

AN ACT

relating to the creation of and funding for the Texas Entrepreneurship Network.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Subtitle F, Title 4, Government Code, is amended by adding Chapter 490 to read as follows:

CHAPTER 490. TEXAS ENTREPRENEURSHIP NETWORK

Sec. 490.001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

(1) "Entrepreneur participant" means an individual who has a business or an idea for a business and registers with the network.

(2) "Fund" means the Texas Entrepreneurship Network fund.

(3) "Network" means the Texas Entrepreneurship Network.

Sec. 490.002. ESTABLISHMENT OF NETWORK. (a) The Texas Entrepreneurship Network is established to develop and diversify the economy of this state through:

(1) the provision of programs and services to facilitate the growth and success of entrepreneurs; and

(2) the statewide, results-driven collaboration of public and private entities to create jobs and energize sustainable local economies through the development of entrepreneurs in this state.

1 (b) The Texas Center for Rural Entrepreneurship shall:

2 (1) operate the network under an agreement with the
3 Department of Agriculture and as provided by this chapter; and

4 (2) comply with all reasonable and customary oversight
5 measures required by the Department of Agriculture.

6 Sec. 490.003. MEMBERS OF NETWORK. (a) The founding members
7 of the network are:

8 (1) the Texas Cooperative Extension of The Texas A&M
9 University System;

10 (2) the IC2 Institute at The University of Texas at
11 Austin;

12 (3) the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural
13 Resources at Texas Tech University;

14 (4) the Department of Agriculture;

15 (5) the Texas Workforce Commission;

16 (6) the Office of Rural Community Affairs;

17 (7) the Texas Center for Rural Entrepreneurship;

18 (8) the Texas Economic Development Council;

19 (9) CoSERVE at The University of Texas--Pan American;

20 (10) the office of external affairs at Texas Southern
21 University; and

22 (11) the John F. Baugh Center for Entrepreneurship at
23 Baylor University.

24 (b) An institution of higher education, chamber of
25 commerce, economic development corporation, business, or
26 organization with an interest in promoting entrepreneurship may
27 join the network.

1 Sec. 490.004. ADVISORY BOARD. (a) The Texas Center for
2 Rural Entrepreneurship shall establish an advisory board to guide
3 and advise the operations of the network.

4 (b) The advisory board consists of one representative from
5 each of the founding members of the network under Section
6 490.003(a) and at least one member from the private sector. An
7 organization other than a founding member of the network under
8 Section 490.003(a) may have a representative on the advisory board
9 only if the creation of an additional seat on the board is
10 authorized by a two-thirds majority vote of the existing board.

11 (c) The initial advisory board shall adopt provisions to
12 determine the terms of board members and stagger the members'
13 terms, and other provisions necessary to administer the board.

14 (d) Advisory board members serve without compensation but
15 are entitled to reimbursement for reasonable expenses incurred in
16 traveling to meetings related to the network.

17 Sec. 490.005. GENERAL DUTIES AND GOALS. (a) The network
18 shall train and refocus existing state and local resources to build
19 a more prosperous, dynamic, and sustainable economy throughout this
20 state by:

21 (1) providing coordinated training and services that
22 enhance the value of the state's existing infrastructure
23 investments and make the investments available to entrepreneur
24 participants;

25 (2) developing a statewide network of
26 entrepreneurship developers and entrepreneurship centers as
27 provided by Section 490.006;

1 (3) developing a comprehensive network of knowledge,
2 leadership, and financial capital resources accessible through the
3 network's entrepreneurship developers and entrepreneurship
4 centers;

5 (4) educating entrepreneur participants and
6 generating awareness of the network and its programs;

7 (5) identifying the most promising ventures through
8 activities, including business-plan competitions, and assisting
9 the ventures' potential for job and wealth creation;

10 (6) developing evaluation methods to measure the
11 effectiveness of the network and the impact of entrepreneurship on
12 local and regional economies;

13 (7) developing best practices for successful
14 entrepreneurship and applied research regarding critical success
15 factors for entrepreneurial businesses to provide a strategic
16 competitive advantage for businesses in this state; and

17 (8) collaborating with existing local, state, and
18 federal agencies and economic development professionals to use the
19 strengths and assets of the agencies and professionals.

20 (b) The network shall work locally, regionally, and
21 statewide with educators, agencies, organizations, networks,
22 businesses, economic developers, consultants, communities,
23 researchers, or other persons to develop and support strategies to
24 assist entrepreneur participants and improve the environment for
25 entrepreneurial development in this state.

26 Sec. 490.006. ENTREPRENEURSHIP SERVICES. (a) The network
27 shall develop a statewide association of local individuals who are

1 entrepreneurship developers trained to analyze, evaluate, and
2 develop business plans and help local entrepreneur participants
3 start, grow, or develop their businesses.

4 (b) The network may establish local entrepreneurship
5 centers in every county practicable, at which an entrepreneur
6 participant may access programs, necessary support, and online
7 resources provided and developed by the network. In establishing
8 the entrepreneurship centers, the network shall use existing
9 infrastructure, public and private organizations, and other
10 resources, including chambers of commerce, universities and
11 community colleges, county extension offices, Texas Workforce
12 Commission offices, and local business offices.

13 (c) The network shall adopt requirements for
14 entrepreneurship centers. An organization must meet the
15 requirements adopted under this subsection before hosting an
16 entrepreneurship center.

17 (d) A group of individuals who have services, resources, or
18 expertise to offer entrepreneur participants may agree to provide
19 services through the network as an entrepreneurship force.

20 Sec. 490.007. NETWORK PROGRAMS. The network may develop:

21 (1) programs for:

22 (A) business plan development, competitive
23 enhancement, and management skills development;

24 (B) entrepreneurship best practices training;

25 (C) entrepreneurship education in primary and
26 secondary schools and community colleges;

27 (D) expanding entrepreneurship in workforce

1 development programs;

2 (E) accessing sources of start-up and growth
3 capital;

4 (F) training and assisting entrepreneurship
5 agents who facilitate and assist entrepreneurial efforts; and

6 (G) community readiness preparation and
7 evaluation, and community planning;

8 (2) methods for helping entrepreneur participants
9 access other loan, guarantee, and grant programs;

10 (3) necessary policies and regulations; and

11 (4) collaborations with other entities.

12 Sec. 490.008. TEXAS ENTREPRENEURSHIP NETWORK FUND. (a)
13 The Texas Entrepreneurship Network fund is an account in the
14 general revenue fund. The Department of Agriculture shall
15 administer the fund.

16 (b) The following amounts shall be deposited in the fund:

17 (1) any amounts appropriated by the legislature for
18 the fund; and

19 (2) gifts, grants, and other donations received for
20 the fund.

21 (c) The fund may be used only for network purposes, subject
22 to Section 490.009.

23 (d) The network may solicit and accept gifts and grants for
24 the fund from public and private universities and all other public
25 and private entities.

26 Sec. 490.009. USE OF FUND. Money appropriated to the fund
27 by the legislature shall be used for:

1 (1) programs related to local entrepreneurship
2 centers, training, and entrepreneurship developers;

3 (2) curriculum development, infrastructure, data
4 management, and research;

5 (3) technology and economic development research
6 centers of excellence;

7 (4) the network's overhead expenses; and

8 (5) other activities necessary to accomplish the
9 mission of this chapter.

10 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2005.

President of the Senate

Speaker of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 1747 was passed by the House on April 27, 2005, by a non-record vote; and that the House concurred in Senate amendments to H.B. No. 1747 on May 23, 2005, by a non-record vote.

Chief Clerk of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 1747 was passed by the Senate, with amendments, on May 20, 2005, by the following vote: Yeas 31, Nays 0.

Secretary of the Senate

APPROVED: _____

Date

Governor