88R10797 JRJ-D

By:  Johnson S.B. No. 1733

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the establishment of a housing assistance pilot program to assist certain students enrolled in public junior colleges.

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

SECTION 1.  Chapter 130, Education Code, is amended by adding Subchapter N to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER N. HOUSING ASSISTANCE PILOT PROGRAM

Sec. 130.401.  DEFINITION. In this subchapter, "pilot program" means the housing assistance pilot program established under this subchapter.

Sec. 130.402.  PILOT PROGRAM PURPOSE. The purpose of the pilot program is to provide needs-based grants to assist eligible students in the payment of the cost of maintaining housing, including payments for eviction prevention, rental payments, and deposit fees for rental units.

Sec. 130.403.  ADMINISTRATION OF PILOT PROGRAM. (a) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall administer the pilot program in coordination with the Texas Education Agency, the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs, and the Texas Interagency Council for the Homeless. The coordinating board shall:

(1)  create a housing assistance fund for the duration of the pilot program; and

(2)  deposit in the fund for each academic year of the pilot program an amount equal to the amount of any gifts, grants, donations, or appropriations designated for the program.

(b)  If the pilot program is not continued by law as of August 31, 2027, any money remaining in the fund shall be credited to the general revenue fund on that date.

Sec. 130.404.  ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS. A junior college district with an enrollment of 40,000 students or more is eligible to participate in the pilot program.

Sec. 130.405.  ELIGIBILITY FOR GRANT. (a) The coordinating board, in consultation with the staff of the participating public junior colleges, including student support specialists, the Texas Homeless Network, and homeless response system leads for the areas in which participating junior colleges are located, shall establish eligibility criteria for students to receive a grant under the pilot program. The eligibility criteria must:

(1)  require an applicant to be enrolled at a participating public junior college; and

(2)  allow for the consideration of an applicant's FAFSA application data or other relevant information.

(b)  The coordinating board may apply the eligibility criteria to create a formula for the disbursement of money under the pilot program.

Sec. 130.406.  THIRD PARTY ADMINISTRATOR. (a) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board may contract with a third party to design and administer the pilot program in consultation with the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs and the Texas Interagency Council for the Homeless.

(b)  A third party administrator shall report to the coordinating board and the Texas Education Agency in the manner agreed to under a contract entered into under this section.

Sec. 130.407.  REPORTS. (a) Not later than October 1 of each even-numbered year, the coordinating board shall prepare a report on the effectiveness of the pilot program. The report must include a recommendation regarding whether the pilot program should be continued, expanded, or terminated.

(b)  The coordinating board shall deliver a copy of the report to the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and each standing committee of the legislature having primary jurisdiction over higher education.

Sec. 130.408.  EXPIRATION. This subchapter expires September 1, 2027.

SECTION 2.  Subchapter N, Chapter 130, Education Code, as added by this Act, applies beginning with the 2023-2024 academic year.

SECTION 3.  This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2023.