

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 2059
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Subcommittee on Higher Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Texas has a nursing shortage that has grown worse over the pandemic. By 2032 Texas will have a shortage of 12,572 licensed vocational nurses and 57,000 registered nurses. The shortage of nurses is challenging the state's ability to provide services, and is also hindering access to behavioral health, long term care, hospitals, and clinic services in our communities and across Texas.

Texas' Center for Nursing Workforce Studies nurse faculty survey, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) evaluation of its Nurse Shortage Reduction Fund program, and a Texas Future of Nursing Summit all point to the lack of access to clinical training and insufficient faculty as challenges to increasing the number of Texas nurses. The faculty survey identifies lack of clinical training capacity as *the* primary obstacle to educating more nurses. Yet little is invested in the critical clinical training needed for nursing.

S.B. 2059 establishes grant programs at THECB to support nursing education and training.

As proposed, S.B. 2059 amends current law relating to grant programs established to support nursing education and training.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 1 (Section 61.9647, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 61, Education Code, by adding Subchapter Z-1, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER Z-1. GRANT PROGRAMS SUPPORTING NURSING EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Sec. 61.9641. DEFINITIONS. Defines "clinical site" and "nursing advisory committee."

Sec. 61.9642. CLINICAL SITE NURSE PRECEPTOR GRANT PROGRAM. (a) Requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), in consultation with the nursing advisory committee (committee), to establish and administer a program to award grants to eligible clinical sites to support the use of nurse preceptors in providing clinical training to nursing students.

(b) Requires a clinical site, to be eligible for a grant under this section, to provide clinical training to nursing students through the use of one or more nurse preceptors, to comply with any clinical site requirements established by THECB, and to comply with any other requirements adopted by THECB rule.

Sec. 61.9643. CLINICAL SITE INNOVATION AND COORDINATION PROGRAM. Requires THECB to establish and administer a program to award grants to eligible clinical sites that create and operate innovative pilot programs that will support nursing performed at clinical sites in this state by increasing the number of nurses, improving the

working environment for nurses, improving the retention of nurses, addressing workplace safety, and coordinating with other clinical sites any solutions found to address common nursing concerns.

Sec. 61.9644. NURSING FACULTY GRANT PROGRAM: PART-TIME POSITIONS.

(a) Requires THECB to award grants under a nursing faculty grant program to eligible institutions of higher education to provide funding for qualified nursing staff working at clinical sites who serve as part-time nursing faculty at those institutions.

(b) Requires that the amount of a grant and the number of grants to be awarded be based on the total number of nursing staff serving as part-time faculty in institutions of higher education throughout the state in the year for which the grant is awarded.

(c) Requires that a grant received under this section be expended to support the applicable nursing faculty positions, including the faculty stipend.

(d) Requires an institution of higher education to certify in the grant application the number of unfilled faculty positions to which the application applies and, after a grant is awarded, to certify which of those positions have been filled before receipt of the grant funds.

(e) Requires THECB to prescribe the dates for the submission of applications and the award of grants under this section to ensure that a grant recipient has sufficient time to prepare for receipt and effective use of the grant funds before the academic period for which the grant is awarded.

(f) Provides that grant amounts are awarded under this section for two consecutive state fiscal years. Authorizes THECB to distribute a grant amount for nursing faculty only on receiving the certification from the institution of higher education that the applicable nurse faculty position has been filled. Requires THECB, for each first-year nursing faculty position for which a clinical site receives an initial grant amount in a state fiscal year, to make available an equal grant amount for the subsequent state fiscal year contingent on filling the part-time nursing faculty positions funded by the grant in that second year.

Sec. 61.9645. NURSING FACULTY GRANT PROGRAM: CLINICAL TRAINING.

(a) Requires THECB to award grants under a nursing faculty grant program to eligible clinical sites to provide funding for qualified nursing faculty of institutions of higher education who seek to obtain additional clinical training by working part-time at a clinical site.

(b) Requires that the amount of a grant and the number of grants to be awarded be based on the total number of nursing faculty in institutions of higher education throughout the state in the year for which the grant is awarded.

Sec. 61.9646. FUNDS. (a) Requires THECB, in consultation with the committee, to allocate funds appropriated for purposes of this subchapter and any other funds received as described by Subsection (b) as THECB considers appropriate to further the purposes of this subchapter.

(b) Authorizes THECB, in addition to money appropriated by the legislature, to solicit, accept, and spend gifts, grants, and donations from any public or private source for the purposes of the grant programs established under this subchapter.

Sec. 61.9647. RULES. Requires THECB, in consultation with the committee, to adopt rules for the administration of the grant programs established under this subchapter. Requires that the rules include:

(1) administrative provisions relating to the awarding of grants under this subchapter, such as eligibility criteria for clinical sites or institutions of higher education, as applicable, grant application procedures, guidelines relating to grant amounts, procedures for evaluating grant applications, and procedures for monitoring the use of grants; and

(2) methods for tracking the effectiveness of grants that use data reasonably available to THECB or the Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies and that evaluate transferability and scalability of innovation programs.

SECTION 2. (a) Requires THECB, as soon as practicable after the effective date of this Act, to adopt rules for the implementation and administration of the grant programs required by Subchapter Z-1, Chapter 61, Education Code, as added by this Act. Authorizes THECB to adopt the initial rules in the manner provided by law for emergency rules.

(b) Requires THECB, not later than September 1, 2023, to establish the grant programs required by Subchapter Z-1, Chapter 61, Education Code, as added by this Act, and to begin to award grants under those programs not later than January 1, 2024.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2023.