

By: Staples

S.B. No. 1711

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

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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) "Fund" means the Texas Entrepreneurship Network fund.

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

(3) "Entrepreneur" means an individual who has a business or an idea for a business, who registers with the 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.

(b) The Office of Rural Community Affairs shall administer

1 the Fund.

2 (c) By agreement with the Office of Rural Community Affairs,
3 the Texas Center for Rural Entrepreneurship will create and operate
4 the Network according to the provisions of this Act taking into
5 consideration all reasonable and customary oversight measures
6 required by the Office of Rural Community Affairs.

7 (d) The Texas Center for Rural Entrepreneurship shall
8 establish an advisory board to guide and advise the operations of
9 the Network. The advisory board shall have representation from
10 each of the founding members of the network listed in Section
11 490.003(a), and at least one member from the private sector. The
12 initial board shall adopt provisions to define board member term,
13 term staggering, and other provisions necessary to administer the
14 board. The members of the board shall participate without
15 compensation other than reimbursement for reasonable and customary
16 travel expenses for meetings related to the Network.

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

19 (1) the Texas Cooperative Extension of the Texas A&M
20 University System;

21 (2) the IC2 Institute at The University of Texas at
22 Austin;

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

25 (4) the Texas Department of Agriculture;

26 (5) the Texas Workforce Commission;

27 (6) the Office of Rural Community Affairs;

1 (7) the Texas Center for Rural Entrepreneurship; and

2 (8) the Texas Economic Development Council.

3 (b) An institution of higher education, chamber of
4 commerce, economic development corporation, business, or
5 organization with an interest in promoting entrepreneurship may
6 join the network. Organizations other than the founding members
7 specified in Section 490.003(a) do not automatically have seats on
8 the advisory board. Additional seats may be created on the board
9 only by a 2/3 majority vote of the board.

10 Sec. 490.004. GENERAL DUTIES AND GOALS. (a) The network
11 shall train and refocus existing State and local resources to build
12 a more prosperous, dynamic, and sustainable economy throughout this
13 state by:

14 (1) Providing coordinated training and services that
15 enhance the value of the State's existing infrastructure
16 investments and make them more available to entrepreneurs;

17 (2) developing a statewide network of
18 entrepreneurship developers and entrepreneurship centers to
19 organize and to support entrepreneur associations;

20 (3) developing a comprehensive network of knowledge,
21 leadership, and financial capital resources accessible through the
22 Network's entrepreneurship developers and entrepreneurship
23 centers;

24 (4) educating entrepreneurs and generating awareness
25 of the network and its programs;

26 (5) identifying the most promising ventures through
27 activities, including business-plan competitions, and assisting

1 the ventures' potential for job and wealth creation;

2 (6) developing evaluation methods to measure the
3 effectiveness of the network and impact of entrepreneurship on
4 local and regional economies;

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

9 (8) collaborating with existing local, state, and
10 federal agencies and economic development professionals to use the
11 strengths and assets of the agencies and professionals.

12 (b) The network shall work locally, regionally, and
13 statewide with educators, agencies, organizations, networks,
14 businesses, economic developers, consultants, communities,
15 researchers, or other persons to develop and support strategies to
16 assist entrepreneurs and improve the environment for
17 entrepreneurial development in this state.

18 Sec. 490.005. ENTREPRENEURSHIP SERVICES. (a) The network
19 shall develop a statewide association of local individuals who are
20 entrepreneurship developers trained to analyze, evaluate, and
21 develop business plans and help local entrepreneurs start, grow, or
22 develop their businesses.

23 (b) The network may establish local entrepreneurship
24 centers in every county practicable at which entrepreneurs may
25 access necessary support and online resources and programs
26 developed and provided by the network. In establishing the
27 entrepreneurship centers, the network shall use existing

1 infrastructure, public and private organizations, and other
2 resources, including chambers of commerce, universities and
3 community colleges, County Extension offices, Texas Workforce
4 Commission offices, and local business offices.

5 (c) The network shall adopt requirements for
6 entrepreneurship centers. An organization must meet the
7 requirements adopted under this subsection before hosting an
8 entrepreneurship center.

9 (d) A group of individuals who have services, resources, or
10 expertise to offer entrepreneurs may agree to provide services
11 through the network as part of an entrepreneurship force.

12 Sec. 490.006. NETWORK PROGRAMS. The network may develop:

13 (1) Programs for:

14 (A) business plan development, competitive
15 enhancement, and management skills development;

16 (B) entrepreneurship best practices training;

17 (C) entrepreneurship education in primary and
18 secondary schools and community colleges;

19 (D) expanding entrepreneurship in workforce
20 development programs;

21 (E) accessing sources of start-up and growth
22 capital; and

23 (F) training and assisting entrepreneurship
24 agents who facilitate and assist entrepreneurial efforts; and

25 (G) community readiness preparation and
26 evaluation, and community planning.

27 (2) methods for helping entrepreneurs access other

1 loan, guarantee, and grant programs;

2 (3) necessary policies and regulations; and

3 (4) collaborations with other entities.

4 Sec. 490.007. TEXAS ENTREPRENEURSHIP NETWORK FUND.

5 (a) The Texas Entrepreneurship Network Fund is an account in the
6 general revenue fund.

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

8 (1) any amounts appropriated by the legislature for
9 the fund; and

10 (2) gifts, grants, and other donations received for
11 the fund.

12 (c) The fund may be used only for network purposes, subject
13 to Section 490.008.

14 (d) The network may solicit and accept gifts and grants for
15 the fund from public and private universities and all other public
16 and private entities.

17 Sec. 490.008. USE OF FUND. (a) Money appropriated to the
18 fund by the legislature shall be used for:

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

21 (2) curriculum development, infrastructure, data
22 management, and research; and

23 (3) technology and economic development research
24 centers of excellence;

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

26 (5) other activities necessary to accomplish the
27 mission of this chapter.

1 (b) The amount of money appropriated to the fund by the
2 legislature that remains after being used as provided by Subsection
3 (a) shall be distributed as enhanced funding for existing
4 entrepreneurship programs of the universities affiliated with an
5 entity included as a network member under Section 490.003(a).

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