

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
867270 JG-D

S.B. 1445
By: Perry
Health & Human Services
3/16/2019
As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Almost one in 10 (9.5 percent) Texas seniors are food insecure. Many are forced to choose between food and medicine, or food and utilities. Food insecurity in seniors exacerbates health problems and increases the cost of health care.

We can improve the health of our seniors by helping them enroll in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to increase their access to good nutrition.

S.B. 1445 will simplify the SNAP application and enrollment process for Texas seniors. This bill would direct the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to:

1. Implement a simplified application and recertification process for households comprised only of seniors by:

- waiving interview requirements;
- using a simplified application form;
- allowing seniors to remain enrolled for 36 months; and
- eliminating reporting requirements except for significant changes in income or assets.

2. Implement data matching with Medicaid to identify seniors who are not enrolled in SNAP. Many seniors on Medicaid are eligible for SNAP but are not enrolled. Data matching would enable HHSC to identify and enroll seniors eligible for SNAP.

As proposed, S.B. 1445 amends current law relating to simplified certification and recertification requirements for certain persons under the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 33.015(a), Human Resources Code, as follows:

- (a) Requires the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), in administering the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP), except as provided by Subsection (c) (relating to the authority of HHSC to require a person to appear at HHSC offices to establish eligibility or comply with certain eligibility recertification requirements) and Section 33.019, to allow a person to comply with initial eligibility requirements, including any initial interview, and with subsequent periodic eligibility recertification requirements by telephone instead of through a personal appearance at HHSC offices if certain criteria are met.

SECTION 2. Amends Subchapter A, Chapter 33, Human Resources Code, by adding Section 33.019, as follows:

Sec. 33.019. SIMPLIFIED CERTIFICATION AND RECERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTAIN SNAP APPLICANTS AND RECIPIENTS. (a) Requires HHSC to develop and implement simplified certification and recertification requirements for individuals who are 60 years of age or older and who reside in a household in which every individual residing in the household is 60 years of age or older. Requires the simplified requirements to:

(1) allow an individual described by this section to waive initial certification and recertification interview requirements;

(2) simplify and reduce the number of verification requirements for certifying and recertifying eligibility to receive benefits, which is required to include the use of a shortened application form; and

(3) allow the individual to remain eligible for benefits for 36 months after certification and after each recertification.

(b) Provides that an individual described by this section is not required to report to HHSC during the 36-month eligibility period unless the individual receives a significant increase in income or assets during that period.

(c) Requires HHSC to, in a manner that complies with federal law, use data matching to help enroll in SNAP eligible individuals described by this section who are receiving Medicaid or Medicare benefits.

SECTION 3. Makes application of Section 33.019, Human Resources Code, as added by this Act, prospective to January 1, 2020.

SECTION 4. Requires a state agency affected by a provision of this Act to request a waiver of authorization from a federal agency if the state agency determines that such waiver of authorization is necessary for implementation of the provision, and authorizes the agency to delay implementation until the waiver or authorization is granted.

SECTION 5. Effective date: September 1, 2019.