

## CHAPTER 44

[House Bill No. 1013]

## SMALL BUSINESS INNOVATORS' OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM

AN ACT Relating to the establishment of a small business innovators' opportunity program; adding a new chapter to Title 43 RCW; making an appropriation; and providing an expiration date.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Washington:

**NEW SECTION.** Section 1. The legislature recognizes the numerous benefits to the state's economic base from the establishment of small businesses by innovators and inventors and the numerous benefits provided by inventors and innovators through industrial diversification, broadening of the economic base, and providing financial benefits to our citizens and new products to the nation's consumers.

It is estimated that ninety-five percent of all inventions and innovations are never authoritatively considered primarily because inventors are unfamiliar with the business environment or financial structure necessary for implementing their proposals.

The legislature therefore recognizes a need to encourage and assist innovators and inventors.

**NEW SECTION.** Sec. 2. Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter.

(1) "Department" means the department of commerce and economic development.

(2) "Director" means the director of commerce and economic development.

(3) "Program" means the small business innovators' opportunity program.

(4) "Inventor" or "innovator" means one who thinks of, imagines, or creates something new which may result in a device, contrivance, or process for the first time, through the use of the imagination or ingenious thinking and experimentation.

(5) "Proposal" means a plan provided by an inventor or innovator on an idea for an invention or an improvement.

(6) "Higher education" means any university, college, community college, or technical institute in this state.

**NEW SECTION.** Sec. 3. The department of commerce and economic development, in cooperation with institutions of higher education, shall establish as a pilot project a small business innovators' opportunity program to provide a professional research and counseling service on a user fee basis to inventors, innovators, and the business community.

The composition and organizational structure of the program shall be determined by the department in a manner which will foster the continuation of the program without state funding at the end of the pilot project established by this chapter. The department shall provide staff support for the program for the duration of the pilot project. The program shall:

- (1) Receive proposals from inventors and innovators;
- (2) Review proposals for accuracy and evaluate their prospects for marketability;
- (3) Cooperate with institutions of higher education to evaluate proposals for marketability, suitability for patent rights, and for the provision of professional research and counseling;
- (4) Provide assistance to the innovators and inventors as appropriate; and
- (5) Have the power to receive funds, contract with institutions of higher education, and carry out such other duties as are deemed necessary to implement this chapter.

The user fee shall be set by the director in an amount which is designed to recover the cost of the services provided.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 4. The director shall be the chairman of the program during the pilot project.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 5. The director shall report quarterly to the appropriate legislative committees with special emphasis on the program's impact on the economy of the state together with any recommendations.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 6. Only businesses with fifty employees or less which are not subsidiaries of another business and individuals are eligible to participate in the program.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 7. The pilot project for the Washington small business innovators' opportunity program shall terminate on June 30, 1984, and this chapter shall expire on such date and thereafter shall be void and of no further force and effect.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 8. There is appropriated to the department of commerce and economic development from the general fund for the biennium ending June 30, 1983, the sum of forty-five thousand dollars, or so much thereof as may be necessary, to carry out the provisions of this act.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 9. Sections 1 through 7 of this act shall constitute a new chapter in Title 43 RCW.

Passed the House February 5, 1982.

Passed the Senate March 3, 1982.

Approved by the Governor March 22, 1982.

Filed in Office of Secretary of State March 22, 1982.