

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 856
By: Flores
Trade, Workforce & Economic Development
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

According to the Texas Healthcare and Bioscience Institute, Texas' bioscience industry is large and rapidly growing, employing 129,245 individuals across 9,212 establishments in 2023, with an employment growth of 21.6 percent since 2019. Wages for many jobs in this industry are significant, with data reported by the institute showing average annual wages in 2023 ranging from \$94,416 to \$134,377 depending on the sector of the industry. The bill sponsor has informed the committee that one of the significant challenges faced by this industry is the preparation and training of workers with knowledge of general manufacturing practices necessary to be ready for these opportunities as they continue to expand. S.B. 856 aims to address these challenges by making the Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station eligible to use funds from the Texas Skills Development Fund for job training purposes.

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

ANALYSIS

S.B. 856 amends the Labor Code to include the Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station among the higher education entities eligible for support from the skills development fund for the following purposes:

- to recover costs incurred in the development of customized assessment and training in certain demand occupations;
- to receive start-up or emergency funds for certain job-training purposes; and
- to offer statewide training programs that are not available from a local junior college district, a local technical college, or a consortium of junior college districts.

The bill includes the station among the entities that a community-based organization is required to partner with in order to apply for money to participate in a training program and specifically does not prohibit the station from participating in a consortium of junior college districts or with a technical college that provides training. The bill subjects the station and any of its training programs supported by the fund to certain biennial review and reporting requirements in the same manner applicable to the Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service, a public community college, and a public technical college.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2025.