion component providing an introduction*
17 *to the foundations of self employment and*
18 *ownership of a small business concern; and*

19 “(iv) *in-depth training delivered*
20 *through online instruction, including an on-*
21 *line course that leads to the creation of a*
22 *business plan.*

23 “(B) *COLLABORATION.—The Administrator*
24 *may—*

1 “(i) collaborate with public and pri-
2 vate entities to develop course curricula for
3 the *Boots to Business Program*; and

4 “(ii) modify program components in
5 coordination with entities participating in
6 a *Warriors in Transition* program, as de-
7 fined in section 738(e) of the *National De-*
8 *fense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year*
9 *2013 (10 U.S.C. 1071 note)*.

10 “(C) *USE OF RESOURCE PARTNERS AND*
11 *DISTRICT OFFICES.—*

12 “(i) *IN GENERAL.—The Administrator*
13 *shall—*

14 “(I) ensure that *Veteran Business*
15 *Outreach Centers* regularly participate,
16 on a nationwide basis, in the *Boots to*
17 *Business Program*; and

18 “(II) to the maximum extent
19 practicable, use district offices of the
20 Administration and a variety of other
21 resource partners and entities in ad-
22 ministering the *Boots to Business Pro-*
23 *gram*.

24 “(ii) *GRANT AUTHORITY.—In carrying*
25 out clause (i), the Administrator may make

1 *grants to Veteran Business Outreach Cen-*
2 *ters, other resource partners, or other enti-*
3 *ties to carry out components of the Boots to*
4 *Business Program.*

5 “(D) AVAILABILITY TO DEPARTMENT OF DE-
6 FENSE AND THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR.—*The*
7 *Administrator shall make available to the Sec-*
8 *retary of Defense and the Secretary of Labor in-*
9 *formation regarding the Boots to Business Pro-*
10 *gram, including all course materials and out-*
11 *reach materials related to the Boots to Business*
12 *Program, for inclusion on the websites of the De-*
13 *partment of Defense and the Department of*
14 *Labor relating to the Transition Assistance Pro-*
15 *gram, in the Transition Assistance Program*
16 *manual, and in other relevant materials avail-*
17 *able for distribution from the Secretary of De-*
18 *fense and the Secretary of Labor.*

19 “(E) AVAILABILITY TO DEPARTMENT OF
20 VETERANS AFFAIRS.—*In consultation with the*
21 *Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Administrator*
22 *shall make available for distribution and display*
23 *on the website of the Department of Veterans Af-*
24 *airs and at local facilities of the Department of*
25 *Veterans Affairs outreach materials regarding*

1 *the Boots to Business Program, which shall, at*
2 *a minimum—*

3 “(i) *describe the Boots to Business Pro-*
4 *gram and the services provided; and*

5 “(ii) *include eligibility requirements*
6 *for participating in the Boots to Business*
7 *Program.*

8 “(F) *AVAILABILITY TO OTHER PARTICI-*
9 *PATING AGENCIES.—The Administrator shall en-*
10 *sure information regarding the Boots to Business*
11 *program, including all course materials and out-*
12 *reach materials related to the Boots to Business*
13 *Program, is made available to other partici-*
14 *pating agencies in the Transition Assistance*
15 *Program and upon request of other agencies.*

16 “(5) *COMPETITIVE BIDDING PROCEDURES.—The*
17 *Administration shall use relevant competitive bidding*
18 *procedures with respect to any contract or cooperative*
19 *agreement executed by the Administration under the*
20 *Boots to Business Program.*

21 “(6) *PUBLICATION OF NOTICE OF FUNDING OP-*
22 *PORTUNITY.—Not later than 30 days before the dead-*
23 *line for submitting applications for any funding op-*
24 *portunity under the Boots to Business Program, the*

1 *Administration shall publish a notice of the funding*
2 *opportunity.*

3 “(7) *REPORT.*—*Not later than 180 days after the*
4 *date of enactment of this subsection, and not less fre-*
5 *quently than annually thereafter, the Administrator*
6 *shall submit to the Committee on Small Business and*
7 *Entrepreneurship of the Senate and the Committee on*
8 *Small Business of the House of Representatives a re-*
9 *port on the performance and effectiveness of the Boots*
10 *to Business Program, which—*

11 “(A) *may be included as part of another re-*
12 *port submitted to such committees by the Admin-*
13 *istrator related to the Office of Veterans Business*
14 *Development; and*

15 “(B) *shall summarize available information*
16 *relating to—*

17 “(i) *grants awarded under paragraph*
18 “(4)(C);

19 “(ii) *the total cost of the Boots to Busi-*
20 *ness Program;*

21 “(iii) *the number of program partici-*
22 *pants using each component of the Boots to*
23 *Business Program;*

1 “(iv) the completion rates for each
2 component of the Boots to Business Pro-
3 gram;

4 “(v) to the extent possible—

5 “(I) the demographics of program
6 participants, to include gender, age,
7 race, ethnicity, and relationship to
8 military;

9 “(II) the number of program par-
10 ticipants that connect with a district
11 office of the Administration, a Veteran
12 Business Outreach Center, or another
13 resource partner of the Administration;

14 “(III) the number of program
15 participants that start a small busi-
16 ness concern;

17 “(IV) the results of the Boots to
18 Business and Boots to Business Reboot
19 course quality surveys conducted by the
20 Office of Veterans Business Develop-
21 ment before and after attending each of
22 those courses, including a summary of
23 any comments received from program
24 participants;

1 “(V) *the results of the Boots to*
2 *Business Program outcome surveys*
3 *conducted by the Office of Veterans*
4 *Business Development, including a*
5 *summary of any comments received*
6 *from program participants; and*

7 “(VI) *the results of other germane*
8 *participant satisfaction surveys;*

9 “(C) *an evaluation of the overall effective-*
10 *ness of the Boots to Business Program based on*
11 *each geographic region covered by the Adminis-*
12 *tration during the most recent fiscal year;*

13 “(D) *an assessment of additional perform-*
14 *ance outcome measures for the Boots to Business*
15 *Program, as identified by the Administrator;*

16 “(E) *any recommendations of the Adminis-*
17 *trator for improvement of the Boots to Business*
18 *Program, which may include expansion of the*
19 *types of individuals who are covered individuals;*

20 “(F) *an explanation of how the Boots to*
21 *Business Program has been integrated with other*
22 *transition programs and related resources of the*
23 *Administration and other Federal agencies; and*

24 “(G) *any additional information the Ad-*
25 *ministrator determines necessary.”.*

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Boots to Business Program, and for other pur-
poses.

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