

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 77

To reauthorize the State Trade Expansion Program of the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 25, 2023

Mrs. SHAHEEN introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship

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## A BILL

To reauthorize the State Trade Expansion Program of the Small Business Administration, 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 “STEP Improvement  
5 Act of 2023”.

6 **SEC. 2. STATE TRADE EXPANSION PROGRAM.**

7       (a) APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS.—Section 22(1)(3)  
8 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 649(1)(3)) is amend-  
9 ed—

10               (1) in subparagraph (D)—

1 (A) in clause (i), by inserting “, including  
 2 a budget plan for use of funds awarded under  
 3 this subsection” before the period at the end;  
 4 and

5 (B) by adding at the end the following:

6 “(iii) TIMING.—The Associate Admin-  
 7 istrator shall—

8 “(I) publish information on how  
 9 to apply for a grant under this sub-  
 10 section, including specific calculations  
 11 and other determinations used to  
 12 award such a grant, not later than  
 13 March 31 of each year;

14 “(II) establish a deadline for the  
 15 submission of applications that is not  
 16 earlier than 60 days after the date on  
 17 which the information is published  
 18 under subclause (I) and that is not  
 19 later than May 31; and

20 “(III) announce grant recipients  
 21 not later than August 31 of each  
 22 year.”; and

23 (2) by adding at the end the following:

24 “(E) APPLICATION INFORMATION.—The  
 25 Associate Administrator shall clearly commu-

1           nicate to applicants and grant recipients any in-  
 2           formation about the State Trade Expansion  
 3           Program, including—

4                   “(i) for each unsuccessful applicant  
 5                   for a grant awarded under this subsection,  
 6                   recommendations to improve a subsequent  
 7                   application for such a grant; and

8                   “(ii) for each successful applicant for  
 9                   such a grant, an explanation for the  
 10                  amount awarded, if different from the  
 11                  amount requested in the application.

12          “(F) BUDGET PLAN REVISIONS.—

13                  “(i) IN GENERAL.—A State receiving  
 14                  a grant under this subsection may revise  
 15                  the budget plan of the State submitted  
 16                  under subparagraph (D) after the dis-  
 17                  bursal of grant funds if—

18                          “(I) the revision complies with al-  
 19                          lowable uses of grant funds under this  
 20                          subsection; and

21                          “(II) such State submits notifica-  
 22                          tion of the revision to the Associate  
 23                          Administrator.

24                  “(ii) EXCEPTION.—If a revision under  
 25                  clause (i) reallocates 10 percent or more of

1 the amounts described in the budget plan  
2 of the State submitted under subparagraph  
3 (D), the State may not implement the re-  
4 vised budget plan without the approval of  
5 the Associate Administrator, unless the As-  
6 sociate Administrator fails to approve or  
7 deny the revised plan within 20 days after  
8 receipt of such revised plan.”.

9 (b) SURVEY.—Section 22(l) of the Small Business  
10 Act (15 U.S.C. 649(l)) is amended—

11 (1) by redesignating paragraphs (7) through  
12 (9) as paragraphs (8) through (10), respectively;  
13 and

14 (2) by inserting after paragraph (6) the fol-  
15 lowing:

16 “(7) SURVEY.—The Associate Administrator  
17 shall conduct an annual survey of each State that  
18 received a grant under this subsection during the  
19 preceding year to solicit feedback on the program  
20 and develop best practices for grantees.”.

21 (c) ANNUAL REPORT.—Paragraph (8)(B) of section  
22 22(l) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 649(l)), as  
23 so redesignated by subsection (b), is amended—

24 (1) in clause (i)—

1 (A) in subclause (III), by inserting “, in-  
2 cluding the total number of eligible small busi-  
3 ness concerns assisted by the program  
4 (disaggregated by socially and economically dis-  
5 advantaged small business concerns, small busi-  
6 ness concerns owned and controlled by women,  
7 and rural small business concerns)” before the  
8 semicolon at the end;

9 (B) in subclause (IV), by striking “and” at  
10 the end;

11 (C) in subclause (V)—

12 (i) by striking “description of best  
13 practices” and inserting “detailed descrip-  
14 tion of best practices”; and

15 (ii) by striking the period at the end  
16 and inserting a semicolon; and

17 (D) by adding at the end the following:

18 “(VI) an analysis of the perform-  
19 ance metrics described in clause (iii),  
20 including a determination of whether  
21 or not any goals relating to such per-  
22 formance metrics were met, and an  
23 analysis of the survey described in  
24 paragraph (7); and

1                   “(VII) a description of lessons  
2                   learned by grant recipients under this  
3                   subsection that may apply to other as-  
4                   sistance provided by the Administra-  
5                   tion.”; and

6                   (2) by adding at the end the following:

7                   “(iii) PERFORMANCE METRICS.—An-  
8                   nually, the Associate Administrator shall  
9                   collect data on eligible small business con-  
10                  cerns assisted by the program for the fol-  
11                  lowing performance metrics:

12                  “(I) Total number of such con-  
13                  cerns, disaggregated by socially and  
14                  economically disadvantaged small  
15                  business concerns, small business con-  
16                  cerns owned and controlled by women,  
17                  and rural small business concerns.

18                  “(II) Total dollar amount of ex-  
19                  port sales by eligible small business  
20                  concerns assisted by the program.

21                  “(III) Number of such concerns  
22                  that have not previously participated  
23                  in an activity described in paragraph  
24                  (2).

1                   “(IV) Number of such concerns  
2                   that, because of participation in the  
3                   program, have accessed a new market.

4                   “(V) Number of such concerns  
5                   that, because of participation in the  
6                   program, have created new jobs.

7                   “(VI) Number of such concerns  
8                   participating in foreign trade missions  
9                   or trade show exhibitions,  
10                  disaggregated by socially and eco-  
11                  nomically disadvantaged small busi-  
12                  ness concerns, small business concerns  
13                  owned and controlled by women, and  
14                  rural small business concerns.”.

15           (d) EXPANSION OF DEFINITION OF ELIGIBLE SMALL  
16 BUSINESS CONCERN.—Section 22(l)(1)(A) of the Small  
17 Business Act (15 U.S.C. 649(l)(1)(A)) is amended—

18           (1) in clause (iii)(II), by adding “and” at the  
19           end;

20           (2) by striking clause (iv); and

21           (3) by redesignating clause (v) as clause (iv).

22           (e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Para-  
23 graph (10) of section 22(l) of the Small Business Act (15  
24 U.S.C. 649(l)), as so redesignated by subsection (b), is

1 amended by striking “fiscal years 2016 through 2020”  
2 and inserting “fiscal years 2024 through 2028”.

3 (f) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 1 year  
4 after the date of enactment of this Act, the Associate Ad-  
5 ministrator for International Trade of the Small Business  
6 Administration shall submit to Congress a report on the  
7 State Trade Expansion Program established under section  
8 22(l) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 649(l)), as  
9 amended by this section, that includes a description of—

10 (1) the process developed for review of revised  
11 budget plans submitted under subparagraph (F) of  
12 section 22(l)(3) of the Small Business Act (15  
13 U.S.C. 649(l)(3)), as added by this Act;

14 (2) any changes made to streamline the applica-  
15 tion process to remove duplicative requirements and  
16 create a more transparent process;

17 (3) the process developed to share best prac-  
18 tices by States described in paragraph (8)(B)(i)(V)  
19 of section 22(l) of the Small Business Act (15  
20 U.S.C. 649(l)), as so redesignated by this Act, par-  
21 ticularly for first-time grant recipients under the  
22 State Trade Expansion Program or grant recipients  
23 that are facing problems using grant funds; and

24 (4) the process developed to communicate, both  
25 verbally and in writing, relevant information about



- 1 the State Trade Expansion Program to all grant re-
- 2 cipients in a timely manner.

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