

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 1192
By: West
Higher Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

It has been suggested that, though the availability of more paid internship opportunities would benefit students and advance state workforce development goals, the option for student off-campus employment under the current college work-study program may not sufficiently meet this need because of certain obstacles to implementation. S.B. 1192 seeks to provide a more effective option for facilitating paid internships by creating a separate, centrally organized and state-funded internship program.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 4 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

S.B. 1192 amends the Education Code to establish the Texas Working Off-Campus: Reinforcing Knowledge and Skills (WORKS) internship program for the purpose of providing jobs funded in part by the state to enable students employed through the program to attend public or private institutions of higher education in Texas while exploring career options and strengthening marketable skills. The bill requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to administer the program and collaborate with eligible employers to provide students employed through the program with employment funded in part by the state. The bill requires the coordinating board to establish criteria to ensure that a participating employer is reimbursed under the program at the rate established by the coordinating board only for fully paid eligible wages and that marketable skills to be strengthened or gained through a student's internship position are identified.

S.B. 1192 requires the coordinating board to develop a standard contract establishing the roles and responsibilities of eligible employers, base wages and minimum work hours for students employed through the program, and any other provisions identified by the coordinating board as necessary to administer the program. The bill requires the coordinating board to use the standard contract as a model for the memorandum of understanding required to be entered into by eligible employers. The bill authorizes the coordinating board to use funds appropriated for the Texas college work-study program and the Texas WORKS internship program to establish and maintain an online portal for use by students and participating entities in fulfilling their responsibilities for internship program participation and to cover the expenses and personnel costs of administering and assessing the internship program. The bill bases priority for funding under the internship program on eligibility criteria established by coordinating board rule if

program funding is insufficient to cover the cost of all eligible students. The bill establishes that funds received by students employed through the program as eligible wages are not considered as financial aid for the academic year in which the funds are earned.

S.B. 1192 authorizes the coordinating board to enter into agreements with employers that participate in the internship program and sets out eligibility criteria for employers entering into such agreements. The bill requires the coordinating board to adopt reasonable rules, consistent with the purpose of the program, to enforce the requirements, conditions, and limitations provided by the bill's provisions and to adopt rules necessary to ensure compliance with the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 concerning nondiscrimination in admissions or employment. The bill requires the commissioner of higher education to develop the rules and procedures necessary for the implementation of the program. The bill requires the coordinating board to establish and maintain an online listing of program employment opportunities available to students that meets certain specifications and to ensure that the list is easily accessible to the public through a clearly identifiable link that appears in a prominent place on the coordinating board's website.

S.B. 1192 sets out eligibility criteria that an institution of higher education or another appropriate educational entity must satisfy to participate in the Texas college work-study program and repeals a provision requiring a certain percentage of employment positions under that program to be provided by employers providing off-campus employment. The bill establishes that funding for state contributions to the Texas WORKS internship program is payable from appropriated funds. The bill expands the scope of the coordinating board's annual report on the Texas college work-study program to include information about the Texas WORKS internship program.

S.B. 1192 applies beginning with the 2020 summer term.

S.B. 1192 repeals Section 56.076(b), Education Code.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2019.