

By: Capriglione

H.B. No. 2741

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a competitive grant program to fund promotion of early literacy programs in certain communities in this state.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 73, Education Code, is amended by adding Subchapter I to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER I. COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM TO PROMOTE EARLY LITERACY

Sec. 73.601. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Competitive grant program" means the competitive grant program to promote early literacy established under this subchapter.

(2) "Health care practitioner" has the meaning assigned by Section 112.001, Occupations Code.

(3) "Health science center" means The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston.

(4) "Literacy program" means a program to promote early literacy.

Sec. 73.602. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM TO PROMOTE EARLY LITERACY. (a) The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston shall establish a competitive grant program to promote early literacy through which the health science center will award grants for the implementation of literacy programs, or the expansion of existing programs, and for the operation of those programs for a period of not less than two years.

1 (b) The health science center shall award grants under the
2 program to applicants, including applicants operating existing
3 programs, in a manner that ensures that the literacy programs
4 collectively operate in multiple communities that are
5 geographically distributed throughout this state.

6 Sec. 73.603. LITERACY PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS. A literacy
7 program funded through a grant awarded under this subchapter must:

8 (1) consult and use as a guide the program model
9 developed by the Reach Out and Read National Center, including any
10 clinical, programmatic, and data collection requirements of that
11 model;

12 (2) require that health care practitioners volunteer
13 to:

14 (A) in conjunction with performing well-child
15 examinations, provide books to children and encourage parents to
16 read to their children to develop preliteracy skills;

17 (B) maintain waiting rooms that encourage
18 children to read; and

19 (C) provide services designed to increase the
20 school readiness of children receiving program services; and

21 (3) partner with local adult literacy providers to
22 encourage parent literacy in appropriate circumstances.

23 Sec. 73.604. APPLICATION. (a) A public or private entity,
24 including a county, municipality, or other political subdivision of
25 this state, may apply for a grant under this subchapter.

26 (b) To apply for a grant, an applicant must submit a written
27 application to the health science center on a form prescribed by the

1 health science center in consultation with the Reach Out and Read
2 National Center.

3 Sec. 73.605. LITERACY PROGRAM GUIDELINES. The health
4 science center, with the assistance of the Reach Out and Read
5 National Center, shall publish guidelines for the literacy programs
6 funded under this subchapter. The guidelines may follow the Reach
7 Out and Read national program model standards and guidelines that
8 have been tested and replicated in multiple communities.

9 Sec. 73.606. USE OF PROGRAM FUNDS. (a) In addition to
10 awarding grants under this subchapter, the health science center
11 may use program funds to:

12 (1) administer the competitive grant program; and
13 (2) purchase or contract to purchase discounted books
14 for use by grant recipients.

15 (b) A grant recipient may use grant funds awarded under this
16 subchapter only to cover costs related to implementing or expanding
17 and operating a literacy program, including costs related to:

18 (1) administering the literacy program;
19 (2) training and managing health care practitioners
20 who volunteer to participate in the literacy program; and
21 (3) purchasing or contracting to purchase discounted
22 books for use in the literacy program.

23 Sec. 73.607. PROGRAM EVALUATION; BIENNIAL COMMITTEE
24 REPORTS. (a) The health science center, with the assistance of
25 the Reach Out and Read National Center, shall prepare and submit a
26 biennial report, not later than December 1 of each even-numbered
27 year, to the senate committee on education, or its successor, and

1 the house public education committee, or its successor, regarding
2 the grants awarded during the preceding two state fiscal years.

3 (b) The report required under Subsection (a) must include:

4 (1) the number of health care practitioners who
5 participate in the program;

6 (2) the number of children receiving literacy program
7 services as a result of the program; and

8 (3) the amount of each grant awarded to a health care
9 practitioner under the program.

10 (c) On request, each grant recipient shall timely collect
11 and provide data and any other information required by the health
12 science center to monitor and evaluate the program, including
13 recipient participation in the program, and to prepare the report
14 required by this section.

15 Sec. 73.608. COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM FUNDING. (a) The
16 health science center shall actively seek and apply for any
17 available federal funds to assist in financing the competitive
18 grant program established under this subchapter.

19 (b) The health science center may use appropriated funds
20 from the state government and may accept gifts, donations, grants
21 of money, and in-kind contributions from the federal government,
22 local governments, private corporations, or other persons to assist
23 in financing the competitive grant program.

24 SECTION 2. The University of Texas Health Science Center at
25 Houston shall:

26 (1) as soon as practicable, apply for any available
27 federal funds to assist in financing the competitive grant program

1 under Subchapter I, Chapter 73, Education Code, as added by this
2 Act, as required by Section 73.608, Education Code, as added by this
3 Act; and

4 (2) not later than December 1, 2018, submit a report to
5 the senate committee on education, or its successor, and the house
6 public education committee, or its successor, regarding the
7 implementation and status of the competitive grant program required
8 by Subchapter I, Chapter 73, Education Code, as added by this Act.

9 SECTION 3. This Act does not make an appropriation. A
10 provision in this Act that creates a new governmental program,
11 creates a new entitlement, or imposes a new duty on a governmental
12 entity is not mandatory during a fiscal period for which the
13 legislature has not made a specific appropriation to implement the
14 provision.

15 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2015.