

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1680

To amend the Small Business Act to improve the women’s business center program, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 22, 2017

Mr. KNIGHT (for himself and Mr. LAWSON of Florida) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Small Business

A BILL

To amend the Small Business Act to improve the women’s 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 “Women’s Business
5 Centers Improvements Act of 2017”.

6 **SEC. 2. OFFICE OF WOMEN’S BUSINESS OWNERSHIP.**

7 Section 29(g) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C.
8 656(g)) is amended—

9 (1) in paragraph (2), by striking subparagraphs
10 (B) and (C) and inserting the following:

1 “(B) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The responsibil-
2 ities of the Assistant Administrator shall be to
3 administer the programs and services of the Of-
4 fice of Women’s Business Ownership.

5 “(C) DUTIES.—The Assistant Adminis-
6 trator shall perform the following functions
7 with respect to the Office of Women’s Business
8 Ownership:

9 “(i) Recommend the annual adminis-
10 trative and program budgets of the Office
11 and eligible entities receiving a grant
12 under the Women’s Business Center Pro-
13 gram.

14 “(ii) Review the annual budgets sub-
15 mitted by each eligible entity receiving a
16 grant under the Women’s Business Center
17 Program.

18 “(iii) Select applicants to receive
19 grants to operate a women’s business cen-
20 ter after reviewing information required by
21 this section, including the budget of each
22 applicant.

23 “(iv) Collaborate with other Federal
24 departments and agencies, State and local
25 governments, not-for-profit organizations,

1 and for-profit enterprises to maximize uti-
2 lization of taxpayer dollars and reduce (or
3 eliminate) any duplication among the pro-
4 grams overseen by the Office of Women’s
5 Business Ownership and those of other en-
6 tities that provide similar services to
7 women entrepreneurs.

8 “(v) Maintain a clearinghouse to pro-
9 vide for the dissemination and exchange of
10 information between women’s business cen-
11 ters.

12 “(vi) Serve as the vice chairperson of
13 the Interagency Committee on Women’s
14 Business Enterprise and as the liaison for
15 the National Women’s Business Council.”;
16 and

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

18 “(3) MISSION.—The mission of the Office of
19 Women’s Business Ownership shall be to assist
20 women entrepreneurs to start, grow, and compete in
21 global markets by providing quality support with ac-
22 cess to capital, access to markets, job creation,
23 growth, and counseling by—

24 “(A) fostering participation of women en-
25 trepreneurs in the economy by overseeing a net-

1 work of women’s business centers throughout
2 States and territories;

3 “(B) creating public-private partnerships
4 to support women entrepreneurs and conduct
5 outreach and education to startup and existing
6 small business concerns owned and controlled
7 by women; and

8 “(C) working with other programs over-
9 seen by the Administrator to ensure women are
10 well-represented and being served and to iden-
11 tify gaps where participation by women could
12 be increased.

13 “(4) ACCREDITATION PROGRAM.—

14 “(A) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than
15 270 days after the date of enactment of this
16 paragraph, the Administrator shall establish
17 standards for an accreditation program for ac-
18 crediting eligible entities receiving a grant
19 under this section, after notice and the oppor-
20 tunity for public comment of no less than 60
21 days.

22 “(B) TRANSITION PROVISION.—Before the
23 date on which standards are established under
24 subparagraph (A), the Administrator may not
25 terminate a grant under this section absent evi-

1 dence of fraud or other criminal misconduct by
2 the recipient.

3 “(C) CONTRACTING AUTHORITY.—The Ad-
4 ministrators may provide financial assistance, by
5 contract or otherwise, to a relevant national
6 women’s business center representative associa-
7 tion to provide assistance in establishing the
8 standards required under subparagraph (A) or
9 for carrying out an accreditation program pur-
10 suant to such standards.”.

11 **SEC. 3. WOMEN’S BUSINESS CENTER PROGRAM.**

12 (a) DEFINITIONS.—Section 29(a) of the Small Busi-
13 ness Act (15 U.S.C. 656(a)) is amended—

14 (1) by striking paragraph (4);

15 (2) by redesignating paragraphs (2) and (3) as
16 paragraphs (3) and (4), respectively;

17 (3) by inserting after paragraph (1) the fol-
18 lowing:

19 “(2) the term ‘eligible entity’ means—

20 “(A) an organization described in section
21 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986
22 and exempt from taxation under section 501(a)
23 of such Code;

24 “(B) a State, regional, or local economic
25 development organization, so long as the orga-

1 nization certifies that grant funds received
2 under this section will not be co-mingled with
3 other funds;

4 “(C) an institution of higher education,
5 unless such institution is currently receiving a
6 grant under section 21;

7 “(D) a development, credit, or finance cor-
8 poration chartered by a State, so long as the
9 corporation certifies that grant funds received
10 under this section will not be co-mingled with
11 other funds; or

12 “(E) any combination of entities listed in
13 subparagraphs (A) through (D);” and

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

15 “(5) the term ‘women’s business center’ means
16 the location at which counseling and training on the
17 management, operations (including manufacturing,
18 services, and retail), access to capital, international
19 trade, Government procurement opportunities, and
20 any other matter is needed to start, maintain, or ex-
21 pand a small business concern owned and controlled
22 by women.”.

23 (b) AUTHORITY.—Section 29(b) of the Small Busi-
24 ness Act (15 U.S.C. 656(b)) is amended—

1 (1) by redesignating paragraphs (1), (2), and
2 (3) as subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C), respectively,
3 and adjusting the margins accordingly;

4 (2) by striking “The Administration” and all
5 that follows through “5-year projects” and inserting
6 the following:

7 “(1) IN GENERAL.—There is established a
8 Women’s Business Center Program under which the
9 Administrator may provide a grant to any eligible
10 entity to operate one or more women’s business cen-
11 ters”;

12 (3) by striking “The projects shall” and insert-
13 ing the following:

14 “(2) USE OF FUNDS.—The women’s business
15 centers shall be designed to provide counseling and
16 training that meets the needs of women, especially
17 socially or economically disadvantaged women, and
18 shall”; and

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

20 “(3) AMOUNT OF GRANTS.—

21 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The amount of a
22 grant provided under this subsection to an eligi-
23 ble entity per project year shall be not more
24 than \$185,000 (as such amount is annually ad-

1 justed by the Administrator to reflect the
2 change in inflation).

3 “(B) ADDITIONAL GRANTS.—

4 “(i) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding
5 subparagraph (A), with respect to an eligi-
6 ble entity that has received \$185,000 in
7 grants under this subsection in a project
8 year, the Administrator may award an ad-
9 ditional grant under this subsection of up
10 to \$65,000 during such project year if the
11 Administrator determines that the eligible
12 entity—

13 “(I) agrees to obtain, after its
14 application has been approved and no-
15 tice of award has been issued, cash
16 contributions from non-Federal
17 sources of 1 non-Federal dollar for
18 each Federal dollar;

19 “(II) is in good standing with the
20 Women’s Business Center Program;
21 and

22 “(III) has met performance goals
23 for the previous project year, if appli-
24 cable.

1 “(ii) LIMITATIONS.—The Adminis-
2 trator may only award additional grants
3 under clause (i)—

4 “(I) during the 3rd and 4th
5 quarters of the fiscal year; and

6 “(II) from unobligated amounts
7 made available to the Administrator
8 to carry out this section.

9 “(4) NOTICE AND COMMENT REQUIRED.—The
10 Administrator may only make a change to the stand-
11 ards by which an eligible entity obtains or maintains
12 grants under this section, the standards for accredi-
13 tation, or any other requirement for the operation of
14 a women’s business center if the Administrator first
15 provides notice and the opportunity for public com-
16 ment, as set forth in section 553(b) of title 5,
17 United States Code, without regard to any excep-
18 tions provided for under such section.”.

19 (c) CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION.—Section 29(c)
20 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 656(c)) is amend-
21 ed—

22 (1) in paragraph (1)—

23 (A) by striking “the recipient organiza-
24 tion” and inserting “an eligible entity”; and

1 (B) by striking “financial assistance” and
2 inserting “a grant”;

3 (2) in paragraph (3)—

4 (A) by striking “financial assistance au-
5 thorized pursuant to this section may be made
6 by grant, contract, or cooperative agreement
7 and” and inserting “grants authorized pursuant
8 to this section”; and

9 (B) in the second sentence, by striking “a
10 recipient organization” and inserting “an eligi-
11 ble entity”;

12 (3) in paragraph (4)—

13 (A) by striking “recipient of assistance”
14 and inserting “eligible entity”;

15 (B) by striking “during any project, it
16 shall not be eligible thereafter” and inserting
17 “during any project for 2 consecutive years, the
18 eligible entity shall not be eligible at any time
19 after that 2-year period”;

20 (C) by striking “such organization” and
21 inserting “the eligible entity”; and

22 (D) by striking “the recipient” and insert-
23 ing “the eligible entity”; and

24 (4) by adding at end the following:

1 “(5) SEPARATION OF PROJECT AND FUNDS.—

2 An eligible entity shall—

3 “(A) carry out a project under this section
4 separately from other projects, if any, of the eli-
5 gible entity; and

6 “(B) separately maintain and account for
7 any grants under this section.

8 “(6) EXAMINATION OF ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—

9 “(A) REQUIRED SITE VISIT.—Each appli-
10 cant, prior to receiving a grant under this sec-
11 tion, shall have a site visit by an employee of
12 the Administration, in order to ensure that the
13 applicant has sufficient resources to provide the
14 services for which the grant is being provided.

15 “(B) ANNUAL REVIEW.—An employee of
16 the Administration shall—

17 “(i) conduct an annual review of the
18 compliance of each eligible entity receiving
19 a grant under this section with the grant
20 agreement, including a financial examina-
21 tion; and

22 “(ii) provide such review to the eligi-
23 ble entity as required under subsection (1).

24 “(7) REMEDIATION OF PROBLEMS.—

1 “(A) PLAN OF ACTION.—If a review of an
2 eligible entity under paragraph (6)(B) identifies
3 any problems, the eligible entity shall, within 45
4 calendar days of receiving such review, provide
5 the Assistant Administrator with a plan of ac-
6 tion, including specific milestones, for cor-
7 recting such problems.

8 “(B) PLAN OF ACTION REVIEW BY THE AS-
9 SISTANT ADMINISTRATOR.—The Assistant Ad-
10 ministrator shall review each plan of action sub-
11 mitted under subparagraph (A) within 30 cal-
12 endar days of receiving such plan and—

13 “(i) if the Assistant Administrator de-
14 termines that such plan will bring the eligi-
15 ble entity into compliance with all the
16 terms of the grant agreement, approve
17 such plan;

18 “(ii) if the Assistant Administrator
19 determines that such plan is inadequate to
20 remedy the problems identified in the an-
21 nual review to which the plan of action re-
22 lates, the Assistant Administrator shall set
23 forth such reasons in writing and provide
24 such determination to the eligible entity

1 within 15 calendar days of such determina-
2 tion.

3 “(C) AMENDMENT TO PLAN OF ACTION.—
4 An eligible entity receiving a determination
5 under subparagraph (B)(ii) shall have 30 cal-
6 endar days from the receipt of the determina-
7 tion to amend the plan of action to satisfy the
8 problems identified by the Assistant Adminis-
9 trator and resubmit such plan to the Assistant
10 Administrator.

11 “(D) AMENDED PLAN REVIEW BY THE AS-
12 SISTANT ADMINISTRATOR.—Within 15 calendar
13 days of the receipt of an amended plan of ac-
14 tion under subparagraph (C), the Assistant Ad-
15 ministrators shall either approve or reject such
16 plan and provide such approval or rejection in
17 writing to the eligible entity.

18 “(E) APPEAL OF ASSISTANT ADMINIS-
19 TRATOR DETERMINATION.—

20 “(i) IN GENERAL.—If the Assistant
21 Administrator rejects an amended plan
22 under subparagraph (D), the eligible entity
23 shall have the opportunity to appeal such
24 decision to the Administrator, who may

1 delegate such appeal to an appropriate of-
2 ficer of the Administration.

3 “(ii) OPPORTUNITY FOR EXPLA-
4 NATION.—Any appeal described under
5 clause (i) shall provide an opportunity for
6 the eligible entity to provide, in writing, an
7 explanation of why the eligible entity’s plan
8 remedies the problems identified in the an-
9 nual review.

10 “(iii) NOTICE OF DETERMINATION.—
11 The determination of the appeal shall be
12 provided to the eligible entity, in writing,
13 within 15 calendar days from the eligible
14 entity’s filing of the appeal.

15 “(iv) EFFECT OF FAILURE TO ACT.—
16 If the Administrator fails to act on an ap-
17 peal made under this subparagraph within
18 the 15-calendar-day period specified under
19 clause (iii), the eligible entity’s amended
20 plan of action submitted under subpara-
21 graph (C) shall be deemed to be approved.

22 “(8) TERMINATION OF GRANT.—

23 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator
24 shall issue regulations (after providing an op-
25 portunity for notice and comment) to provide

1 that, if an eligible entity fails to comply with a
2 plan of action approved by the Assistant Ad-
3 ministrator under paragraph (7)(B)(i) or an
4 amended plan of action approved by the Assist-
5 ant Administrator under paragraph (7)(D) or
6 approved on appeal under paragraph (7)(E),
7 the Assistant Administrator shall terminate the
8 grant provided to the eligible entity under this
9 section.

10 “(B) APPEAL OF TERMINATION.—An eligi-
11 ble entity that has a grant terminated under
12 subparagraph (A) shall have the opportunity to
13 challenge the termination on the record and
14 after an opportunity for a hearing.

15 “(C) FINAL AGENCY ACTION.—The deter-
16 mination made pursuant to subparagraph (B)
17 shall be considered final agency action for the
18 purposes of chapter 7, title 5, United States
19 Code.”.

20 (d) SUBMISSION OF 5-YEAR PLAN.—Section 29(e) of
21 the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 656(e)) is amended—

22 (1) by striking “applicant organization” and in-
23 serting “eligible entity”;

24 (2) by striking “a recipient organization” and
25 inserting “an eligible entity”;

1 (3) by striking “financial assistance” and in-
2 serting “grants”; and

3 (4) by striking “site”.

4 (e) APPLICATIONS AND CRITERIA FOR INITIAL
5 GRANT.—Subsection (f) of section 29 of the Small Busi-
6 ness Act (15 U.S.C. 656) is amended to read as follows:

7 “(f) APPLICATIONS AND CRITERIA FOR INITIAL
8 GRANT.—

9 “(1) APPLICATION.—Each eligible entity desir-
10 ing a grant under subsection (b) shall submit to the
11 Administrator an application that contains—

12 “(A) a certification that the eligible enti-
13 ty—

14 “(i) has designated an executive direc-
15 tor or program manager, who may be com-
16 pensated using grant funds under sub-
17 section (b) or other sources, to manage the
18 women’s business center for which a grant
19 under subsection (b) is sought;

20 “(ii) meets the accounting and report-
21 ing requirements established by the Direc-
22 tor of the Office of Management and
23 Budget;

24 “(B) information demonstrating that the
25 eligible entity has the ability and resources to

1 meet the needs of the market to be served by
2 the women’s business center, including the abil-
3 ity to obtain the non-Federal contribution re-
4 quired under subsection (c);

5 “(C) information relating to the assistance
6 to be provided by the women’s business center
7 in the area in which the women’s business cen-
8 ter is located;

9 “(D) information demonstrating the expe-
10 rience and effectiveness of the eligible entity
11 in—

12 “(i) conducting the services described
13 under subsection (a)(5);

14 “(ii) providing training and services to
15 a representative number of women who are
16 socially or economically disadvantaged; and

17 “(iii) working with resource partners
18 of the Administration and other entities,
19 such as universities; and

20 “(E) a 5-year plan that describes the abil-
21 ity of the eligible entity to provide the services
22 described under subsection (a)(3), including to
23 a representative number of women who are so-
24 cially or economically disadvantaged.

1 “(2) REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF APPLICATIONS
2 FOR INITIAL GRANTS.—

3 “(A) REVIEW AND SELECTION OF ELIGI-
4 BLE ENTITIES.—

5 “(i) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator
6 shall review applications to determine
7 whether the applicant can meet obligations
8 to perform the activities required by a
9 grant under this section, including—

10 “(I) the experience of the appli-
11 cant in conducting activities required
12 by this section;

13 “(II) the amount of time needed
14 for the applicant to commence oper-
15 ations should it be awarded a grant;

16 “(III) the capacity of the appli-
17 cant to meet the accreditation stand-
18 ards established by the Administrator
19 in a timely manner;

20 “(IV) the ability of the applicant
21 to sustain operations for more than 5
22 years (including its ability to obtain
23 sufficient non-Federal funds for that
24 period);

1 “(V) the location of the women’s
2 business center and its proximity to
3 other grant recipients under this sec-
4 tion; and

5 “(VI) the population density of
6 the area to be served by the women’s
7 business center.

8 “(ii) SELECTION CRITERIA.—

9 “(I) RULEMAKING.—The Admin-
10 istrator shall issue regulations (after
11 providing an opportunity for notice
12 and comment) to specify the criteria
13 for review and selection of applicants
14 under this subsection.

15 “(II) MODIFICATIONS PROHIB-
16 ITED AFTER ANNOUNCEMENT.—With
17 respect to a public announcement of
18 any opportunity to be awarded a
19 grant under this section made by the
20 Administrator pursuant to subsection
21 (l)(1), the Administrator may not
22 modify regulations issued pursuant to
23 subclause (I) with respect to such op-
24 portunity unless required to do so by

1 an Act of Congress or an order of a
2 Federal court.

3 “(III) RULE OF CONSTRU-
4 TION.—Nothing in this clause may be
5 construed as prohibiting the Adminis-
6 trator from modifying the regulations
7 issued pursuant to subclause (I) (after
8 providing an opportunity for notice
9 and comment) as such regulations
10 apply to an opportunity to be awarded
11 a grant under this section that the
12 Administrator has not yet publicly an-
13 nounced pursuant to subsection (l)(1).

14 “(B) RECORD RETENTION.—

15 “(i) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator
16 shall maintain a copy of each application
17 submitted under this subsection for not
18 less than 5 years.

19 “(ii) PAPERWORK REDUCTION.—The
20 Administrator shall take steps to reduce,
21 to the maximum extent practicable, the pa-
22 perwork burden associated with carrying
23 out clause (i).”.

24 (f) NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE
25 WOMEN’S BUSINESS CENTER PROGRAM.—Section 29 of

1 the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 656) is amended by
2 inserting after subsection (k) the following:

3 “(l) NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE
4 WOMEN’S BUSINESS CENTER PROGRAM.—The Adminis-
5 trator shall provide—

6 “(1) a public announcement of any opportunity
7 to be awarded grants under this section, and such
8 announcement shall include the standards by which
9 such award will be made, including the regulations
10 issued pursuant to subsection (f)(2)(A)(ii);

11 “(2) the opportunity for any applicant for a
12 grant under this section that failed to obtain such
13 a grant a debriefing with the Assistant Adminis-
14 trator to review the reasons for the applicant’s fail-
15 ure; and

16 “(3) with respect to any site visit or evaluation
17 of an eligible entity receiving a grant under this sec-
18 tion that is carried out by an officer or employee of
19 the Administration (other than the Inspector Gen-
20 eral), a copy of the site visit report or evaluation, as
21 applicable, within 30 calendar days of the completion
22 of such vision or evaluation.”.

23 (g) CONTINUED FUNDING FOR CENTERS.—Section
24 29(m) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 656(m)) is
25 amended—

1 (1) by striking paragraph (3) and inserting the
2 following:

3 “(3) APPLICATION AND APPROVAL FOR CON-
4 TINUATION GRANTS.—

5 “(A) SOLICITATION OF APPLICATIONS.—

6 The Administrator shall solicit applications and
7 award continuation grants under this subsection
8 for the first fiscal year beginning after the date
9 of enactment of this paragraph, and every third
10 fiscal year thereafter.

11 “(B) CONTENTS OF APPLICATION.—Each
12 eligible entity desiring a grant under this sub-
13 section shall submit to the Administrator an ap-
14 plication that contains—

15 “(i) a certification that the appli-
16 cant—

17 “(I) is an eligible entity;

18 “(II) has designated an executive
19 director or program manager to man-
20 age the women’s business center oper-
21 ated by the applicant; and

22 “(III) as a condition of receiving
23 a grant under this subsection,
24 agrees—

1 “(aa) to receive a site visit
2 as part of the final selection
3 process, at the discretion of the
4 Administrator; and

5 “(bb) to remedy any prob-
6 lem identified pursuant to the
7 site visit under item (aa);

8 “(ii) information demonstrating that
9 the applicant has the ability and resources
10 to meet the needs of the market to be
11 served by the women’s business center for
12 which a grant under this subsection is
13 sought, including the ability to obtain the
14 non-Federal contribution required under
15 paragraph (4)(C);

16 “(iii) information relating to assist-
17 ance to be provided by the women’s busi-
18 ness center in the geographic area served
19 by the women’s business center for which
20 a grant under this subsection is sought;

21 “(iv) information demonstrating that
22 the applicant has worked with resource
23 partners of the Administration and other
24 entities;

1 “(v) a 3-year plan that describes the
2 services provided by the women’s business
3 center for which a grant under this sub-
4 section is sought—

5 “(I) to serve women who are
6 business owners or potential business
7 owners by conducting training and
8 counseling activities; and

9 “(II) to provide training and
10 services to a representative number of
11 women who are socially or economi-
12 cally disadvantaged; and

13 “(vi) any additional information that
14 the Administrator may reasonably require.

15 “(C) REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF APPLICA-
16 TIONS FOR GRANTS.—

17 “(i) IN GENERAL.—The Adminis-
18 trator—

19 “(I) shall review each application
20 submitted under subparagraph (B),
21 based on the information described in
22 such subparagraph and the criteria
23 set forth under clause (ii) of this sub-
24 paragraph; and

1 “(II) as part of the final selection
2 process, may, at the discretion of the
3 Administrator, conduct a site visit to
4 each women’s business center for
5 which a grant under this subsection is
6 sought, in particular to evaluate the
7 women’s business center using the se-
8 lection criteria described in clause
9 (ii)(II).

10 “(ii) SELECTION CRITERIA.—

11 “(I) IN GENERAL.—The Admin-
12 istrator shall evaluate applicants for
13 grants under this subsection in ac-
14 cordance with selection criteria that
15 are—

16 “(aa) established before the
17 date on which applicants are re-
18 quired to submit the applications;

19 “(bb) stated in terms of rel-
20 ative importance; and

21 “(cc) publicly available and
22 stated in each solicitation for ap-
23 plications for grants under this
24 subsection made by the Adminis-
25 trator.

1 “(II) REQUIRED CRITERIA.—The
2 selection criteria for a grant under
3 this subsection shall include—

4 “(aa) the total number of
5 entrepreneurs served by the ap-
6 plicant;

7 “(bb) the total number of
8 new startup companies assisted
9 by the applicant;

10 “(cc) the percentage of cli-
11 ents of the applicant that are so-
12 cially or economically disadvan-
13 taged;

14 “(dd) the percentage of indi-
15 viduals in the community served
16 by the applicant who are socially
17 or economically disadvantaged;

18 “(ee) the successful accredi-
19 tation of the applicant under the
20 accreditation program developed
21 under subsection (g)(5); and

22 “(ff) any additional criteria
23 that the Administrator may rea-
24 sonably require.

1 “(iii) CONDITIONS FOR CONTINUED
2 FUNDING.—In determining whether to
3 make a grant under this subsection, the
4 Administrator—

5 “(I) shall consider the results of
6 the most recent evaluation of the
7 women’s business center for which a
8 grant under this subsection is sought,
9 and, to a lesser extent, previous eval-
10 uations; and

11 “(II) may withhold a grant under
12 this subsection, if the Administrator
13 determines that the applicant has
14 failed to provide the information re-
15 quired to be provided under this para-
16 graph, or the information provided by
17 the applicant is inadequate.

18 “(D) NOTIFICATION.—Not later than 60
19 calendar days after the date of each deadline to
20 submit applications under this paragraph, the
21 Administrator shall approve or deny each sub-
22 mitted application and notify the applicant for
23 each such application of the approval or denial.

24 “(E) RECORD RETENTION.—

1 “(i) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator
2 shall maintain a copy of each application
3 submitted under this paragraph for not
4 less than 5 years.

5 “(ii) PAPERWORK REDUCTION.—The
6 Administrator shall take steps to reduce,
7 to the maximum extent practicable, the pa-
8 perwork burden associated with carrying
9 out clause (i).”; and

10 (2) by striking paragraph (5) and inserting the
11 following:

12 “(5) AWARD TO PREVIOUS RECIPIENTS.—There
13 shall be no limitation on the number of times the
14 Administrator may award a grant to an applicant
15 under this subsection.”.

16 (h) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—
17 Section 29 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 656) is
18 amended—

19 (1) in subsection (h)(2), by striking “to award
20 a contract (as a sustainability grant) under sub-
21 section (l) or”;

22 (2) in subsection (j)(1), by striking “The Ad-
23 ministration” and inserting “Not later than Novem-
24 ber 1 of each year, the Administrator”;

25 (3) in subsection (k)—

1 (A) by striking paragraphs (1) and (4);

2 (B) by inserting before paragraph (2) the
3 following:

4 “(1) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be
5 appropriated to the Administration to carry out this
6 section, to remain available until expended,
7 \$21,750,000 for each of fiscal years 2018 through
8 2021.”; and

9 (C) in paragraph (2), by striking subpara-
10 graph (B) and inserting the following:

11 “(B) EXCEPTIONS.—Of the amount made
12 available under this subsection for a fiscal year,
13 the following amounts shall be available for se-
14 lection panel costs, costs associated with main-
15 taining an accreditation program, and post-
16 award conference costs:

17 “(i) For the first fiscal year beginning
18 after the date of the enactment of this sub-
19 paragraph, 2.65 percent.

20 “(ii) For the second fiscal year begin-
21 ning after the date of the enactment of
22 this subparagraph and each fiscal year
23 thereafter through fiscal year 2021, 2.5
24 percent.”; and

25 (4) in subsection (m)—

1 (A) in paragraph (2), by striking “sub-
2 section (b) or (l)” and inserting “this sub-
3 section or subsection (b)”;

4 (B) in paragraph (4)(D), by striking “or
5 subsection (l)”.

6 (i) EFFECT ON EXISTING GRANTS.—

7 (1) TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—A nonprofit or-
8 ganization receiving a grant under section 29(m) of
9 the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 656(m)), as in
10 effect on the day before the date of enactment of
11 this Act, shall continue to receive the grant under
12 the terms and conditions in effect for the grant on
13 the day before the date of enactment of this Act, ex-
14 cept that the nonprofit organization may not apply
15 for a continuation of the grant under section
16 29(m)(5) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C.
17 656(m)(5)), as in effect on the day before the date
18 of enactment of this Act.

19 (2) LENGTH OF CONTINUATION GRANT.—The
20 Administrator of the Small Business Administration
21 may award a grant under section 29(m) of the Small
22 Business Act to a nonprofit organization receiving a
23 grant under section 29(m) of the Small Business
24 Act (15 U.S.C. 656(m)), as in effect on the day be-

1 fore the date of enactment of this Act, for the pe-
2 riod—

3 (A) beginning on the day after the last day
4 of the grant agreement under such section
5 29(m); and

6 (B) ending at the end of the third fiscal
7 year beginning after the date of enactment of
8 this Act.

9 **SEC. 4. MATCHING REQUIREMENTS UNDER WOMEN'S BUSI-**
10 **NESS CENTER PROGRAM.**

11 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 29(c) of the Small Busi-
12 ness Act (15 U.S.C. 656(c)), as amended by section 3 of
13 this Act, is further amended—

14 (1) in paragraph (1), by striking “As a condi-
15 tion” and inserting “Subject to paragraph (6), as a
16 condition”; and

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

18 “(9) WAIVER OF NON-FEDERAL SHARE.—

19 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Upon request by an
20 eligible entity, and in accordance with this para-
21 graph, the Administrator may waive, in whole
22 or in part, the requirement to obtain non-Fed-
23 eral funds under this subsection for counseling
24 and training activities of the eligible entity car-
25 ried out using a grant under this section for a

1 fiscal year. The Administrator may not waive
2 the requirement for an eligible entity to obtain
3 non-Federal funds under this paragraph for
4 more than a total of 2 consecutive fiscal years.

5 “(B) CONSIDERATIONS.—In determining
6 whether to waive the requirement to obtain
7 non-Federal funds under this paragraph, the
8 Administrator shall consider—

9 “(i) the economic conditions affecting
10 the eligible entity;

11 “(ii) the impact a waiver under this
12 paragraph would have on the credibility of
13 the Women’s Business Center Program
14 under this section;

15 “(iii) the demonstrated ability of the
16 eligible entity to raise non-Federal funds;
17 and

18 “(iv) the performance of the eligible
19 entity.

20 “(C) LIMITATION.—The Administrator
21 may not waive the requirement to obtain non-
22 Federal funds under this paragraph if granting
23 the waiver would undermine the credibility of
24 the Women’s Business Center Program.

1 “(10) SOLICITATION.—Notwithstanding any
2 other provision of law, eligible entity may—

3 “(A) solicit cash and in-kind contributions
4 from private individuals and entities to be used
5 to carry out the activities of the eligible entity
6 under the project conducted under this section;
7 and

8 “(B) use amounts made available by the
9 Administrator under this section for the cost of
10 such solicitation and management of the con-
11 tributions received.

12 “(11) EXCESS NON-FEDERAL DOLLARS.—The
13 amount of non-Federal dollars obtained by an eligi-
14 ble entity that is above the amount that is required
15 to be obtained by the eligible entity under this sub-
16 section shall not be subject to the requirements of
17 part 200 of title 2, Code of Federal Regulations, or
18 any successor thereto, if such amount of non-Fed-
19 eral dollars—

20 “(A) is not used as matching funds for
21 purposes of implementing the Women’s Busi-
22 ness Center Program; and

23 “(B) was not obtained using funds from
24 the Women’s Business Center Program.”.

25 (b) REGULATIONS.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator of Small
2 Business Administration shall—

3 (A) except as provided in paragraph (2),
4 and not later than 270 days after the date of
5 enactment of this Act, publish in the Federal
6 Register proposed regulations by the Adminis-
7 trator to carry out the amendments made to
8 section 29 of the Small Business Act (15
9 U.S.C. 656) by this Act; and

10 (B) accept public comments on such pro-
11 posed regulations for not less than 60 days.

12 (2) EXISTING PROPOSED REGULATIONS.—Para-
13 graph (1)(A) shall not apply to the extent proposed
14 regulations by the Administrator have been pub-
15 lished on the date of enactment of this Act that are
16 sufficient to carry out the amendments made to sec-
17 tion 29 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 656)
18 by this Act.

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