



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

May 15, 2020

HUD Fort Worth Regional Office
Mr. Mark Roy
801 Cherry Street, Unit 45
Fort Worth, Texas 76102

RE: 2019 One-Year Action Plan – Minor Amendment, Emergency Services – Help for Colonias (Emergency SHC)

Dear Mr. Roy,

The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA or the Department) and Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) propose to revise the 2019 One-Year Action Plan (OYAP) as described below and in the attachment.

The change allows for flexibility in funds deobligated from the Colonia Self Help Center (SHC), a state legislative set-aside. The Emergency SHC strategy is consistent with the mission of the program – to aid colonia residents in seven designated counties through public services and other direct assistance. The Colonia SHC is intended to be a sustainable opportunity for colonia residents, while tailored to the needs of each eligible county. Internal administrative requirements in the traditional Colonia SHC program restrict the ability of the program to respond to emergency situations.

This Minor Amendment allows TDHCA to reassign administrative responsibilities for certain deobligated Colonia SHC funds to TDA, to provide public services (subsistence payments) in the spirit of the Colonia SHC program, with flexibility to address the emergency situations resulting from the current public health and economic crisis.

As the proposed revisions will not develop new activities or significantly change the method of distribution connected to the 2019 OYAP, the State of Texas is not required to make a substantial amendment.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Barnard

Suzanne Barnard, State Director
Texas Community Development Block Grant Program

AP-30 Methods of Distribution – 91.320(d)&(k)

Table 8 - Distribution Methods by State Program

8	State Program Name:	Colonia SHC Legislative Set-Aside (administered by TDHCA)
	Funding Sources:	CDBG CDBG Colonias Set-aside
	Describe the state program addressed by the Method of Distribution.	Administered by TDHCA and funded through CDBG, the Colonia SHC Program serves colonias along the Texas-Mexico border. Colonia SHCs provide concentrated on-site technical assistance to low- and very low-income individuals and families in a variety of ways including housing, community development activities, infrastructure improvements, outreach and education. Key services include: housing rehabilitation; new construction; surveying and platting; construction skills training; tool library access for self-help construction; housing finance; credit and debt counseling; grant writing; infrastructure construction and access; contract-for-deed conversions; and capital access for mortgages. If the Emergency Services – Help for Colonias (Emergency SHC) strategy is funded, Emergency SHC will provide subsistence payments to families experiencing an emergency, such as economic impacts of the Coronavirus public health crisis, in counties eligible for Colonia SHC funding. Emergency SHC will be administered by TDA in coordination with TDHCA staff.
	Describe all of the criteria that will be used to select applications and the relative importance of these criteria.	Approximately 40,180 residents live in the targeted colonias served by the Colonia SHC Program. The Colonia SHCs process applications from income eligible households on a first-come, first-served basis. Eligible households must reside in a targeted colonia, which has been preselected by each county and approved by C-RAC. Households must earn less than 80% of AMI.
	If only summary criteria were described, how can potential applicants access application manuals or other state publications describing the application criteria? (CDBG only)	Colonia SHCs are statutorily required to establish SHCs in Cameron/Willacy, El Paso, Hidalgo, Starr and Webb counties. Statute allows for additional Colonia SHCs to be established if any other county if TDHCA deems it necessary and appropriate and if the county is designated an economically distressed area under statute. In 2001, TDHCA established additional Colonia SHCs in Maverick and Val Verde counties. Each Colonia SHC must serve five targeted colonias within the county it serves. The Colonia SHCs and TDHCA's Border Field Offices both conduct outreach activities throughout the contract period to inform colonia residents of program benefits and eligibility criteria and to provide application assistance.

<p>Describe how resources will be allocated among funding categories.</p>	<p>Of the State CDBG allocation, 2.5% (approximately) is allocated to this fund. Resources are allocated after analysis and input from each community. Counties that are statutorily designated to participate in the Colonia SHC Program conduct a needs assessment before proposing which target colonias should receive concentrated attention and the scope of program activities and funding. Each Colonia SHC designs a proposal unique to the needs of a specific community. After the C-RAC, composed of residents from previously participating colonias, reviews and approves the proposals from the counties, the proposals are then reviewed and approved by the TDHCA Governing Board for implementation. Funds deobligated from prior Colonia SHC Program grant years and any program income recovered from Colonia SHC funds shall generally be used by TDHCA for the Colonia SHC Program.</p> <p>Funds previously awarded and deobligated or terminated from Colonia Self-Help Center subrecipients, which are nearing their federal expiration date (less than 30 months available for expenditures), may be re-allocated to an Emergency Services – Help for Colonias (Emergency SHC) strategy.</p>
<p>Describe threshold factors and grant size limits.</p>	<p>Maximum \$1,000,000/Minimum \$500,000</p> <p>For the Colonia SHC, program rules limit the assistance to up to \$1,000,000 per Colonia SHC per contract period. If there are insufficient funds available to fully fund an application, the Administrator may accept the amount available and wait for remaining funds to be committed the next program year. Each program activity, such as new construction, rehabilitation, and tool library operation, for example, are limited to specific dollar amounts. TDHCA, at its discretion and in coordination with the county, may amend a contract to increase the budget amount based on Colonia SHC performance and other factors.</p>
<p>What are the outcome measures expected as a result of the method of distribution?</p>	<p>For the Colonia SHC Program, outcomes include: colonia residents assisted, housing units assisted or created, instances of technical assistance provided, and instances of information delivered. In general, these are Activities Benefiting LMI Persons.</p>