

2009 Affordable Housing Needs Score Methodology

Background

The AHNS scoring criterion is used to evaluate HOME, Housing Tax Credit (HTC), and Housing Trust Fund (HTF) applications. The formula is submitted annually for public comment. The final version is published in the SLIHP.

While not specifically legislated by the state, the AHNS helps address other need based funding allocation requirements by responding to:

- an IRS Section 42 requirement that the selection criteria used to award the HTC funding must include “housing needs characteristics.”
- State Auditor’s Office (SAO) and Sunset findings that called for the use of objective, need based criteria to award TDHCA’s funding.

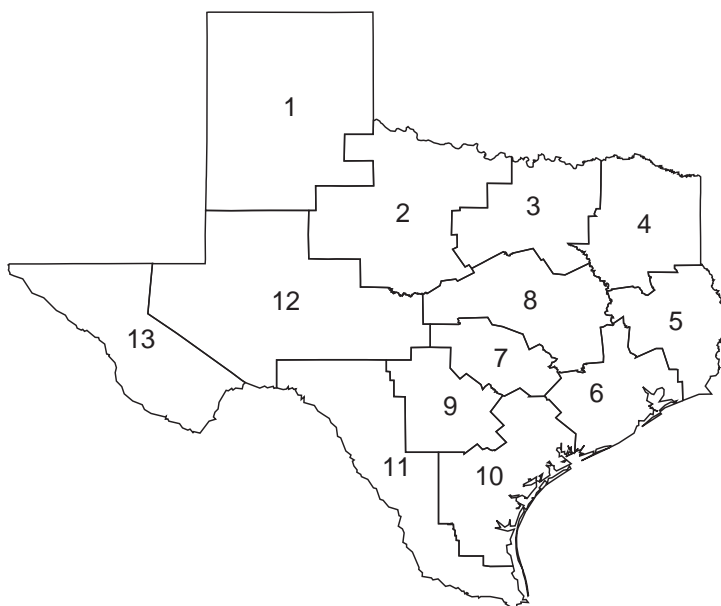


Figure 1. State Service Regions

The AHNS is an extension of the TDHCA Regional Allocation Formula (RAF) in that it provides a comparative assessment of each area’s level of need relative to the other areas within its State Service Region. Through the AHNS, applicants are encouraged to request funding to serve communities that have a high level of need.

The HOME, HTF, and HTC programs use slightly modified versions of the AHNS because the programs have different eligible activities, households, and geographical areas. Under §2306.111(c) of the Texas Government Code, at least 95 percent of HOME funding is set aside for non-participating jurisdictions. Therefore, the HOME AHNS only uses need data for non-participating jurisdictions.

Methodology

The following steps measure each area’s level of affordable housing need.

- 1) The Census number of households at or below 80% AMFI with cost burden establishes baseline for each area’s number of households in need of housing assistance. The type of household considered for this baseline varies by activity.
 - a) Renter data is used for the rental development (RD), tenant based rental assistance (TBRA), and down payment assistance (DPA) scores.
 - b) Owner data is used for the owner occupied rehabilitation (OCC) score.
- 2) For each activity, an adjusted number of households with cost burden is calculated based on the difference between the area’s population in the 2000 Census and the most accurate and recent population estimate data available.³⁾ The number of households assisted using TDHCA funding since the Census was taken (April 1, 2000) is subtracted from the adjusted number of households with cost burden. The resulting number shows the area’s estimated remaining need.
 - a) For HTC scores, RD activity is used;
 - b) For HOME and HTF TBRA and RD scores, TBRA¹ and RD activity is used;

¹ Because of the limited duration of TBRA, a conversion factor was used to equate the value of a voucher to an affordable housing unit. This factor equaled the voucher duration divided by the number of years since the Census. For 2008, this is 2 years/8 years or an approximate reduction in the number of households in need by 25 percent for each TBRA voucher.

- c) For HOME and HTF DPA scores, First Time Homebuyer and HOME DPA activity is used; and
 - d) For HOME and HTF OCC scores, HOME OCC activity is used.
- 4) The estimated remaining need measure is used to quantify the area's level of need for each scoring activity as measured by the ratio of the area's households in need to the area's total households. This ratio shows the concentration of need within an area.
 - 5) A sliding scale that compares each area's level of need to the region's other areas is used to assign points to each area based on its relative concentration of need (maximum of 6 points).

Rural and Urban Need

Section 2306.111(d) of the Government Code requires the RAF to consider rural and urban areas in its distribution of funds. To assist with this distribution, each area is classified using the RAF's geographic area definitions.

The RAF and AHNS use the following definitions to categorize rural and urban areas.

1. Area - The geographic area contained within the boundaries of:
 - a. an incorporated place, or
 - b. a Census Designated Place (CDP) as established by the U.S. Census Bureau for the most recent Decennial Census.
2. Rural – An Area that is:
 - a. outside the boundaries of a metropolitan statistical area (MSA); or
 - b. within the boundaries of a MSA, if the Area has a population of 25,000² or less and does not share a boundary with an Urban Area.³
 - c. in an Area that is eligible for funding by the Texas Rural Development Office of the United States Department of Agriculture, other than an Area that is located in a municipality with a population of more than 50,000.⁴
3. Urban – An Area that:
 - a. is located within the boundaries of a metropolitan statistical area (MSA); or
 - b. does not meet the Rural Area definition.

For the HOME program, a county score is used for activities that will serve more than one Area within a county. If multiple counties or Areas in multiple counties will be served by an application, then the county scores will be averaged. Participating Jurisdictions (PJ) receive a score of zero.

² The definition of "population" in state law (Sec. 311.005(3), Government Code) is "the population shown by the most recent federal decennial census." Because of this requirement, the decennial census place population must be used to make the area type determination.

³ Applicants may petition TDHCA to update the "Rural" designation of an incorporated area within a metropolitan statistical area by providing a letter from a local official. Such letter must clearly indicate that the area's incorporated boundary touches the boundary of another incorporated area with a population of over 25,000. To treat all applicants equitably, such letter must be provided to TDHCA prior to the commencement of the pre-application submission period for HTC applications, or application submission period for HOME applications.

⁴ TDHCA utilizes the most recent list of designated places produced by the Texas USDA Rural Development State Office. Applicants may petition TDHCA to update the "Rural" designation of an area by providing a letter from a USDA Rural Development official clearly stating that the area is eligible for funding by USDA Rural Development. To treat all applicants equitably, such letter must be provided to TDHCA prior to the commencement of the pre-application submission period for HTC applications, or application submission period for HOME applications.