

116J.68 BUREAU OF SMALL BUSINESS.

Subdivision 1. **Generally.** The Bureau of Small Business within the business assistance center shall serve as a clearinghouse and referral service for information needed by small businesses including small targeted group businesses and small businesses located in an economically disadvantaged area.

Subd. 2. **Duties.** The bureau shall:

(a) provide information and assistance with respect to all aspects of business planning and business management related to the start-up, operation, or expansion of a small business in Minnesota;

(b) refer persons interested in the start-up, operation, or expansion of a small business in Minnesota to assistance programs sponsored by federal agencies, state agencies, educational institutions, chambers of commerce, civic organizations, community development groups, private industry associations, and other organizations or to the business assistance referral system established by the Minnesota Project Outreach Corporation;

(c) plan, develop, and implement a master file of information on small business assistance programs of federal, state, and local governments, and other public and private organizations so as to provide comprehensive, timely information to the bureau's clients;

(d) employ staff with adequate and appropriate skills and education and training for the delivery of information and assistance;

(e) seek out and utilize, to the extent practicable, contributed expertise and services of federal, state, and local governments, educational institutions, and other public and private organizations;

(f) maintain a close and continued relationship with the director of the procurement program within the Department of Administration so as to facilitate the department's duties and responsibilities under sections 16C.16 to 16C.19 relating to the small targeted group business and economically disadvantaged business program of the state;

(g) develop an information system which will enable the commissioner and other state agencies to efficiently store, retrieve, analyze, and exchange data regarding small business development and growth in the state. All executive branch agencies of state government and the secretary of state shall to the extent practicable, assist the bureau in the development and implementation of the information system;

(h) establish and maintain a toll free telephone number so that all small business persons anywhere in the state can call the bureau office for assistance. An outreach program shall be established to make the existence of the bureau well known to its potential clientele throughout the

state. If the small business person requires a referral to another provider the bureau may use the business assistance referral system established by the Minnesota Project Outreach Corporation;

(i) conduct research and provide data as required by the state legislature;

(j) develop and publish material on all aspects of the start-up, operation, or expansion of a small business in Minnesota;

(k) collect and disseminate information on state procurement opportunities, including information on the procurement process;

(l) develop a public awareness program through the use of newsletters, personal contacts, and electronic and print news media advertising about state assistance programs for small businesses, including those programs specifically for socially disadvantaged small business persons;

(m) enter into agreements with the federal government and other public and private entities to serve as the statewide coordinator or host agency for the federal small business development center program under United States Code, title 15, section 648; and

(n) assist providers in the evaluation of their programs and the assessment of their service area needs. The bureau may establish model evaluation techniques and performance standards for providers to use.

Subd. 3. [Repealed, 1984 c 604 s 5]

Subd. 4. [Repealed, 1984 c 604 s 5]

Subd. 5. **Advisory board meetings.** (a) If compliance with section 13D.02 is impractical, the Small Business Development Center Advisory Board, created pursuant to United States Code, title 15, section 648, may conduct a meeting of its members by telephone or other electronic means so long as the following conditions are met:

(1) all members of the board participating in the meeting, wherever their physical location, can hear one another and can hear all discussion and testimony;

(2) members of the public present at the regular meeting location of the board can hear clearly all discussion and testimony and all votes of members of the board and, if needed, receive those services required by sections 15.44 and 15.441;

(3) at least one member of the board is physically present at the regular meeting location; and

(4) all votes are conducted by roll call, so each member's vote on each issue can be identified and recorded.

(b) Each member of the board participating in a meeting by telephone or other electronic means is considered present at the meeting for purposes of determining a quorum and participating in all proceedings.

(c) If telephone or other electronic means is used to conduct a meeting, the board, to the extent practical, shall allow a person to monitor the meeting electronically from a remote location. The board may require the person making such a connection to pay for documented marginal costs that the board incurs as a result of the additional connection.

(d) If telephone or other electronic means is used to conduct a regular, special, or emergency meeting, the board shall provide notice of the regular meeting location, of the fact that some members may participate by telephone or other electronic means, and of the provisions of paragraph (c). The timing and method of providing notice is governed by section 13D.04.

History: 1979 c 246 s 3; 1981 c 356 s 248; 1984 c 604 s 5; 1987 c 384 art 2 s 1; 1989 c 335 art 1 s 142; 1989 c 352 s 8,25; 1990 c 541 s 11,29; 1991 c 199 art 1 s 31; 1993 c 163 art 1 s 17; 1996 c 305 art 1 s 29; 1998 c 386 art 2 s 36; 2005 c 163 s 53