

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
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C.S.H.B. 2718  
By: Parker et al. (Ellis)  
Health & Human Services  
5/20/2015  
Committee Report (Substituted)

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

Breaking the cycle of poverty can be difficult for a variety of reasons. Interested parties have noted the willingness of nonprofit faith-based and community-based organizations to work alongside state agencies to provide assistance to those in need, whether that be through job training or some other form of assistance.

C.S.H.B. 2718 aims to further facilitate these connections between state entities and private organizations by directing the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to establish a program allowing Texas applicants for need-based assistance to opt-in to being contacted by community- and faith-based organizations for additional assistance. This legislation will provide the opt-in option on applications for benefits under Medicaid, CHIP, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

A person must be informed about the program and given the opportunity to enroll at the time of an application for benefit. The executive commissioner of HHSC shall adopt rules to implement the program and may solicit the expertise and assistance of interested persons, including charitable organizations.

C.S.H.B. 2718 amends current law relating to a program to allow faith- and community-based organizations to offer supplemental assistance to certain recipients of public assistance.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission in SECTION 1 (Section 531.02482, Government Code) of this bill.

### **SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter B, Chapter 531, Government Code, by adding Section 531.02482, as follows:

Sec. 531.02482. FAITH- AND COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION SUPPORT FOR CERTAIN PERSONS RECEIVING PUBLIC ASSISTANCE. (a) Defines “community-based organization” and “faith-based organization.”

(b) Requires the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to establish a program under which faith- and community-based organizations may, on the request of the applicant, contact and offer supplemental assistance to an applicant for benefits under:

- (1) the financial assistance program under Chapter 31 (Financial Assistance and Service Programs), Human Resources Code;
- (2) the medical assistance program under Chapter 32 (Medical Assistance Program), Human Resources Code;

(3) the supplemental nutrition assistance program under Chapter 33 (Nutritional Assistance Programs), Human Resources Code; or

(4) the child health plan program under Chapter 62 (Child Health Plan for Certain Low-Income Children), Health and Safety Code.

(c) Requires an applicant, at the time of application for benefits described by Subsection (b), to:

(1) be informed about and given the opportunity to enroll in the program; and

(2) be informed that enrolling in the program will not affect the person's eligibility for benefits.

(d) Requires HHSC to develop a procedure under which faith- and community-based organizations may apply to participate in the program.

(e) Requires the executive commissioner of HHSC (executive commissioner) to adopt rules to implement the program established under this section, including rules that:

(1) describe the types of faith- and community-based organizations that may apply to participate in the program and the qualifications and standards of service required of a participating organization;

(2) facilitate contact between a person who enrolls in the program and a faith- and community-based organization participating in the program that provides supplemental services that may be of assistance to the person; and

(3) establish processes for the suspension, revocation, and periodic renewal of an organization's participation in the program, as appropriate;

(4) establish methods to ensure the confidentiality and appropriate use of applicant information shared with a participating organization; and

(5) permit a person enrolled in the program to terminate the person's enrollment in the program.

(f) Requires HHSC, in establishing the program, to solicit expertise and assistance from interested persons, including faith- and community-based organizations, and to establish a temporary work group to provide input and assistance. Provides that this subsection expires, and any work group established under this subsection is abolished, September 1, 2017.

SECTION 2. Requires a state agency, if necessary for implementation of a provision of this Act, to request a waiver or authorization from a federal agency, and authorizes a delay of implementation until such a waiver or authorization is granted.

SECTION 3. Requires the executive commissioner, as soon as practicable after the effective date of this Act, to adopt the rules necessary to implement the changes in law made by this Act.

SECTION 4. Effective date: September 1, 2016.