

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
88R17428 KBB-D

S.B. 22
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Finance
3/20/2023
As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Several studies have shown a positive relationship between salary and quality regarding law enforcement. In fact, one study indicated that the per capita number of crimes cleared (crimes resulting in arrests) was 12 percent higher in the months following pay raises for law enforcement officers.

S.B. 22 seeks to establish a grant program that will provide financial assistance to sheriff's departments, as well as district and county attorney's offices, in eligible counties to ensure professional law enforcement and legal representation of the people's interests throughout the state.

As proposed, S.B. 22 amends current law relating to the establishment of grant programs to provide financial assistance to qualified sheriff's departments, district attorney's offices, and county attorney's offices in rural counties.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Comptroller of Public Accounts of the State of Texas in SECTION 1 (Sections 130.911 and 130.912, Local Government Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter Z, Chapter 130, Local Government Code, by adding Sections 130.911 and 130.912, as follows:

Sec. 130.911. RURAL SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT SALARY ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM. (a) Defines "grant" and "qualified county."

(b) Requires the Comptroller of Public Accounts of the State of Texas (comptroller) to establish and administer the rural sheriff's department salary assistance grant program to support the state purpose of ensuring professional law enforcement throughout the state by providing financial assistance to sheriff's departments in qualified counties.

(c) Authorizes a county, not later than the 30th day after the first day of a qualified county's fiscal year, to submit an application for a grant to the comptroller. Authorizes a county to submit only one application each fiscal year.

(d) Requires the comptroller to award a grant to a qualified county that applies for the grant using money appropriated to the comptroller for that purpose. Requires that the grant be in the following applicable amount:

(1) \$250,000 if the county has a population of less than 10,000;

(2) \$350,000 if the county has a population of 10,000 or more and less than 50,000; or

(3) \$500,000 if the county has a population of 50,000 or more and 300,000 or less.

(e) Requires a county that is awarded a grant to use or authorize the use of the grant money only:

(1) to provide a minimum annual salary of at least \$75,000 for the county sheriff, \$45,000 for each deputy who makes motor vehicle stops in the routine performance of their duties, and \$40,000 for each deputy whose duties include the safekeeping of prisoners and the security of a jail operated by the county;

(2) to increase the salary of a person described by Subdivision (1);

(3) to hire additional deputies or staff for the sheriff's department; or

(4) to purchase equipment for the sheriff's department.

(f) Prohibits a county that is awarded a grant from using or authorizing the use of the grant money for a purpose other than to meet the minimum salary requirements prescribed by Subsection (e)(1) until those requirements are satisfied.

(g) Prohibits a county that is awarded a grant from reducing the sheriff's department budget for the county's fiscal year following the fiscal year in which the comptroller awards the grant.

(h) Requires the comptroller to adopt rules necessary to implement this section, including rules that establish a standardized application process, including the form to be used to apply for a grant and the manner of submitting the form; deadlines for applying for the grant, disbursement of grant money, and spending grant money; and procedures for monitoring the disbursement of grant money to ensure compliance with this section and the return of grant money that was not used by a county for a purpose authorized by this section.

Sec. 130.912. RURAL DISTRICT AND COUNTY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE SALARY ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM. (a) Defines "grant" and "qualified county."

(b) Requires the comptroller to establish and administer the rural district and county attorney's office salary assistance grant program to support the state purpose of ensuring professional legal representation of the people's interests throughout the state by providing financial assistance to district and county attorney's offices in qualified counties.

(c) Authorizes the county to, not later than the 30th day after the first day of a qualified county's fiscal year, submit an application for a grant to the comptroller. Authorizes a county to submit only one application each fiscal year.

(d) Requires the comptroller to award a grant to a qualified county that applies for the grant using money appropriated to the comptroller for that purpose. Requires that the grant be in applicable amounts of \$100,000 if the county has a population of less than 10,000, \$175,000 if the county has a population of 10,000 or more and less than 50,000, or \$275,000 if the county has a population of 50,000 or more and 300,000 or less.

(e) Requires a county that is awarded a grant to use or authorize the use of the grant money only to increase the salary of an assistant attorney or investigator employed at a district or county attorney's office described by Subsection (a)(2) (relating to the definition of "qualified county") or to hire additional staff for an office described by that subsection.

(f) Prohibits a county that is awarded a grant from reducing the budget of a district or county attorney's office described by Subsection (a)(2) for the county's fiscal year following the fiscal year in which the comptroller awards the grant.

(g) Requires the comptroller to adopt rules necessary to implement this section, including rules that establish a standardized application process, including the form to be used to apply for a grant and the manner of submitting the form; deadlines for applying for the grant, disbursement of grant money, and spending grant money; and procedures for monitoring the disbursement of grant money to ensure compliance with this section and the return of grant money that was not used by a county for a purpose authorized by this section.

SECTION 2. Prohibits a qualified county, as defined by Section 130.911 or 130.912, Local Government Code, as added by this Act, from applying for a rural sheriff's department salary assistance grant or a rural district and county attorney's office salary assistance grant before January 1, 2024.

SECTION 3. Requires the comptroller, not later than January 1, 2024, to comply with the requirements of Sections 130.911 and 130.912, Local Government Code, as added by this Act.

SECTION 4. Effective date: September 1, 2023.