

Calendar No. 253

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, Mr. VITTER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. PETERS, Mr. BOOKER, and Mr. MARKEY) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship

OCTOBER 7, 2015

Reported by Mr. VITTER, with an amendment

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

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,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Small Business
3 Broadband and Emerging Information Technology En-
4 hancement Act of 2015”.

5 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

6 Congress finds the following:

7 (1) According to a report by the Federal Com-
8 munications Commission entitled “Connecting Amer-
9 ica: The National Broadband Plan”, dated March
10 2010, the Commission recommends that—

11 (A) “To fully implement next-generation
12 technology within its operations, the SBA
13 should also appoint a broadband and emerging
14 IT coordinator. This individual would ensure
15 that SBA programs maintain the requisite
16 broadband expertise, tools and training courses
17 to serve small businesses.”;

18 (B) “Congress should consider ways to le-
19 verage existing assistance provided through”
20 entrepreneurial development programs, “to
21 focus training on advanced IT and broadband
22 applications”;

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

1 ~~(D)~~ “The training programs should include
2 an entry-level ‘Broadband 101’ course to give
3 small businesses an introduction to how to cap-
4 italize on broadband connectivity, as well as
5 more advanced applications for IT staff.”; and

6 ~~(E)~~ small and medium enterprise “IT
7 training should include resources for non-IT
8 staff, such as how to use e-commerce tools for
9 sales, streamline finance with online records or
10 leverage knowledge management across an or-
11 ganization.”.

12 ~~(2)~~ According to a report by the Broadband
13 Opportunity Council, dated August 20, 2015, the
14 Council recommends that the United States—

15 ~~(A)~~ modernize Federal programs to expand
16 program support for broadband technology in-
17 vestments;

18 ~~(B)~~ empower communities with tools and
19 resources to attract investment in and promote
20 meaningful use of broadband technology;

21 ~~(C)~~ promote increased deployment of and
22 competition relating to broadband technology
23 through expanded access to Federal assets; and

24 ~~(D)~~ improve data collection, analysis, and
25 research on broadband technology.

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

~~(A)~~ “More than three-quarters of the highest grossing apps are produced by startups and small companies.”; and

~~(B)~~ “Seventy-eight percent of the leading app companies are located outside Silicon Valley.”.

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

~~SEC. 3. BROADBAND AND EMERGING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COORDINATOR.~~

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

~~(1)~~ by redesignating section 47 as section 48;

and

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

~~“SEC. 47. BROADBAND AND EMERGING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY.~~

~~“(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—~~

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

4 “(2) the term ‘broadband and emerging infor-
5 mation technology coordinator’ means the employee
6 designated to carry out the broadband and emerging
7 information technology coordination responsibilities
8 of the Administration under subsection (b)(1).

9 “(b) ASSIGNMENT OF COORDINATOR.—

10 “(1) ASSIGNMENT OF COORDINATOR.—The As-
11 sociate Administrator shall designate a senior em-
12 ployee of the Office of Investment and Innovation to
13 serve as the broadband and emerging information
14 technology coordinator, who—

15 “(A) shall report to the Associate Adminis-
16 trator;

17 “(B) shall work in coordination with—

18 “(i) the chief information officer; the
19 chief technology officer; and the head of
20 the Office of Technology of the Adminis-
21 tration; and

22 “(ii) any other Associate Adminis-
23 trator of the Administration determined
24 appropriate by the Associate Adminis-
25 trator;

1 “(C) has experience developing and imple-
 2 menting telecommunications policy in the pri-
 3 vate sector or government; and

4 “(D) has demonstrated significant experi-
 5 ence in the area of broadband or emerging in-
 6 formation technology.

7 “(2) RESPONSIBILITIES OF COORDINATOR.—
 8 The broadband and emerging information technology
 9 coordinator shall—

10 “(A) coordinate programs of the Adminis-
 11 tration that assist small business concerns in
 12 adopting, making innovations in, and using
 13 broadband and other emerging information
 14 technologies;

15 “(B) serve as the primary liaison of the
 16 Administration to other Federal agencies in-
 17 volved in broadband and emerging information
 18 technology policy, including the Department of
 19 Commerce, the Department of Agriculture, and
 20 the Federal Communications Commission;

21 “(C) identify best practices relating to
 22 broadband and emerging information tech-
 23 nology that may benefit small business con-
 24 cerns; and

1 “(D) identify and catalog tools and train-
 2 ing available through the resource partners of
 3 the Administration that assist small business
 4 concerns in adopting, making innovations in,
 5 and using broadband and emerging tech-
 6 nologies.

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

12 “(e) BROADBAND AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGY
 13 TRAINING.—

14 “(1) TRAINING.—The Associate Administrator
 15 shall provide to employees of the Administration
 16 training that—

17 “(A) familiarizes employees of the Admin-
 18 istration with broadband and other emerging
 19 information technologies;

20 “(B) includes—

21 “(i) instruction on counseling small
 22 business concerns regarding adopting,
 23 making innovations in, and using
 24 broadband and other emerging information
 25 technologies; and

1 “(ii) information on programs of the
 2 Federal Government that provide assist-
 3 ance to small business concerns relating to
 4 broadband and emerging information tech-
 5 nologies; and

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

9 “(2) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—
 10 There are authorized to be appropriated such sums
 11 as are necessary to carry out this subsection.

12 “(d) REPORTS.—

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

1 ~~“(2) IMPACT OF BROADBAND SPEED AND PRICE~~
 2 ~~ON SMALL BUSINESSES.—~~

3 ~~“(A) IN GENERAL.—~~Subject to appropria-
 4 ~~tions,~~ the Chief Counsel for Advocacy shall con-
 5 ~~duct a study evaluating the impact of~~
 6 ~~broadband speed and price on small business~~
 7 ~~concerns.~~

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

20 ~~“(i) a survey of broadband speeds~~
 21 ~~available to small business concerns;~~

22 ~~“(ii) a survey of the cost of broadband~~
 23 ~~speeds available to small business con-~~
 24 ~~cerns;~~

1 “(iii) a survey of the type of
2 broadband technology used by small busi-
3 ness concerns; and

4 “(iv) any policy recommendations that
5 may improve the access of small business
6 concerns to comparable broadband services
7 at comparable rates in all regions of the
8 United States.”.

9 **SEC. 4. ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT.**

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

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

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

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

17 and

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

19 “(iv) increasing the competitiveness and
20 productivity of small business concerns by as-
21 sisting entrepreneurs in accessing broadband
22 and other emerging information technology;”.

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 *This Act may be cited as the “Small Business*
 3 *Broadband and Emerging Information Technology En-*
 4 *hancement Act of 2015”.*

5 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

6 *Congress finds the following:*

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 8 *munications Commission entitled “Connecting Amer-*
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 12 *technology within its operations, the SBA should*
 13 *also appoint a broadband and emerging IT coor-*
 14 *dinator. This individual would ensure that SBA*
 15 *programs maintain the requisite broadband ex-*
 16 *pertise, tools and training courses to serve small*
 17 *businesses.”;*

18 *(B) “Congress should consider ways to le-*
 19 *verage existing assistance provided through” en-*
 20 *trepreneurial development programs, “to focus*
 21 *training on advanced IT and broadband appli-*
 22 *cations”;*

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 24 *support technology training among women entre-*
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1 (D) “The training programs should include
 2 an entry-level ‘Broadband 101’ course to give
 3 small businesses an introduction to how to cap-
 4 italize on broadband connectivity, as well as
 5 more advanced applications for IT staff.”; and

6 (E) small and medium enterprise “IT
 7 training should include resources for non-IT
 8 staff, such as how to use e-commerce tools for
 9 sales, streamline finance with online records or
 10 leverage knowledge management across an orga-
 11 nization.”.

12 (2) According to a report by the Broadband Op-
 13 portunity Council, dated August 20, 2015, the avail-
 14 ability of and access to broadband technology en-
 15 ables—

16 (A) greater civic participation, by pro-
 17 viding tools for open government and stream-
 18 lining government process;

19 (B) changes in how people access edu-
 20 cational resources, collaborate in the educational
 21 process, conduct research, and continue to learn
 22 anytime, anyplace, and at any pace;

23 (C) improved healthcare access, treatments,
 24 and information;

1 (D) *new business models that create busi-*
 2 *ness efficiencies, drive job creation, and connect*
 3 *manufacturers and store-fronts to clients and*
 4 *partners worldwide; and*

5 (E) *bringing communities together and im-*
 6 *provements to public safety, creating a greener*
 7 *planet, and make transportation systems more*
 8 *resilient and efficient.*

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

11 (A) *“More than three-quarters of the highest*
 12 *grossing apps are produced by startups and*
 13 *small companies.”; and*

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 15 *app companies are located outside Silicon Val-*
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 18 *Economics Q1 2015: State of the Developer Nation”,*
 19 *dated February 2015, “The emergence of the app in-*
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 25 *chief technology officer, and the head of the*

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