

RCW 43.330.060 Trade and business responsibilities. (1) The department shall (a) assist in expanding the state's role as an international center of trade, culture, and finance; (b) promote and market the state's products and services both nationally and internationally; (c) work in close cooperation with other private and public international trade efforts; (d) act as a centralized location for the assimilation and distribution of trade information; and (e) establish and operate foreign offices promoting overseas trade and commerce.

(2) The department shall identify and work with Washington businesses that can use local, state, and federal assistance to increase domestic and foreign exports of goods and services.

(3) The department shall work generally with small businesses and other employers to facilitate resolution of siting, regulatory, expansion, and retention problems. This assistance shall include but not be limited to assisting in workforce training and infrastructure needs, identifying and locating suitable business sites, and resolving problems with government licensing and regulatory requirements. The department shall identify gaps in needed services and develop steps to address them including private sector support and purchase of these services.

(4) The department shall work to increase the availability of capital to small businesses by developing new and flexible investment tools; by assisting in targeting and improving the efficiency of existing investment mechanisms; and by assisting in the procurement of managerial and technical assistance necessary to attract potential investors.

(5) The department shall assist women and minority-owned businesses in overcoming barriers to entrepreneurial success. The department shall contract with public and private agencies, institutions, and organizations to conduct entrepreneurial training courses for minority and women-owned businesses. The instruction shall be intensive, practical training courses in financing, marketing, managing, accounting, and recordkeeping for a small business, with an emphasis on federal, state, local, or private programs available to assist small businesses. Instruction shall be offered in major population centers throughout the state at times and locations that are convenient for minority and women small business owners.

(6) (a) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, by December 1, 2010, the department, in conjunction with the small business development center, must prepare and present to the governor and appropriate legislative committees a specific, actionable plan to increase access to capital and technical assistance to small businesses and entrepreneurs beginning with the 2011-2013 biennium. In developing the plan, the department and the center may consult with the Washington state microenterprise association, and with other government, nonprofit, and private organizations as necessary. The plan must identify:

(i) Existing sources of capital and technical assistance for small businesses and entrepreneurs;

(ii) Critical gaps and barriers to availability of capital and delivery of technical assistance to small businesses and entrepreneurs;

(iii) Workable solutions to filling the gaps and removing barriers identified in (a) (ii) of this subsection; and

(iv) The financial resources and statutory changes necessary to put the plan into effect beginning with the 2011-2013 biennium.

(b) With respect to increasing access to capital, the plan must identify specific, feasible sources of capital and practical mechanisms for expanding access to it.

(c) The department and the center must include, within the analysis and recommendations in (a) of this subsection, any specific gaps, barriers, and solutions related to rural and low-income communities and small manufacturers interested in exporting. [2010 c 165 § 2; 2005 c 136 § 13; 1993 c 280 § 9.]

Findings—Intent—2010 c 165: "The legislature finds that small businesses and entrepreneurs are a fundamental source of economic and community vitality for our state. They employ state residents, pay state taxes, purchase goods and services from local and regional companies, and contribute to our communities in many other ways. The legislature finds that small businesses and entrepreneurs need increased access to capital and technical assistance in order to maximize their potential. The legislature intends that the department of commerce and the small business development center each build upon their existing relevant statutory missions and authorities by collaborating on a specific plan to expand services to small businesses and entrepreneurs beginning in the 2011-2013 biennium." [2010 c 165 § 1.]

Savings—Effective date—2005 c 136: See notes following RCW 43.168.020.

Tacoma world trade center—1993 c 134: "The legislature recognizes that export opportunities for small and medium-sized businesses stimulates economic growth. Within current resources, the department of trade and economic development shall work with the Tacoma world trade center, to assist small and medium-sized businesses with export opportunities." [1993 c 134 § 1.]