



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 334

February Session, 2022

Substitute House Bill No. 5375

House of Representatives, April 6, 2022

The Committee on Commerce reported through REP. CURREY of the 11th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING SMALL BUSINESS GUIDANCE REGARDING INFECTIOUS DISEASE MITIGATION STRATEGIES AND BEST PRACTICES FOR OPERATING DURING A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY OR CIVIL PREPAREDNESS EMERGENCY.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 32-1v of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

3 Not later than October 1, [2017] 2022, the Commissioner of Economic
4 and Community Development shall establish and operate a state-wide
5 small business hotline to provide prospective and existing small
6 business owners with individualized information and guidance
7 regarding (1) business formation and development, (2) networking
8 resources, [and] (3) technical and financial assistance from the state and
9 quasi-public agencies, (4) infectious disease mitigation strategies,
10 including, but not limited to, strategies to mitigate the spread of COVID-
11 19, and (5) best practices for operating during a declared public health
12 emergency, pursuant to section 19a-131a, or civil preparedness

13 emergency, pursuant to section 28-9. The commissioner shall, within
14 available appropriations, operate and staff such hotline during normal
15 business hours. The commissioner may partner with a nonprofit
16 organization to carry out the provisions of this section. As used in this
17 section, "COVID-19" means the respiratory disease designated by the
18 World Health Organization on February 11, 2020, as coronavirus 2019,
19 and any related mutation thereof recognized by said organization as a
20 communicable respiratory disease.

21 Sec. 2. Section 32-9n of the general statutes is repealed and the
22 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

23 (a) There is established within the Department of Economic and
24 Community Development an Office of Small Business Affairs. Such
25 office shall aid and encourage small business enterprises, particularly
26 those owned and operated by minorities and other socially or
27 economically disadvantaged individuals in Connecticut. As used in this
28 section, "minority" means: (1) Black Americans, including all persons
29 having origins in any of the Black African racial groups not of Hispanic
30 origin; (2) Hispanic Americans, including all persons of Mexican, Puerto
31 Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or
32 origin, regardless of race; (3) all persons having origins in the Iberian
33 Peninsula, including Portugal, regardless of race; (4) women; (5) Asian
34 Pacific Americans and Pacific islanders; or (6) American Indians and
35 persons having origins in any of the original peoples of North America
36 and maintaining identifiable tribal affiliations through membership and
37 participation or community identification.

38 (b) Said Office of Small Business Affairs shall: (1) Administer at least
39 one regional office of the small business development center program
40 within the Department of Economic and Community Development; (2)
41 coordinate, with the director of the small business development center
42 program, the flow of information within the technical and management
43 assistance program within the Department of Economic and
44 Community Development; (3) encourage Connecticut Innovations,
45 Incorporated to grant loans to small businesses, particularly those

46 owned and operated by minorities and other socially or economically
 47 disadvantaged individuals; (4) coordinate and serve as a liaison
 48 between all federal, state, regional and municipal agencies and
 49 programs affecting small business affairs; (5) administer any business
 50 management training program established under section 32-352 or
 51 section 32-355 as the Commissioner of Economic and Community
 52 Development may determine; (6) provide a single point of contact for
 53 small businesses seeking financial and technical assistance from the
 54 state and quasi-public agencies; (7) coordinate all state funded revolving
 55 loan funds used to assist small businesses; [and] (8) establish, in
 56 cooperation with the Commissioner of Economic and Community
 57 Development, and within available appropriations, an informational
 58 web page with a list and links to all small business resources available
 59 and post them in a conspicuous place on the department's web site; (9)
 60 provide guidance to small businesses regarding infectious disease
 61 mitigation strategies, including, but not limited to, strategies to mitigate
 62 the spread of COVID-19; and (10) provide guidance to small businesses
 63 regarding best practices for operating during a declared public health
 64 emergency, pursuant to section 19a-131a, or civil preparedness
 65 emergency, pursuant to section 28-9. The office shall update [this
 66 information on its web site] the informational web page established
 67 pursuant to subdivision (8) of this subsection on at least a quarterly
 68 basis. As used in this subsection, "COVID-19" means the respiratory
 69 disease designated by the World Health Organization on February 11,
 70 2020, as coronavirus 2019, and any related mutation thereof recognized
 71 by said organization as a communicable respiratory disease.

72 (c) On or after February 1, 2011, the Office of Small Business Affairs
 73 shall compile a summary of all small business activities and programs
 74 available and incorporate such summary into the report required
 75 pursuant to section 32-1m.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	October 1, 2022	32-1v

Sec. 2	October 1, 2022	32-9n
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Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

In Section 1, "October 1, 2017" was changed to "October 1, [2017] 2022" for accuracy and internal consistency.

CE *Joint Favorable Subst. -LCO*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 23 \$	FY 24 \$
Department of Economic & Community Development	GF - Cost	93,519	93,519
State Comptroller - Fringe Benefits ¹	GF - Cost	37,903	37,903

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill results in an annualized cost of \$131,422 to the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) in order to provide assistance through its Office of Small Business Affairs on (1) infectious disease mitigation strategies and (2) best practices for operating during a declared public health or civil preparedness emergency.

DECD does not have expertise on public health and therefore would require a one FTE position with a background in public health at an annual cost of \$131,422 (\$93,519 in salary and \$37,903 in fringe costs) to assist small businesses with strategies and best practices.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing cost impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.

¹The fringe benefit costs for most state employees are budgeted centrally in accounts administered by the Comptroller. The estimated active employee fringe benefit cost associated with most personnel changes is 40.53% of payroll in FY 23.

OLR Bill Analysis**sHB 5375*****AN ACT CONCERNING SMALL BUSINESS GUIDANCE REGARDING INFECTIOUS DISEASE MITIGATION STRATEGIES AND BEST PRACTICES FOR OPERATING DURING A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY OR CIVIL PREPAREDNESS EMERGENCY.*****SUMMARY**

This bill requires the Department of Economic and Community Development, through its statewide small business hotline and Office of Small Business Affairs, to make available to prospective and existing small businesses information and guidance on:

1. infectious disease mitigation strategies, including those pertaining to COVID-19, and
2. best practices for operating during a declared state public health or civil preparedness emergency.

Under the bill, the small business hotline must begin providing this information by October 1, 2022. (Presumably, this information would be included on the Office of Small Business Affairs' small business resources webpage, which the office must update on a quarterly basis under existing law.)

The bill also makes technical and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2022

BACKGROUND***Public Health and Civil Preparedness Emergencies***

By law, the governor may declare a public health emergency in the event of a statewide or regional public health emergency. He may declare a civil preparedness emergency in the event or imminent occurrence of a serious disaster, enemy attack, sabotage, or other hostile action.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Commerce Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 20 Nay 2 (03/22/2022)