

**SUBJECT:** Establishing the TRUE program to support workforce education

**COMMITTEE:** Higher Education — favorable, without amendment

**VOTE:** 8 ayes — Murphy, Cortez, Frullo, P. King, Ortega, Raney, C. Turner, J. Turner

0 nays

3 absent — Pacheco, Muñoz, Parker

**SENATE VOTE:** On final passage, April 22 — 31-0

**WITNESSES:** No public hearing.

**DIGEST:** SB 1102 would establish the Texas Reskilling and Upskilling through Education (TRUE) program for the purpose of strengthening the Texas workforce and building a stronger economy. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board would be required to administer the program, using funds appropriated or otherwise available for the purpose.

The coordinating board would have to award grants to eligible entities for creating, redesigning, or expanding workforce training programs and delivering education and workforce training that:

- led to postsecondary industry certifications or other workforce credentials required for high-demand occupations;
- were developed and provided in consultation with employers who were hiring in high-demand occupations; and
- created pathways to employment for students and learners.

In awarding grants, the coordinating board would be required, to the greatest extent practicable, to award grants to at least one eligible entity in each region of the state. An eligible entity would mean a public junior college or technical institute, a consortium of those institutions, or a local chamber of commerce, trade association, or economic development

corporation that partnered with a junior college or technical institute or a consortium of those institutions. The coordinating board would have to ensure that a workforce training program matched regional workforce needs and met other requirements specified in the bill. The board could give preference to applicants that prioritized training to displaced workers or met other requirements specified in the bill.

The board could solicit, accept, and spend grants, gifts, and donations from any public or private source for the TRUE grant program. If the Legislature did not appropriate money for the program, the coordinating board could, but would not be required to, implement the bill using other available appropriations.

A grant awarded to an eligible entity could be used only for the support and maintenance of educational and general activities that promoted workforce learning. An eligible entity could hold over money to a subsequent fiscal year if it provided a reasonable explanation for doing so.

**Postsecondary credentials.** The coordinating board, in collaboration with eligible entities, the Texas Workforce Commission, and private employers, would have to identify existing and develop new postsecondary industry certifications or other workforce credentials in high-demand occupations. An eligible entity awarded a grant could recommend outcomes related to the achievement or development of postsecondary industry certifications to be considered by the coordinating board for inclusion in the state's long-range master plan for higher education.

In making funding recommendations to the Legislature for junior colleges and technical institutes, the coordinating board would have to incorporate the consideration of the achievement or development of postsecondary industry certifications and workforce credentials.

The coordinating board would have to adopt rules for the TRUE grant program as soon as practicable after the bill's effective date.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2021.

**SUPPORTERS  
SAY:**

SB 1102 would help put Texans back to work in high-demand occupations by creating the Texas Reskilling and Upskilling in Education (TRUE) grant program to improve workforce development and coordination between the state's employers and community and technical colleges. Under the grant program, higher education and business partners across the state could collaborate to provide well designed, quickly obtained credentials for displaced and underemployed workers.

TRUE would invest funds to allow eligible higher education institutions to build capacity to expand new, accelerated, and redesigned workforce training programs that teach in-demand skills and confer certifications or credentials. The COVID-19 pandemic transformed much of the job market, and SB 1102 would help affected workers in the service and other sectors access affordable training and acquire valuable skills. Helping workers gain credentials and degrees is vital to attaining the state's higher education goals and boosting the economy.

**CRITICS  
SAY:**

SB 1102 would use state funds to subsidize workforce development, which is not a proper role for state government. Private businesses that stand to gain from employing certified workers should pool resources and create their own training and certification programs.

**NOTES:**

The House companion bill, HB 3003 by Parker, was considered by the House Higher Education Committee in a public hearing on April 15, reported favorably as substitute on April 19, and sent to the Calendars Committee.