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H.B. No. 217

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the services provided by a colonia self-help center.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Sections 2306.586(a), (b), (c), and (d),
Government Code, are amended to read as follows:

(a) The purpose of a self-help center is to assist
individuals and families of low income and very low income to
finance, refinance, construct, improve, or maintain a safe,
suitable home and otherwise improve living conditions in the
colonias' designated service area or in another area the department
has determined is suitable.

(b) A self-help center shall set a goal to improve the
living conditions of residents in the colonias designated under
Section 2306.583(b) [~~2306.583(a)(2)~~] within a two-year period
after a contract is awarded under this subchapter.

(c) A self-help center may serve individuals and families of
low income and very low income by:

(1) providing assistance in obtaining loans or grants
to build a home;

(2) teaching construction skills necessary to repair
or build a home;

(3) providing model home plans;

(4) operating a program to rent or provide tools for
home construction and improvement for the benefit of property

owners in colonias who are building or repairing a residence or installing necessary residential infrastructure;

(5) helping to obtain, construct, access, or improve the service and utility infrastructure designed to service residences in a colonia, including potable water, wastewater disposal, drainage, streets, and utilities;

(6) surveying or platting residential property that an individual purchased without the benefit of a legal survey, plat, or record;

(7) providing credit and debt counseling related to home purchase and finance;

(8) applying for grants and loans to provide housing and other needed community improvements;

(9) providing other services that the self-help center, with the approval of the department, determines are necessary to assist colonia residents in improving their ~~physical~~ living conditions, including help in:

(A) obtaining suitable alternative housing outside of a colonia's area; and

(B) performing the following authorized public service activities under Title 1 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. Section 5301 et seq.):

(i) securing employment;

(ii) establishing or expanding a small business; or

(iii) managing personal finances;

(10) providing assistance in obtaining loans or grants

1 to enable an individual or a family to acquire fee simple title to
2 property that originally was purchased under a contract for a deed,
3 contract for sale, or other executory contract; and

4 (11) providing monthly programs to educate
5 individuals and families on their rights and responsibilities as
6 property owners.

7 (d) A self-help center may not provide grants, financing, or
8 mortgage loan services to purchase, build, rehabilitate, or finance
9 construction or improvements to a home or otherwise improve living
10 conditions in a colonia if water service and suitable wastewater
11 disposal are not available.

12 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2015.