

Senate File 2137 - Introduced

SENATE FILE 2137
BY SODDERS

A BILL FOR

1 An Act relating to economic development assistance at small
2 business development centers by providing for the creation
3 of economic gardening pilot programs.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

1 Section 1. ECONOMIC GARDENING PILOT PROGRAMS.

2 1. Each small business development center in the state
3 shall develop and administer an economic gardening pilot
4 program. For purposes of this subsection, "economic gardening"
5 means the implementation of a set of data-driven economic
6 development principles and practices designed to generate new
7 job growth within the existing base of businesses. The goal
8 of an economic gardening pilot program shall be to foster an
9 environment in which entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized
10 businesses are supported through the provision of information
11 and services rather than direct financial assistance or tax
12 breaks.

13 2. An economic gardening pilot program shall develop and
14 expand upon innovative practices that focus on the following
15 core principles:

16 a. The provision of market information to local businesses.
17 Market information typically includes high-quality data and
18 supporting analysis on various product and consumer markets,
19 the demographics of a community's residents, methods for
20 targeting the various customer markets within the community,
21 and techniques for enhancing competitive advantages.

22 b. The growth of social and business relationships that
23 facilitates productive partnerships among business owners,
24 industry groups, public officials and public sector supporters,
25 and academic institutions.

26 c. The development of the essential infrastructure
27 undergirding economically strong communities. For purposes of
28 this subsection, "essential infrastructure" means community
29 assets and public improvements such as roads, educational
30 facilities, and cultural amenities.

31 3. In developing and administering an economic gardening
32 pilot program, a small business development center shall do all
33 of the following:

34 a. Provide affordable access to business information
35 databases, geographic information system services and

1 consulting, marketing data and analysis, best practices for
2 effective advertising and internet search engine optimization,
3 and demographic data and analysis.

4 b. Assist new and growing businesses in the community
5 by developing networks for the exchange of information and
6 services, such as peer-to-peer learning and mentoring programs,
7 the formation of trade and business associations, and the
8 sharing of research by academic institutions and think tanks.

9 4. A business seeking the assistance or services described
10 in subsection 3 shall enter into an agreement with a small
11 business development center to establish the business's
12 commitment to making a pilot program successful. Such an
13 agreement shall require the business to attend a minimum
14 number of meetings with representatives of the small business
15 development center, track and report the number of jobs
16 created in the manner and form established by the small
17 business development center, and report certain nonconfidential
18 financial information in the manner and form established by the
19 small business development center.

20 5. By December 15, 2012, the small business development
21 centers shall submit a report to the governor and general
22 assembly regarding the effectiveness of the programs and any
23 recommendations for legislative action to expand or modify the
24 pilot programs.

25 EXPLANATION

26 This bill requires the small business development centers at
27 the regents institutions to develop and administer an economic
28 gardening pilot program.

29 "Economic gardening" means the implementation of a set
30 of data-driven economic development principles and practices
31 designed to generate new job growth within the existing base of
32 businesses. The goal of an economic gardening pilot program
33 is to foster an environment in which entrepreneurs and small
34 and medium-sized businesses are supported through the provision
35 of information and services rather than direct financial

1 assistance or tax breaks. Each pilot program has to develop
2 and expand on certain core principles of economic gardening,
3 and the small business development centers must provide certain
4 basic information and services that reflect those principles to
5 businesses seeking assistance.

6 A business seeking assistance must enter into an agreement
7 with a small business development center to establish the
8 business's commitment to making the pilot program successful.
9 Such an agreement must require the business to attend a
10 minimum number of meetings with representatives of the small
11 business development center, track and report the number of
12 jobs created, and report certain nonconfidential financial
13 information.

14 The small business development centers must submit a report
15 by December 15, 2012, to the governor and the general assembly
16 regarding the programs' effectiveness and make recommendations
17 for legislative action to expand the pilot programs.