



NEWS

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

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Contact: Gordon Anderson 512.475.4743
Jill McFarren 512.475.2844

State housing agency invests \$2 million into Cameron County housing market

(AUSTIN) — Recognizing that young families and senior citizens often face the greatest obstacles in securing affordable housing, the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) and State Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr. have announced a \$2 million package of housing funds to four Cameron County applicants to assist more than 150 first time homebuyers and elder renters, providing much-needed economic benefits to the local construction industry.

“The Rio Grande Valley has been among the leading regions of the state in terms of population growth for some time, but unfortunately the housing market has outpaced the income of some Cameron County residents,” said Senator Lucio. “These housing funds will help buyers and renters, generate construction jobs, increase the area tax base, and create a stronger, more cohesive community.”

“We realize that homeownership is the key to creating stable families and communities,” said Michael Gerber, TDHCA Executive Director. “These homebuyer funds will help families overcome the biggest obstacle many homebuyers face: meeting the down payment requirements. In addition to helping strengthen families and neighborhoods, this homebuyer award will also help generate local construction jobs and add to the local tax base.”

TDHCA awarded homebuyer assistance funds to the Cameron County Housing Finance Agency, the Community Development Corporation of Brownsville, and the San Benito Public Housing Authority. Each was awarded \$312,000 through the Department’s HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program to provide down payment and closing cost assistance to qualifying first time homebuyers. Assistance is limited to 6 percent of the home purchase price or \$10,000, whichever is greater. Combined, the three organizations are expected to help place 90 households in a home of their own.

In addition, TDHCA also announced a \$1.1 million HOME Program rental housing development award to the private developers of the 58-unit Buena Vida Apartments. The property, which will be built in La Feria, will specifically serve income eligible elderly residents with decent, affordable rental housing. Rental housing developed with HOME Program funds must reserve units for qualifying low income tenants and cap monthly rents at a rate set by formula.

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221 E. 11TH • AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701 • (800) 525-0657 • (512) 475-3800

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“Senior citizens are among our society’s most vulnerable members, and they often face significant hurdles finding safe, decent housing they can afford,” Gerber continued. “Unfortunately, the challenge is even greater in rural parts of our state where there are simply fewer housing choices. Our funds will create attractive, quality rental housing that will have an immediate and positive impact on its tenants while creating economic opportunities through construction and related jobs.”

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is the funding source for the HOME Program, Under HOME Program rules, funds may be used to serve households earning no more than 80 percent of the area median family income. For Cameron County, this equals an annual income of \$34,900 for a family for four.

Eligible applicants include qualifying units of local government, public housing authorities, Community Housing Development Organizations and other nonprofit groups, and qualifying for-profit organizations.

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 services, energy assistance, and colonia housing programs. The Department annually administers more than \$400 million through for-profit, nonprofit, and local government partnerships to deliver local housing and community-based opportunities and assistance to Texans in need.