

By: Guillen

H.B. No. 2610

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1
2 relating to the establishment of a community-based navigator
3 program to assist individuals applying or seeking to apply through
4 the Internet for certain public assistance benefits programs.

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

6 SECTION 1. Chapter 531, Government Code, is amended by
7 adding Subchapter S to read as follows:

8 SUBCHAPTER S. COMMUNITY-BASED NAVIGATOR PROGRAM

9 Sec. 531.751. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

10 (1) "Community-based organization" and "faith-based
11 organization" have the meanings assigned by Section 535.001.

12 (2) "Navigator" means a person who is:

13 (A) a volunteer or other representative of a
14 faith- or community-based organization; and

15 (B) certified by the commission to provide or
16 facilitate the provision of information or assistance through the
17 faith- or community-based organization to individuals applying or
18 seeking to apply online through the Texas Integrated Eligibility
19 Redesign System (TIERS) or any other electronic eligibility system
20 that is linked to or made a part of that system for public
21 assistance benefits administered by the commission.

22 Sec. 531.752. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMUNITY-BASED NAVIGATOR
23 PROGRAM. The commission, in consultation with the Navigator
24 Program Advisory Committee established under Section 531.756,

1 shall establish a statewide community-based navigator program
2 through which the commission will recruit, train, and certify as
3 navigators volunteers and other representatives of faith- and
4 community-based organizations to assist individuals applying or
5 seeking to apply online for public assistance benefits through the
6 Texas Integrated Eligibility Redesign System (TIERS) or any other
7 electronic eligibility system that is linked to or made a part of
8 that system.

9 Sec. 531.753. PROGRAM RULES. The executive commissioner
10 shall adopt rules to implement this subchapter, including rules:

11 (1) subject to Section 531.754, regarding the
12 qualifications and training required for certification as a
13 navigator;

14 (2) regarding the suspension, revocation, and, if
15 appropriate, periodic renewal of a navigator certificate;

16 (3) to protect the confidentiality of applicant
17 information handled by navigators; and

18 (4) regarding any other issues the executive
19 commissioner determines are appropriate.

20 Sec. 531.754. TRAINING PROGRAM. The commission shall
21 develop and administer a training program for navigators. The
22 program must include training on:

23 (1) how to complete an online application for public
24 assistance benefits through the Texas Integrated Eligibility
25 Redesign System (TIERS);

26 (2) the importance of maintaining the confidentiality
27 of information handled by a navigator;

1 (3) the importance of obtaining and submitting
2 complete and accurate information when completing an application
3 for public assistance benefits online through the Texas Integrated
4 Eligibility Redesign System (TIERS);

5 (4) the financial assistance program, the
6 supplemental nutrition assistance program, the medical assistance
7 program, the child health plan program, and any other public
8 assistance benefits program for which an individual may complete an
9 online application through the Texas Integrated Eligibility
10 Redesign System (TIERS); and

11 (5) how an individual may apply for other public
12 assistance benefits for which an individual may not complete an
13 online application through the Texas Integrated Eligibility
14 Redesign System (TIERS).

15 Sec. 531.755. PUBLICATION OF NAVIGATOR LIST. The
16 commission shall maintain and publish on the commission's Internet
17 website a list of certified navigators.

18 Sec. 531.756. NAVIGATOR PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE. (a)
19 The executive commissioner shall establish the Navigator Program
20 Advisory Committee to assist in the development and implementation
21 of the navigator program under this subchapter.

22 (b) The advisory committee must include representatives of
23 faith- and community-based organizations.

24 (c) The advisory committee members must be representative
25 of the geographic, religious, and racial diversity of this state
26 and the diversity of organization types and sizes in this state.

27 SECTION 2. (a) Not later than January 1, 2012, the

1 executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission
2 shall establish the Navigator Program Advisory Committee as
3 required by Section 531.756, Government Code, as added by this Act.

4 (b) Not later than September 1, 2012, the Health and Human
5 Services Commission shall establish the navigator program required
6 by Subchapter S, Chapter 531, Government Code, as added by this Act.

7 SECTION 3. If before implementing any provision of this Act
8 a state agency determines that a waiver or authorization from a
9 federal agency is necessary for implementation of that provision,
10 the agency affected by the provision shall request the waiver or
11 authorization and may delay implementing that provision until the
12 waiver or authorization is granted.

13 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2011.