

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 267
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Finance
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AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Concerns have been raised nationwide regarding the accountability and performance of law enforcement agencies. There have been calls to incentivize more law enforcement agencies in Texas to seek accreditation through entities such as the Texas Police Chiefs Association Law Enforcement Best Practices Recognition Program by establishing a grant program. Investing in law enforcement agencies through a grant program will help to professionalize the industry, create an environment that fosters better communication between local governments and law enforcement agencies, and ensure the highest standard of excellence in law enforcement. S.B. 267 seeks to address the issue by creating a grant program to provide financial assistance to law enforcement agencies in Texas for certain accreditation purposes.

During the 87th session, H.B. 323 passed out of the house of representatives. It had no opposition and had broad bipartisan support. The bill this session is mandatory rather than voluntary accreditation and is applicable to more law enforcement agencies.

As proposed, S.B. 267 amends current law relating to a law enforcement agency accreditation grant program.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Criminal Justice Division of the Office of the Governor in SECTION 1 (Section 772.0079, Government Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter A, Chapter 772, Government Code, by adding Section 772.0079, as follows:

Sec. 772.0079. LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY ACCREDITATION GRANT PROGRAM. (a) Defines "criminal justice division."

(b) Provides that this section applies only to a law enforcement agency employing one or more certain peace officers.

(c) Requires the Criminal Justice Division of the Office of the Governor (criminal justice division) to establish and administer a grant program to provide to each law enforcement agency to which this section applies financial assistance for purposes of becoming accredited or maintaining accreditation:

(1) through the Texas Police Chiefs Association Law Enforcement Agency Best Practices Accreditation Program;

(2) by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc.;

(3) by the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators; or

(4) by an association or organization designated by the criminal justice division under Subsection (h).

(d) Prohibits the amount of a grant awarded under this section from exceeding \$50,000.

(e) Requires the criminal justice division to establish:

(1) eligibility criteria for grant applicants;

(2) grant application procedures;

(3) guidelines relating to grant amounts;

(4) procedures for evaluating grant applications;

(5) procedures for monitoring the use of a grant awarded under the program and ensuring compliance with any conditions of a grant; and

(6) procedures for revoking a grant awarded under the program if the law enforcement agency:

(A) is not accredited within the period specified by the rules adopted under Subsection (i); or

(B) does not renew or otherwise maintain the agency's accreditation.

(f) Requires the criminal justice division, not later than December 1 of each year, to submit to the Legislative Budget Board a report that provides the following information for the preceding state fiscal year:

(1) the name of each law enforcement agency that applied for a grant under this section; and

(2) the amount of money distributed to each law enforcement agency that received a grant under this section.

(g) Authorizes the criminal justice division to use any revenue available for purposes of this section.

(h) Requires the criminal justice division, with the assistance of the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE), to periodically review associations and organizations that establish standards of practice for law enforcement agencies and that offer accreditation to agencies that meet those standards. Authorizes TCOLE to designate an association or organization as an accrediting agency for purposes of Subsection (c)(4) on a determination by the criminal justice division that accreditation of law enforcement agencies in this state by the association or organization would benefit public safety.

(i) Requires the criminal justice division to adopt rules requiring each law enforcement agency to which this section applies to become accredited as described by Subsection (c). Requires that rules require law enforcement agencies to become accredited as follows:

(1) not later than September 1, 2026, for law enforcement agencies employing 50 or more peace officers; and

(2) not later than September 1, 2027, for law enforcement agencies employing fewer than 50 peace officers.

(j) Requires the criminal justice division to implement a program to assist eligible applicants in becoming accredited as required by the rules adopted under Subsection (i).

(k) Requires a law enforcement agency that receives a grant awarded under the program annually to report the agency's accreditation status, including the applicable accrediting agency described by Subsection (c)(1), (2), (3), or (4), to TCOLE.

(l) Requires TCOLE to post on TCOLE's Internet website a list of all law enforcement agencies that are currently accredited as described by Subsection (c).

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2023.