

1 AN ACT

2 relating to a program to allow faith- and community-based  
3 organizations to offer supplemental assistance to certain  
4 recipients of public assistance.

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

6 SECTION 1. Subchapter B, Chapter 531, Government Code, is  
7 amended by adding Section 531.02482 to read as follows:

8 Sec. 531.02482. FAITH- AND COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION  
9 SUPPORT FOR CERTAIN PERSONS RECEIVING PUBLIC ASSISTANCE. (a) In  
10 this section, "community-based organization" and "faith-based  
11 organization" have the meanings assigned by Section 535.001.

12 (b) The commission shall establish a program under which  
13 faith- and community-based organizations may, on the request of the  
14 applicant, contact and offer supplemental assistance to an  
15 applicant for benefits under:

16 (1) the financial assistance program under Chapter 31,  
17 Human Resources Code;

18 (2) the medical assistance program under Chapter 32,  
19 Human Resources Code;

20 (3) the supplemental nutrition assistance program  
21 under Chapter 33, Human Resources Code; or

22 (4) the child health plan program under Chapter 62,  
23 Health and Safety Code.

24 (c) At the time of application for benefits described by

1 Subsection (b), an applicant must:

2 (1) be informed about and given the opportunity to  
3 enroll in the program; and

4 (2) be informed that enrolling in the program will not  
5 affect the person's eligibility for benefits.

6 (d) The commission shall develop a procedure under which  
7 faith- and community-based organizations may apply to participate  
8 in the program.

9 (e) The executive commissioner shall adopt rules to  
10 implement the program established under this section, including  
11 rules that:

12 (1) describe the types of faith- and community-based  
13 organizations that may apply to participate in the program and the  
14 qualifications and standards of service required of a participating  
15 organization;

16 (2) facilitate contact between a person who enrolls in  
17 the program and a faith- and community-based organization  
18 participating in the program that provides supplemental services  
19 that may be of assistance to the person;

20 (3) establish processes for the suspension,  
21 revocation, and periodic renewal of an organization's  
22 participation in the program, as appropriate;

23 (4) establish methods to ensure the confidentiality  
24 and appropriate use of applicant information shared with a  
25 participating organization; and

26 (5) permit a person enrolled in the program to  
27 terminate the person's enrollment in the program.

1       (f) In establishing the program, the commission may solicit  
2 expertise and assistance from interested persons, including faith-  
3 and community-based organizations, and may establish a temporary  
4 work group to provide input and assistance. This subsection  
5 expires, and any work group established under this subsection is  
6 abolished, September 1, 2017.

7       SECTION 2. 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 3. As soon as practicable after the effective date  
14 of this Act, the executive commissioner of the Health and Human  
15 Services Commission shall adopt the rules necessary to implement  
16 the changes in law made by this Act.

17       SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2016.

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President of the Senate

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Speaker of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 2718 was passed by the House on April 21, 2015, by the following vote: Yeas 144, Nays 0, 1 present, not voting; and that the House concurred in Senate amendments to H.B. No. 2718 on May 27, 2015, by the following vote: Yeas 141, Nays 0, 2 present, not voting.

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Chief Clerk of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 2718 was passed by the Senate, with amendments, on May 24, 2015, by the following vote: Yeas 30, Nays 0.

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Secretary of the Senate

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

Date

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Governor