

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1226
By: Campos
Urban Affairs
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

It has been suggested that one way to help address the issue of homelessness is by providing a more efficient way for programs that help the homeless to receive donations, such as through the use of text messaging. H.B. 1226 seeks to address this issue by authorizing a pilot program that will solicit donations made by text message for the benefit of certain municipal programs that provide services to homeless individuals and families. The pilot program will also protect the confidentiality of donations and will provide for the transparent allocation of funds and for promotion of the program to the public.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs in SECTION 1 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 1226 amends the Government Code to authorize the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) to implement and administer a pilot program to solicit donations made by text message for the benefit of local programs that provide services to homeless individuals and families in municipalities with a population of 285,000 or more. The bill requires the program, if implemented, to do the following:

- facilitate the process by which a person may use text messaging to make a private donation to help homeless individuals and families;
- encourage private donations to be made for the benefit of local programs that prevent and eliminate homelessness; and
- fund local programs that provide emergency housing and transportation to homeless individuals and families.

H.B. 1226 authorizes the TDHCA to adopt rules to govern the program's implementation and administration, including specified rules. The bill sets minimum thresholds for the amount of donated money that must be allocated for costs associated with housing homeless individuals and families, transportation costs, and promotion of the program and caps the amount that may be allocated for overhead and administrative costs. The bill authorizes the TDHCA to assign personnel to coordinate the program's implementation and administration.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2021.