

By: Reynolds

H.B. No. 379

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1  
2 relating to assistance for small businesses, the dissemination of  
3 information about historically underutilized businesses, and the  
4 expansion of the small business development center network.

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

6 SECTION 1. Section 61.8235, Education Code, is amended by  
7 adding Subsection (b-1) to read as follows:

8 (b-1) In developing the career and technical education  
9 program of study curricula under Subsection (b), the board shall  
10 ensure that the curricula include information about historically  
11 underutilized businesses and the certification procedure for and  
12 the assistance available to historically underutilized businesses  
13 under Chapter 2161, Government Code.

14 SECTION 2. Section 481.0068(b), Government Code, is amended  
15 to read as follows:

16 (b) The Office of Small Business Assistance shall:

17 (1) examine the role of small and historically  
18 underutilized businesses in the state's economy and the  
19 contribution of small and historically underutilized businesses in  
20 generating economic activity, expanding employment opportunities,  
21 promoting exports, stimulating innovation and entrepreneurship,  
22 and bringing new and untested products and services to the  
23 marketplace;

24 (2) serve as the principal focal point in the state for

1 small and historically underutilized businesses by:

2 (A) providing to the legislature information on  
3 the effects of proposed policies or actions;

4 (B) assisting state agencies in determining the  
5 impact proposed rules have on small businesses as required by  
6 Section 2006.002; and

7 (C) assisting the agencies in reducing the  
8 adverse effect that rules have on small businesses, if appropriate;

9 (3) evaluate the effectiveness of efforts of state  
10 agencies and other entities to assist small and historically  
11 underutilized businesses and make appropriate recommendations to  
12 the legislature and state agencies to assist the development and  
13 strengthening of small and historically underutilized businesses;

14 (4) identify regulations that inhibit small and  
15 historically underutilized business development and to the extent  
16 possible identify conflicting state policy goals;

17 (5) determine the availability of financial and other  
18 resources to small and historically underutilized businesses and  
19 recommend methods for:

20 (A) increasing the availability of equity  
21 capital and other forms of financial assistance to small and  
22 historically underutilized businesses;

23 (B) generating markets for the goods and services  
24 of small and historically underutilized businesses;

25 (C) providing more effective education,  
26 training, and management and technical assistance to small and  
27 historically underutilized businesses; and

1 (D) providing assistance to small and  
2 historically underutilized businesses in complying with federal,  
3 state, and local laws;

4 (6) identify the reasons for small and historically  
5 underutilized business successes and failures, ascertain the  
6 related factors that are particularly important in this state, and  
7 recommend actions for increasing the success rate of small and  
8 historically underutilized businesses;

9 (7) serve as a focal point for receiving comments and  
10 suggestions concerning state government policies and activities  
11 that affect small and historically underutilized businesses;

12 (8) develop and suggest proposals for changes in state  
13 policies and activities that adversely affect small and  
14 historically underutilized businesses;

15 (9) provide to state agencies information on the  
16 effects of proposed policies or actions that affect small and  
17 historically underutilized businesses;

18 (10) provide information and assistance relating to  
19 establishing, operating, or expanding small and historically  
20 underutilized businesses;

21 (11) assist small and historically underutilized  
22 businesses by:

23 (A) identifying:

24 (i) sources of financial assistance for  
25 those businesses; and

26 (ii) financial barriers to those  
27 businesses;

1           (B) working with relevant organizations to  
2 identify financing programs that aid small businesses in overcoming  
3 financial barriers;

4           (C) matching those businesses with sources of  
5 financial assistance and credit enhancement; and

6           (D) assisting those businesses with the  
7 preparation of applications for government loans, loan guarantees,  
8 and credit enhancement programs;

9           (12) sponsor meetings, to the extent practicable in  
10 cooperation with public and private educational institutions, to  
11 provide training and disseminate information beneficial to small  
12 and historically underutilized businesses;

13           (13) assist small and historically underutilized  
14 businesses in their dealings with federal, state, and local  
15 governmental agencies and provide information regarding  
16 governmental requirements affecting small and historically  
17 underutilized businesses;

18           (14) perform research, studies, and analyses of  
19 matters affecting the interests of small and historically  
20 underutilized businesses;

21           (15) use available resources within the state, such as  
22 small business development centers, educational institutions, and  
23 nonprofit associations, to coordinate the provision of management  
24 and technical assistance to small and historically underutilized  
25 businesses in a systematic manner;

26           (16) publish newsletters, brochures, and other  
27 documents containing information useful to small and historically

1 underutilized businesses;

2 (17) identify successful small and historically  
3 underutilized business assistance programs provided by other  
4 states and determine the feasibility of adapting those programs for  
5 implementation in this state;

6 (18) establish an outreach program to make the  
7 existence of the office known to small and historically  
8 underutilized businesses and potential clients throughout the  
9 state;

10 (19) enlist the cooperation and assistance of public  
11 and private agencies, businesses, and other organizations in  
12 disseminating information about the programs and services provided  
13 by the state that benefit small businesses and how small businesses  
14 can participate in or make use of those programs and services;

15 (20) defer to the small business compliance assistance  
16 program as defined by Section 5.135, Water Code, on advocacy and  
17 technical assistance related to environmental programs that  
18 regulate small businesses;

19 (21) develop a "one-stop" approach for all small  
20 business needs, including competitive activity with state agencies  
21 and political subdivisions, using the services of the Prairie View  
22 A&M Cooperative Extension Program and a limited liability company  
23 whose primary mission includes training and empowering  
24 historically underutilized businesses, monitoring state  
25 procurement expenditures, advising state agencies, and monitoring  
26 the state's historically underutilized business program; ~~and~~

27 (22) promote the establishment of small business

1 development centers at accessible locations, including community  
2 centers, park facilities, and public libraries, in areas of the  
3 state with the fewest number of certified historically  
4 underutilized businesses; and

5 (23) perform any other functions necessary to carry  
6 out the purposes of this section.

7 SECTION 3. Subchapter B, Chapter 2161, Government Code, is  
8 amended by adding Section 2161.067 to read as follows:

9 Sec. 2161.067. PUBLICITY. The comptroller shall publicize,  
10 including through social media, the certification procedure for  
11 historically underutilized businesses under this chapter and  
12 opportunities for historically underutilized businesses to obtain  
13 assistance and guidance, including through economic opportunity  
14 forums.

15 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect December 1, 2017.