



428378

576-01916-15

Proposed Committee Substitute by the Committee on Appropriations  
(Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Tourism, and  
Economic Development)

A bill to be entitled

An act relating to small business financial assistance; creating s. 295.24, F.S.; creating the Veterans Employment Small Business Grant Program within the Department of Veterans' Affairs; directing Florida Is For Veterans, Inc., to administer the program; defining terms; authorizing the corporation to accept and administer moneys appropriated for such grants; specifying grant amounts; limiting the amount that a small business may receive under the program; requiring a small business to apply to and enter into an agreement with the corporation to receive grants; providing requirements for participation in the program; providing that a small business may not receive an additional award for rehiring a veteran previously claimed as an employee for purposes of obtaining funds under the program; providing that the award applies only to veterans hired after a specified date; requiring the corporation to notify the appropriate regional small business center of a small business's participation; providing for termination of the program; authorizing the department to adopt rules; providing an appropriation; providing effective dates.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:



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Section 1. Section 295.24, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

295.24 Veterans Employment Small Business Grant Program.-  
The Veterans Employment Small Business Grant Program is created within the Department of Veterans' Affairs to be administered by Florida Is For Veterans, Inc. The purpose of the program is to stimulate investment in the state's economy by providing grants to small businesses that hire and employ honorably discharged veterans or disabled veterans with a service-connected disability.

(1) As used in this section, the term:

(a) "Corporation" means Florida Is For Veterans, Inc.

(b) "Small business" means an independently owned and operated, for-profit, and privately held business that employs 200 or fewer persons; generates \$2 million or less in annual revenue; and has maintained its principal place of business in this state for at least the previous 4 calendar years.

(2) The corporation may accept and administer moneys appropriated to the department, for transfer to the corporation, for providing grants to encourage small businesses in this state to hire and employ veterans.

(3) A small business that hires a veteran as an employee may receive a one-time grant of:

(a) Three thousand dollars for each veteran, as defined in s. 1.01(14).

(b) Five thousand dollars for each disabled veteran, as described in s. 295.07(1)(a)1.

(4) The grants awarded to a given small business under



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56 subsection (3) may not exceed \$25,000 per fiscal year.

57 (5) A small business must apply to and enter into an  
58 agreement with the corporation in order to participate in the  
59 program. The agreement must require that the small business:

60 (a) Employ a qualifying veteran for at least 1 year in  
61 order to become eligible for grants awarded under subsection  
62 (3).

63 (b) Upon the request of the corporation, report information  
64 regarding the employment status of each qualifying veteran.

65 (c) Pay each qualifying veteran an amount equal to at least  
66 80 percent of the annual median income for veterans in this  
67 state based on the most recent federal census or the most recent  
68 American Community Survey 5-year estimates published by the  
69 United States Census Bureau.

70 (d) Reinvest any awarded grant moneys in the small business  
71 to facilitate further job creation. Reinvestment under this  
72 subsection is limited to manufacturing, equipment, and  
73 facilities expenditures, or other operating or fixed capital  
74 outlay projects.

75 (e) Not receive an additional award for rehiring a veteran  
76 previously claimed as an employee by the same small business for  
77 purposes of obtaining funds under the program.

78 (f) Is eligible to receive a grant award only for a veteran  
79 initially hired on or after October 1, 2015.

80 (6) The corporation shall notify the regional small  
81 business center serving the county in which a participating  
82 small business is located of a small business's participation in  
83 the grant program in order to facilitate improved access to the  
84 resources of the Florida Small Business Development Center



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85 Network.

86 (7) The grant program terminates on the date that all funds  
87 appropriated for the program are expended or on October 1, 2025,  
88 whichever occurs first.

89 (8) The Department of Veterans' Affairs may adopt rules to  
90 implement and administer this section, including, but not  
91 limited to, rules specifying requirements for the application  
92 and approval process and the documentation necessary to claim  
93 grant moneys awarded under this section.

94 Section 2. Effective July 1, 2015, for the 2015-2016 fiscal  
95 year, the sum of \$10 million in nonrecurring funds from the  
96 General Revenue Fund is appropriated to the Department of  
97 Veterans' Affairs for transfer to Florida Is For Veterans, Inc.,  
98 to implement and administer the Veterans Employment Small  
99 Business Grant Program. The corporation may award grant moneys  
100 up to a maximum of \$900,000 per fiscal year. The corporation may  
101 spend up to \$100,000 per fiscal year of funds transferred by the  
102 department for staffing and administrative costs associated with  
103 implementation and administration of the program. If any  
104 appropriated funds remain upon termination of the program,  
105 Florida Is For Veterans, Inc., shall transfer such funds to the  
106 Department of Veterans' Affairs to revert to the General Revenue  
107 Fund.

108 Section 3. Except as otherwise expressly provided in this  
109 act and except for this section, which shall take effect July 1,  
110 2015, this act shall take effect October 1, 2015.