

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 346
By: Paxton
International Relations & Economic Development
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Jobs and Education for Texans (JET) grant program provides grant funding to public junior colleges, public technical institutes, public state colleges, and independent school districts through a competitive process administered through the Texas Workforce Commission. These grants are often used to purchase and install equipment necessary for career and technical education programs, and it has been noted that open-enrollment charter schools and nonprofit organizations are not currently eligible for grants under the program. S.B. 346 seeks to address this issue by authorizing charter schools and certain nonprofit organizations to participate in the JET grant program.

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. 346 amends the Education Code to extend eligibility to participate in the Jobs and Education for Texans (JET) grant program to an open-enrollment charter school or eligible nonprofit organization, as defined by the bill, that has entered into a partnership with a public junior college, public technical institute, or public state college for the purpose of promoting career and technical education or offering dual credit courses to the charter school's students.

S.B. 346 authorizes the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to award a grant to an eligible nonprofit organization for the development, support, or expansion of programs to prepare low-income students for careers in high-demand occupations and establishes that, to be eligible, such an organization must:

- provide a program to offer assistance to low-income students in preparing for, applying to, and enrolling in a public junior college or public technical institute;
- be governed by a board or other governing structure that includes recognized leaders of broad-based community organizations and members of the local business community;
- demonstrate to the satisfaction of the grant program's advisory board that the organization's program has achieved or will achieve specified measures of success among program participants, as applicable; and
- provide matching funds in accordance with TWC rules.

The bill authorizes the matching funds to be obtained from any source available to the nonprofit organization and requires program grants to be awarded in a manner that takes a balanced geographical distribution into consideration.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2021.