

**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**  
**Rick Perry**

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**Perry Announces \$3 Million to Develop Workforce of the Future**  
*Funds to Support Programs to Train and Develop Texas' Biotech Workforce*

AUSTIN – Gov. Perry today announced \$3 million in grant funding for five workforce development programs focused on building a skilled workforce to meet the needs of Texas' growing biotechnology and life science industry. The grants are the first awarded under the *Meeting Industries' Critical Workforce Needs* grant program, which supports workforce initiatives that target the six Texas industry clusters.

“This \$3 million investment will help Texas continue to produce a competitive workforce that can lure biotech businesses to our state,” Perry said. “Texas has been recognized as the best state in the nation to do business, and when corporate leaders are asked why they chose to build or expand their business here, the answer is often that we have a highly skilled workforce that can meet the unique demands of their business.”

The Texas Legislature passed and Gov. Perry signed legislation in 2003 calling for the development of strategies to strengthen the competitiveness of key industry clusters. In addition to biotechnology and life sciences, the industry clusters include advanced technologies and manufacturing; aerospace and defense; information and computer technology; petroleum refining and chemical products; and energy. The *Meeting Industries' Critical Workforce Needs* grants support market-driven education and training opportunities that will provide a skilled workforce pipeline to meet the short- or long-term needs of the target industries.

The five programs receiving grants build on existing partnerships in business and education and are designed to engage youth in science and math specific to biotechnology. Recipients include:

- **Numedeon, Inc., \$230,800** to expose Texas youth to careers in biotechnology through education and realistic activities in vaccine development, clinical trials, epidemiological studies and bringing the vaccine to market in an online virtual world. This capability will be added to Whyville.net, a multi-player interactive science education site for youth that is currently used at the University of Texas and by NASA to educate youth.
- **WorkSource - Greater Austin Area Workforce Board, \$401,620** to promote science education and interest among high school students, provide entry-level training to give new workers access to employment in the industry, and enhance skills training for workers with previous experience. WorkSource and Austin Community College will collaborate to develop two associate degrees and training courses for incumbent workers to assist in supplying Central Texas employers with workers who possess the critical skills required.
- **Texas Business and Education Coalition, \$750,000** to establish a web-based portal of biotechnology career information from Texas employers in order to stimulate interest and encourage middle, high school and post-secondary students and adults to pursue careers in the biotechnology fields.

- **University of Houston, \$1,022,336** to develop an innovative, interdisciplinary, hands-on education and training program in biotechnology. This project will entail designing new curricula that will provide students with a breadth of knowledge and skills across a variety of scientific and technological disciplines to better prepare them for employment in this rapidly changing field.
- **San Jacinto College District, \$514,614** to train 500 individuals for employment as laboratory technologists, engineers, information technology specialists, and other occupations within the industry. The training will focus on health-related homeland security and healthcare research and development, two high-growth biotechnology areas.

“These grants are more than a wise investment in our growing economy; they are investment in Texas families,” Perry said. “More Texans will soon have the skills they need to secure a job that will help them create a better life for themselves and their children.”

The proposals were selected for their innovative approaches to workforce development and their ability to address several different areas of the workforce pipeline, including incumbent or dislocated workers who wish to obtain training to upgrade their skills, youth entering the workforce for the first time and new workers interested in pursuing careers in the Texas industry cluster occupations. The grants build on a regional approach, and are replicable in other areas of the state, both metropolitan and rural, or with other industry groups.

“Texas is positioned to be the location of choice for high-growth industries like the biotechnology and life science industries,” Perry said.

For more information on *Meeting Industries’ Critical Workforce Needs* request for proposals, visit <http://www.tbpc.state.tx.us>.

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