



NEWS

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Contact: Gordon Anderson/512.475.4743
Jorge Reyes/512.475.4577

Maverick County receives \$1.2 million for Colonia Self-Help Center

TDHCA award to assist 5,000 households living in three colonias

(AUSTIN) — The quality of life for approximately 5,000 Maverick County colonia residents may soon brighten through the assistance of the Maverick County Self-Help Center, which today received a \$1.2 million contract from the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA). The contract award, made through TDHCA's Colonia Self-Help Center (SHC) Program, will help the county provide a wide range of housing related services designed to improve living conditions in three colonias.

The Maverick County SHC will serve Loma Bonita, Las Quintas, and Las Brisas colonias, and will be administered through a contract with Community Action Social Services & Education, Inc., a local nonprofit organization. TDHCA estimates that 5,184 residents will receive assistance through this Colonia SHC Program contract.

"We recognize that many colonia residents must face and overcome enormous obstacles just to meet the most basic of housing needs," noted Michael Gerber, TDHCA Executive Director. "By partnering with the county, the Department is helping these residents build or repair their homes and obtain the skills they need to improve their lives. The self-help nature of this program reflects the 'can-do' spirit of the people and region, as well as helping maximize the state's resources."

TDHCA has contracted with the county to rehabilitate 22 homes to bring them up to US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Colonia Housing Standards, assist 60 households with self-help home repairs, build 12 new homes, offer a wide range of technical assistance to 2,800 residents, provide title search assistance, remove junked automobiles and other solid waste, and to perform community outreach.

The Colonia SHC Program was created by the Texas legislature in 1995 to assist very low income individuals and families finance, refinance, construct, improve, or maintain a safe, suitable home in a designated colonia service area.

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In accordance with state law, the Department established self-help centers in Cameron/Willacy, El Paso, Hidalgo, Starr, and Webb counties. In 2001, TDHCA opened two additional Colonia Self-Help Centers serving Maverick and Val Verde counties to address the needs of colonia residents living in these locations.

Funding for TDHCA's Colonia Self-Help Centers comes from HUD's Community Development Block Grant Program allocation to the State of Texas.

About The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs

The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs is Texas' lead agency responsible for affordable housing, community and energy assistance programs, and colonia activities. The Department annually administers funds in excess of \$400 million, the majority of which is derived from mortgage revenue bond financing and refinancing, federal grants, and federal tax credits.