

1 **Program Requirements for Self Sufficiency Fund**
2 **Discussion Paper**
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4 **Background**

5 The Self Sufficiency Fund is a training grant to help individuals obtain industry-recognized
6 credentials. The program focuses on training for:

- 7 • Adult recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF);
- 8 • Individuals at risk of becoming dependent on public assistance; and
- 9 • Individuals earning less than \$37,000 annually with a dependent child.

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11 Currently, to be eligible to receive a Self Sufficiency Fund (SSF) grant, an eligible grant
12 recipient must provide occupational training that leads to an industry-recognized credential in
13 one of the target industry clusters, as follows:

- 14 • Advanced Technologies and Manufacturing
- 15 • Aerospace and Defense
- 16 • Biotechnology and Life Sciences
- 17 • Construction
- 18 • Logistics
- 19 • Transportation
- 20 • Energy
- 21 • Information and Computer Technology
- 22 • Petroleum Refining and Chemical Products

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25 **Issue**

26 Although the current industries are diverse, there are many industry-recognized credentials and
27 associated occupations that are in demand but not encompassed by the target industry clusters.
28 Removing the target industry cluster requirement would open additional opportunities for
29 training individuals at risk of becoming dependent on public assistance and would allow the SSF
30 program to be more responsive to the workforce needs of local employers.

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32 Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Title 40, Part 20, Chapter 835.14 Self Sufficiency Fund
33 requires SSF applicants to seek review and comment from a Local Workforce Development
34 Board (Board) prior to submission of a proposal to TWC. Boards already have an established
35 process for identifying occupations for which the Board plans to direct training funds. Boards
36 identify Target Occupations using labor market information, occupational projections, and local
37 wisdom. These occupations have or are projected to have a substantial number of openings—
38 due to job growth rather than job turnover—and result in occupational wages that meet a Board’s
39 self-sufficiency requirements.
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1 **Decision Point**

- 2 Staff recommends removing the list of target industry clusters from program requirements for the
3 Self-Sufficiency Fund and allowing an eligible grant recipient to provide training that leads to an
4 industry-recognized credential for any Target Occupation or an occupation that the Board
5 approves when they review a Self-Sufficiency Fund grant application.