

The SEED Commission Act

Sponsored by Congressman David N. Cicilline

What is Social Enterprise?

Social enterprises are businesses that seek to catalyze significant, long-term positive social change by utilizing the marketplace. In a time when overwhelming challenges are facing our local communities while government budgets continue to shrink, our country is relying on game changers. We need to unleash the innovative power of entrepreneurs with the greatest potential to deliver effective, efficient, and groundbreaking products and services that address the needs of our communities.

The social entrepreneur identifies a challenge and seeks to engineer and implement a response, a solution – be it a product or a service or a program – that delivers value to the whole of society. And they deliver this value in new, innovative, and sustainable ways. They are economic engines. They are job creators. They are revitalizing our neighborhoods and rebuilding our communities. Just as traditional small businesses form the backbone of our economy, we must also acknowledge that our small business social enterprises are helping to support, strengthen, and grow the economy.

The Commission

Introduced last Congress, the Social Enterprise Ecosystem and Economic Development (SEED) Commission Act would establish a *Commission on the Advancement of Social Enterprise* to examine and make recommendations on ways the federal government can support and utilize social enterprises.

The Commission will:

- Bring together at the same table administrators from a multitude of federal departments and agencies to address ways the federal government can support and utilize social enterprises.
- Identify ways the federal government can work in collaboration with, and support of, social enterprises to create greater social and economic returns while addressing community challenges.
- Draw upon existing experience and scholarship to establish criteria for identifying social enterprises for purposes of accessing federal initiatives.
- Identify and refine the role social enterprises play in our economy, as well as how the federal government can build the capacity of our social enterprises – providing recommendations on how the tax code, tax incentives and credits, loans and debt financing for non-profits, grants, and procurement can be put to best use in supporting social entrepreneurship.
- Study other topics, such as: how the federal government can engage social enterprises in creating jobs, how social enterprise can advance social and economic development goals, and how to improve federal contracting opportunities for social enterprises.
- The Commission would last for approximately 2 years: 1 year to establish criteria by which to identify social enterprises, and another year to submit a report on the Commission's findings.

<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-112hr6505ih/pdf/BILLS-112hr6505ih.pdf>