88R17428 KBB-D

By:  Springer, et al. S.B. No. 22

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

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.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

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

Sec. 130.911.  RURAL SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT SALARY ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM. (a) In this section:

(1)  "Grant" means a grant authorized to be awarded by the comptroller under the rural sheriff's department salary assistance grant program established by this section.

(2)  "Qualified county" means a county with a population of 300,000 or less.

(b)  The comptroller shall 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)  Not later than the 30th day after the first day of a qualified county's fiscal year, the county may submit an application for a grant to the comptroller. A county may submit only one application each fiscal year.

(d)  The comptroller shall award a grant to a qualified county that applies for the grant using money appropriated to the comptroller for that purpose. The grant must 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)  A county that is awarded a grant shall use or authorize the use of the grant money only:

(1)  to provide a minimum annual salary of at least:

(A)  $75,000 for the county sheriff;

(B)  $45,000 for each deputy who makes motor vehicle stops in the routine performance of their duties; and

(C)  $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)  A county that is awarded a grant may not use or authorize 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)  A county that is awarded a grant may not reduce the sheriff's department budget for the county's fiscal year following the fiscal year in which the comptroller awards the grant.

(h)  The comptroller shall adopt rules necessary to implement this section, including rules that establish:

(1)  a standardized application process, including the form to be used to apply for a grant and the manner of submitting the form;

(2)  deadlines for:

(A)  applying for the grant;

(B)  disbursement of grant money; and

(C)  spending grant money; and

(3)  procedures for:

(A)  monitoring the disbursement of grant money to ensure compliance with this section; and

(B)  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) In this section:

(1)  "Grant" means a grant authorized to be awarded by the comptroller under the rural district and county attorney's office salary assistance grant program established by this section.

(2)  "Qualified county" means a county with a population of 300,000 or less that has a district or county attorney's office with criminal jurisdiction.

(b)  The comptroller shall 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)  Not later than the 30th day after the first day of a qualified county's fiscal year, the county may submit an application for a grant to the comptroller. A county may submit only one application each fiscal year.

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

(1)  $100,000 if the county has a population of less than 10,000;

(2)  $175,000 if the county has a population of 10,000 or more and less than 50,000; or

(3)  $275,000 if the county has a population of 50,000 or more and 300,000 or less.

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

(1)  to increase the salary of an assistant attorney or investigator employed at a district or county attorney's office described by Subsection (a)(2); or

(2)  to hire additional staff for an office described by that subsection.

(f)  A county that is awarded a grant may not reduce 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)  The comptroller shall adopt rules necessary to implement this section, including rules that establish:

(1)  a standardized application process, including the form to be used to apply for a grant and the manner of submitting the form;

(2)  deadlines for:

(A)  applying for the grant;

(B)  disbursement of grant money; and

(C)  spending grant money; and

(3)  procedures for:

(A)  monitoring the disbursement of grant money to ensure compliance with this section; and

(B)  the return of grant money that was not used by a county for a purpose authorized by this section.

SECTION 2.  A qualified county, as defined by Section 130.911 or 130.912, Local Government Code, as added by this Act, may not apply 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.  Not later than January 1, 2024, the comptroller of public accounts shall comply with the requirements of Sections 130.911 and 130.912, Local Government Code, as added by this Act.

SECTION 4.  This Act takes effect September 1, 2023.