

- SUBJECT:** Establishing county family drug courts
- COMMITTEE:** County Affairs — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 8 ayes — Coleman, Bohac, Anderson, Biedermann, Dominguez, Huberty, Rosenthal, Stickland
- 0 nays
- 1 absent — Cole
- WITNESSES:** For — Bryan Mares, Texas CASA; Aurora Martinez Jones; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Mandy Blott, Austin Justice Coalition; Ender Reed, Harris County Commissioners Court; Kathleen Mitchell, Just Liberty; Cindy Klempner, National Alliance on Mental Illness-Austin; James Skinner, Sheriffs' Association of Texas; Lee Johnson, Texas Council of Community Centers; Lindsey Linder, Texas Criminal Justice Coalition; Krishnaveni Gundu, Texas Jail Project; Jacob Palmer, TexProtects; Alexis Tatum, Travis County Commissioners Court; Nataly Saucedo, United Ways of Texas)
- Against — None
- On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Anna Ford, Department of Family and Protective Services)
- BACKGROUND:** Government Code sec. 122.002 allows the commissioners court of a county to establish a family drug court program for persons who have had a child removed from their care by the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) and are suspected by DFPS or a court of having a substance abuse problem.
- DIGEST:** CSHB 3786 would establish a fund to provide grants to counties seeking to establish county drug courts. The bill also would require counties that had not established family drug courts to conduct a study on the possible effects of establishing such a court.

**Grant funding for family drug courts.** The family drug court fund would be established as a dedicated account in the general revenue fund and would consist of gifts, donations, grants, and legislative appropriations. The Health and Human Services Commission would administer the fund and could use money in the fund only to award grants to counties to establish and administer family drug courts.

To receive money from the fund, a county would have to submit the study required by the bill and a proposal for the establishment of the court.

The Health and Human Services Commission would have to adopt rules establishing the criteria for awarding a grant from the fund by January 1, 2020.

**Family drug court study.** The county commissioners court would conduct the study with the assistance of the sheriff and, as applicable, the county attorney, district attorney, or criminal district attorney. The commissioners court would be required to request assistance from the following persons located in the county:

- judges;
- child protective services caseworkers and supervisors;
- attorneys ad litem;
- guardians ad litem;
- drug treatment providers;
- family and child therapists;
- peer recovery coach providers;
- domestic violence victim advocates;
- housing partners;
- drug coordinators;
- drug court services managers; and
- drug court case managers.

Commissioners courts would be required to complete the study by

September 1, 2020. The bill's provisions on the study would expire January 1, 2021.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2019.