Training Requirements for Governing Board Members of Texas Public Institutions and Systems of Higher Education

Training for Members of Governing Boards
(Texas Education Code, Section 61.084)

Summary:

The Texas Education Code (Section 61.084) specifies mandatory training requirements for elected and appointed members of the governing boards of institutions of higher education. Each governing board member must attend, during the member's first two years of service as a member of a governing board, at least one training program under Section 61.084 of the Texas Education Code. The training program includes a seminar held annually in Austin that is conducted by the staff of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and other invited speakers.

The content of the instruction at the training program is focused on the official role and duties of the members of governing boards and provides training in the areas of budgeting, policy development, and governance. Topics covered by the training program may include: auditing procedures and recent audits of institutions of higher education; the enabling legislation that creates institutions of higher education; the role of the governing board at institutions of higher education and the relationship between the governing board and an institution's administration, faculty and staff, and students; the mission statements of institutions of higher education; disciplinary and investigative authority of the governing board; the requirements of the open meetings law, Chapter 551, Government Code, and the open records law, Chapter 552, Government Code; the requirements of conflict of interest laws and other laws relating to public officials; any applicable ethics policies adopted by institutions of higher education or the Texas Ethics Commission; and any other topic relating to higher education the THECB considers important.

In addition to the content of the instruction at a training program required under paragraph two above, topics covered by the training program for members of a governing board of a public junior college district must include information about best practices in campus financial management, financial ratio analysis, and case studies using financial indicators.

Satisfied by:

1. The THECB offers an orientation seminar for newly appointed regents and elected trustees that satisfies this legal requirement. This orientation must be completed within two years from the date of the appointment. The day-long orientation is offered face-to-face annually in the fall as part of the THECB's annual Higher Education Leadership Conference. Please see information at: http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/2013LeadershipConference. (Note: For years after 2013, simply change the website address to match the current year.) Questions regarding this training requirement should be directed to the legal counsel of the institution for which the regent or trustee serves as a board member, or to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board at (512) 427-6101.

2. Videos from the THECB's orientation for newly appointed regents and elected trustees are also available online. Please see the information on the THECB's website at www.thecb.state.tx.us/Governing_Board_Training. Questions regarding this training option should be directed to Jennifer Poehl, Administrative Assistant for the Office of Academic Planning and Policy, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, at (512) 427-6566 or jennifer.poehl@thecb.state.tx.us.
Open Meetings Training
(Texas Government Code, Section 551.005;
Texas Government Code, Section 552.012)

Summary:
The Open Meeting Act (Texas Government Code, Section 551.005) and the Public Information Act (Texas Government Code, Section 552.012) specify mandatory open government education requirements for elected and appointed officials who are subject to these laws. Each elected or appointed public official who is subject to these laws must complete a course of training regarding the responsibilities of the governmental body and its members under these laws not later than the 90th day after the date the member takes the oath of office or otherwise assumes responsibilities as a member of the governmental body.

The training must include instruction in: the general background of the legal requirements for open meetings; the applicability to governmental bodies; procedures and requirements regarding quorums, notice, and recordkeeping; procedures and requirements for holding an open meeting and for holding a closed meeting; and penalties and other consequences for failure to comply.

Satisfied by:
The Office of the Attorney General offers free on-line video training courses that satisfy this legal requirement. This course must be completed within 90 days from the date of the appointment. Please see information at https://www.oag.state.tx.us/open/og_training.shtml. Questions regarding this requirement or training options should be directed to the legal counsel of the institution for which the regent or trustee serves as a board member, or to the Office of the Attorney General at (800) 252-8011.

Investment Training; State Agency Board Members and Officers
(Texas Government Code, Section 2256.007)

Summary:
The Public Funds Investment Act (Texas Government Code, Section 2256) specifies mandatory investment training requirements for elected and appointed officials who are subject to this law. Each member of the governing board of a state agency and its investment officer must attend at least one training session relating to the person's investment responsibilities within six months after taking office or assuming duties. An investment officer shall attend a training session not less than once each state fiscal biennium and may receive training from any independent source approved by the governing body of the state agency.

The training must include education in investment controls, security risks, strategy risks, market risks, diversification of investment portfolio, and compliance with Chapter 2256 of the Texas Government Code.

Satisfied by:
The University of North Texas, Center for Public Management offers the video "Protecting Public Funds: The Responsibilities of Governing Boards under the Public Funds Investment Act" for order that satisfies this legal requirement. This course must be completed within six months from the date of the appointment. Please see information at http://pacs.unt.edu/cpm/content/investment-training-video. Questions regarding this requirement or training options should be directed to the legal counsel of the institution for which the regent or trustee serves as a board member, or to the University of North Texas, Center for Public Management at (940) 369-7843.
Additional Sources of Information for Members of Governing Boards

Office of the Attorney General
Open Government and Related Publications

https://www.oag.state.tx.us/open/publications_og.shtml

Texas Ethics Commission
State Officer Publications and Guides

http://www.ethics.state.tx.us/filinginfo/statepub.htm

Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (Washington, D.C.)
Publications

http://agb.org/publications

Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (Washington, D.C.)
Conferences and Workshops

http://agb.org/conferences-and-workshops