

- SUBJECT:** Allowing low-income individuals access to certain job-training programs
- COMMITTEE:** International Relations and Economic Development — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 9 ayes — Button, C. Morales, Beckley, C. Bell, Canales, Hunter, Larson, Metcalf, Ordaz Perez
- 0 nays
- WITNESSES:** For — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Jason Sabo, Children at Risk; Annie Spilman, NFIB; Mike Meroney, Texas Association of Manufacturers; Jennifer Fagan, Texas Construction Association; Dana Harris, The Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce; Jennifer Allmon, The Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops)
- Against — None
- On — Courtney Arbour, Texas Workforce Commission
- BACKGROUND:** Labor Code sec. 309.002(a) establishes the Self-Sufficiency Fund in the general revenue fund for use by public community and technical colleges, community-based organizations, and state extension agencies to develop customized job-training programs for certain recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits.
- Some have raised concerns that requiring individuals to be recipients of TANF benefits in order to participate in job-training programs financed by the Self-Sufficiency Fund unnecessarily limits access to such programs, thereby denying low-income Texans valuable workforce training opportunities.
- DIGEST:** HB 1791 would specify that individuals identified by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) as being low-income or at risk of becoming dependent on public assistance were eligible for job training programs financed by the self-sufficiency fund.

The bill also would specify that an entity receiving money from the self-sufficiency fund would have to work in conjunction with employers to ensure that participants who successfully completed a job-training program would earn wages sufficient to avoid becoming dependent on:

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families benefits; and
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits, if applicable.

TWC would have to adopt rules to identify individuals who were low-income or at risk of becoming dependent on public assistance benefits. The commission also would have to determine which of these individuals were eligible to participate in job training programs developed with money from the self-sufficiency fund.

If a state agency determined that a waiver or authorization from a federal agency was necessary to implement a provision of the bill, the affected agency would have to request the waiver or authorization and could delay implementing that provision until the waiver or authorization was granted.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2021.