

By: Representative Summers

To: Public Health and Human  
Services; Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 785

1 AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN  
2 SERVICES TO ESTABLISH A GRANT PROGRAM FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING  
3 HOUSING ASSISTANCE TO CHRONICALLY HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS AND  
4 FAMILIES; TO PRESCRIBE CERTAIN COMPONENTS THAT MUST BE INCLUDED IN  
5 THE PROGRAM; TO AUTHORIZE THE DEPARTMENT TO ACCEPT FUNDING FROM  
6 PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SOURCES FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE PROGRAM; TO  
7 PROHIBIT THE DEPARTMENT FROM CONTRACTING WITH A PRIVATE ENTITY FOR  
8 THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROGRAM; TO REQUIRE THE LEGISLATURE TO  
9 APPROPRIATE SUFFICIENT FUNDS FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE PROGRAM; AND  
10 FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

11 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

12 **SECTION 1.** (1) The Mississippi Department of Human Services  
13 shall establish and implement a grant program for the purpose of  
14 providing assistance to chronically homeless individuals and  
15 families in procuring temporary and permanent housing in order  
16 that those persons, removed from life on the streets, can focus on  
17 learning and putting into practice the skills necessary to live  
18 meaningful lives and become productive members of the community.

19 (2) The program established under this section must provide  
20 for no less than the following:

21 (a) A clear set of eligibility criteria setting forth  
22 the requirements for participation in the grant program;



23           (b) An outreach and engagement component that helps  
24 identify homeless persons who may qualify for assistance under the  
25 program and which promotes efforts to build relationships between  
26 outreach workers and the homeless, particularly runaways and  
27 street youth;

28           (c) A rapid re-housing component that focuses on  
29 housing identification, rent, utility and move-in assistance;

30           (d) Collaboration with existing state and federal  
31 programs that provide for the delivery of services and treatments  
32 that are needed by those persons experiencing chronic  
33 homelessness, including programs providing substance abuse  
34 treatment, mental health services, screening and diagnostic  
35 services, primary health services, job training and educational  
36 services; and

37           (e) An educational component to increase community  
38 awareness of homelessness and to coordinate partnerships within  
39 communities aimed at preventing, reducing and ultimately ending  
40 the cycle of homelessness.

41           (3) The Department of Human Services shall utilize available  
42 personnel and space of the department in administering the program  
43 created pursuant to this section. The department is encouraged to  
44 collaborate with other public entities to achieve maximum results  
45 in effectively reducing homelessness in communities throughout the  
46 state. However, the department may not contract with any private  
47 entity for the administration of the grant program.



48           (4) The department shall identify and submit applications  
49 for financial grants that may be available from federal and  
50 private sources to help support the program created under this  
51 section. The department may accept gifts, donations and grants of  
52 any kind made for the support of the program and may allocate such  
53 gifts, donations and grants exclusively toward services provided  
54 under the program.

55           (5) Subject to the availability of funding, the Legislature  
56 shall appropriate to the Mississippi Department of Human Services  
57 such funds as may be necessary to carry out the intent of this  
58 section.

59           **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
60 and after July 1, 2021.

