By: Lalani H.B. No. 1256

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to informing certain housing assistance applicants about the availability of certain public assistance programs.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter B, Chapter 545, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 545.0059 to read as follows:

Sec. 545.0059. NOTIFYING CERTAIN HOUSING APPLICANTS ABOUT PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS. (a) In this section:

(1) "Department" means the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs.

(2) "Housing choice voucher program" means the housing choice voucher program under Section 8, United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. Section 1437f).

(3) "Public assistance program" includes:

(A) Medicaid;

(B) the child health plan program;

(C) the financial assistance program under Chapter 31, Human Resources Code;

(D) the nutritional assistance programs under Chapter 33, Human Resources Code, including the supplemental nutrition assistance program under that chapter; and

(E) other programs administered and identified by the commission.

(b) The commission in collaboration with the department and

public housing authorities shall develop and implement a process for screening applications for participation in the housing choice voucher program to identify individuals, including household members referenced in the application, who may be eligible for benefits under a public assistance program.

(c) An individual who is identified as potentially eligible for benefits under a public assistance program must be:

(1) notified of each program for which the individual may be eligible; and

(2) provided with information on how to apply for and obtain benefits under each program.

(d) The commission and department shall enter into a memorandum of understanding to implement this section. The memorandum must specify the roles and duties of each agency with respect to carrying out this section.

SECTION 2. If before implementing any provision of this Act a state agency determines that a waiver or authorization from a federal agency is necessary for implementation of that provision, the agency affected by the provision shall request the waiver or authorization and may delay implementing that provision until the waiver or authorization is granted.

SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2027.