

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center

S.B. 1770  
By: Watson  
Economic Development  
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As Filed

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

The high school drop out rate is too high. Recidivism among young offenders is rising. There is a lack of strong and successful rehabilitative programs in the state, a growing demand for a well-trained green collar work force, and a need for affordable energy efficient projects to be completed. This legislation seeks to increase the creation and efficacy of programs that address all of these issues.

As proposed, S.B. 1770 creates the Texas Sustainable Youth Program administered by the Texas Workforce Commission to fund programs through grant awards that provide green job training, a high school education or GED, and access to counseling and support services for at-risk youth and juveniles. This program will promote economic self-sufficiency for disadvantaged or at-risk youth by providing opportunities to acquire job skills while performing community service activities and create opportunities for communities to restore abandoned properties, historic areas and enhance public places as well as create the availability of affordable, energy-efficient housing for individuals and families of low income.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Workforce Commission in SECTION 1 (Sections 312.053 and 312.155, Labor Code) of this bill.

### **SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Amends Subtitle B, Title 4, Labor Code, by adding Chapter 312, as follows:

#### **CHAPTER 312. TEXAS YOUTHBUILD PROGRAM**

##### **SUBCHAPTER A. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

Sec. 312.001. DEFINITIONS. Defines "energy-efficient," "participant," "program," and "project."

[Reserves Sections 312.002-312.050 for expansion.]

##### **SUBCHAPTER B. POWERS AND DUTIES OF COMMISSION**

Sec. 312.051. PROGRAM; ADMINISTRATION. (a) Provides that the Texas YouthBuild Program (program) is established in the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) as a workforce training and development program.

(b) Requires TWC to administer the program and authorizes TWC to employ personnel as necessary to administer the program.

Sec. 312.052. PROGRAM FUNDING. (a) Provides that the program is funded by appropriations from the legislature and other available money, including funds from federal agencies, identified by TWC, the Texas Youth Commission (TYC), the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), the Texas Education Agency, or other state agencies.

(b) Authorizes TWC to solicit and accept gifts, grants, and other donations for operation of the program.

(c) Prohibits TWC from providing more than 75 percent of the money budgeted for a project.

Sec. 312.053. RULES. Requires TWC to adopt rules as necessary to implement the program, including rules for auditing grants awarded under this chapter and accountability requirements for grant recipients.

Sec. 312.054. ANNUAL REPORT. (a) Requires TWC to report to the governor and the legislature at the end of each state fiscal year on the status of the program.

(b) Sets forth the required content of the report.

[Reserves Sections 312.055-312.100 for expansion.]

#### SUBCHAPTER C. TEXAS YOUTHBUILD PROGRAM

Sec. 312.101. PROGRAM PURPOSES. Requires the program to promote the economic self-sufficiency of disadvantaged or at-risk youth, non-violent juvenile offenders, and young veterans by providing those persons with opportunities to acquire job skills while performing community service activities; create opportunities for communities to restore abandoned properties and historic areas, enhance public places, and increase the availability of affordable, energy-efficient housing for individuals and families of low income; and create training and employment opportunities for eligible veterans.

Sec. 312.102. PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY. (a) Requires a participant, to be eligible to participate in the program, to be an individual at least 16 years of age but younger than 24 years of age who is not attending high school and has not received a high school diploma or high equivalency certificate or is attending high school or a program leading to a high school equivalency certificate but is at risk of dropping out of high school or the equivalency certification program.

(b) Requires a program participant, in addition to meeting the requirements of Subsection (a), to be an individual who is a member of a household that receives public assistance and earns not more than 80 percent of the area median income; errant, homeless, or a potential ward of TDCJ or TYC; educationally disadvantaged, as defined by TWC rule; or referred to the program by a school district, state agency, or court or a veteran who is younger than 24 years of age.

[Reserves Sections 312.103-312.150 for expansion.]

#### SUBCHAPTER D. PROGRAM GRANTS

Sec. 312.151. GRANTS. (a) Requires the executive director of TWC to award grants under the program to eligible entities for projects that meet the requirements of this subchapter.

(b) Requires a grant recipient, to be eligible to receive a grant from the program, to use the grant for a project that provides services specified in Sections 312.154 and 312.155 to individuals eligible to participate in the program under Section 312.102.

Sec. 312.152. ELIGIBLE ENTITIES. (a) Authorizes certain entities, subject to Subsection (b), to apply to receive a grant for an eligible project under this subchapter.

(b) Requires an applicant, to be eligible to receive a grant, to demonstrate that the applicant has at least three years of successful experience operating programs that benefit disadvantaged or at-risk youth, has successful experience in counseling

and support services for high school dropouts and at-risk youth, and has successful experience in job training in the field of the eligible project.

(c) Provides that a private school, as defined by Section 5.001 (Definitions), Education Code, or for-profit entity is not eligible to receive a grant under this subchapter.

Sec. 312.153. GRANT APPLICATION. Requires that a grant application for a proposed project be filed with TWC on a form prescribed by TWC. Sets forth the required content of the application.

Sec. 312.154. PROJECT REQUIREMENTS; SERVICES TO PARTICIPANTS. Requires that a project for which a grant is received under the program to provide or develop a plan to provide to a participant with certain integrated green job training, education, and experience; direct access to counseling and support services, including assessment and orientation services, life-skills training, peer tutoring, gang prevention techniques, parenting and child-care skills, and medical and legal screening and referrals; direct access to leadership training designed to develop ethics, citizenship, personal responsibility, critical thinking, and decision-making, problem-solving, and negotiation skills; direct access to assistance in making the transition from training to economic self-sufficiency, including career counseling, job placement, personal finance, homebuyer education, and follow-up services; and guidance and support in earning college scholarships.

Sec. 312.155. TRAINING STIPEND. (a) Requires that a project for which a grant is received under the program provide a training stipend to each participant who works on the project. Requires that the training stipend under this section be in an amount determined by TWC rule, be provided for a period not to exceed two years, and be conditioned on the demonstration by the participant of improved job performance and personal responsibility as determined by TWC rule.

(b) Provides that a stipend provided under this section does not count as income or resources for purposes of determining the eligibility of the participant or the participant's household for any form of public assistance or in determining the amount of that assistance.

Sec. 312.156. ELIGIBLE PROJECTS. Requires that a project for which a grant is received under the program provide at least one of the following services:

(1) the acquisition, rehabilitation, or construction of energy-efficient, affordable housing for certain individuals;

(2) the energy-efficient rehabilitation or retrofitting of certain structures or facilities;

(3) park and green space construction work, including trail building and the energy-efficient rehabilitation or retrofitting of certain park structures; or

(4) a green job-training program that incorporates training of participants in certain areas and the activities of which benefit certain persons or organizations.

Sec. 312.157. ADVISORY BOARD; PARTICIPANT COUNCIL. Requires an entity awarded a grant for a project under the program to establish an advisory board for the project that includes senior staff of the entity operating the project, area employers, industrial leaders, representatives of nonprofit organizations representing low-income neighborhoods, and participants in the project and a participant council to provide comments and suggestions regarding project policies.

Sec. 312.158. LIMIT ON ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES. Prohibits more than 15 percent of the grant money awarded under the program for a project from being used for administrative costs associated with the project.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2009.