

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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H.B. 2768
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Economic Development
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Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The demand for skilled information technology (IT) professionals continues to grow in Texas. According to CompTIA, the state is projected to experience a 28 percent increase in tech occupation growth over the next decade, which is third highest in the nation. However, Texas currently faces a shortage of qualified IT workers, which often creates challenges in maintaining and advancing the state's technological infrastructure and may be attributed to the bachelor's degree requirement for many state IT jobs.

This requirement could pose an employment barrier for skilled workers who have gained practical experience and technical training through apprenticeship programs and associate degree coursework. Despite the critical roles that public junior colleges and technical institutes play in workforce development, Texas lacks a standardized state-recognized IT apprenticeship credential, which may hamstring the state's efforts to address IT demands within state agencies and public institutions that rely on secure and efficient information systems.

H.B. 2768 seeks to address workforce shortages in Texas' state information resources sector by establishing an alternative pathway to state IT jobs through a state information technology apprenticeship credential program, which could help bridge the skills gap by providing students with hands-on experience, industry-relevant training, and a direct pathway to employment in state IT roles.

H.B. 2768 amends current law relating to the development of a state information technology apprenticeship credential offered by public junior colleges or public technical institutes to address shortages in the state information resources workforce.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter C, Chapter 2054, Government Code, by adding Section 2054.0702, as follows:

Sec. 2054.0702. STATE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY APPRENTICESHIP CREDENTIAL. (a) Defines "public junior college" and "public technical institute."

(b) Authorizes a state agency to enter into an agreement with a public junior college district under Section 130.0081 (Agreement With Junior College District), Education Code, or a public technical institute under Section 135.06 (Extension Program), Education Code, or other applicable law to offer a program leading to a state information technology apprenticeship credential to address shortages in the state information resources workforce.

(c) Requires that a program offered under this section:

(1) be approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in accordance with Section 61.0512 (Board Approval of Academic Programs), Education Code;

(2) develop the knowledge and skills necessary for a journey- or senior-level information technology position in a state agency; and

(3) include a one-year apprenticeship with a relevant state agency, an organization working on a major information resources project, or a regional network security center established under Section 2059.202 (Establishment of Regional Network Security Centers).

(d) Provides that an apprenticeship described by Subsection (c)(3) is authorized to be:

(1) an apprenticeship program registered with the United States Department of Labor; or

(2) an industry-recognized apprenticeship program offered by a public junior college or public technical institute that adheres to academic and workforce standards required by industry and provides for flexibility in course design and implementation, including flexibility regarding the number of hours of classroom instruction and on-the-job training required, competencies required for credentialing, and goals for the program, as determined by the employer partner and faculty of the institution.

(e) Requires the executive director of the Department of Information Resources (DIR) to update DIR's intra-agency career ladder program to ensure that an associate degree together with a credential awarded under this section is authorized to be substituted for a four-year baccalaureate degree.

(f) Requires the classification officer in the office of the state auditor to review the state's position classification plan to determine whether an associate degree together with a credential awarded under this section is authorized to be substituted for a four-year baccalaureate degree and revise relevant job descriptions accordingly.

(g) Authorizes a state agency, if a program offered under this section is not fully funded through tuition and other money available to the public junior college district or public technical institute for that purpose, to use any money available to the agency for the purpose of offering the program and solicit and accept gifts,

grants, and donations from any public or private source for the purpose of offering the program.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2025.