

HB 1495 -- EARLY STAGE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (Torpey)

COMMITTEE OF ORIGIN: Special Standing Committee on Small Business

This bill requires the Missouri Technology Corporation (MTC) to distribute \$9 million for four fiscal years to no more than six Early Stage Business Development Corporations (ESBDC). An "ESBDC" is a not-for-profit corporation designated by the MTC to receive funds and award grants to winners of regional, national, or international competitions for early stage businesses with substantial operations or that are beginning operations in Missouri and have the potential for regional, national, or international sales or the development of new technologies. To be eligible for designation, the ESBDC must provide grants to for-profit companies without taking an equity interest in the company, and the grants must not be loans in the three largest metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs). The grants are limited to \$200,000 per company.

The grants must be distributed as follows:

- (1) One ESBDC in each of the three largest MSAs will receive \$2 million;
- (2) One ESBDC in a MSA containing the city of Columbia will receive \$2 million; and
- (3) Two ESBDCs operating in rural Missouri or smaller MSAs will receive \$500,000.

If the funds are not used in one area they may be redistributed to other ESBDCs in the same category.

To be eligible for designation by the MTC, a not-for-profit in one of the three largest MSAs or a MSA containing the city of Columbia must raise at least \$2 million from other sources, and a not-for-profit in another MSA area of the state must raise at least \$150,000 from other sources prior to applying for the first time. The not-for-profit must apply to the MTC for the designation by October 15 of the fiscal year in which the funds are sought and the department must make a decision on the approval of the application within 60 days.

The bill specifies the criteria for choosing the not-for-profit to be designated, and the designation will be for a two-year period. If multiple applications are submitted for designation from the same area and meet all of the requirements, the MTC must designate the not-for-profit having the best record of success based on the specified criteria.

The not-for-profit may use the funds for administrative expenses, grants, operations, and building a long-term endowment. It cannot use public funds to pay for research involving abortion services, human cloning, or human embryonic stem cell research. This section sunsets four years after the effective date unless this section is renewed.