



# NEWS

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TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

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## **Hidalgo County receives \$1.2 million for Colonia Self Help Center**

*TDHCA award to assist over 3,500 residents living in five colonias*

(AUSTIN) — Understanding that developing safe, sanitary housing is the first building block in improving the living conditions in the state's colonias, the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) today awarded a \$1.2 million contract to Hidalgo County to operate the county's Colonia Self Help Center (SHC), which promotes homeownership and self-reliance to residents living in five area colonias.

The award – the fourth consecutive SHC award made to Hidalgo County – was made through TDHCA's Colonia SHC Program and will help provide a wide variety of technical and consumer assistance to an estimated 3,573 residents living in LJ#1, Muniz, South Tower Estates, Sanchez Ranch, and Linda Vista Estates colonias. This assistance supports the efforts of colonia residents in improving their own living standards while making the most of limited state housing funds.

“Many colonia residents must overcome enormous obstacles just to meet the most basic of housing needs,” noted State Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr. “Hidalgo County and TDHCA will partner together to help these residents build or repair their homes and obtain the skills they need to improve their lives.”

County officials have subcontracted with Proyecto Azteca, a rural nonprofit housing organization, to operate the center and provide services to colonia residents. Under the contract, Proyecto Azteca will among other activities help 10 households acquire a title to their homes, provide 15 classes on home construction skills, rehabilitate or repair 63 homes, reconstruct 10 homes, build 12 new homes, and provide homebuyer assistance for another 12 households.

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, said Michael Gerber, TDHCA Executive Director.

Funds for the Colonia SHC Program come from the state's allocation of federal Community Development Block Grant funds and are designed to benefit households earning no more than 80 percent of the area median family income. For Hidalgo County, this equals an annual income of \$34,900 for a family of four.

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**About The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs**

*The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs is the state agency responsible for affordable housing, community and energy assistance programs, and colonia activities. 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.*