

No. 196. An act relating to simplifying government for small businesses.

(S.85)

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. SIMPLIFYING GOVERNMENT FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

(a) The Secretary of State shall serve as the chair of a steering committee, composed of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Commerce and Community Development, and the Secretary of Digital Services or their designees.

(b) The Secretary of State, in collaboration with the steering committee, and in collaboration with other State agencies and departments and interested stakeholders as necessary, shall:

(1) review and consider the necessary procedural and substantive steps to enhance the Secretary of State's one-stop business portal for businesses, entrepreneurs, and citizens to provide information about starting and operating a business in Vermont; and

(2) submit on or before December 15, 2018:

(A) a design proposal that includes a project scope, timeline, roadmap, and cost projections; and

(B) any statutory or regulatory changes needed to implement the proposal.

(c) The steering committee shall evaluate the cost and efficacy, and integrate into the current one-stop portal to the extent feasible, features that:

(1) enhance State websites to simplify registrations and provide a clear compilation of other State business requirements, including permits and licenses;

(2) simplify the mechanism for making payments to the State by allowing a person to pay amounts he or she owes to the State for taxes, fees, or other charges to a single recipient within State government;

(3) simplify annual filing requirements by allowing a person to make a single filing to a single recipient within State government and check a box if nothing substantive has changed from the prior year;

(4) provide guidance, assistance with navigation, and other support to persons who are forming or operating a small business;

(5) after registration, provide information about additional and ongoing State requirements and a point of contact to discuss questions or explore any assistance needed;

(6) provide guidance and information about State and federal programs and initiatives, as well as State partner organizations and Vermont-based businesses of interest; and

(7) map communication channels for project updates, including digital channels such as e-mail, social media, and other communications.

(d) State agencies and departments shall provide assistance to the steering committee upon its request.

(e) The steering committee shall focus its review on providing services through the one-stop business portal primarily for the benefit of businesses with 20 or fewer employees.

(f) The Agency of Digital Services shall assign a project manager or business analyst to report directly to the Secretary of State to assist with the implementation of this act through June 30, 2019 for the purpose of developing and implementing a one-stop navigable portal for businesses, entrepreneurs, and citizens to access information about starting a business in Vermont, and to provide ongoing support to businesses interfacing with State government.

Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATES

This act shall take effect on passage, except that Sec. 1(f) shall take effect on July 1, 2018.

Date Governor signed bill: May 30, 2018