

By: Guillen, Morales of Maverick, et al.

H.B. No. 318

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the establishment of grant programs to provide financial assistance to qualified sheriff's departments in certain 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 Section 130.9115 to read as follows:

Sec. 130.9115. RURAL SHERIFF'S DEPUTY SHORTAGE RELIEF GRANT PROGRAM. (a) In this section:

(1) "Deputy-to-resident ratio" means the ratio of the number of deputy sheriffs to the number of residents of the unincorporated areas of the county, as determined by the population estimates provided by the state demographer under Section [468.004](#), Government Code.

(2) "Grant" means a grant authorized to be awarded by the comptroller under the rural sheriff's deputy shortage relief grant program established by this section.

(3) "Investigative tool" means equipment, including software, used by a sheriff's office that is necessary for the investigation of cases. The term does not include services unless the services are purchased in connection with the purchase of tangible equipment.

(4) "Investigator-to-patrol ratio" means the ratio of the number of deputy sheriffs who primarily conduct case

investigations in the routine performance of the deputy's duties to the number of deputy sheriffs who primarily make motor vehicle stops in the routine performance of the deputy's duties.

(5) "Qualified county" means a county:

(A) with a population of 300,000 or less; and

(B) for which on January 1, 2025:

(i) the deputy-to-resident ratio is less than 15 to 10,000; or

(ii) the investigator-to-patrol ratio is less than one to five.

(6) "Qualified deputy position" means a deputy sheriff position in a qualified county that:

(A) is held or will be held by a deputy sheriff who primarily makes motor vehicle stops in the routine performance of the deputy's duties;

(B) is in addition to a deputy sheriff position held in the county on January 1, 2025;

(C) is not considered a qualified investigator position; and

(D) when aggregated with each other qualified deputy position would result in a deputy-to-resident ratio of 15 to 10,000, determined as of January 1, 2025.

(7) "Qualified emergency dispatcher" means a person who primarily provides communication support services for a sheriff's office by responding to requests for assistance in emergencies.

(8) "Qualified investigative support staff member"

1 means a person who primarily provides technical support services  
2 for a qualified investigator in the investigation of an offense,  
3 including a person who provides evidence testing or analysis  
4 services.

5 (9) "Qualified investigator position" means a deputy  
6 sheriff position in a qualified county that:

7 (A) is held or will be held by a deputy sheriff  
8 who primarily conducts case investigations in the routine  
9 performance of the deputy's duties;

10 (B) is in addition to a deputy sheriff position  
11 held in the county on January 1, 2025; and

12 (C) when aggregated with each other qualified  
13 investigator position would result in an investigator-to-patrol  
14 ratio of one to five, determined as of January 1, 2025.

15 (b) The comptroller shall establish and administer the  
16 rural sheriff's deputy shortage relief grant program to support the  
17 state purpose of ensuring professional law enforcement throughout  
18 the state by providing financial assistance to sheriff's  
19 departments in qualified counties.

20 (c) Not later than the 30th day after the first day of a  
21 qualified county's fiscal year, the county may submit an  
22 application for a grant to the comptroller. The county must  
23 indicate in the application the number of qualified deputy  
24 positions, qualified investigator positions, qualified emergency  
25 dispatcher positions, and qualified investigative support staff  
26 member positions the county is requesting for inclusion in the  
27 determination of the amount of the grant for that fiscal year and

1 the number of qualified deputy positions and qualified investigator  
2 positions for which the county is requesting additional funds  
3 described by Subsections (d)(2) and (4). A county may submit only  
4 one application each fiscal year.

5 (d) Subject to Subsections (e), (f), (g), (h), and (k), the  
6 comptroller shall award a grant to a qualified county that applies  
7 for the grant using money appropriated to the comptroller for that  
8 purpose. The grant must be in the following amount:

9 (1) \$50,000 for each qualified deputy position  
10 indicated by the county in the application for that fiscal year;

11 (2) an additional \$50,000 for each qualified deputy  
12 position indicated in the application for that fiscal year, unless  
13 the county has received a grant under this subdivision for that  
14 position in a preceding fiscal year;

15 (3) \$50,000 for each qualified investigator position  
16 indicated by the county in the application for that fiscal year  
17 necessary for an investigator-to-patrol ratio of one to five after  
18 filling the qualified deputy positions under the grant;

19 (4) an additional \$50,000 for each qualified  
20 investigator position indicated in the application for that fiscal  
21 year, unless the county has received a grant under this subdivision  
22 for that position in a preceding fiscal year;

23 (5) \$35,000 for each qualified emergency dispatcher  
24 indicated by the county in the application for that fiscal year; and

25 (6) \$35,000 for each qualified investigative support  
26 staff member indicated by the county in the application for that  
27 fiscal year.

1       (e) This subsection applies only to a fiscal year of a  
2 qualified county that meets the deputy-to-resident ratio described  
3 by Subsection (a)(5)(B)(i) during a calendar year that begins on or  
4 after January 1, 2025, but before the calendar year in which the  
5 fiscal year begins. A qualified county is not eligible to receive a  
6 grant under this section for a fiscal year unless the county adopts  
7 a budget for the fiscal year that provides for the employment of a  
8 number of deputy sheriffs necessary to meet the deputy-to-resident  
9 ratio of at least 15 to 10,000, determined as of January 1 of the  
10 calendar year in which the fiscal year begins.

11       (f) This subsection applies only to a fiscal year of a  
12 qualified county for which the number of qualified deputy positions  
13 the county is otherwise entitled to receive a grant for under this  
14 section is greater than the number of qualified deputy positions  
15 the county would be entitled to receive a grant for under this  
16 section if the deputy-to-resident ratio described by Subsection  
17 (a)(5)(B)(i) is determined as of January 1 of the calendar year in  
18 which the fiscal year begins instead of January 1, 2025. A  
19 qualified county is entitled to receive a grant under this section  
20 only for the number of qualified deputy positions the county would  
21 be entitled to receive a grant for if the deputy-to-resident ratio  
22 described by Subsection (a)(5)(B)(i) is determined as of January 1  
23 of the calendar year in which the fiscal year begins instead of  
24 January 1, 2025.

25       (g) This subsection applies only to a fiscal year of a  
26 qualified county that meets the investigator-to-patrol ratio  
27 described by Subsection (a)(5)(B)(ii) during a calendar year that

begins on or after January 1, 2025, but before the calendar year in which the fiscal year begins. A qualified county is not eligible to receive a grant under this section for a fiscal year unless the county adopts a budget for the fiscal year that provides for the employment of a number of deputy sheriffs necessary to meet the investigator-to-patrol ratio of at least one to five, determined as of January 1 of the calendar year in which the fiscal year begins.

(h) This subsection applies only to a fiscal year of a qualified county for which the number of qualified investigator positions the county is otherwise entitled to receive a grant for under this section is greater than the number of qualified investigator positions the county would be entitled to receive a grant for under this section if the investigator-to-patrol ratio described by Subsection (a)(5)(B)(ii) is determined as of January 1 of the calendar year in which the fiscal year begins instead of January 1, 2025. A qualified county is entitled to receive a grant under this section only for the number of qualified investigator positions the county would be entitled to receive a grant for if the investigator-to-patrol ratio described by Subsection (a)(5)(B)(ii) is determined as of January 1 of the calendar year in which the fiscal year begins instead of January 1, 2025.

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

(1) to provide to each deputy sheriff who fills a qualified deputy position a minimum annual salary of at least \$45,000;

(2) to provide to each deputy sheriff who fills a

1 qualified investigator position a minimum annual salary of at least  
2 \$45,000;

3 (3) to provide to each dispatcher who fills a  
4 qualified emergency dispatcher position a minimum annual salary of  
5 at least \$30,000;

6 (4) to provide to each investigative support staff  
7 member who fills a qualified investigative support staff position a  
8 minimum salary of at least \$30,000;

9 (5) to purchase vehicles, firearms, and safety  
10 equipment for the use of a deputy sheriff who fills a qualified  
11 deputy position; and

12 (6) to purchase vehicles, firearms, investigative  
13 tools, and safety equipment for the use of a deputy sheriff who  
14 fills a qualified investigator position.

15 (j) A county that is awarded a grant may not reduce the  
16 sheriff's department budget for the county's fiscal year following  
17 the fiscal year in which the comptroller awards the grant.

18 (k) The total dollar amount awarded under this section may  
19 not exceed \$150 million in a state fiscal year. If the total dollar  
20 amount of grants to which counties are entitled under this section  
21 exceeds the limitation under this subsection in a state fiscal  
22 year, the comptroller shall proportionally reduce the amount of  
23 each grant awarded so the limitation is not exceeded.

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

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

1 form;

2 (2) deadlines for:

3 (A) applying for the grant;

4 (B) disbursement of grant money; and

5 (C) spending grant money;

6 (3) procedures for:

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

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

11 (4) standards to determine if an emergency dispatcher  
12 is a qualified emergency dispatcher.

13 SECTION 2. A qualified county, as defined by Section  
14 130.9115, Local Government Code, as added by this Act, may not apply  
15 for a grant under that section before September 1, 2026.

16 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.