

1-1 By: Powell, et al. S.B. No. 994  
 1-2 (In the Senate - Filed March 3, 2021; March 18, 2021, read  
 1-3 first time and referred to Committee on Higher Education;  
 1-4 April 29, 2021, reported favorably by the following vote: Yeas 6,  
 1-5 Nays 3; April 29, 2021, sent to printer.)

1-6 COMMITTEE VOTE

	Yea	Nay	Absent	PNV
1-7				
1-8	X			
1-9	X			
1-10		X		
1-11	X			
1-12	X			
1-13		X		
1-14		X		
1-15	X			
1-16	X			

1-17 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
 1-18 AN ACT

1-19 relating to measures to facilitate the successful completion of  
 1-20 degree and certificate programs by certain adult learners at public  
 1-21 institutions of higher education.

1-22 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

1-23 SECTION 1. Chapter 61, Education Code, is amended by adding  
 1-24 Subchapter R to read as follows:

1-25 SUBCHAPTER R. TEXAS RECOVERY ACT

1-26 Sec. 61.801. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

1-27 (1) "Adult learner" means a person who:

1-28 (A) is at least 25 years of age but not older than  
 1-29 34 years of age; and

1-30 (B) within the preceding 48 months, has achieved  
 1-31 at least 75 percent completion of a baccalaureate or associate  
 1-32 degree or certificate program.

1-33 (2) "Texas WORKS internship program" means the Texas  
 1-34 Working Off-Campus: Reinforcing Knowledge and Skills (WORKS)  
 1-35 Internship Program established under Subchapter E-1, Chapter 56.

1-36 Sec. 61.802. TUITION ASSISTANCE GRANT FOR ADULT LEARNERS.

1-37 (a) For the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 academic years, the board shall  
 1-38 provide to each adult learner enrolled in a baccalaureate or  
 1-39 associate degree or certificate program at an institution of higher  
 1-40 education a grant for each semester or term in the amount equal to  
 1-41 25 percent of the average statewide amount of tuition and required  
 1-42 fees that a resident student enrolled full-time in a baccalaureate  
 1-43 or associate degree or certificate program, as applicable, would be  
 1-44 charged for that semester or term at the type of institution of  
 1-45 higher education at which the adult learner is enrolled.

1-46 (b) An adult learner receiving a grant under this section  
 1-47 may use the money only to pay the cost of tuition or required fees  
 1-48 for the baccalaureate or associate degree or certificate program in  
 1-49 which the adult learner is enrolled at an institution of higher  
 1-50 education.

1-51 Sec. 61.803. INCENTIVE FUNDING FOR ADULT LEARNERS. (a) For  
 1-52 the state fiscal biennium beginning September 1, 2023, the board  
 1-53 shall distribute incentive funding to each institution of higher  
 1-54 education based on the number of adult learners enrolled at the  
 1-55 institution who, during the preceding state fiscal biennium:

1-56 (1) timely completed:

1-57 (A) a baccalaureate or associate degree program  
 1-58 in accordance with the adult learner's degree plan; or

1-59 (B) a certificate program, as established by  
 1-60 board rule; or

1-61 (2) received a baccalaureate or associate degree or

2-1 certificate in a target field, as established by board rule.

2-2 (b) Subject to the availability of funds, the amount of  
 2-3 incentive funding distributed per qualifying adult learner to an  
 2-4 institution of higher education under this section for a state  
 2-5 fiscal biennium may not be less than the amount of funding provided  
 2-6 per student for that biennium for achievement of an equivalent  
 2-7 student success measure under Section 61.0593(f), Education Code.

2-8 Sec. 61.804. FINAL SEMESTER INTERNSHIPS FOR ADULT LEARNERS.

2-9 (a) For the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 academic years, the board shall  
 2-10 collaborate with employers who participate in the Texas WORKS  
 2-11 internship program to ensure that:

2-12 (1) employers give priority in employment under that  
 2-13 program to adult learners in the final semester of a baccalaureate  
 2-14 or associate degree or certificate program at an institution of  
 2-15 higher education; and

2-16 (2) each adult learner employed through that program  
 2-17 during the adult learner's final semester of a baccalaureate or  
 2-18 associate degree or certificate program at an institution of higher  
 2-19 education receives an additional \$2,500 stipend as part of the  
 2-20 adult learner's wages under that program.

2-21 (b) The board shall certify internships provided through  
 2-22 the Texas WORKS internship program through which an adult learner  
 2-23 may earn course credit toward the adult learner's baccalaureate or  
 2-24 associate degree or certificate program, as applicable.

2-25 Sec. 61.805. GRAD TX PROGRAM. The board shall establish the  
 2-26 Grad TX program in collaboration with institutions of higher  
 2-27 education to support the reskilling, upskilling, and high-value  
 2-28 degree or certificate program completion of adult learners. The  
 2-29 program may include:

2-30 (1) academic and career advising;

2-31 (2) assistance with available student financial aid  
 2-32 options; and

2-33 (3) flexible degree or certificate programs designed  
 2-34 for adult learners.

2-35 Sec. 61.806. LIMITATION. (a) The total amount spent under  
 2-36 this subchapter may not exceed \$50 million.

2-37 (b) If the total cost of providing grants, incentive  
 2-38 funding, or stipends to all eligible adult learners or institutions  
 2-39 of higher education under this subchapter would exceed the amount  
 2-40 that may be spent under Subsection (a), the board shall reduce the  
 2-41 amount of each grant, incentive funding award, and stipend as  
 2-42 necessary to comply with that subsection.

2-43 Sec. 61.807. GIFTS, GRANTS, AND DONATIONS. The board may  
 2-44 accept gifts, grants, and donations from any public or private  
 2-45 source for purposes of this subchapter.

2-46 Sec. 61.808. REPORT. Not later than December 1 of each  
 2-47 year, the board shall submit to the governor, the lieutenant  
 2-48 governor, and the speaker of the house of representatives a report  
 2-49 on the status and effectiveness of the measures established under  
 2-50 this subchapter.

2-51 Sec. 61.809. RULES. The board may adopt rules as necessary  
 2-52 to implement this subchapter. In adopting rules, the board shall  
 2-53 consult with institutions of higher education, the Texas Workforce  
 2-54 Commission, members of the business community, and other relevant  
 2-55 stakeholders.

2-56 Sec. 61.810. EXPIRATION. This subchapter expires September  
 2-57 1, 2025.

2-58 SECTION 2. Not later than December 1, 2022, the Texas Higher  
 2-59 Education Coordinating Board shall submit the board's initial  
 2-60 report required under Section 61.808, Education Code, as added by  
 2-61 this Act.

2-62 SECTION 3. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board is  
 2-63 required to implement a provision of this Act only if the  
 2-64 legislature appropriates money specifically for that purpose. If  
 2-65 the legislature does not appropriate money specifically for that  
 2-66 purpose, the coordinating board may, but is not required to,  
 2-67 implement a provision of this Act using other appropriations  
 2-68 available for that purpose.

2-69 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives

3-1 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
3-2 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
3-3 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
3-4 Act takes effect September 1, 2021.

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