

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
81R5542 JSC-D

S.B. 591
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Health & Human Services
4/24/2009
As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Texas has the third highest teen birth rate in the nation. The public costs of teen childbearing are estimated to be at least one billion dollars annually, the highest of any state. In addition to tax savings on Medicaid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), foster care, and incarceration costs, reducing teen pregnancy will reduce school dropout rates, child abuse, and infant mortality.

Currently, the state administers grant programs to fund abstinence education programs in schools and communities, and youth development programs focused on prevention of juvenile delinquency. However, there is no state funding or program to support cost-effective evidence-based youth development programs shown to prevent teen pregnancy. Service learning is a particularly powerful youth development tool. This bill would create and fund a small competitive grant pilot program to support the establishment of the Teen Outreach Program (TOP) in Bexar County. Based on positive youth-development principles and service learning experiences, TOP has proven effective in reducing the high school drop out rate by 60 percent, and lowering the rate of teen pregnancy by 33 percent. Cost benefits are calculated at \$1.29 for each dollar spent and \$181 for each child served.

As proposed, S.B. 591 amends current law relating to the establishment of an evidence-based youth development competitive grant pilot program.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 531, Government Code, by adding Subchapter S, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER S. EVIDENCE-BASED YOUTH DEVELOPMENT COMPETITIVE GRANT PILOT PROGRAM

Sec. 531.751. DEFINITION. Defines "adolescent."

Sec. 531.752. ESTABLISHMENT OF EVIDENCE-BASED YOUTH DEVELOPMENT COMPETITIVE GRANT PILOT PROGRAM. (a) Requires the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to establish an evidence-based youth development competitive grant pilot program (pilot program) to award grants for the implementation, expansion, and operation of programs designed to provide information and guidance for not more than 75 adolescents in making healthy and beneficial life choices.

(b) Requires that the pilot program be located in Bexar County and serve regions that are located in zip codes in which the school-age birth rate is at least three times the national school-age birth rate and served by one or more school district in which at least 90 percent of the student population is economically disadvantaged, and the annual dropout rate for grades seven through 12 is greater than five percent.

Sec. 531.753. EVIDENCE-BASED YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS. (a) Requires that an evidence-based youth development program (program) funded through a grant awarded under this subchapter:

- (1) target adolescents who are at risk of becoming pregnant or causing an unplanned pregnancy or already have a child, are at risk of engaging in delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision, as those terms are defined by Section 51.03 (Delinquent Conduct; Conduct Indicating a Need For Supervision), Family Code, are at risk of dropping out of school, live in foster care or in a facility operated by the state; or live in economically disadvantaged circumstances;
- (2) feature a curriculum that is appropriate for adolescents and that has been demonstrated to reduce school dropout and adolescent pregnancy rates;
- (3) include a community service component of not fewer than 20 hours each year;
- (4) include at least one activity session or group discussion each week; and
- (5) cover a wide variety of developmental topics of interest to adolescents, including: development of values and good judgment, communication and assertiveness, healthy relationships, influence of others and peer pressure, goal-setting, decision-making, development and human sexuality, preparation for participation in community service activities, community service learning, and group reflection on community service experiences.

(b) Requires that a program operate for not less than nine months or an academic school year.

Sec. 531.754. APPLICATION. (a) Authorizes a public or private entity, including a county, municipality, or other political subdivision of this state, to apply for a grant under this subchapter by submitting a written application to HHSC on a form prescribed by HHSC.

(b) Requires that the application prescribed by HHSC require the applicant to provide data on the number of adolescents who will receive assistance through the program, describe the ongoing monitoring and evaluation process to which a grant recipient is subject, including the recipient's obligation to collect and provide information requested by the HHSC, and require the applicant to provide other relevant information as determined by HHSC.

Sec. 531.755. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS IN AWARDING GRANTS. Requires HHSC, in determining whether to award a grant under this subchapter, to consider:

- (1) the demonstrated need for an evidence-based youth development program in the community in which the applicant proposes to operate or expand the program, as determined by the poverty rate, the crime rate, the school-age birth rate, the rate of drug and alcohol abuse, and the annual dropout rate for grades 7 through 12;
- (2) the applicant's ability to participate in ongoing monitoring and performance evaluations, including the applicant's ability to collect and provide information required by HHSC;
- (3) the applicant's ability to adhere to the evidence-based youth development program operating and performance standards;

(4) the applicant's ability to develop broad-based community support for implementing or expanding an evidence-based youth development program, as applicable; and

(5) the applicant's history of developing and sustaining innovative, high-quality programs that meet the needs of families and communities.

Sec. 531.756. EVIDENCE-BASED YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM STANDARDS. Requires the executive commissioner of the HHSC (executive commissioner), in accordance with the goals and requirements established by this subchapter, to adopt standards for a program awarded a grant under this subchapter.

Sec. 531.757. USE OF AWARDED GRANT FUNDS. Authorizes the grant funds awarded under this subchapter to be used only to cover costs related to implementing, expanding, or operating a program, including costs related to development program, including costs related to administering the program, including appropriate local site selection and required evaluation and quality monitoring; training and managing staff; paying staff salaries and expenses; and paying for program facilities and equipment.

Sec. 531.758. EVIDENCE-BASED YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM MONITORING AND EVALUATION; COMMITTEE REPORT. Requires the executive commissioner to adopt performance indicators designed to measure a grant recipient's performance with respect to the program standards adopted by the executive commissioner under Section 531.756.

(b) Requires HHSC to use the performance indicators to monitor and evaluate the performance indicators to monitor and evaluate the performance of each grant recipient.

(c) Requires HHSC, not later than December 1, 2010, to submit a report to the Senate Health and Human Services Committee or its successor, and the House Human Services Committee or its successor, regarding the performance of each grant recipient with respect to providing program services, including the number of low-income adolescents served by a program and, of that number, the number of adolescents who subsequently became pregnant or caused a pregnancy, and any other information required by HHSC.

(d) Requires each grant recipient, on request, to timely collect and provide data and any other information required by HHSC to monitor and evaluate the recipient or to prepare the report required by this section.

Sec. 531.759. EVIDENCE-BASED YOUTH DEVELOPMENT COMPETITIVE GRANT PILOT PROGRAM FUNDING. (a) Requires HHSC to actively seek and apply for any available federal funds or grants from any source to assist in financing the pilot program established under this subchapter.

(b) Authorizes HHSC to use appropriated funds and to accept gifts, donations, and grants of money from the federal government, local governments, private corporations, or other persons to assist in financing the pilot program.

Sec. 531.760. EXPIRATION. Provides that this subchapter expires September 1, 2011.

SECTION 2. Requires HHSC, as soon as practicable after the effective date of this Act, to apply for any available funds or grants to assist in financing the pilot program created by this Act.

(b) Requires HHSC, not later than December 1, 2009, to establish and implement the pilot program.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2009.