

2022 Colonia Planning and Needs Assessment

Background:

The Texas Community Development Block Grant (TxCDBG) Program serves small and rural communities across Texas with community and economic development funding. The program sets aside 10% of the program's funding for assistance to colonia communities located within 150 miles of the Texas-Mexico border.

For TxCDBG, the term "colonia" means any identifiable unincorporated community that is determined to be a colonia on the basis of objective criteria, including lack of potable water supply, lack of adequate sewage systems, and lack of decent, safe, and sanitary housing; and was in existence as a colonia before the date of the enactment of the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act (November 28, 1990).

One requirement under this federally established set aside is a method of determining the colonias with greatest need. In years past, TxCDBG relied on the Texas Secretary of State's Office of Colonia Initiatives (OCI) to meet this requirement. The OCI office was responsible for coordinating a workgroup of federal and state agencies and their partners, including producing a report to the legislature on colonia conditions. Ombudsmen from OCI were located in several key counties and assessed colonia needs on a regular basis. The TxCDBG program has historically funded county-specific colonia planning efforts, the results of which were included in the OCI resources. Other agency and non-profit partners have also produced assessments of colonia needs in certain counties.

The OCI office has been dissolved and the reports produced in 2014, while valuable, may no longer reflect current needs. A new needs assessment of colonia communities is required to remain compliant with federal requirements. **Once completed, this needs assessment will form the basis of the Colonia Fund, with all projects funded through the colonia set-aside expected to be supported by the 2022 planning document or subsequent updates.**

Needs Assessment Plan for 2022:

TDA will award grant funds for a Colonia Planning and Needs Assessment to be conducted in all 67 counties eligible for the TxCDBG Colonia Fund. A total of five grants will be awarded, each assigned a designated zone for the needs assessment, as shown on the map below.

Each grant will include one Anchor County that accepts responsibility for overseeing the needs assessment within that zone, and a number of Partnering Counties.

Grant amounts are determined based on several factors:

- number of counties in the zone;
- number of colonia communities previously identified by either the Secretary of State's Office of Colonia Initiatives or the Texas Water Development Board;
- the degree of documentation and recent needs assessment previously conducted within the county.

2022 Colonia Planning and Needs Assessment

Anticipated Planning Zones



Anticipated Funding

Zone	Funding	Number of Counties	Estimated Number of Known Colonias	Geography
Green	\$ 620,000.00	394	25	RGCOG, PBRPC, WCTCOG, CVCOG (partial)
Orange	\$ 460,000.00	209	24	MRGDC, AACOG, CAPCOG, GCRPC, CVCOG (partial)
Purple	\$ 790,000.00	325	11	CBCOG
Blue	\$ 705,000.00	581	6	LRGVDC, STDC
Yellow	\$ 525,000.00	924	1	Hidalgo County

2022 Colonia Planning and Needs Assessment

Responsibilities of Anchor County:

- Apply for grant funding and execute a Grant Agreement with TDA;
- Execute interlocal agreements with each Partnering County –
 - TDA will provide a sample document and assist in coordinating this process;
- Execute an agreement with a planning services provider -
 - Select a subrecipient planner, such as a university or non-profit entity, OR
 - Conduct a procurement process for a private company;
- Oversee the planning process –
 - Collect final reports for each county as the needs assessment is completed,
 - Submit Payment Requests, Project Completion Report, and other grant documents as needed.
 - The County may request up to \$25,000 in administrative costs (as a line item for the planning services provider or to reimburse the county for its force account administrative expenses).

Responsibilities of Partnering County:

- Execute interlocal agreements with the Anchor County for the zone –
 - This agreement acknowledges the colonia planning grant and authorizes the Anchor County to conduct grant activities within the Partnering County's jurisdiction,
 - TDA will provide a sample document and assist in coordinating this process; and
- Participate with the planning services provider in conducting the needs assessment –
 - Provide access to county records such as plats, existing planning documents,
 - Discuss any known colonia needs or priorities, and
 - Review and acknowledge the final results of the planning effort.

Note: Several counties within the designated Colonia Fund geography have no (or very few) previously identified colonia communities and may choose not to participate in this needs assessment. TDA will provide a form to document this decision and acknowledge that the county will no longer participate in the Colonia Fund.

2022 Colonia Planning and Needs Assessment

Responsibilities of Planning Services Provider:

- Execute an agreement with the Anchor County;
- Perform a needs assessment in each assigned county –
 - Conduct a records search or relevant documents,
 - Discuss colonia needs with local officials, community leaders, and residents, as appropriate, and
 - Observe colonia conditions through an on-site visit;
- Provide periodic status reports to the Anchor County and TDA; and
- Produce a final report for each county using the format defined by TDA, including:
 - Summary of County’s colonia needs, and
 - Report for each individual Colonia community
 - Documentation of eligibility for TxCDBG Colonia Fund and/or other colonia-specific funding – map of location, documentation of community’s age, M number(s) identification,
 - Documentation of community characteristics – population, number of households, number of business or commercial properties, other key characteristics
 - Assessment of needs – availability and adequacy of utilities, road conditions, housing conditions,
 - Documentation of any factors leading to a “disadvantaged community” designation,
 - Other factors relevant for community development planning – susceptibility to flooding, impact of drought, health factors, and
 - Optional: Recommendations for project development – actions and/or general project descriptions for addressing specific needs, including appropriate funding sources.