

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2116

To improve certain programs of the Small Business Administration to better assist small business customers in accessing broadband technology, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER 1, 2015

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself and Mr. VITTER) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship

A BILL

To improve certain programs of the Small Business Administration to better assist small business customers in accessing broadband technology, 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 “Small Business
5 Broadband and Emerging Information Technology En-
6 hancement Act of 2015”.

7 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

8 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) According to a report by the Federal Com-
2 munications Commission entitled “Connecting Amer-
3 ica: The National Broadband Plan”, dated March
4 2010, the Commission recommends that—

5 (A) “To fully implement next-generation
6 technology within its operations, the SBA
7 should also appoint a broadband and emerging
8 IT coordinator. This individual would ensure
9 that SBA programs maintain the requisite
10 broadband expertise, tools and training courses
11 to serve small businesses.”;

12 (B) “Congress should consider ways to le-
13 verage existing assistance provided through”
14 entrepreneurial development programs, “to
15 focus training on advanced IT and broadband
16 applications”;

17 (C) “Congress could also consider ways to
18 support technology training among women en-
19 trepreneurs through” women’s business centers;

20 (D) “The training programs should include
21 an entry-level ‘Broadband 101’ course to give
22 small businesses an introduction to how to cap-
23 italize on broadband connectivity, as well as
24 more advanced applications for IT staff.”; and

1 (E) small and medium enterprise “IT
2 training should include resources for non-IT
3 staff, such as how to use e-commerce tools for
4 sales, streamline finance with online records or
5 leverage knowledge management across an or-
6 ganization.”.

7 (2) According to a report by the Broadband
8 Opportunity Council, dated August 20, 2015, the
9 Council recommends that the United States—

10 (A) modernize Federal programs to expand
11 program support for broadband technology in-
12 vestments;

13 (B) empower communities with tools and
14 resources to attract investment in and promote
15 meaningful use of broadband technology;

16 (C) promote increased deployment of and
17 competition relating to broadband technology
18 through expanded access to Federal assets; and

19 (D) improve data collection, analysis, and
20 research on broadband technology.

21 (3) According to a report entitled “The State of
22 the App Economy”, dated October 2014—

23 (A) “More than three-quarters of the high-
24 est grossing apps are produced by startups and
25 small companies.”; and

1 (B) “Seventy-eight percent of the leading
2 app companies are located outside Silicon Val-
3 ley.”.

4 (4) According to a report entitled, “Developer
5 Economics Q1 2015: State of the Developer Na-
6 tion”, dated February 2015, “The emergence of the
7 app industry over the past eight years has grown to
8 a \$120 billion economy.”.

9 **SEC. 3. BROADBAND AND EMERGING INFORMATION TECH-**
10 **NOLOGY COORDINATOR.**

11 The Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 631 et seq.) is
12 amended—

13 (1) by redesignating section 47 as section 48;
14 and

15 (2) by inserting after section 46 the following:

16 **“SEC. 47. BROADBAND AND EMERGING INFORMATION**
17 **TECHNOLOGY.**

18 “(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

19 “(1) the term ‘Associate Administrator’ means
20 the Associate Administrator for the Office of Invest-
21 ment and Innovation; and

22 “(2) the term ‘broadband and emerging infor-
23 mation technology coordinator’ means the employee
24 designated to carry out the broadband and emerging

1 information technology coordination responsibilities
2 of the Administration under subsection (b)(1).

3 “(b) ASSIGNMENT OF COORDINATOR.—

4 “(1) ASSIGNMENT OF COORDINATOR.—The As-
5 sociate Administrator shall designate a senior em-
6 ployee of the Office of Investment and Innovation to
7 serve as the broadband and emerging information
8 technology coordinator, who—

9 “(A) shall report to the Associate Adminis-
10 trator;

11 “(B) shall work in coordination with—

12 “(i) the chief information officer, the
13 chief technology officer, and the head of
14 the Office of Technology of the Adminis-
15 tration; and

16 “(ii) any other Associate Adminis-
17 trator of the Administration determined
18 appropriate by the Associate Adminis-
19 trator;

20 “(C) has experience developing and imple-
21 menting telecommunications policy in the pri-
22 vate sector or government; and

23 “(D) has demonstrated significant experi-
24 ence in the area of broadband or emerging in-
25 formation technology.

1 “(2) RESPONSIBILITIES OF COORDINATOR.—

2 The broadband and emerging information technology
3 coordinator shall—

4 “(A) coordinate programs of the Adminis-
5 tration that assist small business concerns in
6 adopting, making innovations in, and using
7 broadband and other emerging information
8 technologies;

9 “(B) serve as the primary liaison of the
10 Administration to other Federal agencies in-
11 volved in broadband and emerging information
12 technology policy, including the Department of
13 Commerce, the Department of Agriculture, and
14 the Federal Communications Commission;

15 “(C) identify best practices relating to
16 broadband and emerging information tech-
17 nology that may benefit small business con-
18 cerns; and

19 “(D) identify and catalog tools and train-
20 ing available through the resource partners of
21 the Administration that assist small business
22 concerns in adopting, making innovations in,
23 and using broadband and emerging tech-
24 nologies.

1 “(3) TRAVEL.—Not more than 20 percent of
2 the hours of service by the broadband and emerging
3 information technology coordinator during any fiscal
4 year shall consist of travel outside the United States
5 to perform official duties.

6 “(c) BROADBAND AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGY
7 TRAINING.—

8 “(1) TRAINING.—The Associate Administrator
9 shall provide to employees of the Administration
10 training that—

11 “(A) familiarizes employees of the Admin-
12 istration with broadband and other emerging
13 information technologies;

14 “(B) includes—

15 “(i) instruction on counseling small
16 business concerns regarding adopting,
17 making innovations in, and using
18 broadband and other emerging information
19 technologies; and

20 “(ii) information on programs of the
21 Federal Government that provide assist-
22 ance to small business concerns relating to
23 broadband and emerging information tech-
24 nologies; and

1 “(C) to maximum extent practicable, uses
2 the tools and training cataloged and identified
3 under subsection (b)(2)(D).

4 “(2) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—
5 There are authorized to be appropriated such sums
6 as are necessary to carry out this subsection.

7 “(d) REPORTS.—

8 “(1) BIENNIAL REPORT ON ACTIVITIES.—Not
9 later than 2 years after the date on which the Asso-
10 ciate Administrator makes the first designation of
11 an employee under subsection (b), and every 2 years
12 thereafter, the broadband and emerging information
13 technology coordinator shall submit to the Com-
14 mittee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of
15 the Senate and the Committee on Small Business of
16 the House of Representatives a report regarding the
17 programs and activities of the Administration relat-
18 ing to broadband and other emerging information
19 technologies.

20 “(2) IMPACT OF BROADBAND SPEED AND PRICE
21 ON SMALL BUSINESSES.—

22 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to appropria-
23 tions, the Chief Counsel for Advocacy shall con-
24 duct a study evaluating the impact of

1 broadband speed and price on small business
2 concerns.

3 “(B) REPORT.—Not later than 3 years
4 after the date of enactment of the Small Busi-
5 ness Broadband and Emerging Information
6 Technology Enhancement Act of 2015, the
7 Chief Counsel for Advocacy shall submit to the
8 Committee on Commerce, Science, and Trans-
9 portation and the Committee on Small Business
10 and Entrepreneurship of the Senate and the
11 Committee on Energy and Commerce and the
12 Committee on Small Business of the House of
13 Representatives a report on the results of the
14 study under subparagraph (A), including—

15 “(i) a survey of broadband speeds
16 available to small business concerns;

17 “(ii) a survey of the cost of broadband
18 speeds available to small business con-
19 cerns;

20 “(iii) a survey of the type of
21 broadband technology used by small busi-
22 ness concerns; and

23 “(iv) any policy recommendations that
24 may improve the access of small business
25 concerns to comparable broadband services

1 at comparable rates in all regions of the
2 United States.”.

3 **SEC. 4. ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT.**

4 Section 21(c)(3)(B) of the Small Business Act (15
5 U.S.C. 648(c)(3)(B)) is amended—

6 (1) in the matter preceding clause (i), by insert-
7 ing “accessing broadband and other emerging infor-
8 mation technology,” after “technology transfer,”;

9 (2) in clause (ii), by striking “and” at the end;

10 (3) in clause (iii), by adding “and” at the end;

11 and

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

13 “(iv) increasing the competitiveness and
14 productivity of small business concerns by as-
15 sisting entrepreneurs in accessing broadband
16 and other emerging information technology;”.

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