



NEWS

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State housing agency steps up aid to tornado victims in Moore, Swisher counties

Regional non-profit to help administer \$10,000 to two hard-hit communities

(AUSTIN) — Food, shelter, clothing, medication, and a host of other emergency goods and services are heading to two Panhandle communities devastated in April by a series of tornadoes thanks to the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA).

TDHCA today announced a \$10,000 disaster relief award to Panhandle Community Services, a non-profit organization providing poverty related programs and services to very low income residents in 26 counties. Panhandle Community Services will administer the grant and provide direct emergency assistance to residents in Cactus and Tulia still suffering from the aftereffects of the tornadoes.

“I know these funds will really help some of the folks in Cactus get back on their feet,” said State Representative Warren Chisum. “I’ve encouraged TDHCA and Panhandle to do all they can to help rebuild the community.”

“I appreciate the State’s response to our drastic situation in my district,” said State Representative David Swinford. “All agencies have been great to work with, and I am proud of this agency’s special attention to our needs.”

“Our agency staff is well aware of the terrible damage in these two communities, and we know that many residents are still suffering in the wake of these storms,” said Michael Gerber, TDHCA Executive Director. “TDHCA is pleased to provide these funds which will help Panhandle Community Services provide aid to Cactus and Tulia with some of their immediate needs.”

On April 21, the Panhandle communities of Cactus and Tulia were each hit by tornadoes that left 275 residents in a Dumas shelter and another 479 residents needing emergency assistance.

Governor Rick Perry on April 25 declared Moore and Swisher counties disaster areas, and officials from Panhandle Community Services quickly requested the emergency disaster relief funds which the Department today approved.

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Panhandle Community Services is a non-profit organization that is part of the state's network of community action agencies and holds a contract with TDHCA through its Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Program. The \$10,000 CSBG emergency disaster relief grant will help provide temporary shelter, food, clothing, medication, blankets, essential appliances, diapers, items of personal hygiene, cleaning supplies, and other emergency needs to residents of Cactus and Tulia.

Panhandle Community Services will coordinate service delivery with the local Red Cross, Salvation Army, and Moore and Swisher counties.

The US Department of Health and Human Services is the funding source for the CSBG Program. The program funds the delivery of services to residents in all 254 counties earning no more than 125 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. For Texas, this equals an annual income of \$20,650 for a family of four.

CSBG funds support a variety of direct services in addition to helping maintain the core administrative elements of local community action agencies. Services include health services for children, families, and the elderly; job training and employment services; transportation, substance abuse counseling; emergency financial assistance; and other poverty related services. Funding is also provided to organizations serving Native American and migrant and seasonal farm workers, and for other innovative projects.

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.