

GOVERNMENT CODE

TITLE 4. EXECUTIVE BRANCH

SUBTITLE I. HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

CHAPTER 550. HUMAN SERVICES AND OTHER SOCIAL SERVICES PROVIDED
THROUGH FAITH- AND COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

SUBCHAPTER A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Sec. 550.0001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

(1) "Community-based initiative" includes a social, health, human services, or volunteer income tax assistance initiative a community-based organization operates.

(2) "Community-based organization" means a nonprofit corporation or association that is located in close proximity to the population the organization serves.

(3) "Faith-based initiative" means a social, health, or human services initiative a faith-based organization operates.

(4) "Faith-based organization" means a nonprofit corporation or association that:

(A) operates through a religious or denominational organization, including an organization that is:

(i) operated for a religious, educational, or charitable purpose; and

(ii) operated, supervised, or controlled, wholly or partly, by or in connection with a religious organization; or

(B) clearly demonstrates through the organization's mission statement, policies, or practices that the organization is guided or motivated by religion.

(5) "Interagency coordinating group" means the interagency coordinating group for faith- and community-based initiatives established under Section [550.0054](#).

(6) "State Commission on National and Community Service" means the entity used as authorized by 42 U.S.C. Section 12638(a) to carry out a state commission's duties under the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. Section 12501 et seq.).

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. [4611](#)), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

Sec. 550.0002. PURPOSE OF CHAPTER. The purpose of this chapter is to strengthen the capacity of faith- and community-based organizations and forge stronger partnerships between those organizations and state government for the legitimate public purpose of providing charitable and social services to persons in this state.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. [4611](#)), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

Sec. 550.0003. CONSTRUCTION OF CHAPTER. This chapter may not be construed to:

(1) exempt a faith- or community-based organization from any applicable state or federal law; or

(2) be an endorsement or sponsorship by this state of a faith-based organization's religious character, expression, beliefs, doctrines, or practices.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. [4611](#)), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

Sec. 550.0004. CONSISTENT APPLICATION WITH FEDERAL LAW. A power authorized or duty imposed under this chapter must be performed in a manner consistent with 42 U.S.C. Section 604a.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. [4611](#)), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

SUBCHAPTER B. GOVERNMENTAL LIAISONS FOR FAITH- AND COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

Sec. 550.0051. DEFINITION. In this subchapter, "council" means the Texas Nonprofit Council.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. [4611](#)), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

Sec. 550.0052. DESIGNATION OF FAITH- AND COMMUNITY-BASED

LIAISONS. (a) The executive commissioner, in consultation with the governor, shall designate one employee from the commission and from each health and human services agency to serve as a liaison for faith- and community-based organizations.

(b) The chief administrative officer of each of the following state agencies, in consultation with the governor, shall designate one employee from the agency to serve as a liaison for faith- and community-based organizations:

- (1) the Department of Agriculture;
- (2) the Department of Information Resources;
- (3) the Department of Public Safety;
- (4) the office of the attorney general;
- (5) the office of the comptroller;
- (6) the office of the governor;
- (7) the office of the secretary of state;
- (8) the Office of State-Federal Relations;
- (9) the Public Utility Commission of Texas;
- (10) the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality;
- (11) the Texas Department of Criminal Justice;
- (12) the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs;
- (13) the Texas Department of Insurance;
- (14) the Texas Juvenile Justice Department;
- (15) the Texas Veterans Commission;
- (16) the Texas Workforce Commission; and
- (17) other state agencies as the governor determines.

(c) The commissioner of higher education, in consultation with the presiding officer of the interagency coordinating group, shall designate one employee from an institution of higher education, as defined by Section [61.003](#), Education Code, to serve as a liaison for faith- and community-based organizations.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. [4611](#)), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

Sec. 550.0053. GENERAL POWERS AND DUTIES OF LIAISONS.

(a) A faith- and community-based liaison designated under Section [550.0052](#) shall:

(1) identify and remove unnecessary barriers to partnerships between the state agency the liaison represents and faith- and community-based organizations;

(2) provide any necessary information and training for employees of the represented state agency regarding equal opportunity standards for faith- and community-based organizations seeking to partner with state government;

(3) facilitate the identification of practices with demonstrated effectiveness for faith- and community-based organizations that partner with the represented state agency;

(4) work with the appropriate departments and programs of the represented state agency to conduct outreach efforts to inform and welcome faith- and community-based organizations that have not traditionally formed partnerships with the agency;

(5) coordinate all efforts with the governor's office of faith- and community-based initiatives and provide any requested information, support, and assistance to that office to the extent permitted by law and as feasible; and

(6) attend conferences sponsored by federal agencies and offices and other relevant entities to become and remain informed of issues and developments regarding faith- and community-based initiatives.

(b) A designated faith- and community-based liaison may coordinate and interact with statewide organizations that represent faith- or community-based organizations as necessary to accomplish the purposes of this subchapter and Subchapters A and C. Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. [4611](#)), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

Sec. [550.0054](#). INTERAGENCY COORDINATING GROUP. (a) The interagency coordinating group for faith- and community-based initiatives is composed of:

(1) each faith- and community-based liaison designated under Section [550.0052](#); and

(2) a liaison from the State Commission on National and Community Service.

(b) Service on the interagency coordinating group is an

additional duty of the office or position held by each liaison designated under Section [550.0052\(b\)](#).

(c) The liaison from the State Commission on National and Community Service is the presiding officer of the interagency coordinating group. If the State Commission on National and Community Service is abolished, the liaison from the office of the governor is the presiding officer of the group.

(d) The state agencies described by Section [550.0052\(b\)](#) shall provide administrative support for the interagency coordinating group as coordinated by the presiding officer.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. [4611](#)), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

Sec. 550.0055. DUTIES OF INTERAGENCY COORDINATING GROUP. The interagency coordinating group shall:

(1) meet periodically at the call of the presiding officer;

(2) work across state agencies and with the State Commission on National and Community Service to facilitate the removal of unnecessary interagency barriers to partnerships between state agencies and faith- and community-based organizations; and

(3) operate in a manner that promotes effective partnerships between those agencies and organizations to serve residents of this state who need assistance.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. [4611](#)), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

Sec. 550.0056. INTERAGENCY COORDINATING GROUP ANNUAL REPORT. Not later than December 1 of each year, the interagency coordinating group shall submit to the legislature a report describing in detail the activities, goals, and progress of the group. The report must be made available to the public on the office of the governor's Internet website.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. [4611](#)), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

Sec. 550.0057. TEXAS NONPROFIT COUNCIL. (a) The Texas Nonprofit Council is established to help direct the interagency coordinating group in carrying out the group's duties under this subchapter.

(b) The governor, in consultation with the presiding officer of the interagency coordinating group, shall appoint as council members two representatives from each of the following groups and entities to represent each group's and entity's appropriate sector:

- (1) community-based groups;
- (2) consultants to nonprofit corporations;
- (3) faith-based groups, at least one of which must be a statewide interfaith group;
- (4) local governments;
- (5) statewide associations of nonprofit organizations; and
- (6) statewide nonprofit organizations.

(c) A council member serves a three-year term expiring October 1. A council member may not serve more than two consecutive terms.

(d) The council shall:

- (1) elect a presiding officer or presiding officers and a secretary from among the council members; and
- (2) assist the executive commissioner in identifying an individual to fill a vacancy on the council.

(e) The state agencies described by Section 550.0052(b) shall provide administrative support to the council as coordinated by the presiding officer of the interagency coordinating group.

(f) Chapter 2110 does not apply to the council.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. 4611), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

Sec. 550.0058. DUTIES OF TEXAS NONPROFIT COUNCIL. The council, in coordination with the interagency coordinating group, shall:

- (1) make recommendations for improving contracting relationships between state agencies and faith- and

community-based organizations;

(2) develop best practices for cooperating and collaborating with faith- and community-based organizations; and

(3) identify and address:

(A) duplication of services provided by this state and faith- and community-based organizations; and

(B) gaps in state services that faith- and community-based organizations could fill.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. [4611](#)), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

Sec. 550.0059. TEXAS NONPROFIT COUNCIL BIENNIAL REPORT.

(a) The council shall prepare a biennial report detailing the council's work. The report must include any recommendations relating to legislation necessary to address an issue identified under Section [550.0058](#).

(b) Not later than December 1 of each even-numbered year, the council shall present the report to:

(1) the House Committee on Human Services or its successor;

(2) the House Committee on Public Health or its successor; and

(3) the Senate Health and Human Services Committee or its successor.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. [4611](#)), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

SUBCHAPTER C. RENEWING OUR COMMUNITIES ACCOUNT

Sec. 550.0101. DEFINITION. In this subchapter, "account" means the renewing our communities account established under Section [550.0103](#).

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. [4611](#)), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

Sec. 550.0102. PURPOSES OF SUBCHAPTER. Recognizing that faith- and community-based organizations provide a range of vital

charitable services to persons in this state, the purposes of this subchapter are to:

- (1) increase the impact and effectiveness of those organizations;

- (2) forge stronger partnerships between those organizations and state government so that:

- (A) communities are empowered to serve individuals in need; and

- (B) community capacity for providing services is strengthened; and

- (3) create a funding mechanism that:

- (A) builds on the established efforts of those organizations; and

- (B) operates to create new partnerships in local communities for the benefit of this state.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. [4611](#)), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

Sec. 550.0103. RENEWING OUR COMMUNITIES ACCOUNT. (a) The renewing our communities account is an account in the general revenue fund that may be appropriated only to the commission for:

- (1) the purposes and activities authorized by this subchapter; and

- (2) reasonable administrative expenses under this subchapter.

(b) The purposes of the account are to:

- (1) increase the capacity of faith- and community-based organizations to provide charitable services and to manage human resources and funds;

- (2) assist local governmental entities in establishing local offices to promote faith- and community-based initiatives; and

- (3) foster better partnerships between state government and faith- and community-based organizations.

(c) The account consists of:

- (1) all money appropriated for the purposes of this subchapter; and

(2) any gifts, grants, or donations received for the purposes of this subchapter.

(d) The account is exempt from the application of Section [403.095](#).

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. [4611](#)), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

Sec. 550.0104. COMMISSION POWERS AND DUTIES REGARDING ACCOUNT. (a) The commission shall:

(1) contract with the State Commission on National and Community Service to administer funds appropriated from the account in a manner that:

(A) consolidates the capacity of and strengthens national service and community and faith- and community-based initiatives; and

(B) leverages public and private funds to benefit this state;

(2) develop a competitive process for awarding grants from funds in the account that is consistent with state law and includes objective selection criteria;

(3) oversee the delivery of training and other assistance activities under this subchapter;

(4) develop criteria limiting grant awards under Section [550.0106](#)(a)(1)(A) to small and medium-sized faith- and community-based organizations that provide charitable services to persons in this state;

(5) establish general state priorities for the account;

(6) establish and monitor performance and outcome measures for persons who are awarded grants under this subchapter; and

(7) establish policies and procedures to ensure that any money appropriated from the account to the commission that is allocated to build the capacity of a faith-based organization or for a faith-based initiative is not used to advance a sectarian purpose or to engage in any form of proselytization.

(b) The commission may award money in the account

appropriated to the commission to the State Commission on National and Community Service in the form of a grant instead of contracting with that entity under Subsection (a)(1).

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. [4611](#)), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

Sec. 550.0105. ACCEPTABLE USES OF ACCOUNT FUNDS. The commission or the State Commission on National and Community Service, in accordance with the terms of a contract or grant, as applicable, may:

(1) directly, or through agreements with one or more entities serving faith- and community-based organizations that provide charitable services to persons in this state:

(A) assist the organizations with:

(i) writing or managing grants through workshops or other forms of guidance;

(ii) obtaining legal assistance related to forming a corporation or obtaining an exemption from taxation under the Internal Revenue Code; and

(iii) obtaining information about or referrals to entities that provide expertise in accounting, legal, or tax issues, program development matters, or other organizational topics;

(B) provide to the organizations information or assistance related to building the organizations' capacity for providing services;

(C) facilitate the formation of networks, the coordination of services, and the sharing of resources among the organizations;

(D) in cooperation with existing efforts, if possible, conduct needs assessments to identify gaps in services in a community that present a need for developing or expanding services;

(E) work with the organizations to identify the organizations' needs for improvements in their internal capacity for providing services;

(F) provide the organizations with information

on and assistance in identifying or using practices with demonstrated effectiveness for delivering charitable services to persons, families, and communities and in replicating charitable services programs that have demonstrated effectiveness; and

(G) encourage research into the impact of organizational capacity on program delivery for the organizations;

(2) assist a local governmental entity in creating a better partnership between government and faith- and community-based organizations to provide charitable services to persons in this state; and

(3) use funds appropriated from the account to provide matching money for federal or private grant programs that further the purposes of the account as described by Section 550.0103(b).

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. 4611), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

Sec. 550.0106. ADMINISTRATION OF ACCOUNT FUNDS. (a) If under Section 550.0104 the commission contracts with or awards a grant to the State Commission on National and Community Service, that entity:

(1) may award grants from funds appropriated from the account to:

(A) faith- and community-based organizations that provide charitable services to persons in this state for capacity-building purposes; and

(B) local governmental entities to provide seed money for local offices for faith- and community-based initiatives; and

(2) shall monitor performance and outcome measures for persons to whom that entity awards grants using the measures the commission establishes under Section 550.0104(a)(6).

(b) Any funds awarded to the State Commission on National and Community Service under a contract or through a grant under Section 550.0104 must be administered in the manner required by this subchapter.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. 4611), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

Sec. 550.0107. ACCOUNT MONITORING. The commission shall monitor the use of the funds administered by the State Commission on National and Community Service under a contract or through a grant under Section 550.0104 to ensure that the funds are used in a manner consistent with the requirements of this subchapter.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. 4611), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

Sec. 550.0108. PUBLIC INFORMATION; INTERNET POSTING REQUIREMENT. (a) Records relating to the award of a contract or grant to the State Commission on National and Community Service, or to grants that entity awards, and records relating to other uses of the awarded funds are public information subject to Chapter 552.

(b) If the commission contracts with or awards a grant to the State Commission on National and Community Service under Section 550.0104, the commission shall provide a link on the commission's Internet website to that entity's Internet website. The entity's Internet website must provide:

(1) a list of the names of each person to whom the entity awards a grant from money appropriated from the account and the amount and purpose of the grant; and

(2) information regarding the methods by which the public may request information about those grants.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. 4611), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

Sec. 550.0109. REPORTS. (a) If the State Commission on National and Community Service is awarded a contract or grant under Section 550.0104, that entity must provide to the commission periodic reports on a schedule the executive commissioner determines. The schedule of periodic reports must include an annual report that provides:

(1) a specific accounting of that entity's use of money appropriated from the account, including the names of persons to whom grants have been awarded and the purposes of those grants; and

(2) a summary of the efforts of the faith- and

community-based liaisons designated under Section 550.0052 to comply with the duties imposed by and the purposes of Sections 550.0053 and 550.0055.

(b) The commission shall:

(1) post the annual report submitted under this section on the commission's Internet website; and

(2) provide copies of the report to the governor, the lieutenant governor, and the members of the legislature.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. 4611), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

Sec. 550.0110. CONSTRUCTION OF SUBCHAPTER. If the commission contracts with or awards a grant to the State Commission on National and Community Service under Section 550.0104, this subchapter may not be construed to:

(1) release that entity from any regulations or reporting or other requirements applicable to a commission contractor or grantee;

(2) impose regulations or reporting or other requirements on that entity that do not apply to other commission contractors or grantees solely because of the entity's status;

(3) alter the nonprofit status of that entity or the requirements for maintaining that status; or

(4) convert that entity into a governmental entity because of the receipt of account funds through the contract or grant.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. 4611), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

SUBCHAPTER D. FAITH- AND COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION SUPPLEMENTAL
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING PUBLIC
ASSISTANCE

Sec. 550.0151. PROGRAM ESTABLISHMENT. (a) The commission shall:

(1) establish a program under which faith- and community-based organizations may, on an applicant's request,

contact and offer supplemental assistance to the applicant for benefits under:

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

(B) the medical assistance program under Chapter 32, Human Resources Code;

(C) the supplemental nutrition assistance program under Chapter 33, Human Resources Code; or

(D) the child health plan program under Chapter 62, Health and Safety Code; and

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

(b) At the time an individual applies for benefits described by Subsection (a), the individual must be:

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

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

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. 4611), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

Sec. 550.0152. RULES. The executive commissioner shall adopt rules to implement the program, including rules that:

(1) describe:

(A) the types of faith- and community-based organizations that may apply to participate in the program; and

(B) the qualifications and standards of service required of a participating organization;

(2) facilitate contact between an individual who enrolls in the program and a participating organization that provides supplemental services that may assist the individual;

(3) establish:

(A) processes for suspending, revoking, and periodically renewing an organization's participation in the program, as appropriate; and

(B) methods to ensure the confidentiality and

appropriate use of applicant information shared with a participating organization; and

(4) permit an individual to terminate the individual's enrollment in the program.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. [4611](#)), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

For expiration of this subchapter, see Section 550.0210.

SUBCHAPTER D-1. PILOT PROGRAM FOR SELF-SUFFICIENCY OF CERTAIN
INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE OR SUPPLEMENTAL
NUTRITION ASSISTANCE BENEFITS

Sec. 550.0201. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Financial assistance benefits" means money payments under:

(A) the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program operated under Chapter [31](#), Human Resources Code; or

(B) the state temporary assistance and support services program operated under Chapter [34](#), Human Resources Code.

(2) "Pilot program" means the pilot program for self-sufficiency of certain individuals receiving financial assistance or supplemental nutrition assistance benefits developed and implemented under this subchapter.

(3) "Self-sufficiency" means:

(A) being employed in a position that pays a sufficient wage;

(B) having financial savings in an amount equal to at least \$1,000 per member of a family's household; and

(C) maintaining a debt-to-income ratio that does not exceed 43 percent.

(4) "Slow reduction scale" means a graduated plan for reducing financial assistance or supplemental nutrition assistance benefits that correlates with a phase of the pilot program's progressive stages toward self-sufficiency.

(5) "Sufficient wage" means an amount of money sufficient to meet a family's minimum necessary spending on basic

needs, including food, child care, health insurance, housing, and transportation, as determined by a market-based calculation that uses geographically specific expenditure data.

(6) "Supplemental nutrition assistance benefits" means money payments under the supplemental nutrition assistance program operated under Chapter 33, Human Resources Code.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. 4611), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

Sec. 550.0202. PILOT PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION. (a) The commission shall develop and implement a pilot program to assist not more than 500 eligible families in gaining permanent self-sufficiency and by eliminating the need for financial assistance, supplemental nutrition assistance, or other means-tested public benefits, notwithstanding the limitations and requirements of Section 31.043, Human Resources Code.

(b) If the commission determines the number of families participating in the pilot program during a year reaches capacity for that year, the number of families that may be served under the program in the following year may be increased by 20 percent.

(c) The commission shall develop and implement the pilot program with the assistance of:

- (1) faith-based and other relevant public or private organizations;
- (2) local workforce development boards;
- (3) the Texas Workforce Commission; and
- (4) any other person the commission determines appropriate.

(d) The pilot program must operate for at least 24 months. The program must also include 16 additional months for:

- (1) planning and designing the program before the program begins operation;
- (2) recruiting eligible families to participate in the program;
- (3) randomly placing each participating family in one of at least three research groups, including:
 - (A) a control group;

(B) a group consisting of families for whom the application of income, asset, and time limits described by Section 550.0204 is waived; and

(C) a group consisting of families for whom the application of income, asset, and time limits described by Section 550.0204 is waived and who receive wraparound case management services under the program; and

(4) after the program begins operation, collecting and sharing data that allows for:

(A) obtaining participating families' eligibility and identification data before a family is randomly placed in a research group under Subdivision (3);

(B) conducting surveys or interviews of participating families to obtain information that is not contained in records related to a family's eligibility for financial assistance, supplemental nutrition assistance, or other means-tested public benefits;

(C) providing quarterly reports for not more than 60 months after a participating family's enrollment in the program regarding the program's effect on the family's labor market participation, income, and need for means-tested public benefits;

(D) assessing the interaction of the program's components with the desired outcomes of the program using data collected during the program and data obtained from state agencies concerning means-tested public benefits; and

(E) enlisting a third party to conduct a rigorous experimental impact evaluation of the program.

(e) The pilot program must provide through a community-based provider to each participating family placed in the research group described by Subsection (d)(3)(C) holistic, wraparound case management services that meet all applicable program requirements under 7 C.F.R. Section 273.7(e) or 45 C.F.R. Section 261.10, as applicable. Case management services provided under this subsection must include the strategic use of financial assistance and supplemental nutrition assistance benefits to ensure that the goals included in the family's service plan are achieved.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. [4611](#)), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

Sec. 550.0203. PILOT PROGRAM DESIGN. (a) The commission shall design the pilot program to allow social services providers, public benefit offices, and other community partners to refer potential participating families to the program.

(b) The commission shall design the pilot program to assist eligible participating families in attaining self-sufficiency by:

(1) identifying eligibility requirements for the continuation of financial assistance or supplemental nutrition assistance benefits and time limits for the benefits, the application of which may be waived for a limited period and that, if applied, would impede self-sufficiency;

(2) implementing strategies, including waiving the application of the eligibility requirements and time limits identified in Subdivision (1), to remove barriers to self-sufficiency; and

(3) moving eligible participating families toward self-sufficiency through progressive stages that include the following phases:

(A) an initial phase in which a family transitions out of an emergent crisis by securing housing, medical care, and financial assistance and supplemental nutrition assistance benefits, as necessary;

(B) a second phase in which:

(i) the family transitions toward stability by securing employment and any necessary child care and by participating in services that build the financial management skills necessary to meet financial goals; and

(ii) the family's financial assistance and supplemental nutrition assistance benefits are reduced according to the following scale:

(a) on reaching 25 percent of the family's sufficient wage, the amount of benefits is reduced by 10 percent;

(b) on reaching 50 percent of the

family's sufficient wage, the amount of benefits is reduced by 25 percent; and

(c) on reaching 75 percent of the family's sufficient wage, the amount of benefits is reduced by 50 percent;

(C) a third phase in which the family:

(i) transitions to self-sufficiency by securing employment that pays a sufficient wage, reducing debt, and building savings; and

(ii) becomes ineligible for financial assistance and supplemental nutrition assistance benefits on reaching 100 percent of the family's sufficient wage; and

(D) a final phase in which the family attains self-sufficiency by retaining employment that pays a sufficient wage, amassing at least \$1,000 per member of the family's household, and having manageable debt so that the family will no longer be dependent on financial assistance, supplemental nutrition assistance, or other means-tested public benefits for at least six months following the date the family stops participating in the program.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. [4611](#)), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

Sec. 550.0204. BENEFIT ELIGIBILITY FOR PILOT PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS. (a) To allow for continuation of financial assistance and supplemental nutrition assistance benefits and reduction of the benefits using a slow reduction scale, the pilot program will test extending the benefits for at least 24 months but not more than 60 months by waiving:

(1) the application of income and asset limit eligibility requirements for financial assistance and supplemental nutrition assistance benefits; and

(2) the time limits specified by Section [31.0065](#), Human Resources Code, for financial assistance benefits.

(b) The commission shall freeze a participating family's eligibility status for financial assistance and supplemental nutrition assistance benefits beginning on the date the

participating family enters the pilot program and ending on the date the family ceases participating in the program.

(c) The waiver of the application of any asset limit requirement under this section must allow the participating family to have assets in an amount equal to at least \$1,000 per member of the family's household.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. [4611](#)), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

Sec. 550.0205. FAMILY ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS. A family is eligible to participate in the pilot program if the family:

(1) includes one or more members who are recipients of financial assistance or supplemental nutrition assistance benefits, at least one of whom is:

(A) at least 18 years of age but not older than 62 years of age; and

(B) willing, physically able, and legally able to be employed; and

(2) has a total household income that is less than a sufficient wage based on the family's makeup and geographical area of residence.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. [4611](#)), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

Sec. 550.0206. CASE MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS. (a) An individual from a family that wishes to participate in the pilot program must attend an in-person intake meeting with a program case manager. During the intake meeting the case manager shall:

(1) determine whether:

(A) the individual's family meets the eligibility requirements under Section [550.0205](#); and

(B) the application of income or asset limit eligibility requirements for continuation of financial assistance and supplemental nutrition assistance benefits and the time limits specified by Section [31.0065](#), Human Resources Code, for financial assistance benefits may be waived under the program;

(2) review the family's demographic information and

household financial budget;

(3) assess the family members' current financial and career situations;

(4) collaborate with the individual to develop and implement strategies for removing barriers to the family attaining self-sufficiency, including waiving the application of income and asset limit eligibility requirements and time limits described by Subdivision (1)(B) to allow for continuation of financial assistance and supplemental nutrition assistance benefits; and

(5) if the individual's family is determined eligible for and chooses to participate in the program, schedule a follow-up meeting to:

(A) further assess the family's crisis;

(B) review available referral services; and

(C) create a service plan.

(b) A participating family must be assigned a program case manager who shall:

(1) if the family is determined eligible, provide the family with a verification of the waived application of asset, income, and time limits described by Section [550.0204](#), allowing the family to continue receiving financial assistance and supplemental nutrition assistance benefits on a slow reduction scale;

(2) during the initial phase of the program, create medium- and long-term goals consistent with the strategies developed under Subsection (a)(4); and

(3) assess, at the follow-up meeting scheduled under Subsection (a)(5), the family's crisis, review available referral services, and create a service plan.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. [4611](#)), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

Sec. 550.0207. PILOT PROGRAM MONITORING AND EVALUATION. The commission shall monitor and evaluate the pilot program in a manner that allows for promoting research-informed results of the program.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. [4611](#)), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

Sec. 550.0208. REPORTS. (a) On the conclusion of the pilot program but not later than 48 months following the date of the last participating family's enrollment in the program, the commission shall report to the legislature on the results of the program. The report must include:

(1) an evaluation of the program's effect on participating families in achieving self-sufficiency and eliminating the need for means-tested public benefits;

(2) the impact to this state on the costs of the financial assistance and supplemental nutrition assistance programs and of the child-care services program operated by the Texas Workforce Commission;

(3) a cost-benefit analysis of the program; and

(4) recommendations on the feasibility and continuation of the program.

(b) During the operation of the pilot program, the commission shall provide to the legislature additional reports concerning the program that the commission determines appropriate. Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. [4611](#)), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

Sec. 550.0209. RULES. The executive commissioner and the Texas Workforce Commission may adopt rules to implement this subchapter.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. [4611](#)), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

Sec. 550.0210. SUBCHAPTER EXPIRATION. This subchapter expires September 1, 2026.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. [4611](#)), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

SUBCHAPTER E. COMMUNITY-BASED NAVIGATOR PROGRAM

Sec. 550.0251. DEFINITION. In this subchapter, "navigator" means an individual who is:

(1) a volunteer or other representative of a faith- or community-based organization; and

(2) certified by the commission to provide or facilitate the provision of information or assistance through the faith- or community-based organization to individuals applying or seeking to apply online for public assistance benefits administered by the commission through the Texas Integrated Eligibility Redesign System (TIERS) or any other electronic eligibility system that is linked to or made a part of that system.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. [4611](#)), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

Sec. 550.0252. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMUNITY-BASED NAVIGATOR PROGRAM. (a) The commission shall establish a statewide community-based navigator program if the executive commissioner determines the program can be established and operated using existing resources and without disrupting other commission functions.

(b) Under the statewide community-based navigator program, the commission will train and certify as navigators volunteers and other representatives of faith- and community-based organizations. The navigators will assist individuals applying or seeking to apply online for public assistance benefits through the Texas Integrated Eligibility Redesign System (TIERS) or any other electronic eligibility system that is linked to or made a part of that system.

(c) In establishing the navigator program, the commission:

(1) shall solicit the expertise and assistance of interested persons, including faith- and community-based organizations; and

(2) may establish a work group or other temporary, informal group of interested persons to provide input and assistance.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. [4611](#)), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

Sec. 550.0253. PROGRAM STANDARDS. The executive

commissioner shall adopt standards to implement this subchapter, including standards:

- (1) subject to Section [550.0254](#), regarding the qualifications and training required for navigator certification;
- (2) regarding the suspension, revocation, and, if appropriate, periodic renewal of a navigator certificate;
- (3) to protect the confidentiality of applicant information handled by navigators; and
- (4) regarding any other issues the executive commissioner determines are appropriate.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. [4611](#)), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

Sec. 550.0254. NAVIGATOR TRAINING PROGRAM. The commission shall develop and administer a navigator training program that includes training on:

- (1) the manner of completing an online application for public assistance benefits through the Texas Integrated Eligibility Redesign System (TIERS);
- (2) the importance of maintaining the confidentiality of information a navigator handles;
- (3) the importance of obtaining and submitting complete and accurate information when completing an application for public assistance benefits online through the Texas Integrated Eligibility Redesign System (TIERS);
- (4) the financial assistance program, the supplemental nutrition assistance program, Medicaid, the child health plan program, and any other public assistance benefits program for which an individual may complete an online application through the Texas Integrated Eligibility Redesign System (TIERS); and
- (5) the method by which an individual may apply for other public assistance benefits for which the individual may not complete an online application through the Texas Integrated Eligibility Redesign System (TIERS).

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. [4611](#)), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.

Sec. 550.0255. CERTIFIED NAVIGATOR LIST. The commission shall publish and maintain on the commission's Internet website a list of certified navigators.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 769 (H.B. [4611](#)), Sec. 1.01, eff. April 1, 2025.