



NEWS

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

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State housing agency, area nonprofits partnering to provide rental assistance, foster self sufficiency

(AUSTIN) — The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) today announced funding awards totaling \$591,770 to two Lufkin-based organizations helping low income residents obtain decent housing while working toward financial and personal independence.

TDHCA awarded \$300,000 to Buckner Children & Family Services and another \$291,770 to the Burke Center, two nonprofit organizations providing an array of social and housing services in 13 East Texas counties. The combined awards are expected to help at least 36 low income households with their monthly rent payments, with the Burke Center proposing to focus exclusively on assisting persons with disabilities.

“Finding a decent, affordable place to call home can often be a challenge for residents of smaller communities, where residents typically have fewer housing choices,” said Tom H. Gann, a member of the TDHCA Governing Board and resident of Lufkin. “This challenge is often greater with a disability. These funds will not only make an immediate impact on the lives of these tenants, they have the potential to create the long-term benefits of self-reliance.”

The Burke Center assists clients living in a 12-county area that includes Angelina, Houston, Trinity, Nacogdoches, Shelby, San Augustine, Sabine, Tyler, San Jacinto, Newton, Jasper, and Polk counties. Buckner Children & Family Services provides assistance to clients living in Angelina, Nacogdoches, and Montgomery counties.

The awards will help each agency subsidize rents and make security and utility deposits for eligible low income households, ensuring they can find decent, affordable rental housing. The assistance is available for up to 24 months. In return, tenants must participate in a self-sufficiency program with the goal of achieving eventual financial independence.

Self-sufficiency programs vary with the tenant population served but often include drug dependency classes, job training, college degree programs, parenting training, and GED classes.

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TDHCA made the awards through its HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program, which is funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to provide more affordable housing via block grants to the states.

Eligible applicants include qualifying cities and counties, public housing authorities, and qualifying nonprofit organizations which then work with low income tenants at the local level. HOME funds are designed to assist households earning no more than 80 percent of the area median family income.

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, colonia housing programs, and disaster recovery housing programs. It currently administers \$2 billion through for-profit, nonprofit, and local government partnerships to deliver local housing and community-based opportunities and assistance to Texans in need.