

“(4) increases or decreases in profits of assisted concerns; and

“(5) the employment increases or decreases of assisted concerns.”

Subsec. (k)(1). Pub. L. 106-165, §4(b)(1), added par. (1) and struck out heading and text of former par. (1). Text read as follows: “There is authorized to be appropriated \$11,000,000 for each fiscal year to carry out the projects authorized under this section, of which, for fiscal year 1998, not more than 5 percent may be used for administrative expenses related to the program under this section.”

Pub. L. 106-17, §3, substituted “\$11,000,000” for “\$8,000,000”.

Subsec. (k)(2). Pub. L. 106-165, §4(b)(2), designated existing provisions as subpar. (A), inserted heading, substituted “Except as provided in subparagraph (B), amounts made” for “Amounts made”, and added subpar. (B).

Subsec. (k)(4). Pub. L. 106-165, §4(b)(3), added par. (4).

Subsec. (l). Pub. L. 106-165, §4(a), added subsec. (l).

1997—Pub. L. 105-135 amended section generally, substituting provisions relating to women’s business center program for provisions relating to women’s demonstration projects.

1994—Subsec. (g). Pub. L. 103-403, §411(2), substituted “1997” for “1995”.

Subsec. (h). Pub. L. 103-403, §412, added subsec. (h).

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

CHANGE OF NAME

Committee on Small Business of Senate changed to Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of Senate. See Senate Resolution No. 123, One Hundred Seventh Congress, June 29, 2001.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2010 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 111-240, title I, §1401(c), Sept. 27, 2010, 124 Stat. 2549, provided that the amendment made by section 1401(c)(2) is effective Oct. 1, 2012.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2007 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 110-28, title VIII, §8305(b), May 25, 2007, 121 Stat. 210, provided that the amendment made by section 8305(b) is effective Oct. 1 of the first full fiscal year after May 25, 2007.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1999 AMENDMENTS

Pub. L. 106-165, §6, Dec. 9, 1999, 113 Stat. 1801, provided that: “This Act [amending this section and enacting provisions set out as notes under this section and section 631 of this title] and the amendments made by this Act shall take effect on October 1, 1999.”

Pub. L. 106-17, §2(b), Apr. 6, 1999, 113 Stat. 27, provided that: “The amendments made by this section [amending this section] shall apply beginning October 1, 1998.”

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1997 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 105-135 effective Oct. 1, 1997, see section 3 of Pub. L. 105-135, set out as a note under section 631 of this title.

REGULATIONS

Pub. L. 106-165, §4(c), Dec. 9, 1999, 113 Stat. 1799, provided that: “Not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act [Dec. 9, 1999], the Administrator of the Small Business Administration shall issue guidelines to implement the amendments made by this section [amending this section].”

TRANSITIONAL RULE

Pub. L. 110-28, title VIII, §8305(c), May 25, 2007, 121 Stat. 210, provided that: “Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a grant or cooperative agreement that was awarded under subsection (l) of section 29 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 656), on or before the day before the date described in subsection (b) of this sec-

tion [set out as an Effective Date of 2007 Amendment note above], shall remain in full force and effect under the terms, and for the duration, of such grant or agreement.”

APPLICABILITY

Pub. L. 105-135, title III, §308(b), Dec. 2, 1997, 111 Stat. 2615, provided that:

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), any organization conducting a 3-year project under section 29 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 656) (as in effect on the day before the effective date of this Act [Dec. 2, 1997]) on September 30, 1997, may request an extension of the term of that project to a total term of 5 years. If such an extension is made, the organization shall receive financial assistance in accordance with section 29(c) of the Small Business Act (as amended by this section) subject to procedures established by the Administrator, in coordination with the Assistant Administrator of the Office of Women’s Business Ownership established under section 29 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 656) (as amended by this section).

“(2) TERMS OF ASSISTANCE FOR CERTAIN ORGANIZATIONS.—Any organization operating in the third year of a 3-year project under section 29 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 656) (as in effect on the day before the effective date of this Act) on September 30, 1997, may request an extension of the term of that project to a total term of 5 years. If such an extension is made, during the fourth and fifth years of the project, the organization shall receive financial assistance in accordance with section 29(c)(1)(C) of the Small Business Act (as amended by this section) subject to procedures established by the Administrator, in coordination with the Assistant Administrator of the Office of Women’s Business Ownership established under section 29 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 656) (as amended by this section).”

§ 657. Oversight of regulatory enforcement

(a) Definitions

For purposes of this section, the term—

(1) “Board” means a Regional Small Business Regulatory Fairness Board established under subsection (c); and

(2) “Ombudsman” means the Small Business and Agriculture Regulatory Enforcement Ombudsman designated under subsection (b).

(b) SBA Enforcement Ombudsman

(1) Not later than 180 days after March 29, 1996, the Administrator shall designate a Small Business and Agriculture Regulatory Enforcement Ombudsman, who shall report directly to the Administrator, utilizing personnel of the Small Business Administration to the extent practicable. Other agencies shall assist the Ombudsman and take actions as necessary to ensure compliance with the requirements of this section. Nothing in this section is intended to replace or diminish the activities of any Ombudsman or similar office in any other agency.

(2) The Ombudsman shall—

(A) work with each agency with regulatory authority over small businesses to ensure that small business concerns that receive or are subject to an audit, on-site inspection, compliance assistance effort, or other enforcement related communication or contact by agency personnel are provided with a means to comment on the enforcement activity conducted by such personnel;

(B) establish means to receive comments from small business concerns regarding actions by agency employees conducting compli-

ance or enforcement activities with respect to the small business concern, means to refer comments to the Inspector General of the affected agency in the appropriate circumstances, and otherwise seek to maintain the identity of the person and small business concern making such comments on a confidential basis to the same extent as employee identities are protected under section 407 of title 5;

(C) based on substantiated comments received from small business concerns and the Boards, annually report to Congress and affected agencies evaluating the enforcement activities of agency personnel including a rating of the responsiveness to small business of the various regional and program offices of each agency;

(D) coordinate and report annually on the activities, findings and recommendations of the Boards to the Administrator and to the heads of affected agencies; and

(E) provide the affected agency with an opportunity to comment on draft reports prepared under subparagraph (C), and include a section of the final report in which the affected agency may make such comments as are not addressed by the Ombudsman in revisions to the draft.

(c) Regional Small Business Regulatory Fairness Boards

(1) Not later than 180 days after March 29, 1996, the Administrator shall establish a Small Business Regulatory Fairness Board in each regional office of the Small Business Administration.

(2) Each Board established under paragraph (1) shall—

(A) meet at least annually to advise the Ombudsman on matters of concern to small businesses relating to the enforcement activities of agencies;

(B) report to the Ombudsman on substantiated instances of excessive enforcement actions of agencies against small business concerns including any findings or recommendations of the Board as to agency enforcement policy or practice; and

(C) prior to publication, provide comment on the annual report of the Ombudsman prepared under subsection (b).

(3) Each Board shall consist of five members, who are owners, operators, or officers of small business concerns, appointed by the Administrator, after receiving the recommendations of the chair and ranking minority member of the Committees on Small Business of the House of Representatives and the Senate. Not more than three of the Board members shall be of the same political party. No member shall be an officer or employee of the Federal Government, in either the executive branch or the Congress.

(4) Members of the Board shall serve at the pleasure of the Administrator for terms of three years or less.

(5) The Administrator shall select a chair from among the members of the Board who shall serve at the pleasure of the Administrator for not more than 1 year as chair.

(6) A majority of the members of the Board shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of business, but a lesser number may hold hearings.

(d) Powers of Boards

(1) The Board may hold such hearings and collect such information as appropriate for carrying out this section.

(2) The Board may use the United States mails in the same manner and under the same conditions as other departments and agencies of the Federal Government.

(3) The Board may accept donations of services necessary to conduct its business, provided that the donations and their sources are disclosed by the Board.

(4) Members of the Board shall serve without compensation, provided that, members of the Board shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for employees of agencies under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5 while away from their homes or regular places of business in the performance of services for the Board.

(e) Centralized website

Not later than 6 months after October 10, 2022, the Ombudsman shall maintain a publicly available website that includes—

(1) hyperlinks to small entity compliance guides described under section 212(a)(1) of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996; and

(2) with respect to each such small entity compliance guide, the contact information for an individual who can offer assistance to small entities with respect to the rules that are the subject of such guide.

(f) Report on agency compliance

The Ombudsman shall include in the annual report required under subsection (b)(2)(C) an assessment of agency compliance with the requirements of section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996 for the year covered by such annual report.

(Pub. L. 85-536, §2[30], as added Pub. L. 104-121, title II, §222(2), Mar. 29, 1996, 110 Stat. 860; amended Pub. L. 117-188, §2, Oct. 10, 2022, 136 Stat. 2203; Pub. L. 117-286, §4(b)(37), Dec. 27, 2022, 136 Stat. 4347.)

Editorial Notes

REFERENCES IN TEXT

Section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996, referred to in subsecs. (e)(1) and (f), is section 212 of title II of Pub. L. 104-121, which is set out in a note under section 601 of Title 5, Government Organization and Employees.

PRIOR PROVISIONS

A prior section 2[30] of Pub. L. 85-536 was renumbered section 2[49] and is set out as a note under section 631 of this title.

AMENDMENTS

2022—Subsec. (b)(2)(B). Pub. L. 117-286 substituted “section 407 of title 5;” for “section 7 of the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.);”.

Subsecs. (e), (f). Pub. L. 117-188 added subsecs. (e) and (f).

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

CHANGE OF NAME

Committee on Small Business of Senate changed to Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of

Senate. See Senate Resolution No. 123, One Hundred Seventh Congress, June 29, 2001.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective on expiration of 90 days after Mar. 29, 1996, see section 224 of Pub. L. 104-121 set out in a Small Business Regulatory Fairness note under section 601 of Title 5, Government Organization and Employment.

§ 657a. HUBZone program

(a) In general

There is established within the Administration a program (to be known as the HUBZone program) to be carried out by the Administrator to provide for Federal contracting assistance, including promoting economic development in economically distressed areas (as defined in section 636(m)(11)),¹ to qualified HUBZone small business concerns in accordance with this section.

(b) Definitions relating to HUBZones

In this section:

(1) Historically underutilized business zone

The terms “historically underutilized business zone” or “HUBZone” mean any area located within 1 or more—

- (A) qualified census tracts;
- (B) qualified nonmetropolitan counties;
- (C) lands within the external boundaries of an Indian reservation;
- (D) redesignated areas;
- (E) base closure areas;
- (F) qualified disaster areas; or
- (G) a Governor-designated covered area.

(2) HUBZone small business concern

The term “HUBZone small business concern” means—

- (A) a small business concern that is at least 51 percent owned and controlled by United States citizens;
- (B) a small business concern that is—
 - (i) an Alaska Native Corporation owned and controlled by Natives (as determined pursuant to section 1626(e)(1) of title 43); or
 - (ii) a direct or indirect subsidiary corporation, joint venture, or partnership of an Alaska Native Corporation qualifying pursuant to section 1626(e)(1) of title 43, if that subsidiary, joint venture, or partnership is owned and controlled by Natives (as determined pursuant to section 1626(e)(2) of title 43);
- (C) a small business concern—
 - (i) that is wholly owned by one or more Indian tribal governments, or by a corporation that is wholly owned by one or more Indian tribal governments; or
 - (ii) that is owned in part by one or more Indian tribal governments, or by a corporation that is wholly owned by one or more Indian tribal governments, if all other owners are either United States citizens or small business concerns;
- (D) a small business concern—
 - (i) that is wholly owned by one or more Native Hawaiian Organizations (as defined

in section 637(a)(15) of this title), or by a corporation that is wholly owned by one or more Native Hawaiian Organizations; or

(ii) that is owned in part by one or more Native Hawaiian Organizations, or by a corporation that is wholly owned by one or more Native Hawaiian Organizations, if all other owners are either United States citizens or small business concerns;

(E) a small business concern that is—

(i) wholly owned by a community development corporation that has received financial assistance under part 1 of subchapter A of the Community Economic Development Act of 1981 (42 U.S.C. 9805 et seq.); or

(ii) owned in part by one or more community development corporations, if all other owners are either United States citizens or small business concerns; or

(F) a small business concern that is—

(i) a small agricultural cooperative organized or incorporated in the United States;

(ii) wholly owned by 1 or more small agricultural cooperatives organized or incorporated in the United States; or

(iii) owned in part by 1 or more small agricultural cooperatives organized or incorporated in the United States, if all owners are small business concerns or United States citizens.

(3) Qualified areas

(A) Qualified census tract

(i) In general

The term “qualified census tract” means a census tract that is covered by the definition of “qualified census tract” in section 42(d)(5)(B)(ii) of title 26 and that is reflected in an online tool prepared by the Administrator described under subsection (d)(7).

(ii) Exception

For any metropolitan statistical area in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the term “qualified census tract” has the meaning given that term in section 42(d)(5)(B)(ii) of title 26 as applied without regard to subclause (II) of such section and that is reflected in the online tool described under clause (i), except that this clause shall only apply—

(I) 10 years after the date that the Administrator implements this clause, or

(II) the date on which the Financial Oversight and Management Board for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico created by the Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act ceases to exist,

whichever event occurs first.

(B) Qualified nonmetropolitan county

The term “qualified nonmetropolitan county” means any county that is reflected in the online tool described under subparagraph (A)(i) and—

(i) that was not located in a metropolitan statistical area (as defined in section

¹ See References in Text note below.