

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD
Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 89TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

April 16, 2025

TO: Honorable Gary VanDeaver, Chair, House Committee on Public Health

FROM: Jerry McGinty, Director, Legislative Budget Board

IN RE: HB231 by Morales, Christina (Relating to a study on food deserts and their disproportionate impact among communities of color.), **As Introduced**

Estimated Two-year Net Impact to General Revenue Related Funds for HB231, As Introduced: a negative impact of (\$571,782) through the biennium ending August 31, 2027.

The bill would make no appropriation but could provide the legal basis for an appropriation of funds to implement the provisions of the bill.

General Revenue-Related Funds, Five- Year Impact:

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	Probable Net Positive/(Negative) Impact to <i>General Revenue Related Funds</i>
2026	(\$571,782)
2027	\$0
2028	\$0
2029	\$0
2030	\$0

All Funds, Five-Year Impact:

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	Probable Savings/(Cost) from <i>General Revenue Fund</i> 1	<i>Change in Number of State Employees from FY 2025</i>
2026	(\$571,782)	3.0
2027	\$0	0.0
2028	\$0	0.0
2029	\$0	0.0
2030	\$0	0.0

Fiscal Analysis

The Department of State Health Services (DSHS), in collaboration with any other state agency, would be required to conduct a study on food deserts and any disproportionate impact of food deserts on communities of color. Based on the results of the study, DSHS shall develop recommendations for legislative and other action to address disparities in food access among communities of color and increase access to healthy and nutritious food. A written report summarizing the results of the study and recommendations shall be submitted to standing committees of the legislature with primary jurisdiction over DSHS not later than September 1, 2026.

Methodology

According to DSHS, 3.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions would be needed due to the time constraints and scope of the required research under the bill. Due to these positions being temporary and the immediate need for hiring, DSHS would utilize professional services to obtain staff resources based on a full-time position (2,080 hours) for the entirety of fiscal year 2026. The agency has indicated the following staffing needs in fiscal year 2026:

- 1.0 FTE Program Specialist V position would support the establishment of an expert panel, host panel meetings, and write the required report at \$74 an hour to equal \$153,920 from the General Revenue Fund in salary costs in fiscal year 2026;
- 1.0 FTE Research Specialist IV position would support study development, identification of relevant existing research, and write the report at \$79 an hour to equal \$164,320 from the General Revenue Fund in salary costs in fiscal year 2026; and
- 1.0 FTE Epidemiologist III position would represent the food desert program with other existing agency groups and data owners to identify and analytically examine databases that may serve as sources of food deserts and associated sociodemographic factors in Texas. The position would manage and analyze internal and external data sources following protocols and dissemination standards set by DSHS and present data as requested. The position would also monitor and fulfill data requests. This position would be hired at \$84 an hour to equal \$174,720 from the General Revenue for salary costs in fiscal year 2026.

Other costs related to the temporary FTEs total \$78,822 from the General Revenue Fund in fiscal year 2026.

Local Government Impact

No significant fiscal implication to units of local government is anticipated.

Source Agencies: 537 State Health Services, Department of
LBB Staff: JMc, NPe, ER, APA