

By: Menéndez

S.B. No. 454

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the establishment of the Texas Emergency Aid for Public Postsecondary Students (TEAPPS) grant program for students at certain public institutions of higher education.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 61, Education Code, is amended by adding Subchapter MM to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER MM. TEXAS EMERGENCY AID FOR PUBLIC POSTSECONDARY STUDENTS (TEAPPS) GRANT PROGRAM

Sec. 61.9901. DEFINITION. In this subchapter, "program" means the Texas Emergency Aid for Public Postsecondary Students (TEAPPS) grant program established under this subchapter.

Sec. 61.9902. PROGRAM PURPOSE. The purpose of the Texas Emergency Aid for Public Postsecondary Students (TEAPPS) grant program is to enable eligible institutions of higher education to provide emergency aid grants to assist students in dealing with unexpected or unforeseen expenses, events, or circumstances that could cause a loss of momentum toward completion of a degree program.

Sec. 61.9903. ADMINISTRATION OF PROGRAM. (a) The board shall administer the program and adopt any rules necessary to implement the program. The board shall consult with institutions of higher education in developing rules under this subchapter.

(b) The board shall develop a competitive application

1 process to award grants to eligible institutions of higher
2 education under the program.

3 Sec. 61.9904. GRANT ELIGIBILITY. To be eligible to receive
4 a grant under the program, an institution of higher education must
5 offer at least one associate or baccalaureate degree program and:

6 (1) have a student enrollment in which at least 30
7 percent of students:

8 (A) receive a Pell grant; or

9 (B) are members of an underrepresented minority
10 population, as determined by the board; or

11 (2) be designated by the United States Department of
12 Education as a Minority Serving Institution (MSI).

13 Sec. 61.9905. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS. An institution of
14 higher education awarded a grant under this subchapter must:

15 (1) adopt a policy that clearly defines "emergency" in
16 accordance with board rule for purposes of providing emergency aid
17 to students under Section 61.9907;

18 (2) use an additional amount of funds at least equal to
19 10 percent of the grant amount awarded under the program for
20 purposes of providing emergency aid to students under Section
21 61.9907;

22 (3) partner with state agencies, nonprofit
23 community-based organizations, or other private entities to offer
24 to students receiving emergency aid under Section 61.9907
25 wraparound support services, such as assistance with food, housing,
26 transportation, or health care; and

27 (4) implement basic components and adhere to best

1 practices for successful emergency aid programs, as determined by
2 the board.

3 Sec. 61.9906. GRANT FUNDING; AMOUNT OF GRANT. (a) The
4 total amount of money appropriated for an academic year to award
5 grants to institutions of higher education under the program may
6 not exceed \$2 million.

7 (b) The amount of a grant awarded to an institution of
8 higher education under the program may not exceed \$50,000 per
9 academic year.

10 (c) The board may solicit and accept gifts, grants, and
11 donations from any public or private source for the program.

12 Sec. 61.9907. GRANT USE. (a) An institution of higher
13 education that receives a grant under the program may use grant
14 funds only to provide emergency aid to students enrolled at the
15 institution in accordance with this subchapter.

16 (b) The amount of emergency aid awarded to a student under
17 this section may not exceed \$1,000 per award.

18 (c) An institution of higher education that receives a grant
19 under the program must establish an application process for
20 students enrolled at the institution to apply for emergency aid
21 awarded under this section. The application process must:

22 (1) allow students to apply electronically;

23 (2) be offered in both English and Spanish; and

24 (3) require the institution to:

25 (A) conclude review of an application not later
26 than 48 hours after receipt of the application; and

27 (B) disburse any funds awarded not later than 48

1 hours after concluding review of an application.

2 (d) Each institution of higher education that receives a
3 grant under the program shall:

4 (1) inform students enrolled at the institution of the
5 availability of emergency aid under this section in the manner
6 required by board rule;

7 (2) collect and maintain data regarding the awarding
8 of emergency aid under this section to evaluate the effectiveness
9 of the program; and

10 (3) report the data collected under Subdivision (2) to
11 the board in the time and manner required by board rule.

12 SECTION 2. (a) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating
13 Board shall adopt rules to administer Subchapter MM, Chapter 61,
14 Education Code, as added by this Act, as soon as practicable after
15 the effective date of this Act.

16 (b) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall
17 begin awarding grants under Subchapter MM, Chapter 61, Education
18 Code, as added by this Act, for the first academic year for which
19 money is appropriated for that purpose, except that the
20 coordinating board may not award grants under that subchapter for
21 an academic year before the 2024-2025 academic year.

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