

By the Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security; and Senators Garcia and Sachs

583-01477-15

2015292c1

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to small business financial
3 assistance; creating s. 295.24, F.S.; creating the
4 Veterans Employment Small Business Grant Program
5 within the Department of Veterans' Affairs; directing
6 Florida Is For Veterans, Inc., to administer the
7 program; defining terms; authorizing the corporation
8 to accept and administer moneys appropriated for such
9 grants; specifying grant amounts; limiting the amount
10 that a small business may receive under the program;
11 requiring a small business to apply to and enter into
12 an agreement with the corporation to receive grants;
13 providing requirements for participation in the
14 program; providing that a small business may not
15 receive an additional award for rehiring a veteran
16 previously claimed as an employee for purposes of
17 obtaining funds under the program; authorizing the
18 corporation to award an additional grant to a small
19 business under specified circumstances; requiring the
20 corporation to notify the appropriate regional small
21 business center of a small business's participation;
22 authorizing the department to adopt rules; providing
23 an appropriation; providing an effective date.

24
25 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

26
27 Section 1. Section 295.24, Florida Statutes, is created to
28 read:

29 295.24 Veterans Employment Small Business Grant Program.—

583-01477-15

2015292c1

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

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

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

39 (b) "Small business" means an independently owned and
40 operated, for-profit, and privately held business that employs
41 200 or fewer persons; generates \$2 million or less in annual
42 revenue; and has maintained its principal place of business in
43 this state for at least the previous 4 calendar years.

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

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

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

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

54 (c) One thousand dollars for each qualifying veteran whose
55 employment is continued beyond an initial 12-month period.

56 (4) The grants awarded to a given small business under
57 paragraphs (3)(a) and (b) may not exceed \$25,000 per fiscal
58 year.

583-01477-15

2015292c1

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

62 (a) Employ a qualifying veteran for at least 6 months in
63 order to become eligible for grants awarded under paragraphs
64 (3) (a) and (b) .

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

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

72 (d) Reinvest any awarded grant moneys in the small business
73 to facilitate further job creation.

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

77 (6) The corporation may award a small business that uses
78 the services of a regional workforce board in hiring a veteran
79 an additional one-time grant of \$1,000 for each qualifying
80 veteran.

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

87 (8) The Department of Veterans' Affairs may adopt rules to

583-01477-15

2015292c1

88 implement and administer this section, including, but not
89 limited to, rules specifying requirements for the application
90 and approval process and the documentation necessary to claim
91 grant moneys awarded under this section.

92 Section 2. For the 2015-2016 fiscal year, the sum of \$10
93 million in nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund is
94 appropriated to the Department of Veterans' Affairs for transfer
95 to Florida Is For Veterans, Inc., to implement and administer
96 this act. The corporation may award grant moneys up to a maximum
97 of \$800,000 per fiscal year. The corporation may spend up to
98 \$150,000 per fiscal year of funds transferred by the department
99 for staffing and administrative costs associated with
100 implementation and administration of the program. Upon
101 termination of the program, all remaining appropriated funds
102 shall revert to the General Revenue Fund.

103 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2015.

104