Economy

Economic Development

Rural Law Enforcement Grants Senate Bill (SB) 22

Senate Bill (SB) 22 establishes a grant program that provides financial assistance to sheriff's departments, constable's offices and district and county attorney's offices in eligible counties to ensure professional law enforcement and legal representation of the people's interests throughout the state.

The law provides salary supplements for several positions in rural areas. Eligible counties were able to apply for grant funds in January, 2024, regardless of a particular county's fiscal start-date. In future years, counties and prosecutor's offices will apply online according to the start of their fiscal year.

Eligibility

The Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts will use the federal decennial census as the source for the population counts (2020 census data).

A qualified county or prosecutor's office means the office meets the standards provided by the law.

- Offices must serve counties or jurisdictions with overall populations of 300,000 or less.

- If a constable is already making above the minimum annual salary, the county is not eligible for grant funding to increase the salary.
- If a county already pays the minimum salary levels for the sheriff, deputies and jailers, the county may still apply for funds for additional salaries, personnel or equipment.

Minimum salaries and other eligible expenditures are detailed in Local Government Code (LG) 130.911.

Available Funds and Qualified Expenditures

▼ Sheriff's Offices

For sheriff's offices, a qualified county is eligible for the following:

- $250,000 if the county has a population of less than 10,000;
- $350,000 if the county has a population of 10,000 or more and less than 50,000; or
- $500,000 if the county has a population of 50,000 or more and 300,000 or less.

Counties awarded money for sheriff's offices must use the grant funds to:

- provide a minimum annual salary of:
  - $75,000 for a county sheriff;
  - $45,000 for each deputy who makes motor vehicle stops in the routine performance of their duties;
  - $40,000 for each jailer whose duties include the safekeeping of prisoners and the security of a jail operated by the county;
- increase the salary of those listed above;
- hire additional deputies or staff for the sheriff's office; and

- purchase vehicles, firearms and safety equipment for the sheriff's office.

Before the county can authorize the use of the grant money for the other allowable expenses, **the county must first use the grant money to meet minimum annual salaries** of the county sheriff, deputies who make motor vehicle stops in the routine performance of their duties and jailers whose duties include the safekeeping of prisoners and the security of a jail operated by the county.

Counties may use grant funds to increase salaries for those listed in Local Government Code Section 130.911(e)(1) above the established minimum amounts stated.

If a sheriff holds dual offices in the county, the portion of the salary attributable to the sheriff's duties must be increased to meet the minimum salary required in Local Government Code Section 130.911(e)(1).

If a sheriff's office employs part-time employees or pays its employees hourly rather than salary wages, the office must pay an hourly wage that would be the equivalent of the minimum annual salary as per Section 130.911(e) of the Local Government Code.

Additionally, if a county uses grant funds to increase the salary of the county sheriff, deputy sheriff, jailer or any additional staff hired under Local Government Code Sections 130.911(e)(1), (2) or (3), grant funds may be spent for the associated benefits that are incremental to the increase in salary.

Benefits that are not tied to the increase in salary, such as longevity pay, cannot be paid for with grant funding. Overtime pay is also not an eligible use of funds, as per Rule 16.304.

For the purposes of this section, jailer is defined as “a person employed by the county sheriff as a licensed county jailer, under the provisions and requirements of Local Government Code, §85.005 and Occupations Code, §1701.301 whose duties include the safekeeping of prisoners and the security of a jail operated by the county” per Rule 16.300(2).

▶ Constable's Offices

▼ Prosecutor's Offices

For prosecutor’s offices, the Comptroller’s office will use the population of a county in a single-county jurisdiction to determine funding eligibility. In a multi-county jurisdiction, the Comptroller’s office will use the sum of the population in each county. A jurisdiction with a population of 300,000 or less is eligible for the following amounts for the prosecutor’s office:

- $100,000 if the jurisdiction has a population of less than 10,000;
- $175,000 if the jurisdiction has a population of 10,000 or more and less than 50,000; or
- $275,000 if the jurisdiction has a population of 50,000 or more and 300,000 or less.

A prosecutor’s office that is awarded grant funds from SB 22 must use the grant money to:

- increase the salary of an assistant attorney, an investigator or a victim assistance coordinator employed at the office; or
- hire additional staff for the office.

If a rural prosecutor’s office uses grant funds to increase the salary of an assistant attorney, investigator, a victim assistance coordinator or any additional staff hired under Local Government Code Sections 130.913(e)(1) or (2), grant funds may be spent for the associated benefits that are incremental to the increase in salary.

Benefits that are not tied to the increase in salary, such as longevity pay, cannot be paid for with grant funding.

Disallowed expenses

- software;
- increasing salaries of current employees outside of those authorized in the statute;
- contract employees;
- overtime pay;
- hazard pay; and
- office equipment.

Contact us with questions about the SB22 program.

[mailto:SB22.grants@cpa.texas.gov]

Need Help?

For additional information, contact the Data Analysis and Transparency Division [comptroller.texas.gov/economy/contact.php].