

By: Nelson

S.B. No. 1277

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to training and education for state agency administrators and employees.

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

SECTION 1. Section 656.043, Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 656.043. DEFINITION. In this subchapter, "state agency" means a department, agency, or institution of the executive, legislative, or judicial branch of [this] state government, including an institution of higher education as defined by Section 61.003, Education Code.

SECTION 2. Section 656.047, Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 656.047. PAYMENT OF PROGRAM EXPENSES. (a) Except as provided by this section or other law, a [A] state agency may spend public funds as appropriate to pay the salary, tuition and other fees, travel and living expenses, training stipend, expense of training materials, and other necessary expenses of an instructor, student, or other participant in a training or education program.

(b) For an administrator or employee of a state agency who seeks reimbursement for a training or education program offered by an institution of higher education or private or independent institution of higher education as defined by Section 61.003, Education Code, the agency may only pay the tuition expenses for a

1 program course successfully completed by the administrator or
2 employee at an accredited institution of higher education.

3 SECTION 3. Section 656.048, Government Code, is amended by
4 adding Subsection (b) to read as follows:

5 (b) A state agency shall adopt rules requiring that before
6 an administrator or employee of the agency may be reimbursed under
7 Section 656.047(b), the executive head of the agency must
8 authorize the tuition reimbursement payment.

9 SECTION 4. Section 656.101, Government Code, is amended by
10 amending Subdivision (1) and adding Subdivision (1-a) to read as
11 follows:

12 (1) "State agency" has the meaning assigned by Section
13 656.043.

14 (1-a) "State [~~and "state~~] employee" has the meaning
15 [~~have the meanings~~] assigned by Section 572.002 [~~except that the~~
16 ~~terms do not include a river authority or an employee of a river~~
17 ~~authority~~].

18 SECTION 5. Section 656.102, Government Code, is amended to
19 read as follows:

20 Sec. 656.102. AGENCY POLICY. (a) Before a state agency
21 spends any money on training for a state employee, the state agency
22 must adopt a policy governing the training of employees, in
23 addition to the rules required by Section 656.048, that requires
24 training to relate to an employee's duties following the training.

25 (b) The policy must:

26 (1) provide clear and objective guidelines to govern
27 tuition reimbursement for an administrator or employee of a state

1 agency who is enrolled in training for which the administrator or
2 employee seeks reimbursement from this state; and

3 (2) address tuition reimbursement for nontraditional
4 training, including online courses or courses not credited towards
5 a degree.

6 (c) The state agency shall post the policy adopted under
7 this section on the employment section of the agency's Internet
8 website.

9 SECTION 6. The changes in law made by this Act apply only to
10 training and education expenses paid by a state agency on or after
11 the effective date of this Act.

12 SECTION 7. This Act takes effect September 1, 2015.