

TEXAS WORKFORCE INVESTMENT COUNCIL

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Council at a Glance

The Texas Workforce Investment Council (council) is a 19-member board that assists the governor and the Legislature with strategic planning for and evaluation of the Texas workforce system. Housed in the Office of the Governor, representation on the council includes five from business, five from labor, three from education, one from community-based organizations, and an ex officio voting member from each of the following state entities: the Texas Workforce Commission, Texas Education Agency, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, Texas Health and Human Services Commission, and Office of the Governor's Economic Development and Tourism Division.

The council's mission is to promote the development of a highly skilled and well-educated workforce for Texas. In addition to its responsibilities in state law, the council also serves as the State Workforce Investment Board under the federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998. The council's key duties include:

- strategic planning for the integration of system-wide workforce development services in Texas;
- evaluating the workforce development system by collecting and reporting performance measure data from agencies and employers to identify how well the state's workforce system is meeting the needs of employers and job seekers;
- producing research reports for the Office of the Governor, the Legislature, and others, on topics such as adult education and workforce trends; and
- reviewing state and local workforce plans to recommend final approval by the governor.

Without this council, Texas could lose \$160 million in federal funds.

The council also provides staff support for the Texas Skill Standards Board. The Legislature created the board in 1995 to develop a statewide system of skill standards for occupations with strong employment and earnings opportunities but requiring less than a baccalaureate degree.

Summary

Federal law requires a state-level board to plan, evaluate, and coordinate workforce-related services across employment, education, and human service agencies. Without such a council, Texas could lose \$160 million in federal funds. The Sunset Commission concluded that the functions of the council are needed and its organizational placement in the Governor's Office is appropriate.

However, the Sunset Commission found that the key tasks of the closely related Texas Skill Standards Board have largely been accomplished, and its remaining duties could be performed by the council, eliminating the need for this separate workforce-related board. The following material summarizes the Sunset Commission's recommendations on the Texas Workforce Investment Council.

Issue and Recommendations

Issue 1

Texas Has a Continuing Need for the Texas Workforce Investment Council and Would Benefit From Its Assumption of the Duties of the Texas Skill Standards Board.

The Texas Workforce Investment Council fulfills the federal requirement that states must maintain a state-level workforce development board to plan, evaluate, and coordinate workforce services. Texas benefits from having such an entity strategically plan for the integration of workforce services in Texas, and evaluate the effectiveness of the state's workforce system.

However, the Sunset Commission found that the Texas Skill Standards Board has accomplished most of its key tasks and concluded that the remaining duties could easily be absorbed by the council. Maintaining two separate governor-appointed boards when one could perform these duties is inefficient. The council's staff already provides administrative support to the Skill Standards Board, and the council's broader directive to promote the development of a well-educated, highly skilled workforce easily encompasses the board's duties.

Recommendations

Change in Statute

1.1 Continue the Texas Workforce Investment Council for 12 years and align its Sunset review with that of the Texas Workforce Commission.

This recommendation would continue the council to meet federal requirements. The council would continue to be administratively attached to the Governor's Office.

1.2 Abolish the Texas Skill Standards Board and transfer its powers and duties to the Texas Workforce Investment Council.

Under this recommendation, the Texas Skill Standards Board would cease to exist and the council would take over responsibility for developing and maintaining the statewide system of industry-defined and industry-recognized skill standards and credentials for all major skilled occupations. This recommendation would fully integrate the board's functions into the council, effectively streamlining the administration of related workforce development functions under a single entity. These changes would take place on September 1, 2015.

Fiscal Implication Summary

None of the recommendations regarding the council would have a fiscal impact to the State.