

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 2448
By: Sparks
Economic Development
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Small rural communities in our state can lack the economies of scale needed to grow and improve the workforce and prepare students for higher education and the workforce. Currently, there are successful models, using technical assistance providers, that work with local communities to expand workforce opportunities with good jobs, in areas such as agriculture, health care, and technology, and to align institutions of higher education and rural school districts to prepare students for college and careers.

To help scale these models, S.B. 2448 adds to current law a rural workforce development program at the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to support measurable programs advancing college and career readiness, skill development, and work experience. The bill authorizes TWC to award grants for technical assistance to one or more nonprofit organizations to assist a rural community's alignment of workforce, higher education, and education goals, including access and attainment of postsecondary credentials and degrees, and also allows grants to local entities performing activities related to the program.

As proposed, S.B. 2448 amends current law relating to rural workforce development.

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 A, Chapter 302, Labor Code, by adding Section 302.021, as follows:

Sec. 302.021. RURAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT. (a) Provides that the purpose of this section is to enhance the employability, earnings, and standard of living of the people living in rural communities of this state, through job creation and expansion, education, and skills training.

(b) Requires the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), in consultation with the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, to administer a rural workforce development program to support certain measurable programs advancing college and career readiness, skill development, and work experience opportunities.

(c) Authorizes TWC to award grants to local entities that perform activities related to the purposes of this section.

(d) Authorizes TWC to award grants for technical assistance to one or more nonprofit organizations with experience in improving outcomes, including students' college and career outcomes, in rural communities in this state. Requires the nonprofit organization to assist a rural community's alignment of workforce, higher education, and education goals, including access and attainment of postsecondary credentials and degrees.

(e) Authorizes TWC to accept gifts, grants, and donations from any public or private source for the purposes of the program and is required to administer the program using money appropriated to TWC or money received from other sources.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2025.