

112TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3197

To reauthorize the women’s business center program of the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 17, 2012

Ms. SNOWE (for herself and Ms. LANDRIEU) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship

A BILL

To reauthorize the women’s business center program of the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Women’s Small Busi-
5 ness Ownership Act of 2012”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITION.**

7 In this Act, the term “Administrator” means the Ad-
8 ministrator of the Small Business Administration.

1 **SEC. 3. OFFICE OF WOMEN'S BUSINESS OWNERSHIP.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 29(g) of the Small Busi-
3 ness Act (15 U.S.C. 656(g)) is amended—

4 (1) in paragraph (2)—

5 (A) in subparagraph (B)—

6 (i) in clause (i), by striking “in the
7 areas” and all that follows through the end
8 of subclause (I), and inserting the fol-
9 lowing: “to address issues concerning the
10 management, operations, manufacturing,
11 technology, finance, retail and product
12 sales, international trade, Government con-
13 tracting, and other disciplines required
14 for—

15 “(I) starting, operating, and in-
16 creasing the business of a small busi-
17 ness concern;”; and

18 (ii) in clause (ii), by striking “Wom-
19 en’s Business Center program” each place
20 that term appears and inserting “women’s
21 business center program”; and

22 (B) in subparagraph (C), by inserting be-
23 fore the period at the end the following: “, the
24 National Women’s Business Council, and any
25 association of women’s business centers”; and

26 (2) by adding at the end the following:

1 “(3) TRAINING.—The Administrator may pro-
2 vide annual programmatic and financial examination
3 training for women’s business ownership representa-
4 tives and district office technical representatives of
5 the Administration to enable representatives to carry
6 out their responsibilities.

7 “(4) PROGRAM AND TRANSPARENCY IMPROVE-
8 MENTS.—The Administrator shall maximize the
9 transparency of the women’s business center finan-
10 cial assistance proposal process and the pro-
11 grammatic and financial examination process by—

12 “(A) providing public notice of any an-
13 nouncement for financial assistance under sub-
14 section (b) or a grant under subsection (l) not
15 later than the end of the first quarter of each
16 fiscal year;

17 “(B) in the announcement described in
18 subparagraph (A), outlining award and pro-
19 gram evaluation criteria and describing the
20 weighting of the criteria for financial assistance
21 under subsection (b) and grants under sub-
22 section (l);

23 “(C) minimizing paperwork and reporting
24 requirements for applicants for and recipients
25 of financial assistance under this section;

1 “(D) standardizing the programmatic and
2 financial examination process; and

3 “(E) providing to each women’s business
4 center, not later than 60 days after the comple-
5 tion of a site visit to the women’s business cen-
6 ter (whether conducted for an audit, perform-
7 ance review, or other reason), a copy of any site
8 visit reports or evaluation reports prepared by
9 district office technical representatives or offi-
10 cers or employees of the Administration.”.

11 (b) CHANGE OF TITLE.—

12 (1) IN GENERAL.—Section 29 of the Small
13 Business Act (15 U.S.C. 656) is amended—

14 (A) in subsection (a)—

15 (i) by striking paragraphs (1) and (4);

16 (ii) by redesignating paragraphs (2)
17 and (3) as paragraphs (4) and (5), respec-
18 tively; and

19 (iii) by inserting before paragraph (4),
20 as so redesignated, the following:

21 “(2) the term ‘Director’ means the Director of
22 the Office of Women’s Business Ownership estab-
23 lished under subsection (g);”;

1 (B) by striking “Assistant Administrator”
2 each place that term appears and inserting “Di-
3 rector”; and

4 (C) in subsection (g)(2), in the paragraph
5 heading, by striking “ASSISTANT ADMINIS-
6 TRATOR” and inserting “DIRECTOR”.

7 (2) WOMEN’S BUSINESS OWNERSHIP ACT OF
8 1988.—Title IV of the Women’s Business Ownership
9 Act of 1988 (15 U.S.C. 7101 et seq.) is amended—

10 (A) in section 403(a)(2)(B), by striking
11 “Assistant Administrator” and inserting “Di-
12 rector”;

13 (B) in section 405, by striking “Assistant
14 Administrator” and inserting “Director”; and

15 (C) in section 406(c), by striking “Assist-
16 ant Administrator” and inserting “Director”.

17 **SEC. 4. WOMEN’S BUSINESS CENTER PROGRAM.**

18 (a) WOMEN’S BUSINESS CENTER FINANCIAL ASSIST-
19 ANCE.—Section 29 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C.
20 656) is amended—

21 (1) in subsection (a), as amended by section
22 3(b) of this Act—

23 (A) by inserting before paragraph (2) the
24 following:

1 “(1) the term ‘association of women’s business
2 centers’ means an organization—

3 “(A) that represents not less than 51 per-
4 cent of the women’s business centers that par-
5 ticipate in a program under this section; and

6 “(B) whose primary purpose is to rep-
7 resent women’s business centers;”;

8 (B) by inserting after paragraph (2) the
9 following:

10 “(3) the term ‘eligible entity’ means—

11 “(A) a private nonprofit organization;

12 “(B) a State, regional, or local economic
13 development organization;

14 “(C) a development, credit, or finance cor-
15 poration chartered by a State;

16 “(D) a junior or community college, as de-
17 fined in section 312(f) of the Higher Education
18 Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1058(f)); or

19 “(E) any combination of entities listed in
20 subparagraphs (A) through (D);”;

21 (C) in paragraph (4), by striking “and” at
22 the end;

23 (D) in paragraph (5), by striking the pe-
24 riod at the end and inserting “; and”; and

1 (E) by adding after paragraph (5) the fol-
2 lowing:

3 “(6) the term ‘women’s business center’ means
4 a project conducted by an eligible entity under this
5 section.”;

6 (2) in subsection (b)—

7 (A) by redesignating paragraphs (1), (2),
8 and (3) as subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C),
9 and adjusting the margins accordingly;

10 (B) by striking “The Administration” and
11 all that follows through “5-year projects” and
12 inserting the following:

13 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administration may
14 provide financial assistance to an eligible entity to
15 conduct a project under this section”;

16 (C) by striking “The projects shall” and
17 inserting the following:

18 “(2) USE OF FUNDS.—The project shall be de-
19 signed to provide training and counseling that meets
20 the needs of women, especially socially and economi-
21 cally disadvantaged women, and shall”; and

22 (D) by adding at the end the following:

23 “(3) AMOUNT OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.—

24 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator
25 may award financial assistance under this sub-

1 section of not less than \$100,000 and not more
2 than \$150,000 per year.

3 “(B) LOWER AMOUNT.—The Adminis-
4 trator may award financial assistance under
5 this subsection to a recipient in an amount that
6 is less than \$100,000 if the Administrator de-
7 termines that the recipient is unable to make a
8 non-Federal contribution of \$100,000 or more,
9 as required under subsection (c).

10 “(C) EQUAL ALLOCATIONS.—If the Admin-
11 istration has insufficient funds to provide finan-
12 cial assistance of not less than \$100,000 for
13 each recipient of financial assistance under this
14 subsection in any fiscal year, the Administrator
15 shall provide an equal amount of financial as-
16 sistance to each recipient in the fiscal year, un-
17 less a recipient requests a lower amount than
18 the allocated amount.

19 “(4) CONSULTATION WITH ASSOCIATIONS OF
20 WOMEN’S BUSINESS CENTERS.—The Administrator
21 shall consult with each association of women’s busi-
22 ness centers to develop—

23 “(A) a training program for the staff of
24 women’s business centers and the Administra-
25 tion; and

1 “(B) recommendations to improve the poli-
2 cies and procedures for governing the general
3 operations and administration of the women’s
4 business center program, including grant pro-
5 gram improvements under subsection (g)(4).”;

6 (3) in subsection (c)—

7 (A) in paragraph (1) by striking “the re-
8 cipient organization” and inserting “an eligible
9 entity”;

10 (B) in paragraph (3), in the second sen-
11 tence, by striking “a recipient organization”
12 and inserting “an eligible entity”;

13 (C) in paragraph (4)—

14 (i) by striking “recipient of assist-
15 ance” and inserting “eligible entity”;

16 (ii) by striking “such organization”
17 and inserting “the eligible entity”; and

18 (iii) by striking “recipient” and in-
19 serting “eligible entity”; and

20 (D) in paragraph (5)—

21 (i) in subparagraph (A), by striking
22 “a recipient organization” and inserting
23 “an eligible entity”; and

1 (ii) by striking “the recipient organi-
 2 zation” each place it appears and inserting
 3 “the eligible entity”; and

4 (E) by adding at end the following:

5 “(6) SEPARATION OF PROJECT AND FUNDS.—

6 An eligible entity shall—

7 “(A) carry out a project under this section
 8 separately from other projects, if any, of the eli-
 9 gible entity; and

10 “(B) separately maintain and account for
 11 any financial assistance under this section.”;

12 (4) in subsection (e)—

13 (A) by striking “applicant organization”
 14 and inserting “eligible entity”;

15 (B) by striking “a recipient organization”
 16 and inserting “an eligible entity”; and

17 (C) by striking “site”;

18 (5) by striking subsection (f) and inserting the
 19 following:

20 “(f) APPLICATIONS AND CRITERIA FOR INITIAL FI-
 21 NANCIAL ASSISTANCE.—

22 “(1) APPLICATION.—Each eligible entity desir-
 23 ing financial assistance under subsection (b) shall
 24 submit to the Administrator an application that con-
 25 tains—

1 “(A) a certification that the eligible enti-
2 ty—

3 “(i) has designated an executive direc-
4 tor or program manager, who may be com-
5 pensated using financial assistance under
6 subsection (b) or other sources, to manage
7 the center on a full-time basis;

8 “(ii) as a condition of receiving finan-
9 cial assistance under subsection (b),
10 agrees—

11 “(I) to receive a site visit by the
12 Administrator as part of the final se-
13 lection process;

14 “(II) to undergo an annual pro-
15 grammatic and financial examination;
16 and

17 “(III) to the maximum extent
18 practicable, to remedy any problems
19 identified pursuant to the site visit or
20 examination under subclause (I) or
21 (II); and

22 “(iii) meets the accounting and re-
23 porting requirements established by the
24 Director of the Office of Management and
25 Budget;

1 “(B) information demonstrating that the
2 eligible entity has the ability and resources to
3 meet the needs of the market to be served by
4 the women’s business center for which financial
5 assistance under subsection (b) is sought, in-
6 cluding the ability to obtain the non-Federal
7 contribution required under subsection (c);

8 “(C) information relating to the assistance
9 to be provided by the women’s business center
10 for which financial assistance under subsection
11 (b) is sought in the area in which the women’s
12 business center is located;

13 “(D) information demonstrating the expe-
14 rience and effectiveness of the eligible entity
15 in—

16 “(i) conducting financial, manage-
17 ment, and marketing assistance programs,
18 as described in subsection (b)(2), which
19 are designed to teach or upgrade the busi-
20 ness skills of women who are business own-
21 ers or potential business owners;

22 “(ii) providing training and services to
23 a representative number of women who are
24 socially and economically disadvantaged;
25 and

1 “(iii) working with resource partners
2 of the Administration and other entities,
3 such as universities; and

4 “(E) a 5-year plan that describes the abil-
5 ity of the women’s business center for which fi-
6 nancial assistance is sought—

7 “(i) to serve women who are business
8 owners or potential business owners by
9 conducting training and counseling activi-
10 ties; and

11 “(ii) to provide training and services
12 to a representative number of women who
13 are socially and economically disadvan-
14 taged.

15 “(2) ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.—The Admin-
16 istrator shall make any request for additional infor-
17 mation from an organization applying for financial
18 assistance under subsection (b) that was not re-
19 quested in the original announcement in writing.

20 “(3) REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF APPLICATIONS
21 FOR INITIAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.—

22 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator
23 shall—

24 “(i) review each application submitted
25 under paragraph (1), based on the infor-

1 mation described in such paragraph and
2 the criteria set forth under subparagraph
3 (B) of this paragraph; and

4 “(ii) to the extent practicable, as part
5 of the final selection process, conduct a
6 site visit to each women’s business center
7 for which financial assistance under sub-
8 section (b) is sought.

9 “(B) SELECTION CRITERIA.—

10 “(i) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator
11 shall evaluate applicants for financial as-
12 sistance under subsection (b) in accordance
13 with selection criteria that are—

14 “(I) established before the date
15 on which applicants are required to
16 submit the applications;

17 “(II) stated in terms of relative
18 importance; and

19 “(III) publicly available and stat-
20 ed in each solicitation for applications
21 for financial assistance under sub-
22 section (b) made by the Adminis-
23 trator.

1 “(ii) REQUIRED CRITERIA.—The se-
2 lection criteria for financial assistance
3 under subsection (b) shall include—

4 “(I) the experience of the appli-
5 cant in conducting programs or ongo-
6 ing efforts designed to teach or en-
7 hance the business skills of women
8 who are business owners or potential
9 business owners;

10 “(II) the ability of the applicant
11 to begin a project within a minimum
12 amount of time;

13 “(III) the ability of the applicant
14 to provide training and services to a
15 representative number of women who
16 are socially and economically dis-
17 advantaged; and

18 “(IV) the location for the wom-
19 en’s business center proposed by the
20 applicant, including whether the appli-
21 cant is located in a State in which
22 there is not a women’s business center
23 receiving funding from the Adminis-
24 tration.

1 “(C) PROXIMITY.—If the principal place of
2 business of an applicant for financial assistance
3 under subsection (b) is located less than 50
4 miles from the principal place of business of a
5 women’s business center that received funds
6 under this section on or before the date of the
7 application, the applicant shall not be eligible
8 for the financial assistance, unless the applicant
9 submits a detailed written justification of the
10 need for an additional center in the area in
11 which the applicant is located.

12 “(D) RECORD RETENTION.—The Adminis-
13 trator shall maintain a copy of each application
14 submitted under this subsection for not less
15 than 7 years.”; and

16 (6) in subsection (m)—

17 (A) by striking paragraph (3) and insert-
18 ing the following:

19 “(3) APPLICATION AND APPROVAL FOR RE-
20 NEWAL GRANTS.—

21 “(A) SOLICITATION OF APPLICATIONS.—
22 The Administrator shall solicit applications and
23 award grants under this subsection for the first
24 fiscal year beginning after the date of enact-
25 ment of the Women’s Small Business Owner-

1 ship Act of 2012, and every third fiscal year
2 thereafter.

3 “(B) CONTENTS OF APPLICATION.—Each
4 eligible entity desiring a grant under this sub-
5 section shall submit to the Administrator an ap-
6 plication that contains—

7 “(i) a certification that the appli-
8 cant—

9 “(I) is an eligible entity;

10 “(II) has designated a full-time
11 executive director or program man-
12 ager to manage the women’s business
13 center operated by the applicant; and

14 “(III) as a condition of receiving
15 a grant under this subsection,
16 agrees—

17 “(aa) to receive a site visit
18 as part of the final selection
19 process;

20 “(bb) to submit, for the 2
21 full fiscal years before the date
22 on which the application is sub-
23 mitted, annual programmatic and
24 financial examination reports or
25 certified copies of the compliance

1 supplemental audits under OMB
2 Circular A-133 of the applicant;
3 and

4 “(cc) to remedy any problem
5 identified pursuant to the site
6 visit or examination under item
7 (aa) or (bb);

8 “(ii) information demonstrating that
9 the applicant has the ability and resources
10 to meet the needs of the market to be
11 served by the women’s business center for
12 which a grant under this subsection is
13 sought, including the ability to obtain the
14 non-Federal contribution required under
15 paragraph (4)(C);

16 “(iii) information relating to assist-
17 ance to be provided by the women’s busi-
18 ness center in the area served by the wom-
19 en’s business center for which a grant
20 under this subsection is sought;

21 “(iv) information demonstrating that
22 the applicant has worked with resource
23 partners of the Administration and other
24 entities;

1 “(v) a 3-year plan that describes the
2 ability of the women’s business center for
3 which a grant under this subsection is
4 sought—

5 “(I) to serve women who are
6 business owners or potential business
7 owners by conducting training and
8 counseling activities; and

9 “(II) to provide training and
10 services to a representative number of
11 women who are socially and economi-
12 cally disadvantaged; and

13 “(vi) any additional information that
14 the Administrator may reasonably require.

15 “(C) REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF APPLICA-
16 TIONS FOR GRANTS.—

17 “(i) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator
18 shall—

19 “(I) review each application sub-
20 mitted under subparagraph (B), based
21 on the information described in such
22 subparagraph and the criteria set
23 forth under clause (ii) of this subpara-
24 graph; and

1 “(II) whenever practicable, as
2 part of the final selection process,
3 conduct a site visit to each women’s
4 business center for which a grant
5 under this subsection is sought.

6 “(ii) SELECTION CRITERIA.—

7 “(I) IN GENERAL.—The Admin-
8 istrator shall evaluate applicants for
9 grants under this subsection in ac-
10 cordance with selection criteria that
11 are—

12 “(aa) established before the
13 date on which applicants are re-
14 quired to submit the applications;

15 “(bb) stated in terms of rel-
16 ative importance; and

17 “(cc) publicly available and
18 stated in each solicitation for ap-
19 plications for grants under this
20 subsection made by the Adminis-
21 trator.

22 “(II) REQUIRED CRITERIA.—The
23 selection criteria for a grant under
24 this subsection shall include—

1 “(aa) the total number of
2 entrepreneurs served by the ap-
3 plicant;

4 “(bb) the total number of
5 new startup companies assisted
6 by the applicant;

7 “(cc) the percentage of cli-
8 ents of the applicant that are so-
9 cially or economically disadvan-
10 taged; and

11 “(dd) the percentage of indi-
12 viduals in the community served
13 by the applicant who are socially
14 or economically disadvantaged.

15 “(iii) CONDITIONS FOR CONTINUED
16 FUNDING.—In determining whether to
17 make a grant under this subsection, the
18 Administrator—

19 “(I) shall consider the results of
20 the most recent evaluation of the
21 women’s business center for which a
22 grant under this subsection is sought,
23 and, to a lesser extent, previous eval-
24 uations; and

1 “(II) may withhold a grant under
2 this subsection, if the Administrator
3 determines that the applicant has
4 failed to provide the information re-
5 quired to be provided under this para-
6 graph, or the information provided by
7 the applicant is inadequate.

8 “(D) NOTIFICATION.—Not later than 60
9 days after the date of each deadline to submit
10 applications, the Administrator shall approve or
11 deny any application under this paragraph and
12 notify the applicant for each such application of
13 the approval or denial.

14 “(E) RECORD RETENTION.—The Adminis-
15 trator shall maintain a copy of each application
16 submitted under this paragraph for not less
17 than 7 years.”; and

18 (B) by striking paragraph (5) and insert-
19 ing the following:

20 “(5) AWARD TO PREVIOUS RECIPIENTS.—There
21 shall be no limitation on the number of times the
22 Administrator may award a grant to an applicant
23 under this subsection.”.

24 (b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Section 29 of the Small
2 Business Act (15 U.S.C. 656) is amended—

3 (A) in subsection (h)(2), by striking “to
4 award a contract (as a sustainability grant)
5 under subsection (l) or”;

6 (B) in subsection (j)(1), by striking “The
7 Administration” and inserting “Not later than
8 November 1 of each year, the Administrator”;

9 (C) in subsection (k)—

10 (i) by striking paragraphs (1), (2),
11 and (4);

12 (ii) by redesignating paragraph (3) as
13 paragraph (5); and

14 (iii) by inserting before paragraph (5),
15 as so redesignated, the following:

16 “(1) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be
17 appropriated to the Administration to carry out this
18 section, to remain available until expended,
19 \$14,500,000 for each of fiscal years 2013, 2014,
20 and 2015.

21 “(2) USE OF FUNDS.—Amounts made available
22 under this subsection may only be used for grant
23 awards and may not be used for costs incurred by
24 the Administration in connection with the manage-

1 ment and administration of the program under this
2 section.

3 “(3) CONTINUING GRANT AND COOPERATIVE
4 AGREEMENT AUTHORITY.—

5 “(A) PROMPT DISBURSEMENT.—Upon re-
6 ceiving funds to carry out this section for a fis-
7 cal year, the Administrator shall, to the extent
8 practicable, promptly reimburse funds to any
9 women’s business center awarded financial as-
10 sistance under this section if the center meets
11 the eligibility requirements under this section.

12 “(B) SUSPENSION OR TERMINATION.—If
13 the Administrator has entered into a grant or
14 cooperative agreement with a women’s business
15 center under this section, the Administrator
16 may not suspend or terminate the grant or co-
17 operative agreement, unless the Adminis-
18 trator—

19 “(i) provides the women’s business
20 center with written notification setting
21 forth the reasons for that action; and

22 “(ii) affords the women’s business
23 center an opportunity for a hearing, ap-
24 peal, or other administrative proceeding

1 under chapter 5 of title 5, United States
2 Code.”;

3 (D) in subsection (m)—

4 (i) in paragraph (2), by striking “sub-
5 section (b) or (l)” and inserting “this sub-
6 section or subsection (b)”;

7 (ii) in paragraph (4)(D), by striking
8 “or subsection (l)”;

9 (E) by redesignating subsections (m) and
10 (n), as amended by this Act, as subsections (l)
11 and (m), respectively.

12 (2) PROSPECTIVE REPEAL.—Section 1401(c)(2)
13 of the Small Business Jobs Act of 2010 (15 U.S.C.
14 636 note) is amended—

15 (A) in subparagraph (A), by striking
16 “and” at the end;

17 (B) in subparagraph (B), by striking the
18 period at the end and inserting “; and”;

19 (C) by adding at the end the following:

20 “(C) by redesignating paragraph (6), as
21 added by section 4(a)(3)(E) of the Women’s
22 Small Business Ownership Act of 2012, as
23 paragraph (5).”.

24 (c) EFFECT ON EXISTING GRANTS.—

1 (1) TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—A nonprofit or-
2 organization receiving a grant under section 29(m) of
3 the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 656(m)), as in
4 effect on the day before the date of enactment of
5 this Act, shall continue to receive the grant under
6 the terms and conditions in effect for the grant on
7 the day before the date of enactment of this Act, ex-
8 cept that the nonprofit organization may not apply
9 for a renewal of the grant under section 29(m)(5) of
10 the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 656(m)(5)), as
11 in effect on the day before the date of enactment of
12 this Act.

13 (2) LENGTH OF RENEWAL GRANT.—The Ad-
14 ministrator may award a grant under section 29(l)
15 of the Small Business Act, as so redesignated by
16 subsection (b)(5) of this Act, to a nonprofit organi-
17 zation receiving a grant under section 29(m) of the
18 Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 656(m)), as in effect
19 on the day before the date of enactment of this Act,
20 for the period—

21 (A) beginning on the day after the last day
22 of the grant agreement under such section
23 29(m); and

1 (B) ending at the end of the third fiscal
2 year beginning after the date of enactment of
3 this Act.

4 **SEC. 5. STUDY AND REPORT ON ECONOMIC ISSUES FACING**
5 **WOMEN'S BUSINESS CENTERS.**

6 (a) STUDY.—The Comptroller General of the United
7 States shall conduct a broad study of the unique economic
8 issues facing women's business centers located in covered
9 areas to identify—

10 (1) the difficulties such centers face in raising
11 non-Federal funds;

12 (2) the difficulties such centers face in com-
13 peting for financial assistance, non-Federal funds, or
14 other types of assistance;

15 (3) the difficulties such centers face in writing
16 grant proposals; and

17 (4) other difficulties such centers face because
18 of the economy in the type of covered area in which
19 such centers are located.

20 (b) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date
21 of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall
22 submit to Congress a report containing the results of the
23 study under subsection (a), which shall include rec-
24 ommendations, if any, regarding how to—

1 (1) address the unique difficulties women’s
 2 business centers located in covered areas face be-
 3 cause of the type of covered area in which such cen-
 4 ters are located;

5 (2) expand the presence of, and increase the
 6 services provided by, women’s business centers lo-
 7 cated in covered areas; and

8 (3) best use technology and other resources to
 9 better serve women business owners located in cov-
 10 ered areas.

11 (c) DEFINITION OF COVERED AREA.—In this section,
 12 the term “covered area” means—

13 (1) any State that is predominantly rural, as
 14 determined by the Administrator;

15 (2) any State that is predominantly urban, as
 16 determined by the Administrator; and

17 (3) any State or territory that is an island.

18 **SEC. 6. STUDY AND REPORT ON OVERSIGHT OF WOMEN’S**
 19 **BUSINESS CENTERS.**

20 (a) STUDY.—The Comptroller General of the United
 21 States shall conduct a study of the oversight of women’s
 22 business centers by the Administrator, which shall in-
 23 clude—

24 (1) an analysis of the coordination by the Ad-
 25 ministrator of the activities of women’s business cen-

1 ters with the activities of small business development
2 centers, the Service Corps of Retired Executives,
3 and Veteran Business Outreach Centers;

4 (2) a comparison of the types of individuals and
5 small business concerns served by women’s business
6 centers and the types of individuals and small busi-
7 ness concerns served by small business development
8 centers, the Service Corps of Retired Executives,
9 and Veteran Business Outreach Centers; and

10 (3) an analysis of performance data for wom-
11 en’s business centers that evaluates how well wom-
12 en’s business centers are carrying out the mission of
13 women’s business centers and serving individuals
14 and small business concerns.

15 (b) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date
16 of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall
17 submit to Congress a report containing the results of the
18 study under subsection (a), which shall include rec-
19 ommendations, if any, for eliminating the duplication of
20 services provided by women’s business centers, small busi-
21 ness development centers, the Service Corps of Retired
22 Executives, and Veteran Business Outreach Centers.

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