

1 **Texas Workforce Commission Chapter 838**
2 **Texas Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Grant Program**
3 **Discussion Paper**
4

5 **Background**

6 House Bill (HB) 2784, 86th Texas Legislature, Regular Session (2019), amended Texas Labor
7 Code Chapter 302 by adding Subchapter I to create the Texas Industry-Recognized
8 Apprenticeship Programs Grant Program. The purpose of the program is to address Texas'
9 immediate industrial workforce needs resulting from the impact of hurricanes, other natural
10 disasters, and overall workforce shortages.

11 In May 2020, the US Department of Labor (DOL) established a process in which Standards
12 Recognition Entities (SREs) would evaluate and recognize Industry Recognized Apprenticeship
13 Programs (IRAPs). In November 2021, DOL proposed rescinding the IRAP framework. On
14 November 25, 2022, DOL ceased recognizing SREs or IRAPs and rescinded the related rules
15 under 29 Code of Federal Regulations Part 29.

16 In response to DOL's actions and to implement HB 2784, TWC is in process of amending Texas
17 Workforce Commission Chapter 838 to remove DOL-related references and to establish a state-
18 based grant program to support the apprenticeship training model. If adopted, the amendments to
19 Chapter 838—currently posted for public comment—will remove references to the federal
20 program and clarify the eligibility criteria and application process for entities that want to
21 participate in the Texas Industry Recognized Apprenticeship (TIRA) Grant program.

22 **Issue**

23 During the 88th Texas Legislature, TWC was allocated \$20M for the Fiscal Year (FY) 23 and
24 FY24 biennium to implement HB 2784 and to support the TIRA Grant Program.

25 **Recommendations**

26 Staff recommends the following:

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- 28 • Issuing a notice of availability for grants in which terms align with the revised provisions
29 of Chapter 838 prior to final rule amendment
 - 30 • Accepting applications from private sector employers that represent industries in the
31 state's 25 target occupations
 - 32 • Designating the Executive Director or designee to review and approve applications for
TIRA funding