

By: Raney

H.B. No. 2879

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 J to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER J. COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM TO PROMOTE EARLY LITERACY

Sec. 73.701. 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. 73.702. 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. 73.703. 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 who  
13 participate in the literacy program:

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. 73.704. 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. 73.705. 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. 73.706. USE OF PROGRAM MONEY. (a) In addition to  
10 awarding grants under this subchapter, the health science center  
11 may use program money 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 money 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. 73.707. 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. 73.708. COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM FUNDING. (a) The  
16 health science center shall actively seek and apply for any  
17 available federal money to assist in financing the competitive  
18 grant program established under this subchapter.

19 (b) The health science center may use appropriated money  
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 money to assist in financing the competitive grant program

1 under Subchapter J, Chapter 73, Education Code, as added by this  
2 Act, as required by Section 73.708, Education Code, as added by this  
3 Act; and

4 (2) not later than December 1, 2022, 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 J, Chapter 73, Education Code, as added by this Act.

9 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2019.