

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 834
By: Campos
Urban Affairs
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The process for donating to community programs that provide services to homeless individuals and families could be made much faster and simpler through the use of text messages. H.B. 834 seeks to establish a more instant and efficient way for local homelessness services programs to receive donations by providing for a "text-to-donate" pilot program in certain municipalities.

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. 834 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. 834 authorizes TDHCA to adopt rules to govern the program's implementation and administration, including specified rules relating to the ability to make a donation by text message, confidentiality of donor information, the disbursement of program money, and promotion of the program. The bill sets minimum thresholds for allocating the amount of donated money as follows:

- not less than 65 percent allocated for costs associated with housing homeless individuals and families;
- not less than 20 percent for transportation costs; and
- not less than five percent for promotion of the program.

The bill caps the amount that may be allocated for overhead and administrative costs at 10 percent of donated money. The bill authorizes TDHCA to assign personnel to coordinate the program's implementation and administration.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2023.