

SUBJECT: Coordinating low-income tenant services programs

COMMITTEE: Urban Affairs — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 8 ayes — Hill, Bailey, Burnam, Ehrhardt, Garcia, Hodge, Shields, Wohlgemuth
0 nays
1 absent — Clark

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, Local and Uncontested Calendar, April 28 — 31-0

WITNESSES: None

BACKGROUND : The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) offers ancillary social services, known as tenant services, to some of its clients. The Texas Workforce Commission and the Texas Department of Health offer some similar services.

DIGEST: SB 951 would provide guidelines for the TDHCA tenant services program and require the department to coordinate its services with similar services provided through state workforce development and welfare programs. TDHCA would have to emphasize tenant services eligible for additional federal matching funds through workforce development or welfare-related programs.

“Tenant services” would mean social services, including child care, transportation and basic adult education provided to individuals residing in low-income housing.

The bill would require TDHCA to designate a tenant services program coordinator who would serve as liaison to the Texas Workforce Commission, Texas Department of Human Services, Department of Protective and Regulatory Services, and Legislative Budget Board on matters relating to tenant services programs. The coordinator would have to meet in Austin at least quarterly with representatives of those agencies to update coordination of tenant services with workforce development and

welfare-related programs, discuss funding sources for tenant services programs, and report on the status of tenant services programs, including the number of clients and types of services offered.

TDHCA would have to file a report on the tenant services program with the appropriate state agencies and legislative committees by December 1 in each year preceding a regular session of the Legislature.

SB 951 would take immediate effect if finally approved by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house.

NOTES:

A Senate amendment to HB 2577 by Hill et al., expanding housing programs at TDHCA, would create a tenant services program and require TDHCA to designate a tenant services program coordinator. The Senate passed HB 2577, as amended, on May 24.