

By: Lucio

S.B. No. 824

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT
2 relating to the coordination of rural and small community
3 initiatives.

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

5 SECTION 1. Title 7, Government Code, is amended by adding
6 Chapter 793 to read as follows:

7 CHAPTER 793. COORDINATION OF RURAL AND SMALL COMMUNITIES

8 Sec. 793.001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

9 (1) "Agency" means a state office, institution, or
10 other state governmental entity that is in the executive branch of
11 state government.

12 (2) "Coordinator" means the rural and small community
13 coordinator.

14 (3) "Task force" means the Texas Rural and Small
15 Community Advisory Task Force.

16 Sec. 793.002. INTERAGENCY COORDINATION OF RURAL AND SMALL
17 COMMUNITY INITIATIVES. (a) The governor may designate an employee
18 of the governor's office, an agency, or the office of the secretary
19 of state to act as the state's rural and small community
20 coordinator. The coordinator shall:

21 (1) examine state and federal programs that address
22 the needs of rural and small communities;

23 (2) act as an ombudsman for governmental agencies
24 within the state to help reduce regulations by improving

1 communication and cooperation between federal, state, and local
2 governments;

3 (3) study the best practices found in other states and
4 within the state and work with agencies to develop a coordinated
5 state plan to implement similar programs tailored to the needs of
6 the state's rural and small communities; and

7 (4) work with federal, state, and local governmental
8 entities to resolve any infrastructure, capacity, and economic
9 development problems to allow rural and small communities to:

10 (A) manage better guided growth; and

11 (B) become less dependent on state funds and
12 services.

13 (b) The coordinator shall coordinate programs and
14 initiatives that address the needs of rural and small communities:

15 (1) within the agency; and

16 (2) with other agencies and local officials involved
17 in rural and small community projects in the state.

18 (c) The coordinator shall work with other agencies and local
19 officials involved in rural and small community projects in the
20 state to:

21 (1) coordinate efforts to address rural and small
22 community issues;

23 (2) identify nonprofit self-help groups and community
24 development organizations to help with rural and small community
25 initiatives;

26 (3) set goals for each state fiscal year for rural and
27 small community initiatives in the state, including goals to:

1 (A) address regional asset identification and
2 development;

3 (B) ensure access to state and federal programs
4 through better outreach and application streamlining;

5 (C) increase international competitiveness,
6 import capacity, and export capacity;

7 (D) increase potential for entrepreneurial and
8 small business development opportunities;

9 (E) improve technical assistance needed to build
10 local capacity;

11 (F) assist efforts for youth retention and
12 workforce skill development; and

13 (G) increase regional planning and coordination;

14 (4) ensure that the goals set under this subsection
15 are met each state fiscal year; and

16 (5) coordinate state outreach efforts to rural and
17 small communities and to stakeholders capable of providing needed
18 services.

19 (d) If the governor designates a coordinator under
20 Subsection (a), the following agencies shall designate an officer
21 or employee of the agency to serve as the agency's liaison to the
22 coordinator:

23 (1) the Texas Department of Rural Affairs;

24 (2) the Texas Water Development Board;

25 (3) the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality;

26 (4) the Texas Department of Housing and Community
27 Affairs;

- 1 (5) the Health and Human Services Commission;
- 2 (6) the Parks and Wildlife Department;
- 3 (7) the Texas Department of Transportation;
- 4 (8) the Department of Public Safety of the State of
5 Texas;
- 6 (9) the office of the secretary of state;
- 7 (10) the Department of Agriculture;
- 8 (11) the office of the comptroller; and
- 9 (12) the Texas Workforce Commission.

10 (e) Each agency's liaison under Subsection (d) must be a
11 deputy executive director or a person of equivalent or higher
12 authority at the agency. This subsection does not authorize the
13 creation of a new position for rural and small community
14 coordination at a state agency.

15 (f) In coordinating rural and small community initiatives
16 under this section, the coordinator shall consider the advice and
17 recommendations of the task force established under Section
18 793.003.

19 Sec. 793.003. TEXAS RURAL AND SMALL COMMUNITY ADVISORY TASK
20 FORCE. (a) The coordinator shall appoint to serve on the Texas
21 Rural and Small Community Advisory Task Force:

22 (1) at least one representative from each agency
23 listed under Section 793.002(d);

24 (2) two representatives who are members of
25 organizations that represent the interests of rural and small
26 communities;

27 (3) two representatives who are county officials from

1 rural counties;

2 (4) two representatives from the councils of
3 government that serve regions that are predominantly rural or
4 composed of small communities;

5 (5) two representatives who are officials from small
6 municipalities;

7 (6) two representatives who are board members of
8 nonprofit or community development organizations;

9 (7) two representatives of institutions of higher
10 education who specialize in rural community and economic
11 development;

12 (8) two representatives of local small business
13 development corporations; and

14 (9) two representatives of local economic development
15 corporations.

16 (b) Each agency's representative under Subsection (a)(1)
17 serves in a resource capacity only and must be a deputy executive
18 director or a person of equivalent or higher authority at the
19 agency.

20 (c) The coordinator shall make appointments under
21 Subsection (a) so that different geographic regions of the state
22 are represented in order to better develop a plan that can meet the
23 needs of unique rural and small communities.

24 (d) The coordinator shall serve as the presiding officer of
25 the task force.

26 (e) Chapter 2110 does not apply to the task force.

27 Sec. 793.004. TEXAS RURAL AND SMALL COMMUNITY COORDINATED

1 PLAN. (a) The task force shall develop and adopt the Texas Rural
2 and Small Community Coordinated Plan. The plan must include:

3 (1) short-term recommendations and initiatives that
4 the state, including the coordinator and each entity represented on
5 the task force, may follow after the adoption of the plan for the
6 ensuing:

7 (A) two years; and

8 (B) four years;

9 (2) long-term recommendations and initiatives that
10 the state, including the coordinator and each entity represented on
11 the task force, may follow after the adoption of the plan for the
12 ensuing:

13 (A) 5 years;

14 (B) 10 years; and

15 (C) 15 years; and

16 (3) recommendations on what the state can do to:

17 (A) increase and improve delivery, access, and
18 administration of programs that benefit rural and small communities
19 in the state;

20 (B) increase regional and individual capacity in
21 rural and small communities in the state;

22 (C) address any important problem identified by
23 the task force that currently impedes development, growth, and
24 commerce in rural and small communities;

25 (D) increase international competitiveness,
26 import capacity, and export capacity;

27 (E) increase potential for entrepreneurial and

1 small business development opportunities;

2 (F) improve technical assistance needed to build
3 local capacity;

4 (G) assist efforts for youth retention and
5 workforce skill development; and

6 (H) decrease the dependency of rural and small
7 communities on state funds and services and increase sustainable
8 economic growth and community development in those communities.

9 (b) Each entity represented on the task force may
10 incorporate the plan's applicable recommendations and initiatives
11 into the entity's operations.

12 (c) The task force shall adopt an updated plan before the
13 fourth anniversary of the date the plan is adopted or the date an
14 updated plan is adopted.

15 Sec. 793.005. QUARTERLY REPORTS. Each entity represented
16 on the task force shall submit quarterly reports to the coordinator
17 regarding any action taken by the entity on behalf of the task force
18 or in furtherance of a plan or recommendation adopted by the task
19 force, including:

20 (1) the status of projects;

21 (2) the funding of expenditures;

22 (3) the planning and research conducted;

23 (4) the community and technical assistance provided;

24 (5) the information collected; and

25 (6) the direct role of the entity in promoting
26 community and economic development through federal, state, and
27 local government funding.

1 SECTION 2. Not later than September 1, 2012, the rural and
2 small community coordinator, if one is designated by the governor
3 under Section 793.002, Government Code, as added by this Act, shall
4 submit to the governor, lieutenant governor, speaker of the house
5 of representatives, members of the legislature, and Legislative
6 Budget Board a detailed written report of the Texas Rural and Small
7 Community Coordinated Plan adopted under Section 793.004,
8 Government Code, as added by this Act, and any recommendations for
9 legislative action.

10 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
11 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
12 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
13 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
14 Act takes effect September 1, 2011.