

By: Staples

S.B. No. 1436

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the creation and administration of the community telecommunications alliance program.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 487, Government Code, is amended by adding Subchapter K to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER K. COMMUNITY TELECOMMUNICATIONS ALLIANCE PROGRAM

Sec. 487.451. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Community telecommunications alliance" means an association of public and private entities created to share resources, promote innovative school health technology, and improve the overall quality of life within a local community.

(2) "Program" means the community telecommunications alliance program.

Sec. 487.452. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING. (a) The office and the Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund Board by rule shall adopt a memorandum of understanding establishing the community telecommunications alliance program. The program shall:

(1) assist local communities in the creation and development of community telecommunications alliances;

(2) assist community telecommunications alliances in applying for grant funding for projects, including:

(A) assisting alliances in securing matching private sector funding for projects; and

1                   (B) requiring alliances to develop sustainable  
2 plans:

3                   (i) that demonstrate how the alliance will  
4 continue services once the grant funding terminates; and

5                   (ii) that do not adversely affect the  
6 financial stability of local businesses and telecommunications  
7 providers;

8                   (3) assist community telecommunications alliances in  
9 facilitating access to telecommunications services for local  
10 communities to promote rural economic development; and

11                   (4) create rural pilot projects to develop innovative  
12 school health technology projects.

13                   (b) Each community telecommunications alliance established  
14 under this section shall have an advisory council with  
15 representation from each of the following:

16                   (1) a local nonprofit organization;

17                   (2) a local county-elected official;

18                   (3) a local city-elected official;

19                   (4) a local telecommunications provider;

20                   (5) a local economic development group; and

21                   (6) the local financial community.

22                   (c) Eligibility for private network services under this  
23 section is limited to the entities listed in Sections 58.253(a) and  
24 59.072(a), Utilities Code, as appropriate.

25                   Sec. 487.453. REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE. Not later than  
26 January 1 of each odd-numbered year, the office shall submit to the  
27 legislature a report detailing the grant activities of the program

1 and grant recipients. The report must include:

2 (1) the criteria used to quantify the effect grant  
3 funds had in advancing telecommunications connectivity and  
4 technology;

5 (2) data and performance measures used to quantify the  
6 achievement of program objectives; and

7 (3) a description of and results from a grant  
8 monitoring risk assessment and on-site review process.

9 SECTION 2. Section 57.047(c), Utilities Code, is amended to  
10 read as follows:

11 (c) In awarding a grant or loan under this subchapter, the  
12 board shall give priority to a project or proposal that:

13 (1) represents collaborative efforts involving more  
14 than one school, university, or library;

15 (2) contributes matching funds from another source;

16 (3) shows promise of becoming self-sustaining;

17 (4) helps users of information learn new ways to  
18 acquire and use information through telecommunications;

19 (5) extends specific educational information and  
20 knowledge services to a group not previously served, especially a  
21 group in a rural or remote area;

22 (6) results in more efficient or effective learning  
23 than through conventional teaching;

24 (7) improves the effectiveness and efficiency of  
25 health care delivery; [~~or~~]

26 (8) takes advantage of distance learning  
27 opportunities in a rural or urban school district with a:

1 (A) disproportionate number of at-risk youths;

2 or

3 (B) high dropout rate; or

4 (9) was developed in connection with a community  
5 telecommunications alliance program created under Subchapter K,  
6 Chapter 487, Government Code.

7 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2003.