

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
83R10615 JSL-D

S.B. 924  
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As Filed

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

According to the United States Department of Agriculture, one in five Texas households struggles to afford food. One in four children live in food insecure households. Food insecurity causes hunger, poor diet, and negative health and education outcomes in children. Low-income Texans are at greater risk for diet-related illness and obesity in part due to poor nutrition and the lack of adequate resources to purchase health foods on a consistent basis. Food insecurity and its associated education and health outcomes cost the state billions of dollars each year in related healthcare and education costs and lost productivity. Food insecurity undermines the economic competitiveness of the state. Texas has federal funds at its disposal to fight food insecurity and assist in the prevention of diet-related disease, including programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly known as food stamps), the child nutrition programs (e.g., schools meals; summer food; and the special supplemental nutrition program for women, infants, and children (WIC)), and senior nutrition assistance. While all of these programs are administered by one agency at the federal level, they are dispersed across several agencies at the state level.

The purpose of S.B. 924 is to maximize the use of federal nutrition programs in order to increase Texas's effort to address food insecurity and diet-related disease, ensure the most strategic and cost-effective use of federal funds, and foster increased coordination and collaboration among the state agencies charged with administering the federal nutrition programs.

S.B. 924 directs the different state agencies involved in food and nutrition programs to include as part of the agency's strategic plan goals related to increasing access to nutritious foods, access to and participation in the school meal programs, strengthening education awareness of food and nutrition programs, and facilitating obesity prevention and diabetes awareness.

As proposed, S.B. 924 amends current law relating to strategic plans to address hunger, food, nutrition, and obesity in this state.

### **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 12, Agriculture Code, by adding Section 12.00251, as follows:

Sec. 12.00251. STRATEGIC PLAN FOR ADDRESSING HUNGER, FOOD, NUTRITION, AND OBESITY. Requires the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) to develop a strategic plan that includes as a goal of TDA addressing hunger, food, nutrition, and obesity in this state by increasing access to nutritious foods by persons in this state; increasing access to and participation in the national free or reduced-price lunch program established under 42 U.S.C. Section 1751 et seq. by persons eligible for the program; strengthening TDA's education initiatives to increase awareness of food and nutrition programs in this state by using public service announcements; and facilitating obesity prevention and diabetes awareness initiatives.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 7.021, Education Code, by adding Subsection (e), as follows:

(e) Requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to develop a strategic plan that includes as a goal of the agency addressing hunger, food, nutrition, and obesity in this state by increasing access to nutritious foods by persons served by TEA; increasing access to and participation in the national free or reduced-price lunch program established under 42 U.S.C. Section 1751 et seq. by eligible persons served by TEA; strengthening TEA's education initiatives to increase awareness of food and nutrition programs in this state by using public service announcements; and facilitating obesity prevention and diabetes awareness initiatives.

SECTION 3. Amends Section 531.022, Government Code, by adding Subsection (f), as follows:

(f) Requires that the coordinated strategic plan for health and human services, in addition to the goals specified by Subsection (c) (relating to requiring the plan to include certain goals), include as a goal of the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services, and the Department of State Health Services addressing hunger, food, nutrition, and obesity in this state by increasing access to nutritious foods by persons served by the agencies; increasing access to and participation in the national free or reduced-price lunch program established under 42 U.S.C. Section 1751 et seq. by eligible persons served by the agencies; strengthening each agency's education initiatives to increase awareness of food and nutrition programs in this state by using public service announcements; and facilitating obesity prevention and diabetes awareness initiatives.

SECTION 4. Requires TDA, as soon as possible after the effective date of this Act and using existing funds, to develop the strategic plan required by Section 12.00251, Agriculture Code, as added by this Act, and requires TEA, as soon as possible after the effective date of this Act and using existing funds, to develop the strategic plan required by Section 7.021(e), Education Code, as added by this Act.

SECTION 5. Requires the executive commissioner of HHSC to include the goal and methods of implementing that goal specified by Section 531.022(f), Government Code, as added by this Act, in the first biennial update of the coordinated strategic plan for health and human services required by Section 531.022, Government Code, as amended by this Act, that is required after the effective date of this Act.

SECTION 6. Effective date: September 1, 2013.