

LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA  
ONE HUNDRED NINTH LEGISLATURE  
SECOND SESSION

**LEGISLATIVE BILL 999**

Introduced by Spivey, 13; Ibach, 44.

Read first time January 13, 2026

Committee: Banking, Commerce and Insurance

- 1 A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to business; to adopt the Business Innovation
- 2 and Startup Commission Act.
- 3 Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

1           **Section 1.** (1) Sections 1 to 5 of this act shall be known and may  
2 be cited as the Business Innovation and Startup Commission Act.

3           (2) The purposes of the Business Innovation and Startup Commission  
4 Act are to:

5           (a) Create the Business Innovation and Startup Commission to provide  
6 for general planning, coordination, and an operating program to support  
7 entrepreneurship, startups, and business innovation in Nebraska;

8           (b) Provide for grants and other assistance for the purpose of  
9 expanding access to capital, commercialization, and business development  
10 services as part of a comprehensive statewide innovation ecosystem; and

11           (c) Authorize collaboration with state agencies, political  
12 subdivisions, educational institutions, and private partners for the  
13 purpose of strengthening and aligning Nebraska's startup and innovation  
14 infrastructure.

15           **Sec. 2.** (1) The Business Innovation and Startup Commission is  
16 hereby created.

17           (2) The purpose of the commission is to champion business and  
18 innovation in Nebraska including making recommendations regarding  
19 policies, programs, and regulatory structures that promote economic  
20 growth through, but not limited to, business formation and startup  
21 success, innovation and entrepreneurship, and a comprehensive approach to  
22 resilient economic systems in Nebraska.

23           (3) The commission shall consist of the following members:

24           (a) Each chief executive officer or director of the state innovation  
25 hubs;

26           (b) One member that is the chief executive officer, founder, or  
27 principal owner of a business with five million dollars or less in annual  
28 revenue and operates in a rural area of the state appointed by the  
29 Governor;

30           (c) One member representing a chamber of commerce appointed by the  
31 Governor;

1       (d) One member representing an economic development corporation  
2 appointed by the Governor;

3       (e) One member representing a Nebraska-based venture capital fund,  
4 angel investment network, or startup financing organization with  
5 demonstrated experience investing in early-stage companies appointed by  
6 the Governor;

7       (f) One member representing a research university or community  
8 college engaged in applied research, commercialization, or workforce-  
9 aligned innovation appointed by the Governor;

10       (g) One member representing a manufacturing, agricultural  
11 technologies, or industry innovation sector critical to Nebraska's  
12 economy appointed by the Governor;

13       (h) One member representing a community-based or minority-serving  
14 organization with demonstrated experience supporting underrepresented  
15 entrepreneurs or small businesses appointed by the Governor;

16       (i) One member representing the Department of Economic Development,  
17 who shall serve as a nonvoting, ex officio member; and

18       (j) One member representing the Department of Labor, who shall serve  
19 as a nonvoting, ex officio member.

20       (4) Appointments shall be made within sixty days after the effective  
21 date of this act.

22       (5) The members of the commission shall serve for a term of four  
23 years with a maximum of two terms and shall serve without compensation,  
24 but may be reimbursed for expenses as provided in sections 81-1174 to  
25 81-1177.

26       (6) The commission shall elect a chairperson and vice-chairperson  
27 from among its members.

28       (7) The commission shall meet at least quarterly and may meet more  
29 frequently at the call of the chairperson. A majority of the members of  
30 the commission shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of transacting  
31 business.

1           **Sec. 3.** The Business Innovation and Startup Commission shall:

2           (1) Develop, administer, coordinate, and evaluate programs and  
3 initiatives that support business formation, startup growth, innovation,  
4 and entrepreneurship in Nebraska;

5           (2) Evaluate barriers to business formation and growth, including  
6 regulatory, financing, workforce, and infrastructure barriers;

7           (3) Examine access to capital for startups and small emerging  
8 businesses, including debt, equity, seed, and alternative financing  
9 tools;

10           (4) Study best practices from other states related to innovation  
11 policy, startup ecosystems, and emerging industries;

12           (5) Review and assess existing state programs and policies related  
13 to economic development, innovation, and entrepreneurship in order to  
14 align state economic development incentives with startup and innovation  
15 driven enterprises;

16           (6) Make recommendations for statutory, regulatory, or  
17 administrative changes to the Governor and Legislature to improve  
18 Nebraska's business innovation environment;

19           (7) Study and implement best practices and strategies from other  
20 states related to innovation policy, startup ecosystems, and emerging  
21 industries to promote commercialization of research, technology transfer,  
22 and high-growth entrepreneurship;

23           (8) Develop and administer grant programs using appropriated funds  
24 or other available resources to support startup formation, business  
25 innovation, commercialization, access to capital, and technical  
26 assistance;

27           (9) Coordinate with state agencies, political subdivisions,  
28 educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, and private-sector  
29 partners to better coordinate a comprehensive statewide business  
30 innovation and startup ecosystem, including identifying existing  
31 programs, gaps, and redundancies and recommending strategies to improve

1 alignment and accessibility; and

2 (10) Support regional and sector-based innovation hubs, including  
3 incubators, accelerators, and entrepreneurial support organizations,  
4 through partnerships, technical assistance, and targeted grants in both  
5 urban and rural areas.

6 **Sec. 4.** The Business Innovation and Startup Fund is created. The  
7 fund shall consist of funds transferred by the Legislature. The Business  
8 Innovation and Startup Commission shall use the fund for the purpose of  
9 implementing the Business Innovation and Startup Commission Act. Any  
10 money in the fund available for investment shall be invested by the state  
11 investment officer pursuant to the Nebraska Capital Expansion Act and the  
12 Nebraska State Funds Investment Act.

13 **Sec. 5.** (1) On or before December 1, 2027, and on or before  
14 December 1 of each year thereafter, the Business Innovation and Startup  
15 Commission shall submit a report of its activities, findings, and  
16 recommendations electronically to the Legislature.

17 (2) Each report shall include:

18 (a) A summary of the commission's activity during the preceding  
19 year;

20 (b) An accounting of grant awards and other financial assistance;

21 (c) An evaluation of progress toward the development of a  
22 comprehensive and inclusive business innovation and startup ecosystem;

23 (d) Measurable outcomes related to startup formation, business  
24 growth, access to capital, geographic distribution, and participation by  
25 underserved or underrepresented communities; and

26 (e) Any recommendations for statutory, regulatory, or budgetary  
27 changes necessary to improve the effectiveness of the commission's  
28 programs and mission.