



NEWS

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

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State housing agency awards \$1.2 million for Webb County Colonia Self-Help Center

(AUSTIN) — Recognizing that improving housing conditions in the state’s colonias can lead to improved health and economic standards for colonia residents, the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs today announced that it has awarded Webb County a \$1.2 million contract to operate the county’s Colonia Self-Help Center, which provides a wide range of housing related services designed to help qualifying households improve their own circumstances.

The Webb County Colonia Self-Help Center (SHC) will serve an estimated 1,212 residents living in Los Altos, Tanquecitos I and II, San Carlos I and II, Ranchitos 359 East, and D-5 Acres colonias. Webb County officials have awarded the principal subcontract to service and operate the self-help center to the Webb County Community Action Agency, a local nonprofit organization.

“With this funding TDHCA is empowering colonia residents to improve their homes and communities through their own sweat equity and neighborly collaboration,” State Senator Judith Zaffirini said. “This is exactly the kind of project that I foresaw in 1995 when I authored and passed SB 1509, which created seven Self-Help Centers throughout the border region. Operating like a library, the centers offer a rich variety of opportunities for home improvement projects and skills development classes. They truly are a treasure, and I will continue to prioritize state funding for them.”

“We recognize that most 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 Webb County to rehabilitate 20 homes, rebuild two homes, construct two new homes, present 40 classes in construction skills development, present 32 homeownership education classes and complete 21 house-to-line water connections, as well as help fund a tool lending library and a solid waste removal project.

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The Colonia SHC Program helps provide technical assistance to eligible colonia residents in the areas of housing rehabilitation, new home construction, construction skills training, and many other housing related topics.

Funding for the program is provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development through its 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 the state 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.