TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION

SKILLS FOR SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAM

Program Overview

Introduction

The Skills for Small Business (SSB) program is an exciting opportunity for a small business to request training for its employees that will help the business improve its overall operations. The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) is implementing this initiative in coordination with the Office of the Governor's Small Business Forums in an effort to address the training needs of the more than 433,000 small businesses in Texas. TWC welcomes your application and will work with you and the public community or technical college of your choice to provide the training your business needs to be successful.

Below is information on eligibility, program parameters, and data reporting requirements. Following that is the application that must be completed, signed, and returned to TWC for review and approval prior to the start of training.

Our Customer Outreach and Support Team is available to answer any questions you have about the program and/or assist you in completing the application. Please call us at (877) 463-1777 or by e-mail at Skills@twc.state.tx.us.

Eligible Applicants

- To participate in the SSB program, a business must:
  - Be a private business;
  - Employ at least one and not more than 99 individuals companywide;
  - Be financially stable;
  - Be liable to pay Unemployment Insurance contributions to TWC and be in compliance with the reporting and payment requirements; and
  - Be in compliance with the Texas Business and Commerce Code.

Program Information:

- The program will cover the following costs:
  - Tuition and fees costs for course offerings provided by public community and technical colleges in the local area – see listing of eligible institutions. *(Important Note: the SSB program will not cover costs for course offerings from third-party vendors, universities, or proprietary or vocational schools)*;
  - Up to $1,450 in a 12-month period for a new employee; and
  - Up to $725 in a 12-month period for an existing employee.

- For the purposes of this program, a ***new employee*** is defined as an individual who is hired in the three months prior to TWC's receipt of the application requesting training. An ***existing employee*** is one who is currently employed by the business and has been employed for longer than the three months prior to TWC's receipt of the application.

- Businesses will be responsible for all course costs not covered by SSB funding.

- It is a requirement of the program that the hourly wage of each employee for whom training is being requested meets or exceeds the prevailing wage for that occupation in the local labor market. TWC will use local labor market wage data to determine if this requirement is met.

Data Reporting Requirements:

If your application is determined to be fundable, the business will be required to provide TWC with specific data on each participating employee before the application is approved and funds are released to the college. It will be used by the college to track each employee's progress in the approved courses and report monthly to TWC.

The following are the required data elements that must be provided to TWC before the agency will give final approval on the application and release funds to the college for the requested training:

- Employee's full name, middle initial (if applicable), and last name
- Employee's Social Security Number*
- Employee's mailing address
- Employee's birth date
- Employee's veteran status (Yes or No)
- Employee's hire date

*** *IMPORTANT:* *There is NO alternative to the use of a SSN as the identifier of individual employees participating in the Skills for Small Business program. Employees who do not allow the release of this information to TWC will not be able to participate in the program*.**

Procedure for Submitting an Application:

After you have completed your application, please email the Microsoft Word version (without signatures) to the attention of Debbie Hall/Dana Mays at SkillsForSmallBusiness@twc.state.tx.us. You must also send us the original *signed* application by fax to (512) 463-7187 or by mail to the following address:

Debbie Hall/Dana Mays
Texas Workforce Commission
101 E. 15th Street, Room 424T
Austin, Texas 78701

If you do not have email capabilities, you may either fax the signed application to Debbie Hall/Dana Mays at (512) 463-7187 or mail the original signed application to the address above.

Funding Notification:

Once your application is determined to be fundable, the business will be required to provide information on each participating employee (see "Data Reporting Requirements" above). The college will use this information to track and report to TWC on the employee's progress throughout training. This information must be received by TWC before final approval of the application and release of funds to the college. All SSB program funds will go directly to the college to cover the costs of the approved training. The business will be responsible for any balance due to the college, which must be paid in full prior to the first day of classes or by the selected college's payment deadline.

***Important Note*: If an employee withdraws from an approved course before the withdrawal deadline, TWC will be refunded the amount paid by the SSB program, with any remaining balance going to the business.**

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Application Instructions

The Program Overview provides information on eligibility, program parameters, reporting requirements, and submission of the application. You are now ready to complete the application for submission to TWC. As always, our Customer Outreach and Support Team is available to answer any questions you have about the program and/or assist you in completing the application. Please contact us at (877) 463-1777 or e-mail Skills@twc.state.tx.us.

1. Complete Table 1 by providing the requested information about the small business requesting training assistance. Important points to consider in completing this section:
   a. The address provided must be the physical business location of the participating employees.
   b. If you do not know your Experian Business Identification Number (BIN), please go to http://www.SmartBusinessReports.com/ExperianBIN, type in your company name, city and state, and then hit "search." The next page will show you your BIN number in the upper left corner beneath the company address.
   c. Your TWC Account Number is the account under which the business reports employee wages to the TWC Tax Department.
   d. To determine your NAICS Code (North American Industrial Classification System Code), please access the current web site at: http://www.census.gov/eos/www/naics.

2. Complete Table 2 to indicate the name and address of the public community or technical college you have chosen for your requested training. Include the name of the contact person with whom you have consulted in completing this application (if applicable).

3. Complete Table 3 on Attachment A of the application to provide the information listed below. You may add rows as needed.
   a. The job title of each individual for whom training is requested;
   b. The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) Code for each job title listed. You may access SOC Code information and brief definitions at http://stats.bls.gov/soc/home.htm. (More detailed information on determining correct SOC Codes can be found in the Occupational Outlook Handbook at http://www.bls.gov/oco/home.htm.) The SOC Code must be the "Detailed Occupation – Level 4 classification" and contain six digits (XX-XXXX).

      (If you need assistance in determining the correct SOC Code, please contact TWC's Customer Outreach and Support Team at (877) 463-1777 or e-mail Skills@twc.state.tx.us*)*
   c. The actual hourly wage of the employee in the occupation for which you are requesting training. *Do not provide average wages or wage ranges.*
   d. Indicate if the individual in the occupation for which you are requesting training is a new or existing employee. (*A new employee is an individual who was hired in the three months prior to the date this application is received by TWC. An existing employee is one who is currently employed by the business and has been employed for longer than the three months prior to the date this application is received by TWC.)*

e. Indicate if the individual in the occupation for which you are requesting training has previously received training under the SSB program.

f. The course title and section, as shown on the Schedule of Classes or other college publication.

g. The course period, including the date the course begins and the date the course ends.

h. The total cost of the course (tuition and fees only).

i. The amount of the course cost to be paid by the SSB Program.*

j. The amount of the course cost to be paid by the business.*

* ***The following are examples of how to calculate the cost of training for new and existing employees:***

New Employee – allowed up to $1,450 in a 12-month period

Course	Course Cost (Tuition & Fees Only)	Amount Paid by SSB Program	Amount Paid by Business
Business Practices	$500	$500	-0-
Accounting I	$600	$600	-0-
Computer Skills	$500	$350	$150
	Totals:	**$1,450**	**$150**

Existing Employee – allowed up to $725 in a 12-month period

Course	Course Cost (Tuition & Fees Only)	Amount Paid by SSB Program	Amount Paid by Business
Business Practices	$500	$500	-0-
Accounting I	$600	$225	$375
	Totals:	**$725**	**$375**

4. Explain how each training course(s) listed in Attachment A will have an immediate, positive impact on the business' daily operations.

5. Identify if the occupations for which training is being requested align with the occupations targeted for training by the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) in the area where the business is located (see http://www.twc.state.tx.us/svcs/funds/ssb.html for links to LWDB Targeted Occupations Lists).

6. Place an "X" by the appropriate response (YES or NO) to indicate if:

   a. The business has applied for or intends to apply for a Texas Enterprise Fund grant; and

   b. If the business received a Texas Enterprise Fund grant.

7. Sign the "Business Assurances and Attestations" page and include it with your application.