

**15E.362 Entrepreneur investment awards program.**

1. The authority shall establish and administer an entrepreneur investment awards program for purposes of providing grants to programs that provide technical and financial assistance to entrepreneurs seeking to create, locate, or expand a business in the state if the business derives or intends to derive more than ten percent of its gross sales from markets outside of the state. Financial assistance under the program shall be provided from the entrepreneur investment awards program fund created in section 15E.363.

2. In determining whether an entrepreneur assistance program qualifies for a grant under the entrepreneur investment awards program, the authority shall find that the entrepreneur assistance program demonstrates all of the following:

a. The entrepreneur assistance program expended at least five hundred thousand dollars in the program's previous fiscal year to provide technical and financial assistance to entrepreneurs seeking to create, locate, or expand a business in the state if the business derives or intends to derive more than ten percent of its gross sales from markets outside of the state. The five hundred thousand dollars in expenditures in the program's previous fiscal year shall not include grants awarded pursuant to this section or any funds invested in clients' businesses.

b. The entrepreneur assistance program provides services to meet the broad-based needs of entrepreneurs seeking to create, locate, or expand a business in the state if the business derives or intends to derive more than ten percent of its gross sales from markets outside of the state.

c. The entrepreneur assistance program communicates with and cooperates with other entrepreneur assistance programs and similar service providers in the state.

d. The entrepreneur assistance program engages various funding sources for entrepreneurs seeking to create, locate, or expand a business in the state if the business derives or intends to derive more than ten percent of its gross sales from markets outside of the state.

e. The entrepreneur assistance program communicates with and cooperates with various entities for purposes of locating suitable facilities for clients of the entrepreneur assistance program.

f. The entrepreneur assistance program is an Iowa-based business.

3. In determining whether an entrepreneur assistance program qualifies for a grant under the entrepreneur investment awards program, the authority may consider any of the following:

a. The business experience of the professional staff employed or retained by the entrepreneur assistance program.

b. The business plan review capacity of the entrepreneur assistance program's professional staff.

c. The expertise of the entrepreneur assistance program's professional staff in all aspects of business disciplines.

d. The entrepreneur assistance program's professional staff's access to external service providers including legal, accounting, marketing, and financial services.

4. Upon being awarded a grant under this section, the entrepreneur assistance program shall accept client referrals from the economic development authority.

5. The amount of a grant awarded to a qualifying entrepreneur assistance program shall not exceed the lesser of the following for any fiscal year:

a. An amount equal to twenty-five percent of the funds expended by the qualifying program in the program's previous fiscal year to provide technical and financial assistance to entrepreneurs seeking to create, locate, or expand a business in the state if the business derives or intends to derive more than ten percent of its gross sales from markets outside of the state. For purposes of this paragraph, "*funds expended*" shall not include grants awarded pursuant to this section or any funds invested in clients' businesses.

b. An amount equal to one hundred percent of funds raised by the entrepreneur assistance program in the previous fiscal year from private foundations, federal or local government funds, financial institutions, or individuals.

c. Two hundred thousand dollars.

6. The grant awarded to a qualifying entrepreneur assistance program shall only be used for the purpose of the operating costs incurred by the program.

7. The economic development authority board may approve, deny, or defer each application for a grant from the entrepreneur investment awards program fund created in section 15E.363.

8. The maximum amount of the total grants awarded by the authority for the entrepreneur investment awards program shall not exceed one million dollars in a fiscal year. The authority shall award the grants on a first-come, first-served basis.

9. The authority may contract with outside service providers for assistance with the grant program described in this section or may delegate the administration of the program to the Iowa innovation corporation pursuant to section 15.106B.

10. The authority shall not award a grant to an entrepreneur assistance program from the entrepreneur investment awards program fund after June 30, 2014. It is the intent of the general assembly to review and assess the success of the entrepreneur investment awards program based on the report provided by the economic development authority.

11. The economic development authority shall conduct a comprehensive review of the entrepreneur investment awards program and shall, by December 31, 2013, submit a report of the findings of the review, as well as any recommendations and cost projections of its recommendations, to the governor and the general assembly. The report shall consist of the following information:

a. The number of grants awarded, the total amount of the grants awarded, the total amount expended on the entrepreneur investment awards program, and the number of entrepreneur investment awards to entrepreneur assistance programs that were the subject of repayment or collection activity.

b. The number of applications received by the authority for the program and the status of the applications.

c. For each entrepreneur assistance program receiving moneys from the entrepreneur investment awards program fund, the following information:

(1) The amount the entrepreneur assistance program received from the entrepreneur investment awards program fund.

(2) The number of entrepreneurs creating a business in the state that were assisted by the entrepreneur assistance program and the number of new jobs associated with the business.

(3) The number of entrepreneurs locating or expanding a business in the state that were assisted by the entrepreneur assistance program and the number of new or retained jobs associated with the business.

(4) The entrepreneur assistance program's location.

(5) The amount, if any, of private and local matching funds received by the entrepreneur assistance program.

d. The number of clients referred by the authority to an entrepreneur assistance program receiving moneys from the entrepreneur investment awards program fund.

e. An evaluation of the investment made by the state of Iowa in the entrepreneur investment awards program.

f. Any other information the authority deems relevant to assessing the success of the entrepreneur investment awards program.

2012 Acts, ch 1126, §21

Referred to in §15.106B, 15E.363