

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 897
By: Blanco
Homeland Security, Public Safety & Veterans' Affairs
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Current law requires different levels of non-state matching funds for counties applying for mental health grants through the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC). Counties with a population of less than 100,000 must provide a 25 percent match, a county with a population of 100,000 or more but less than 250,000 must provide a 50 percent match, and counties with a population of 250,000 or more must provide a 100 percent match. These match requirements apply both to counties applying individually and to regional mental health programs. However, the bill sponsor has informed the committee that while these requirements aim to ensure a shared investment in mental health services, they can pose financial challenges for some counties, potentially limit the number of programs that can participate in the grant program, and restrict access to veteran mental health services. S.B. 897 seeks to address this issue, ensure that counties can continue to access mental health grants without unnecessary financial burdens, and increase opportunities for veterans and their families to receive mental health services by lowering the match rate for grant programs from 100 percent of the grant amount to 75 percent of the grant amount in counties with a population of 250,000 or more.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

S.B. 897 amends the Government Code to reduce the amount of matching funds under the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) grant program to support community mental health programs for veterans and their families that a potential grant recipient that intends to support such a program that provides services in a county with a population of 250,000 or more must provide from non-state sources to qualify for a grant from 100 percent of the grant amount to 75 percent of the grant amount. The bill applies only to a grant awarded on or after the bill's effective date. A grant awarded before that date is governed by the law in effect on the date the award was made, and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose. Implementation of a provision of this bill by HHSC is mandatory only if a specific appropriation is made for that purpose in an amount greater than the amount appropriated to HHSC for that purpose for the 2024-2025 state fiscal biennium.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2025.