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NEW DIRECTIONS

Government, Service Providers Changing Approach to Helping the Homeless
by Brenda M. Forsythe



Donna, a homeless mother of two children, said her husband walked out on the family and took everything they owned, including her identification. She is asking for assistance at a busy Austin intersection.

Like a lot of homeless people, Paul Anderson, 51, has not always lived on the street. He has worked for most of his life and was even a federal employee with the U. S. Postal Service in Dallas, Texas. Anderson can remember when he could afford food and shelter. He remembers when the roof over his head was more than a bridge—he had a home.

A few years ago, unfortunate events in his life triggered a chain reaction that left him broke and desolate.

"I was at the end of my rope," said Anderson, "and I was running out of rope fast."

The events that sidetracked the course of his life could have happened to anyone. He overcame a work-related injury and soon after returning to work, he was the victim of a random shooting. His wounds were so bad

("Priority: Home!" continued on page 5)

Dallas Housing Project Offers Second Chance for Homeless Men

It is a chance for all of us to get our feet back on the ground," said Paul Anderson, as he described his new home in Dallas, Texas.

To this formerly homeless man, housing means much more than shelter. It presents a priceless opportunity for a new beginning in life.

Anderson's new home is The Point Apartments, a transitional housing project for homeless single men that was opened in April 1994 by the Dallas County Community Action Committee, Inc. (DCCAC).

A Dallas insurance company donated the property and the building, which had been slated for demolition. DCCAC received funding from

the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs' Housing Trust Fund to renovate the building into 10 one bedroom apartments.

"Since we are so involved on a daily basis with helping poor people, we decided that this would be an opportunity to provide, at least on a limited basis, housing for the homeless," said Cleo Sims, executive director of DCCAC.

The transitional housing project is an expansion of the array of emergency services and self-improvement programs DCCAC already provides to low income persons. The organization, which has been in operation since 1964, has a computer training center

and even operates a thrift store and restaurant to supplement the federal funds it receives.

Through its transitional housing component, DCCAC will be able to address the needs of the homeless men in a comprehensive manner, much like the philosophy of the new federal homeless plan, Priority: Home!

Residents will live in The Point for a maximum of 24 months. During that time the residents will receive supportive services such as education, job training and job placement, and life-skills training to enable them to become self-sufficient.

"It is truly a blessing," said Rayford ("Project" continued on page 5)

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A Message from Executive Director Henry Flores

And the Real Winners Are....The People of Texas

Increased employee productivity is one of the key concepts that I have emphasized since becoming executive director of the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA). Together with the invaluable assistance of the executive staff, I have sought to promote an atmosphere within the Department that encourages staff to achieve results through creativity and innovation. Achieving results ultimately means that the Department is more successful in improving the quality of life for low income Texans.

To recognize and celebrate some of the outstanding staff accomplishments and performances during the past year, the executive staff has created an "Employee Recognition Program." Under the program, there are three categories: "Rising to the Occasion," "Sustained Performance," and "Innovation and Creativity." Awards for the three categories will be given biannually to an organizational unit, team or individual.

This past June, the executive staff nominated and voted on the first awards. The best part about the employee recognition program is that it was a hard choice for the executive staff to make. All of the Department's programs are worthy of recognition because they successfully provide services to benefit low and moderate income Texans. However, the purpose of the program is to recognize exceptional performances and achievements.

The HOME program staff was recognized for "Rising to the Occasion." The program staff have met the tremendous challenge of committing all of their program funds within the prescribed 1994 federal deadline. It is quite an accomplishment, considering this is a new program and staff had to develop and implement rules and procedures on top of funding a total of \$35 million in applications statewide. As a result of this accomplishment, approximately 2,000 affordable housing units will be created statewide for persons of low and modest incomes.

For "Innovation and Creativity," the housing team of

the Department's Compliance Division received an award. The Compliance Division is charged with the task of monitoring the Department's multi-family housing projects. The Division signed an agreement with the Resolution Trust Corporation to monitor more than 200 properties sold through the federal Affordable Housing Disposition Program. The properties are monitored to ensure that they meet set-aside requirements for low and very low income persons. In most cases, these properties had been operational for several years. Thus, it was a challenging task to promote affordable housing practices in a conventional real estate market. Thanks to the effort of the housing team, documentation of 11,000 units has been reviewed to ensure their continued availability for low income families.

The only individual recognized was Joe Midura, a Senior Planner for the Community Development Block Grant Program. He received the "Sustained Performance" award. Midura, who has been with the program for more than 10 years, was instrumental in helping the program apply for and receive three new federal grants. As a result, the state of Texas received \$850,000 in additional federal funds. The federal grants will 1) help to economically empower small cities and 2) allow the Department to open three technical assistance offices along the border.

All three of the award winners administer programs that ultimately improve the Department's service delivery and create a better life for low income Texans. Just in pure numbers, these programs combined have brought in more than \$36.5 million to the state of Texas and provided more than 13,000 units of affordable housing.

The Department plans to expand the employee recognition program to provide a mechanism for public evaluation of the administration of its programs. This will allow the opportunity to hear first-hand how well we are providing services and the areas where improvement is needed.



HOUSING CONFERENCE TARGETS NONPROFITS

HUD, TDHCA Join Forces to Co-Sponsor Event in August

by Tomas Zuniga

The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) and the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) are co-sponsoring a housing conference in Austin on Aug. 24-26, 1994 at the Wyndham Hotel. The focus of the housing conference is the development of affordable housing by nonprofit organizations.

TDHCA has made a commitment to develop capacity among nonprofit organizations across Texas. During the last two years, TDHCA has certified 60 Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs). Over the

years, TDHCA has made funds available for the pre-development and development of many worthwhile projects sponsored, owned and/or managed by nonprofit organizations. This conference is an effort towards our continued commitment to capacity building among nonprofits. It is the hope of both TDHCA and HUD to continue building on this strong foundation.

This conference offers the opportunity to exchange ideas and information with state, federal and private sector officials who directly influence future funding. The conference will

also offer a wide variety of "hands-on" workshops relevant to housing development and day-to-day issues of nonprofits.

Conference panels are comprised of speakers from TDHCA, HUD, the Farmers' Home Administration, nonprofits and lenders. The opening address will be given by Texas Senator Gonzalo Barrientos, D-Austin.

The conference fee is \$35 to \$45, depending upon date of registration. Space for the conference is limited. For information on registration contact Linda Chavez at (512) 475-1245.



LIHEAP GRANT STILL A MUCH NEEDED ENERGY SOURCE FOR LOW INCOME TEXANS

by Nieves López

During the federal budget process for the 1995 fiscal year, the Clinton administration requested a 50 percent funding cut for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program Grant (LIHEAP). Only \$730 million of the previously appropriated \$1.475 billion was requested. The cut-back announcement caused concern among state energy officials, community action agencies, advocates for low income persons and utility companies nationwide.

Fortunately, Congress is likely to restore a majority of the funding. The House of Representatives has passed a bill restoring all but \$250 million which results in a total appropriation of \$1.225 billion. In committee, the Senate has restored all but \$90 million. Once the full Senate passes the bill, it will be sent to conference committee which will likely result in an appropriation of about \$1.3 billion, a 12 percent reduction.

Impact on Texas

In Texas, LIHEAP funds the Comprehensive Energy Assistance Program (CEAP) and the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP). CEAP is the primary source of funding available to help low income Texans pay for their energy costs. WAP helps low income Texans make their home more energy efficient through minor repairs.

Texas' summer heat and winter freezes threaten the health and safety of the elderly, persons with disabilities and young children. Many of our elderly will forego much needed medication or food to pay their utility bills. TDHCA's work with low-income households has shown that the inability to pay for utilities contributes to home abandonment and homelessness.

For every one percent reduction in funding, Texas loses \$319,228. In human terms, for every one percent reduction, 977 households do not receive utility assistance and 24 households are not weatherized.

In requesting the cut-back, the Clinton administration alleged that LIHEAP does not provide long-term solutions to poverty. In its call to change the welfare system, the administration is actively moving away from an entitlement system to that of a "workfare" system.

Most states administer LIHEAP through an entitlement program in which checks are written to qualifying households at a central location (usually a state agency), thus providing only a short-term solution to their energy needs. However, as of 1993, Texas made some fundamental changes when it created the LIHEAP-funded Comprehensive Energy Assistance Program. The new program is administered through local community action agencies (CAAs). Unlike many other states, Texas now places greater emphasis on finding long-term solutions for its clients.

Builds Self-Sufficiency

Program participants must sign a client agreement form which is a contract between the service providing agency and the client that stipulates the responsibilities of both parties.

At the minimum, the agency provides financial assistance for energy bills on a sliding scale basis during a three to six month enrollment period. Meanwhile clients learn to cope with their energy costs by participating in budget counselling and energy conservation classes. The agreement may contain other stipulations, such as literacy classes or job training. If a client does not complete the agreement, the agency may cut services.

Thus the client is not "entitled" to financial assistance, but receives assistance on an as-needed basis. At the same time clients become responsible for finding solutions to their problems. The client agreement allows agencies to work with clients in a goal-oriented manner, actively encouraging responsibility and self-sufficiency.

The Weatherization Assistance Program provides further long term solutions since it addresses the physical structure of the home.

Another assumption behind the administration's proposal to cut LIHEAP is that the conditions that gave rise to the grant no longer exist. The federal government created LIHEAP during the oil crisis of the early 1970s to help low-income families meet their energy bills. The administration contends that the resolution of the oil crisis and the subsequent lowering of oil prices eliminated the need for LIHEAP.

In Texas, unlike in Northern States, fuel oil is not the primary source of energy to heat or cool the home. The majority of Texans use either electricity or gas. During the cold period from October, 1993 through March 15, 1994, 66 percent of LIHEAP funds covered the cost of electricity and 29 percent covered the cost of gas (Propane and natural gas). Less than one percent of the funds were used to pay for fuel oil.

Rising Energy Costs

Unlike fuel oil, electricity and gas prices have increased substantially. In 1981, the average cost of electricity was \$28.27 per 500 kilo watt hour (KWH). By January 1994, the average cost was \$42.70—a 51 percent increase.¹ From 1982 to 1992, the price of natural gas rose 32.6 percent. From 1978 to 1992, the average cost of consumer grade propane doubled.² Propane costs 42 percent more than oil and 78 percent more than natural gas. About 44 percent of propane-using households nationwide have annual incomes below \$15,000, and one-third have at least one person over age 60.³

The rising cost of electricity and gas is especially difficult for the poor. The Texas Public Utility Commission reports that "as a group, the poor, who earn at or below 125 percent of the federal poverty level income, consume less electric energy per year than their non-poor counterparts. As a percent of total household income, however, energy expenditures are three to four times greater for the poor than the non-poor."⁴

Texas' LIHEAP programs provide long-term solutions to the problems facing low-income Texans—a focus shared by the Clinton administration's emphasis on self-sufficiency. Moreover, the programs provide low income Texans the necessary relief from very real price increases in the energy used to heat and cool their homes. LIHEAP provides an indispensable commodity and should continue to be funded at adequate levels.

Opponents of LIHEAP are likely to use the same arguments as the administration—arguments which have led to cut-backs in the past, and may appear in future budget debates. ★

¹Texas Public Utility Commission Annual Report, 1994

²Texas Railroad Commission

³Rabago, Jaussaud & Benenson, *An Alternative Framework for Low-Income Electric Ratepayer Services*, Texas Public Utility Commission (1992), p.2.

⁴Propane Facts, by the Propane Consumers Coalition

Silver Lining: EIGHTIES PROPERTY BUST PROVIDES TEXAS WITH AFFORDABLE HOUSING BOOM

by Elena Peinado

As the saying goes, "Every cloud has its silver lining."

Affordable housing opportunities in Texas have sprung out of the savings and loan crisis and recession of the 1980s.

After financial institutions failed during the savings and loan crisis, their property

assets fell into the hands of the federal government. The Resolution Trust Company (RTC) was entrusted with disposing the assets, which included multi-family properties. Meanwhile, a combination of poor financing, the recession and unscrupulous developers caused multi-family properties insured by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) to revert to federal homeownership.

TDHCA is temporarily obtaining these multifamily properties from HUD and the RTC. The HUD inventory alone includes around 200 properties. TDHCA plans to turn over the properties to nonprofit housing organizations in the local areas. The HUD-obtained properties will be used to launch TDHCA's new self-sufficiency initiative, Target Independence, while the primary focus of the RTC properties will

be nonprofit capacity building.

Target Independence

"In order to render real services to those in need, assistance programs must tap into people's desire to help themselves rather than foster dependence," said Henry Flores, executive director of TDHCA. Target

Independence is a program that fosters self-reliance by helping low income families make the transition from public assistance to owning their own home.

Families in the Section 8 Program

pay 30 percent of their monthly adjusted gross income for rent. The government then pays the landlord the difference between that amount and the fair-market rent of the unit. TDHCA plans to pool the rental income, normally earned by a landlord, into a revolving loan fund that will be available to help low income tenants afford the down payment and closing costs on a mortgage loan.

Creating Homeownership

Flores first implemented Target Independence for the city of Corpus Christi while executive director of the housing authority, prior to TDHCA.

Target Independence participants complete a transitional program during which time they live in well-maintained, mixed-base developments (i.e., not all apartment residents would be recipients of public assistance). A spectrum of services from child-care to GED classes are provided. Many of these would be open to non-Section 8 residents for a fee. Section 8 recipients not otherwise employed can volunteer to work in the daycare and provide maintenance for the complex.

Program participants must: 1) be employed; 2) pay rent on time; 3) keep their children in school; 4) remain drug and crime free; and 5) successfully complete training courses.

Upon successful completion of the program, qualified participants can apply for a grant or loan to be used to purchase their own home. The fund may be accessed within five years.

The program has been in place in Corpus Christi for several years now. Many participants have moved on to homeownership and the developments have continued to be well-maintained.

TDHCA will implement the program through the purchase of HUD foreclosed multifamily properties, the majority of which are concentrated in the Dallas and Houston areas. HUD offers cities and Texas first right of refusal to purchase the properties. If a city or housing authority is not interested in acquiring a property, TDHCA will consider it for the program. However, some properties may be in too poor condition to warrant investment.

Once a property has been selected, the Department will request proposals from nonprofits interested in purchasing the property and implementing Target Independence. Proposals will be selected based on the nonprofits' local presence, its commitment to affordable housing, and the quality of its plan for achieving tenant self-sufficiency. The Department plans to train nonprofits in multifamily management as well as assist them in securing the financing. Previous experience managing a property will not be a major criterion. The selected nonprofits will work with public housing authorities to recruit Section 8 families interested in homeownership.

While each nonprofit is encouraged to tailor its program to tenant needs, certain components of the Target Independence's original plan must be implemented. These include the five participant requirements, up-scale maintenance of properties, creation of a revolving fund, and provision of supportive services. The kind and number of supportive services offered will vary from proposal to proposal.

TDHCA will work with the nonprofits to ensure proper maintenance and management. Since the profits landlords make from Section 8 land-lord reimbursements will be directed towards service provision, properties can be well-maintained and still provide extensive services.

"The only profit will be helping people," said Flores.

Nonprofit Capacity

The Nonprofit Development and Capacity Enhancement Program uses essentially the same strategy as Target Independence towards a slightly different end. The goal of this program is to promote nonprofit housing organizations and help keep dollars and property ownership in Texas. Through this program, TDHCA temporarily acquires RTC properties designated for use as affordable housing, trains a nonprofit in multifamily management, and then sells the property to that nonprofit.

As with the HUD properties, government entities and nonprofits have first right of refusal on the RTC proper-

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Photo by Mark Nelson

These photographs illustrate some of the properties that will be purchased by TDHCA for affordable housing. Top shows the Presidents Corner apartment complex in Arlington. Bottom shows a playground at the Cedar Ridge apartment complex in Houston. Properties are well-maintained and have recreational facilities.

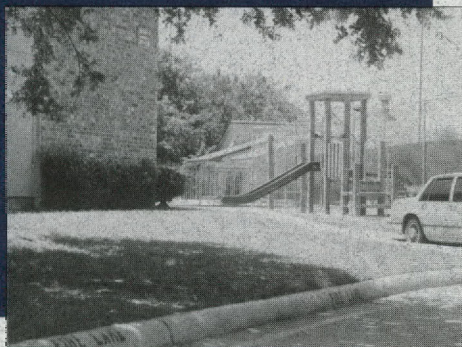


Photo by Keith Emerson

"PRIORITY: HOME!"

The New Federal Plan to Break the Cycle of Homelessness

(Continued from page 1)

that doctors did not think he would be able to walk again.

Fortunately, he did walk again. However, his disability pay was not enough to support himself and he ended up walking the streets. He had overcome a lot of adversity, but his rope finally ran out.

New Federal Plan

"We must address the problems that render people homeless in the first place rather than focusing simply on getting them off the streets for

the night," said Housing Secretary Henry Cisneros in a report released by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in May 1994.

The report was developed during the past year in response to an executive order signed by President Clinton that requested the Inter-

agency Council on the Homeless to examine the issue. The council is comprised of staff from 17 federal agencies. It was the first time a president ordered a cross-agency examination of the issue and has led to a profound change in federal policy. Through bold rhetoric such as recommending "a full-scale attack on homelessness" and "an overhaul of government programs," the report makes an aggressive move towards 1) defining the problem 2) addressing the causes and 3) developing viable solutions.

Referring to homelessness as the "most manifest and obvious symptom of urban decay," the plan does not shy away from the severity of the problem. It states that on any given night approximately 600,000 people are homeless in the United States and 7 million people were without a permanent residence at some point between 1985 and 1990.

At the news conference announc-

ing the release of the report, Cisneros vowed that the Clinton administration would reduce the number of homeless people by one-third before the end of its first term. The administration plans to double homeless assistance to \$1.7 billion for fiscal year 1995. The \$1.7 billion is three times more than the \$555 million spent on homeless aid in the last year of the Bush administration.

If the U. S. Congress fully appropriates the administration's request, according to HUD, funding for homeless programs administered by the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) would increase from an annual average of about \$2 million to \$25 million.

Advocates for the homeless in Texas are encouraged by the plan.

"Cisneros is talking about putting the money where his mouth is and that is very important because you can not do homeless programs without money," said Cleo Sims, executive director of Dallas County Community Action Committee, Inc.

"This is a concept that liberals and conservatives alike can support — liberals because it continues federal financing to help cure a major social ill, and conservatives because it places emphasis where it belongs: at the local level where the problem persists," said Ron Wright, chairman of the board, Arlington Night Shelter.

Addressing the Causes

The report is more realistic in its definition of homelessness and also its explanation of the leading factors for homelessness. HUD recognizes that like the example of Paul Anderson, there are certain "root causes" leading to homelessness. Identified causes include severe economic shifts, lack of affordable housing, increased drug abuse, physical health and mental health problems, all impacted by changing family structures and a breakdown in social institutions. The government's failure to respond has led to the current crisis.

HUD puts the homeless population into two broad classes: 1) people affected by "crisis poverty" who become vulnerable to homelessness through unforeseen events and 2) people affected by one or more

(Continued on page 7)

"Dallas Housing Project"

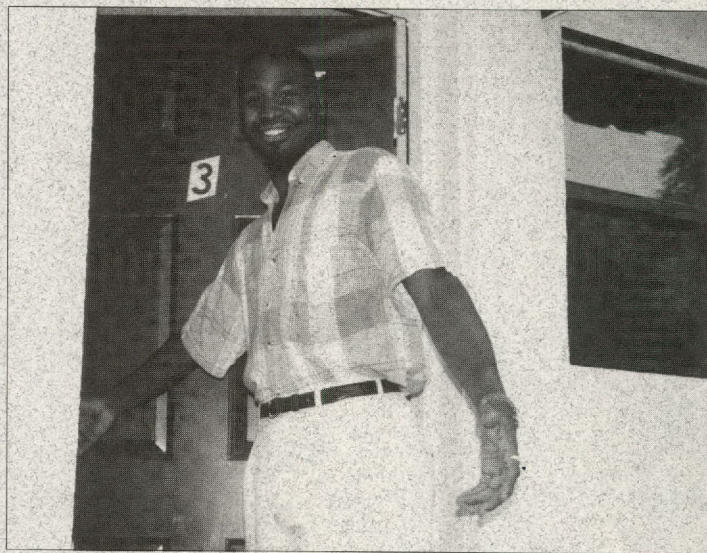
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Roberson, 23, one of the new residents.

Roberson described the opportunity as "a stepping stone" that will provide necessary guidance, counseling and support as he works towards self-reliance and independence.

The furnished apartments are fully equipped with household items such as bed linens, cooking utensils and groceries.

"We felt that if we were going to do a comprehensive program, we needed to provide everything for the residents from day one. Then teach them how to take care and replace these things as needed," said Sims.



Rayford Roberson, 23, proudly opens the door to his new apartment at The Point, a Dallas transitional housing program for single men. Roberson said his new home is "truly a blessing," and will provide him the opportunity to better his life through education and job training.

To enlist men in the program, DCCAC contacted area homeless shelters. A screening committee conducted interviews with applicants to find men who were dedicated to improving their situation. Once selected for the program, individual goals were developed for each resident.

Among themselves, the men have cultivated a sense of family and camaraderie. Sims said that the residents have taken the initiative to set-up weekly meetings, which was not an original component of the program.

"On their own, they meet together to discuss their goals and how they can help one another. They support each another," said Sims.

DCCAC eventually plans to expand the agency's homeless program to address single mothers with children.★

TDHCA CO-SPONSORS NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR MIGRANT FARMWORKERS

by Dyna Cole

The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) joined forces with the Midwest Association of Farmworker Organizations (MAFO) in early Spring 1994 to co-sponsor the sixth annual National Farmworker Conference in San Antonio. The conference drew together state officials, advocates and migrant farmworkers to discuss issues that affect migrant farmworkers.

Conference organizers estimate more than 500 people attended the conference, including about 50 farmworkers, making this the most successful conference to date.

The conference initially began as regional meetings sponsored by TDHCA. The meetings provided a forum for farmworker groups in Texas and the Midwest states to share ideas on migrant issues.

Arturo Lopez, MAFO board member and director of the Coalition of Florida Farmworker Organizations, said the meetings were effective and needed to be expanded.

"We decided they needed to be broadened to include not only the Midwest, but other states like California and Florida. We decided to make it a national conference," Lopez said.

TDHCA provided Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funds to help support this year's conference. Five percent of TDHCA's allocation from the federal government for CSBG is reserved for special population groups such as migrant farmworkers and Native Americans. During the 1993 fiscal funding cycle, seven agencies received approximately \$1 million in grant funds to serve migrant farmworkers.

TDHCA also helped community action agencies sponsor migrant workers who desired to attend the conference.

"The conference provided an opportunity for migrant farmworkers themselves to hear firsthand what national service provider issues are being raised," said David Galvan, program manager for the Community Services

Section at TDHCA.

Need for Affordable Housing

Issues raised at the conference covered a variety of concerns. Migrant workers encounter difficulties similar to other low income populations, such as acquiring affordable housing, health care, and employment. The need for affordable housing is among the foremost issues for migrant farmworkers

seek a better quality of life.

Attending school is difficult for migrant youth. Circuit farmworkers are on the road from April to October, which disrupts two school years.

"The dropout rate is larger for farmworkers than any other population," said Lopez.

Previously, summer school was not a viable option since requirements vary among school districts.

"The kids would ask, 'Why should we attend summer school when it's not going to count anyway?'" said Lopez.

Recently, migrant advocacy groups have introduced initiatives to develop consistent high school graduation standards. This enables students to receive credit for summer courses taken in areas where they work. Two federally funded programs in Texas are the High School Equivalency Program and its companion program, the College Assistance for Migrants



Texas migrant farmworkers harvest tomatoes.

and more than 100 people attended the sessions devoted to housing.

"Housing has always been an area of difficulty for the migrant farmworker population," said Lopez.

Intense two-day workshops entitled "Rural Housing Development Training" encouraged public and private agencies who work with migrant populations to participate in affordable housing activities.

"The housing 'how to' sessions covered the basics and were very well attended. We also presented information on resource development for the agencies," said Lupe Martinez, MAFO's chairman of the board.

Training included successful grant writing and how to access funds from private sector foundations and public sector housing programs.

Striving for Education

Two conference workshops focused on education. Literacy and job training are key issues for farmworkers who

Program.

TDHCA funds a program that encourages migrant youth to stay in school. The program is known as the Student Alternatives Program, Inc, and operates in 11 South Texas school districts.

Other ideas that have been proposed include offering a stipend to school-aged farmworkers who attend summer school.

Planning for 1995

In planning for the 1995 conference in Florida, a meeting was held at this year's conference between the organizers and the migrant farmworkers to discuss ideas for next year's agenda.

"One of the plans we are working on is to have workshops in the language of the people, and to have translators available for Spanish, Creole, and Haitian languages," said Martinez.

For information on the 1995 conference, contact David Galvan at (512) 475-3895.

"Housing has always been an area of difficulty for the migrant farmworker population,"

said Arturo Lopez, board member for the Midwest Association of Farmworkers.

("Multi-family Properties" Continued from page 5)

ties. TDHCA will only purchase a property if no local government and local nonprofit groups have expressed interest. Often times there are local nonprofits interested in acquiring a property, but they lack either the money and the management experience needed for the undertaking. If TDHCA does not acquire a property, the property will likely be bought by an out of state nonprofit or a for-profit developer. These may sell the property for a profit, possibly taking the money made away from Texas as well as depriving the area of the commitment characteristic of a local affordable housing organization.

After TDHCA purchases a property, a nonprofit will be selected to manage and eventually buy the property. As with Target Independence, the criteria for selecting a nonprofit is local commitment and quality of services while TDHCA provides training and assists with financing. Unlike Target Independence, low income

residents do not have to be Section 8 recipients.

TDHCA's interest in promoting housing nonprofits is two-fold. One consideration is the effectiveness of nonprofits. Nonprofits have a commitment to their community and a flexibility hard to find in either a larger nonprofit or a government entity. The two elements can combine for housing programs more responsive to the needs of specific communities.

Another consideration is the federal propensity to target funds to nonprofits. The HOME Investment Partnership Program for example reserves 15 percent of its funds for nonprofits. Unfortunately, Texas has relatively few nonprofits. A 1992 study by the Texas Development institute found that only one fourth of Texas' counties were served by a nonprofit housing organization. As a result, the state often loses out on federal funding. TDHCA hopes that this program helps the state acquire its fair share of federal funds.

TDHCA presently plans to acquire 20 HUD properties for Target Independence. The Department has committed to the purchase of 11 RTC properties in Sherman, El Paso, Bryan, College Station, Coppell, Carrollton, and Arlington. Other properties are currently under review. Requests for Proposals from nonprofits, property management companies, insurance companies, etc. will soon be going out.

TDHCA plans to hold properties for no more than two years before transferring ownership to a nonprofit. The Department also plans to put in place deed restrictions to ensure that properties maintain a high quality and support services to low income tenants.

It is hoped that the combined effect of Target Independence and the Nonprofit Capacity Building programs will lead to a higher standard state-wide of affordable housing for low income families.



("Priority: Home!" Continued from page 5)

"chronic, disabling conditions," such as mental illness or substance abuse.

Homelessness will no longer be viewed as merely "a lack of housing." Instead, HUD's new approach involves providing solutions by addressing a variety of underlying unmet needs—physical, economic and social.

"In previous housing programs, we have had the band-aid approach applied to helping people to stabilize and help themselves and that is especially true for the homeless," said Sims.

She said that in addition to housing, homeless people need food, clothing, education, health care, job training and job placement.

"All of these things are necessary to help these people feel really good about themselves," said Sims. "So that they feel that they are part of the human race—which many of them have long ago stopped feeling."

Continuum of Care

Instead of a "band-aid" approach, the new plan calls for a comprehensive and coordinated system referred to as a "continuum of care." This results-oriented philosophy is based on the goal of achieving self-sufficiency.

In a "continuum of care," the needs of a client are assessed through a mechanism such as case management. The client would then receive transitional housing and necessary supportive and rehabilitative services to empower the individual to achieve independent living in a permanent residence.

To create a program conducive to this approach, HUD is proposing to reorganize the six categorical programs authorized by the 1987 Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act into a single formula, need-based grant.

The proposal leaves discretion to states and local governments to develop comprehensive programs from

a "menu" of resources that can be tailored to fit specific needs of a locality. Communities will also be required to develop programs through a broad-based planning effort that involves nonprofits and other community members in the planning and implementation of the local program.

"The concept of requiring cities and counties to actually sit down and coordinate services for this target group is something that a lot of people have been advocating for a long time," said Eddie Fariss, assistant program manager of Community Services at TDHCA and vice chairman of the Texas Interagency Council for the Homeless since its inception in 1989. "What HUD is trying to do with this change in the law is to bring all of the organizations together that exist in a community that can provide the components of the continuum of care."

Through a community-based coordinated effort, homeless providers will be able to refer clients to other nonprofits in the local area, therefore creating a network of providers.

"For the first time, everyone gets a seat at the table," said Wright. "The plan empowers local communities with the flexibility and means to produce creative solutions to one of the most vexing problems of our age."

Through Priority: Home! the federal government has taken a progressive step forward in addressing the homeless issue. The plan acknowledges the extent of the problem and takes a pragmatic approach to developing viable solutions. The administration has shown its commitment by requesting the necessary resources, now it will be up to Congress to approve the plan and appropriate funding.

"In previous housing programs, we have had the band-aid approach applied to helping people to stabilize and help themselves and that is especially true for the homeless," said Cleo Sims, executive director of Dallas County Community Action Agency.



DATES TO REMEMBER



TDHCA Executive Director Henry Flores, left, receives an award from U. S. Housing and Urban Development Deputy Secretary Terrace Duvernay this past Spring. The award was given for the innovative Texas Border Initiatives Program. TDHCA has formed partnerships with national and local nonprofits, local governments and federal governments to address poverty along the border.

"Poverty along the South Texas border is among the worst in the entire country. There is nothing like it. Our best hope for eliminating these deplorable conditions comes from creative partnerships..." said Duvernay, in a release announcing the award.

- August**
- STATEWIDE HOUSING CONFERENCE FOR NONPROFITS, Austin
August 24-26
 - HOME PROGRAM PUBLIC HEARING, Austin
August 29
 - FIRST TIME HOMEBUYER SEMINAR, Nacogdoches
August 30
 - FIRST TIME HOMEBUYER SEMINAR, Marshall
August 31

- September**
- TEXAS INTERAGENCY COUNCIL FOR THE HOMELESS, Austin
September 14
 - COMPLIANCE TRAINING FOR LIHTC, Austin
September 20
 - FIRST TIME HOMEBUYER SEMINAR, Texarkana
September 20
 - CDBG 1994-95 PROGRAM YEAR APPLICATION DEADLINE: Community Development Fund; Colonia Fund; Planning/Capacity Building Fund, Austin
September 21

- COMPLIANCE TRAINING FOR RTC, Austin
September 21
- FIRST TIME HOMEBUYER SEMINAR, Beaumont
September 29

CHANGING LIVES

Changing Lives is a newsletter published to inform the public about the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs' programs and activities. The publication is produced by a committee comprised of staff from all divisions within the Department.

Parisrice Robinson, Newsletter Director
Brenda Forsythe, Editor

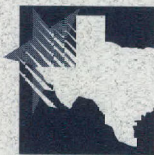
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