

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center

S.B. 55  
By: Nelson et al.  
Veteran Affairs & Military Installations  
7/24/2015  
Enrolled

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

This legislation creates a grant program at the Health and Human Services Commission, which will receive 100 percent matching funds from a private third party, to support community programs for veterans' mental health.

S.B. 55 amends current law relating to the creation of a grant program to support community mental health programs for veterans and their families.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission in SECTION 1 (Section 531.0992, Government Code) of this bill.

### **SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter B, Chapter 531, Government Code, by adding Section 531.0992, as follows:

Sec. 531.0992. GRANT PROGRAM FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR VETERANS. (a) Requires the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), to the extent funds are appropriated to HHSC for that purpose, to establish a grant program for the purpose of supporting community mental health programs providing services and treatment to veterans and their families.

(b) Requires HHSC to enter into an agreement with a qualified nonprofit or private entity to serve as the administrator of the grant program. Requires that the duties of the administrator include assisting, supporting, and advising HHSC in fulfilling HHSC's responsibilities with respect to the grant program. Authorizes the administrator to advise HHSC on:

- (1) designing, developing, implementing, and managing the program;
- (2) determining criteria for local community collaboration and the types of services and deliveries eligible for grants;
- (3) eligibility requirements for grant recipients;
- (4) designing and managing the competitive bidding processes for applications or proposals and the evaluation and selection of grant recipients;
- (5) contractual requirements for grant recipients;
- (6) grant requisites and mechanisms;
- (7) roles and responsibilities of grant recipients;
- (8) reporting requirements for grant recipients;

- (9) support and technical capabilities;
- (10) requisite timelines and deadlines for the program;
- (11) evaluation of the program and grant recipients; and
- (12) requirements for reporting on the program to policy makers.

(c) Requires the private entity that supports and administers the grant program to obtain or secure contributions to the grant program in an amount of money or other consideration at least equal in value to the amount of money awarded to grant recipients by the commission under the grant program. Requires that the money or other consideration obtained or secured by the private entity to, as determined by the executive commissioner of HHSC (executive commissioner), include cash or in-kind contributions from private contributors or local governments but provides that it may not include state or federal funds.

(d) Requires that money appropriated to, or obtained by, HHSC for the grant program be disbursed directly to grant recipients by HHSC, as authorized by the executive commissioner. Requires that money or other consideration obtained or secured by the private entity be disbursed or provided directly to grant recipients by the private entity, private contributors, or local governments, as authorized by the executive commissioner.

(e) Requires that all grants awarded under the grant program be used for the sole purpose of supporting community programs that provide mental health care services and treatment to veterans and their families and that coordinate mental health care services for veterans and their families with other transition support services.

(f) Requires HHSC to select grant recipients based on the submission of applications or proposals by nonprofit and governmental entities. Requires the executive commissioner to develop criteria for the evaluation of those applications or proposals and the selection of grant recipients. Requires that the selection criteria:

(1) evaluate and score:

(A) fiscal controls for the project;

(B) project effectiveness;

(C) project cost; and

(D) an applicant's previous experience with grants and contracts;

(2) address the possibility of and method for making multiple awards; and

(3) include other factors that the executive commissioner considers relevant.

(g) Requires the executive commissioner to use a noncompetitive procurement procedure to select a qualified nonprofit or private entity to administer a pilot program of the grant program established under this section. Requires the executive commissioner, in selecting the qualified nonprofit or private entity, to consider the purposes of the program and the duties of the program administrator described in this section.

(h) Requires the executive commissioner to adopt any rules necessary to implement the grant program under this section.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2015.