86R2660 JES-D

By:  Miles S.B. No. 298

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the dissemination of information about historically underutilized businesses and the expansion of the small business development center network.

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

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

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

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

(b)  The Office of Small Business Assistance shall:

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

(2)  serve as the principal focal point in the state for small and historically underutilized businesses by:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(11)  assist small and historically underutilized businesses by:

(A)  identifying:

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

(ii)  financial barriers to those businesses;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(16)  publish newsletters, brochures, and other documents containing information useful to small and historically underutilized businesses;

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

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

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

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

(21)  develop a "one-stop" approach for all small business needs, including competitive activity with state agencies and political subdivisions; [~~and~~]

(22)  promote the establishment of small business development centers at accessible locations, including community centers, park facilities, and public libraries, in areas of this state with the fewest certified historically underutilized businesses; and

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

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

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

SECTION 4.  This Act takes effect September 1, 2019.