

By: Lucio

S.B. No. 1408

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the establishment of a matching grant program for community development in certain municipalities and counties.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Title 2, Agriculture Code, is amended by adding Chapter 23 to read as follows:

CHAPTER 23. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM FOR RURAL AND SMALL COMMUNITIES

Sec. 23.001. DEFINITION. In this chapter, "program" means the community development matching grant program established under this chapter.

Sec. 23.002. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM. (a) Subject to the availability of federal and state funds, the department shall create a community development matching grant program to foster community and economic development in certain municipalities and counties.

(b) The department shall award matching grants under the program to assist in the financing of:

(1) trade-related initiatives and programs, as determined by the commissioner, that will assist farmers, ranchers, and the equine industry in eligible municipalities or counties to develop and export their produce, products, and services to international markets;

(2) community development projects, including basic

1 infrastructure projects such as water or wastewater facilities and
2 planning, street improvements, and drainage;

3 (3) capacity-building projects relating to local
4 public facility and housing planning activities;

5 (4) renewable energy projects to help participating
6 rural communities reduce energy costs for water and wastewater
7 treatment facilities;

8 (5) restoration projects for water or wastewater
9 infrastructure based on urgent need, if the infrastructure poses an
10 imminent threat to life or health;

11 (6) economic development projects to create or retain
12 permanent employment opportunities;

13 (7) economic development projects to support economic
14 and management development activities at the county level;

15 (8) environmental projects that provide assistance to
16 small communities for solving water or wastewater problems using
17 self-help methods; and

18 (9) other community development projects as
19 determined by the department with the assistance of the Texas Rural
20 Health and Economic Development Advisory Council.

21 Sec. 23.003. ELIGIBLE ENTITIES. A municipality or county is
22 eligible for a matching grant under this chapter if the
23 municipality or county is:

24 (1) a nonentitlement area, as defined by 42 U.S.C.
25 Section 5302(a)(7), under the federal community development block
26 grant nonentitlement program; and

27 (2) in good standing with the department and with the

1 United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

2 Sec. 23.004. APPLICATIONS. Eligible municipalities or
3 counties may submit a single-jurisdiction application or a
4 multi-jurisdiction application for a matching grant under the
5 program for a community development project. An application must
6 include a description of the project proposal.

7 Sec. 23.005. PREFERENCE FOR MULTI-JURISDICTION
8 APPLICATIONS. (a) In awarding a matching grant under the program,
9 the department shall give preference to an application submitted
10 under the program by two or more eligible municipalities or
11 counties if the application shows that the proposed community
12 development project will mutually benefit the residents of the
13 communities applying for the funds.

14 (b) A multi-jurisdiction application solely for
15 administrative convenience may not be accepted by the department.

16 (c) A municipality or county that has submitted a
17 multi-jurisdiction application may not submit a
18 single-jurisdiction application for a matching grant for the same
19 project for which the multi-jurisdiction application was
20 submitted.

21 (d) If a matching grant is awarded under this program, one
22 of the municipalities or counties participating under a
23 multi-jurisdiction application shall be primarily accountable to
24 the department for financial compliance and performance
25 requirements under the program. All municipalities and counties
26 applying under a multi-jurisdiction application must meet
27 application threshold requirements.

1 Sec. 23.006. RULES. (a) The department by rule shall set
2 criteria for matching grant requirements and participation under
3 the program.

4 (b) The department shall adopt rules necessary to implement
5 this chapter.

6 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
7 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
8 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
9 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
10 Act takes effect September 1, 2015.