

(5) The existing business shall have its principal place of business in Maryland; and

(6) The existing business shall have a strong customer base.

(F) IF THE APPLICANT ENTERPRISE IS AN INDIVIDUAL, THE APPLICANT SHALL SATISFY THE AUTHORITY THAT:

(1) THE APPLICANT IS OF GOOD MORAL CHARACTER;

(2) AS DETERMINED FROM CREDITORS, EMPLOYERS, AND OTHER INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE APPLICANT, THE APPLICANT HAS A REPUTATION FOR FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY;

(3) THE APPLICANT IS A RESIDENT OF MARYLAND OR THE APPLICANT'S PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS IS IN MARYLAND; AND

(4) THE APPLICANT IS UNABLE TO OBTAIN ADEQUATE BUSINESS FINANCING ON REASONABLE TERMS THROUGH NORMAL LENDING CHANNELS BECAUSE THE APPLICANT:

(I) BELONGS TO A GROUP THAT HISTORICALLY HAS BEEN DEPRIVED OF ACCESS TO NORMAL ECONOMIC OR FINANCIAL RESOURCES BECAUSE OF RACE, COLOR, CREED, SEX, RELIGION, OR NATIONAL ORIGIN;

(II) HAS AN IDENTIFIABLE PHYSICAL HANDICAP THAT SEVERELY LIMITS THE ABILITY OF THE APPLICANT TO OBTAIN FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, BUT DOES NOT LIMIT THE ABILITY OF THE APPLICANT TO PERFORM THE CONTRACT OR OTHER ACTIVITY FOR WHICH THE APPLICANT WOULD BE RECEIVING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE; OR

(III) HAS ANY OTHER SOCIAL OR ECONOMIC IMPEDIMENT THAT IS BEYOND THE PERSONAL CONTROL OF THE APPLICANT, SUCH AS LACK OF FORMAL EDUCATION OR FINANCIAL CAPACITY OR GEOGRAPHICAL OR REGIONAL ECONOMIC DISTRESS BUT THAT DOES NOT LIMIT THE ABILITY OF THE APPLICANT TO PERFORM THE CONTRACT OR OTHER ACTIVITY FOR WHICH THE APPLICANT WOULD BE RECEIVING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

(G) IF THE APPLICANT ENTERPRISE IS OTHER THAN A SOLE PROPRIETORSHIP, AT LEAST 51 PERCENT OF THE ENTERPRISE SHALL BE OWNED BY INDIVIDUALS WHO MEET THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR APPLICANTS UNDER SUBSECTION (F) OF THIS SECTION.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 1997.

May 22, 1997

The Honorable Casper R. Taylor, Jr.
Speaker of the House
State House
Annapolis MD 21401