

By: Guillen

H.B. No. 318

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the establishment of grant programs to provide financial assistance to qualified sheriff's departments in certain rural counties.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter Z, Chapter 130, Local Government Code, is amended by adding Section 130.9115 to read as follows:

Sec. 130.9115. RURAL SHERIFF'S DEPUTY SHORTAGE RELIEF GRANT PROGRAM. (a) In this section:

(1) "Deputy-to-resident ratio" means the ratio of the number of deputy sheriffs to the number of residents of the unincorporated areas of the county, as determined by the population estimates provided by the state demographer under Section 468.004, Government Code.

(2) "Grant" means a grant authorized to be awarded by the comptroller under the rural sheriff's deputy shortage relief grant program established by this section.

(3) "Qualified county" means a county:
(A) with a population of 300,000 or less; and
(B) for which on January 1, 2025, the deputy-to-resident ratio is less than 15 to 10,000.

(4) "Qualified deputy position" means a deputy sheriff position in a qualified county that:

(A) is held or will be held by a deputy sheriff

1 who makes motor vehicle stops in the routine performance of the
2 deputy's duties;

3 (B) is in addition to a deputy sheriff position
4 held in the county on January 1, 2025; and

5 (C) when aggregated with each other qualified
6 deputy position would result in a deputy-to-resident ratio of 15 to
7 10,000, determined as of January 1, 2025.

8 (b) The comptroller shall establish and administer the
9 rural sheriff's deputy shortage relief grant program to support the
10 state purpose of ensuring professional law enforcement throughout
11 the state by providing financial assistance to sheriff's
12 departments in qualified counties.

13 (c) Not later than the 30th day after the first day of a
14 qualified county's fiscal year, the county may submit an
15 application for a grant to the comptroller. The county must
16 indicate in the application the number of qualified deputy
17 positions the county is requesting for inclusion in the
18 determination of the amount of the grant for that fiscal year and
19 the number for which the county is requesting additional funds
20 described by Subsection (d)(2). A county may submit only one
21 application each fiscal year.

22 (d) Subject to Subsections (e), (f), and (j), the
23 comptroller shall award a grant to a qualified county that applies
24 for the grant using money appropriated to the comptroller for that
25 purpose. The grant must be in the following amount:

26 (1) \$50,000 for each qualified deputy position
27 indicated by the county in the application for that fiscal year; and

1 (2) an additional \$50,000 for each qualified deputy
2 position indicated in the application for that fiscal year, unless
3 the county has received a grant under this subdivision for that
4 position in a preceding fiscal year.

5 (e) This subsection applies only to a fiscal year of a
6 qualified county that meets the deputy-to-resident ratio described
7 by Subsection (a)(4)(C) during a calendar year that begins on or
8 after January 1, 2025, but before the calendar year in which the
9 fiscal year begins. A qualified county is not eligible to receive a
10 grant under this section for a fiscal year unless the county adopts
11 a budget for the fiscal year that provides for the employment of a
12 number of deputy sheriffs necessary to meet the deputy-to-resident
13 ratio of at least 15 to 10,000, determined as of January 1 of the
14 calendar year in which the fiscal year begins.

15 (f) This subsection applies only to a fiscal year of a
16 qualified county for which the number of qualified deputy positions
17 the county is otherwise entitled to receive a grant for under this
18 section is greater than the number of qualified deputy positions
19 the county would be entitled to receive a grant for under this
20 section if the deputy-to-resident ratio described by Subsection
21 (a)(4)(C) is determined as of January 1 of the calendar year in
22 which the fiscal year begins instead of January 1, 2025. A qualified
23 county is entitled to receive a grant under this section only for
24 the number of qualified deputy positions the county would be
25 entitled to receive a grant for if the deputy-to-resident ratio
26 described by Subsection (a)(4)(C) is determined as of January 1 of
27 the calendar year in which the fiscal year begins instead of January

1 1, 2025.

2 (g) A county that is awarded a grant shall use or authorize
3 the use of the grant money only:

4 (1) to provide to each deputy sheriff who fills a
5 qualified deputy position a minimum annual salary of at least
6 \$45,000; and

7 (2) subject to Subsection (h), to purchase vehicles,
8 firearms, and safety equipment for the use of a deputy sheriff who
9 fills a qualified deputy position.

10 (h) A county that is awarded a grant may not use or authorize
11 the use of the grant money for a purpose other than prescribed by
12 Subsection (g)(1) until that requirement is satisfied.

13 (i) A county that is awarded a grant may not reduce the
14 sheriff's department budget for the county's fiscal year following
15 the fiscal year in which the comptroller awards the grant.

16 (j) The total dollar amount awarded under this section may
17 not exceed \$100 million in a state fiscal year. If the total dollar
18 amount of grants to which counties are entitled under this section
19 exceeds the limitation under this subsection in a state fiscal
20 year, the comptroller shall proportionally reduce the amount of
21 each grant awarded so the limitation is not exceeded.

22 (k) The comptroller shall adopt rules necessary to
23 implement this section, including rules that establish:

24 (1) a standardized application process, including the
25 form to be used to apply for a grant and the manner of submitting the
26 form;

27 (2) deadlines for:

- 1 (A) applying for the grant;
- 2 (B) disbursement of grant money; and
- 3 (C) spending grant money; and
- 4 (3) procedures for:
 - 5 (A) monitoring the disbursement of grant money to
 - 6 ensure compliance with this section; and
 - 7 (B) the return of grant money that was not used by
 - 8 a county for a purpose authorized by this section.

9 SECTION 2. Subchapter Z, Chapter 130, Local Government
10 Code, is amended by adding Section 130.9116 to read as follows:

11 Sec. 130.9116. RURAL SHERIFF'S INVESTIGATOR SHORTAGE
12 RELIEF GRANT PROGRAM. (a) In this section:

13 (1) "Investigator-to-patrol ratio" means the ratio of
14 the number of deputy sheriffs who conduct case investigations in
15 the routine performance of the deputy's duties to the number of
16 deputy sheriffs who make motor vehicle stops in the routine
17 performance of the deputy's duties.

18 (2) "Grant" means a grant authorized to be awarded by
19 the comptroller under the rural sheriff's investigator shortage
20 relief grant program established by this section.

21 (3) "Qualified county" means a county:

- 22 (A) with a population of 300,000 or less; and
- 23 (B) for which on January 1, 2025 the
- 24 investigator-to-patrol ratio is less than 1 to 3;

25 (4) "Qualified deputy position" means a deputy sheriff
26 position in a qualified county that is held or will be held by a
27 deputy sheriff who makes motor vehicle stops in the routine

1 performance of the deputy's duties.

2 (5) "Qualified investigator position" means a deputy
3 sheriff position in a qualified county that:

4 (A) is held or will be held by a deputy sheriff
5 who conducts case investigations in the routine performance of the
6 deputy's duties;

7 (B) is in addition to a deputy sheriff position
8 held in the county on January 1, 2025; and

9 (C) when aggregated with each other qualified
10 investigator position would result in a investigator-to-patrol
11 ratio of 1 to 3, determined as of January 1, 2025.

12 (b) The comptroller shall establish and administer the
13 rural sheriff's investigator shortage relief grant program to
14 support the state purpose of ensuring professional law enforcement
15 throughout the state by providing financial assistance to sheriff's
16 departments in qualified counties.

17 (c) Not later than the 30th day after the first day of a
18 qualified county's fiscal year, the county may submit an
19 application for a grant to the comptroller. The county must
20 indicate in the application the number of qualified investigator
21 positions the county is requesting for inclusion in the
22 determination of the amount of the grant for that fiscal year and
23 the number for which the county is requesting additional funds
24 described by Subsection (d)(2). A county may submit only one
25 application each fiscal year.

26 (d) Subject to Subsections (e), (f), and (j), the
27 comptroller shall award a grant to a qualified county that applies

1 for the grant using money appropriated to the comptroller for that
2 purpose. The grant must be in the following amount:

3 (1) \$50,000 for each qualified investigator position
4 indicated by the county in the application for that fiscal year;

5 (2) an additional \$50,000 for each qualified
6 investigator position indicated in the application for that fiscal
7 year, unless the county has received a grant under this subdivision
8 for that position in a preceding fiscal year.

9 (e) This subsection applies only to a fiscal year of a
10 qualified county that meets the investigator-to-patrol ratio
11 described by Subsection (a)(5)(C) during a calendar year that
12 begins on or after January 1, 2025, but before the calendar year in
13 which the fiscal year begins. A qualified county is not eligible to
14 receive a grant under this section for a fiscal year unless the
15 county adopts a budget for the fiscal year that provides for the
16 employment of a number of deputy sheriffs necessary to meet the
17 investigator-to-patrol ratio of at least 1 to 3, determined as of
18 January 1 of the calendar year in which the fiscal year begins.

19 (f) This subsection applies only to a fiscal year of a
20 qualified county for which the number of qualified investigator
21 positions the county is otherwise entitled to receive a grant for
22 under this section is greater than the number of qualified
23 investigator positions the county would be entitled to receive a
24 grant for under this section if the investigator-to-patrol ratio
25 described by Subsection (a)(5)(C) is determined as of January 1 of
26 the calendar year in which the fiscal year begins instead of January
27 1, 2025. A qualified county is entitled to receive a grant under

1 this section only for the number of qualified investigator
2 positions the county would be entitled to receive a grant for if the
3 investigator-to-patrol ratio described by Subsection (a)(5)(C) is
4 determined as of January 1 of the calendar year in which the fiscal
5 year begins instead of January 1, 2025.

6 (g) A county that is awarded a grant shall use or authorize
7 the use of the grant money only:

8 (1) to provide to each deputy sheriff who fills a
9 qualified investigator position a minimum annual salary of at least
10 \$45,000; and

11 (2) subject to Subsection (h), to purchase vehicles,
12 firearms, investigative tools, and safety equipment for the use of
13 a deputy sheriff who fills a qualified investigator position.

14 (h) A county that is awarded a grant may not use or authorize
15 the use of the grant money for a purpose other than prescribed by
16 Subsection (g)(1) until that requirement is satisfied.

17 (i) A county that is awarded a grant may not reduce the
18 sheriff's department budget for the county's fiscal year following
19 the fiscal year in which the comptroller awards the grant.

20 (j) The total dollar amount awarded under this section may
21 not exceed \$50 million in a state fiscal year. If the total dollar
22 amount of grants to which counties are entitled under this section
23 exceeds the limitation under this subsection in a state fiscal
24 year, the comptroller shall proportionally reduce the amount of
25 each grant awarded so the limitation is not exceeded.

26 (k) The comptroller shall adopt rules necessary to
27 implement this section, including rules that establish:

1 (1) a standardized application process, including the
2 form to be used to apply for a grant and the manner of submitting the
3 form;

4 (2) deadlines for:

5 (A) applying for the grant;

6 (B) disbursement of grant money; and

7 (C) spending grant money; and

8 (3) procedures for:

9 (A) monitoring the disbursement of grant money to
10 ensure compliance with this section; and

11 (B) the return of grant money that was not used by
12 a county for a purpose authorized by this section.

13 SECTION 3. A qualified county, as defined by Section
14 130.9115, Local Government Code, as added by this Act, may not apply
15 for a grant under that section before January 1, 2026.

16 SECTION 4. A qualified county, as defined by Section
17 130.9116, Local Government Code, as added by this Act, may not apply
18 for a grant under that section before January 1, 2026.

19 SECTION 5. Not later than January 1, 2026, the comptroller
20 of public accounts shall comply with the requirements of Sections
21 130.9115 and 130.9116, Local Government Code, as added by this Act.

22 SECTION 6. This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.