

“(1) programs to foster economic development among small high-technology firms vary widely among the States;

“(2) States that do not aggressively support the development of small high-technology firms, including participation by small business concerns in the SBIR program, are at a competitive disadvantage in establishing a business climate that is conducive to technology development; and

“(3) building stronger national, State, and local support for science and technology research in these disadvantaged States will expand economic opportunities in the United States, create jobs, and increase the competitiveness of the United States in the world market.”

§ 657e. Mentoring Networks

(a) Findings

Congress finds that—

(1) the SBIR and STTR programs create jobs, increase capacity for technological innovation, and boost international competitiveness;

(2) increasing the quantity of applications from all States to the SBIR and STTR programs would enhance competition for such awards and the quality of the completed projects; and

(3) mentoring is a natural complement to the FAST program of reaching out to new companies regarding the SBIR and STTR programs as an effective and low-cost way to improve the likelihood that such companies will succeed in such programs in developing and commercializing their research.

(b) Authorization for Mentoring Networks

The recipient of an award or participant in a cooperative agreement under section 657d of this title may use a reasonable amount of such assistance for the establishment of a Mentoring Network under this section.

(c) Criteria for Mentoring Networks

A Mentoring Network established using assistance under section 657d of this title shall—

(1) provide business advice and counseling to high technology small business concerns located in the State or region served by the Mentoring Network and identified under section 657d(c)(1)(E)(ii) of this title as potential candidates for the SBIR or STTR programs;

(2) identify volunteer mentors who—

(A) are persons associated with a small business concern that has successfully completed one or more SBIR or STTR funding agreements; and

(B) have agreed to guide small business concerns through all stages of the SBIR or STTR program process, including providing assistance relating to—

- (i) proposal writing;
- (ii) marketing;
- (iii) Government accounting;
- (iv) Government audits;
- (v) project facilities and equipment;
- (vi) human resources;
- (vii) third phase partners;
- (viii) commercialization;
- (ix) venture capital networking; and
- (x) other matters relevant to the SBIR and STTR programs;

(3) have experience working with small business concerns participating in the SBIR and STTR programs;

(4) contribute information to the national database referred to in subsection (d); and

(5) agree to reimburse volunteer mentors for out-of-pocket expenses related to service as a mentor under this section.

(d) Mentoring database

The Administrator shall—

(1) include in the database required by section 638(k)(1) of this title, in cooperation with the SBIR, STTR, and FAST programs, information on Mentoring Networks and mentors participating under this section, including a description of their areas of expertise;

(2) work cooperatively with Mentoring Networks to maintain and update the database;

(3) take such action as may be necessary to aggressively promote Mentoring Networks under this section; and

(4) fulfill the requirements of this subsection either directly or by contract.

(Pub. L. 85-536, §2[35], as added Pub. L. 106-554, §1(a)(9) [title I, §112], Dec. 21, 2000, 114 Stat. 2763, 2763A-680.)

§ 657f. Procurement program for small business concerns owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans

(a) Sole source contracts

In accordance with this section, a contracting officer may award a sole source contract to any small business concern owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans if—

(1) such concern is determined to be a responsible contractor with respect to performance of such contract opportunity and the contracting officer does not have a reasonable expectation that 2 or more small business concerns owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans will submit offers for the contracting opportunity;

(2) the anticipated award price of the contract (including options) will not exceed—

(A) \$5,000,000, in the case of a contract opportunity assigned a standard industrial classification code for manufacturing; or

(B) \$3,000,000, in the case of any other contract opportunity; and

(3) in the estimation of the contracting officer, the contract award can be made at a fair and reasonable price.

(b) Restricted competition

In accordance with this section, a contracting officer may award contracts on the basis of competition restricted to small business concerns owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans if the contracting officer has a reasonable expectation that not less than 2 small business concerns owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans will submit offers and that the award can be made at a fair market price.

(c) Relationship to other contracting preferences

A procurement may not be made from a source on the basis of a preference provided under subsection (a) or (b) if the procurement would otherwise be made from a different source under section 4124 or 4125 of title 18 or chapter 85 of title 41.