



General Assembly

February Session, 2022

Substitute Bill No. 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.

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 Section 32-1v of the general statutes is repealed and the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 Section 32-9n of the general statutes is repealed and the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

