

By: Hernandez

H.B. No. 3460

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the creation of a grant program to provide direct financial assistance to certain residents of this state who were affected by the winter disaster of 2021.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. This Act may be cited as the Providing Ongoing Water and Energy Resources (POWER) to Texas Consumers Act.

SECTION 2. Subchapter B, Chapter 403, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 403.0281 to read as follows:

Sec. 403.0281. GRANTS FOR RESPONSE TO WINTER DISASTER OF 2021. (a) In this section:

(1) "Eligible resident" means a resident of this state who:

(A) is a member of a household that earns not more than 60 percent of the area median income; or

(B) receives state or federal public benefits.

(2) "Local government" means a municipality or county.

(3) "Qualifying nonprofit" means a nonprofit organization that provides services to connect persons with programs operated by local governments, including the grant program under this section.

(4) "Winter disaster of 2021" means the weather event that involved snowfall, ice accumulation, and below freezing temperatures and that occurred in this state between February 14,

1 2021, and February 20, 2021.

2 (b) Using money available for the purpose, the comptroller
3 shall establish and administer a program to provide grants to local
4 governments which may be used only to provide direct financial
5 assistance to the local governments' eligible residents who were
6 affected by the winter disaster of 2021.

7 (c) The comptroller shall establish:

8 (1) the formula to be used to distribute the grants to
9 local governments;

10 (2) deadlines for the disbursement and spending of
11 grant money;

12 (3) a standardized application process to be used by
13 each local government that receives a grant under this section; and

14 (4) procedures for:

15 (A) monitoring the disbursements of grants by
16 local governments to ensure compliance with this section; and

17 (B) the return of grant money that was not used by
18 a local government to provide direct financial assistance.

19 (d) A local government may:

20 (1) use grant money awarded under this section only
21 for the purpose described by Subsection (b);

22 (2) provide direct financial assistance to an eligible
23 resident in any amount that is not less than \$1,000 or more than
24 \$2,500 if the local government determines that the eligible
25 resident was affected by the winter disaster of 2021;

26 (3) prioritize the award of grants to eligible
27 residents most in need of assistance, as determined by the local

1 government; and

2 (4) contract with a qualifying nonprofit to ensure the
3 local government's eligible residents are made aware of the grant
4 program.

5 (e) The comptroller may solicit and accept gifts, grants,
6 and donations from any source for the purpose of awarding grants
7 under this section.

8 (f) The comptroller shall adopt rules as necessary to
9 administer this section.

10 (g) This section expires September 1, 2023.

11 SECTION 3. Not later than the 30th day following the
12 effective date of this Act, the comptroller of public accounts
13 shall comply with the requirements of Section 403.0281(c),
14 Government Code, as added by this Act.

15 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
16 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
17 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
18 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
19 Act takes effect September 1, 2021.