



The HUD Experience

HUD Region VI News Brief



Winter/Spring 2020 - The HUD Experience, HUD's Region VI-News Brief provides you with a snapshot of what's new in the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development's Southwest Region. You will find periodic updates on HUD activities in Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma and New Mexico.

Notes from the Deputy Regional Administrator

Coronavirus/COVID-19

As the Deputy Regional Administrator for the Southwest Region of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, I am responsible for coordinating and directing HUD's activities in the states of Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. I want you to know that our HUD team remains open for business, working with our city, state, and nonprofit partners to support you as you continue providing assistance to those in need, even as we all deal with the ramifications of the coronavirus/COVID-19.

An important source of information on our national webpage for all of our partners can be found at:

<https://www.hud.gov/coronavirus>.



Leslie Bradley, Deputy Regional Administrator

There you will find guidance to our grantees and constituents from the Assistant Secretaries for all HUD program areas - Public and Indian Housing, Community Planning and Development, the Federal Housing Administration, Fair Housing and Multifamily Housing, among others. It will be continuously updated, and HUD encourages our partners to monitor that page regularly for program direction. Although our Region's offices are currently physically inaccessible, HUD is still doing business and will continue to operate. See below for important contact information for each of our field offices and program areas. Please know that you can contact me at any time at leslieann.bradley@hud.gov or 817-978-5965.

Leslie Bradley, Deputy Regional Administrator

Other Important Contact Information

For Public Housing: 800-955-2232

For Housing Counseling: (800) 569-4287

For Housing Discrimination: 1-800-669-9777 (or 1-800-927-9275 for TTY)

For Multifamily Complaints: 1-800-MULTI-70 (1-800-685-8470)

Online:

Email HUD Customer Service at:

TXWebmanager@hud.gov (Texas),

ARWebmanager@hud.gov (Arkansas),

LAWebmanager@hud.gov (Louisiana),

NMWebmanager@hud.gov (New Mexico),

OKWebmanager@hud.gov (Oklahoma)

Envision Centers

EnVision Centers (ECs) are shining examples of HUD's focus on building sustainable solutions for fostering independence and maintaining the availability of affordable housing. They are a collaboration between local governments, non-profit partners, institutions of learning, and local, state, and national government service agencies. While established HUD programs focus primarily on rental assistance, ECs take a holistic approach by surrounding customers with tools they need to progress. ECs are centralized hubs that serve as an incubator to support the four key pillars of self-sufficiency which are: Economic Empowerment, Educational Advancement, Health and Wellness, and Character and Leadership.

Developing these attributes with support and skills training, EC's HUD assisted tenants can move to a point where they need less, or even no, assistance from HUD. Participants might find daycare assistance, health care services, high school and higher learning opportunities, job skills training, job placement, and more. The bottom line is that ECs can provide social and economic upward mobility typically co-located in one facility to help increase access and ease of use for the community.

Region VI is proud to have two centers of the program's first round demonstration cohort located in Fort Worth, Texas and in the Choctaw Nation in Oklahoma. Building on this initial success, the HUD Southwest team remained very proactive in encouraging EC development in communities throughout. Now, three additional communities in Texas are approved to participate in the program. Arlington, Brownsville, and San Antonio in Texas have each received designations as ECs, and more are on the way! Region VI will continue work to help more communities towards EC participation, providing more opportunities for more people throughout the Southwest.

Region VI News

Humans of HUD: Benjamin Franklin

By: HUD Office of Public Affairs



Photo: Benjamin Franklin.

Meet Benjamin Franklin from San Antonio. He recently experienced homelessness after his parents gave up their custodial rights. Fortunately, under a local HUD-funded program, he found a place to call home.

Humans of HUD is designed to show the human side of HUD's programs-it includes stories and videos from people who tell their stories of how HUD programs helped change their lives for the better. Check out [Benjamin's](#) and others' stories on HUD's main website and [YouTube channel](#). If you know someone you think would be a good

candidate for an HOH story or video, please contact us at patricia.a.campbell@hud.gov.

EnVisioning Greater Opportunities

By: Patricia Campbell



Photo: Secretary Carson speaks with a student as he tours Alamo Colleges Eastside Education Training Center in San Antonio with Chancellor Dr. Mike Flores.

Secretary Carson recently visited San Antonio to designate the Alamo Colleges Eastside Education Training Center (EETC) as an EnVision Center.

"EnVision Centers are a way to connect local resources with the people who need them the most," said Secretary Carson. "From job training classes to financial counseling, I see so many vital services being provided here that have an unimaginable impact on the lives of the people you help. I look forward to seeing the brighter futures the EETC will continue to bring to the San Antonio community."

The EETC serves as a center of collaboration in the San Antonio community, bringing together more than 20 non-profit and government entities to

provide job training and placement, re-entry services, literacy education, case management, including childcare and transportation services, financial counseling and small business development counseling. The EETC EnVision Center joins the Southwest region's other EnVision Centers in Arlington, Brownsville, Fort Worth, Texas, and Poteau Oklahoma (Choctaw Nation).

By: Scott Hudman



Left to Right, Betty Nunally, Secretary Carson, Hank Rush, and Congressman Dan Crenshaw discuss successful programs offered at Star of Hope.

Showing Support for Homeless Veterans in Texarkana

By: David Blick



Photo: Photo: King Wong, Staff Attorney - Lone Star Legal Aid, and David Blick, Field Policy Management, Senior Analyst - Little Rock at Operation Stand Down.

Little Rock Field Office Director, Wanda Merritt and HUD Senior Analyst, David Blick recently participated in the *Operation Stand Down for Veterans* at Texarkana College. Co-sponsored by the Overton Brooks VAMC Homeless Program, East Texas Veterans Resource Center and Trinity Presbyterian Church-Hero's Pantry, *Operation Stand Down* brings together agencies, businesses, and the faith community to address the issue of homelessness. This "one-stop-shop" event offers homeless veterans a safe-haven from the streets where they can get lunch, clothing, haircuts, healthcare, social services, and be connected to vocational and legal assistance. One goal of the operation is to create a supportive community that can help strengthen the self-esteem of people experiencing homelessness. HUD staff met with several participating vendors, including Veterans Affairs staff and Lone Star Legal Aid.

Wanda Merritt said, "We are proud to report the Housing Authority of Texarkana, Texas has a total of sixteen HUD-VASH vouchers that are 100 percent leased up - doing its part to help end veteran's homelessness."

Secretary Carson Visits Houston Homeless Shelters and Conducts Homeless Roundtable in Houston

Secretary Ben Carson's recent visit to Houston focused on homelessness, visiting the Star of Hope Mission as well as holding a roundtable discussion on the challenges of addressing homelessness in Houston. Star of Hope (SoH) is a Christian centered ministry dedicated to meeting the needs of Houston's homeless men, women and children. Their facilities serve approximately 3,500 homeless individuals and families each year. The Secretary toured their main campus along with Congressman Dan Crenshaw, HUD Deputy Regional Administrator Leslie Bradley, and Houston Field Office Director Dr. Edward Pringle.

After the tour, the Secretary set out for Rice University's Baker Institute for a roundtable discussion on issues surrounding homelessness and challenges facing homeless providers. The Houston Continuum of Care, the City of Houston, Harris County, the Houston Housing Authority, Rice University, and thirty representatives of invested organizations combating homelessness in Houston participated in the discussion. Many topics were discussed, including the successful VASH program and HUD efforts to bring pathways to self-sufficiency. All attending renewed their commitment to serve the homeless community in Houston.

Spreading Holiday Cheer to the Homeless

By: Darlene Swearington



Left to right - Darlene Swearington, Scott Hudman, Sidni Campbell, Delilah Oates, and Ursula McClendon from the HUD Houston Field Office volunteered to serve lunch at the Star of Hope Mission in Houston in December 2019 in the spirit of giving back to the community.

The Houston Field office team recently served lunch and good cheer at two Star of Hope Mission campuses (SOHM), the Men’s Center and the Women and Family Shelters. A cross-collaborative effort, the teams consisted of employees from the Office of Community Planning and Development, Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity and Field Policy and Management. SOHM staff and clients expressed great appreciation for their service, with over 200 customers served. The team welcomed the opportunity to personally interact with clients of the shelters, serving a hot lunch and warm feelings on a cold day. “It really hits you to understand how grateful they are for that meal,” said Scott Hudman.

[Star of Hope](#) is a Christian-centered community supporting Houston’s homeless men, women, and children. The agency encourages positive life changes through programs in spiritual growth, education, employment, life management, and substance abuse recovery.

Bright Futures Ahead with FSS

By: Ahsaki Thurman



Photo: From left to right – Deana Brossard, Fort Worth Housing Solutions, FSS Manager; Ahsaki Thurman, former HUD PIH Fort Worth Field Office Division Director, Mary-Margaret Lemons, President Fort Worth Housing Solutions.

Fort Worth Housing Solutions (FWHS) recently honored FWHS clients who completed their self-sufficiency goals this year. Thirty clients completed the Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) program and received escrow checks totaling more than \$166,000. Another 17 clients purchased homes through the HCV homeownership program. Many of the homeowners had the pleasure of purchasing newly constructed homes, which allowed them to be a part of selection and customization process of their new homes.

FWHS also recognized three youth honorees (graduating HS Seniors) who participated in the

FWHS Silhouettes program, a mentoring program that FWHS supports year-round. The program partners with the local Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and encourages young women to become active members in their communities.

Ahsaki Thurman spoke during the graduation where she congratulated participants on their successes and encouraged them to continue moving forward on next level goals. HUD continues to support these types of initiatives and many others.

Brownsville Residents Prepare for a “Buena Vida” With Opening of City’s New EnVision Center

By: Patricia Campbell



HUD EnVision Center Program Manager Unabyrd Wadhams (holding certificate) was joined by Region VI DRA Leslie Bradley (l. of her) and City of Brownsville and HACB officials at the designation of the Buena Vida Choice Neighborhood EnVision Center in Brownsville in February. It was the third EC in Texas at the time of the designation, joining San Antonio and Fort Worth.

Residents of Brownsville, Texas, can find help in reaching their life goals with the recent designation of the Buena Vida Choice Neighborhood EnVision Center in February 2020.

Brownsville was the third city in Texas and the fourth in Region VI to receive an EnVision Center designation. EnVision Centers are part of HUD Secretary Carson’s initiative to offer a more holistic housing approach by connecting HUD-assisted and low-income families with the tools that can lead to self sufficiency. The principle partners for the Brownsville EC are the Housing Authority of the City of Brownsville (HACB), the City of Brownsville and the Revival of Cultural Arts Center.

EnVision Center Program Manager Unabyrd Wadhams came from Washington, D.C., to present the official designation certificate. “Secretary Carson believes that public-private partnerships are the way we as a country can lead low-income families to life success,” she said. “EnVision Centers are the perfect example of that partnership, and Mayor Martinez and the city, HACB and the Cultural Arts Center are to be commended for both

their foresight and their hard work in making today's opening a reality."

The Buena Vida Choice Neighborhood EC will provide a wide range of programs to area residents, including youth leadership and internship programs, ESL, STEM, financial literacy classes, health classes, Family Self Sufficiency counseling, and small business development.

American Dream City Home to Texas' Fourth EnVision Center

By: Patricia Campbell



Photo: Assistant Deputy Secretary for Field Policy and Management Ben DeMarzo Announces Arlington's EnVision Center Designation.

The home of the Dallas Cowboys and the Texas Rangers can now boast about being the home of another important Texas institution – its fourth EnVision Center. The Arlington EnVision Center (EC), located in the city's Human Services Center, received its official designation in February.

Assistant Deputy Secretary for Field Policy and Management, Ben DeMarzo was joined by Arlington Mayor Jeff Williams, resident LaCheryl Royal and representatives from the EC's main partners: Mindy Cochran, the Executive Director of the Arlington Housing Authority and Regina Williams, Vice President of the United Way.

HUD Secretary, Dr. Ben Carson also sent a video message where he congratulated the city on their EnVision Center designation. The video was viewed on one of the EnVision Center's new touch screen kiosks, which will be located on the ground floor of the EC. The screen is divided among the four EC pillars, and when visitors walk in, they can touch one of the pillars to find links to services directly related to their needs.

During the event, Arlington resident LaCheryl Royal spoke about her move to the "American Dream City" from West Texas and how she used the services the center offers to reach her goals. After attending financial classes in the very same room where the designation event was held, she worked hard to move forward, and recently received her teacher certification.

"Anyone can dream here, but first you have to envision the dream," said LaCheryl.

Texas' other EnVision Centers are in Fort Worth, San Antonio and Brownsville

[We Want to Hear from You](#)

HUD ISSUES REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION OR COMMENTS ON NEW PROGRAMS AND REGULATIONS. TAKE A LOOK BELOW ON WHERE HUD IS SEEKING PUBLIC INPUT AND LET US HERE FROM YOU!

(CTRL + Click to follow)

[FR-6130-P-01 Equal Participation of Faith-Based Organizations in HUD Programs and Activities: Implementation of Executive Order 13831](#)

[FR-6149-P-01 Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards](#)

[FR-7027-N-06 60- Day Notice of Proposed Information Collection: Project Approval for Single-Family Condominiums](#)

[National News from Washington](#)

(CTRL + Click to follow)

[HUD Provides Immediate Relief for Homeowners Among Nationwide Coronavirus Response](#)

[HUD Announces Additional \\$1.1 Million to Public Housing Authorities to Assist Young People Aging Out of Foster Care](#)

[HUD Awards \\$5 Million to Public Housing Agencies to Install Carbon Monoxide Detectors](#)

[HUD Awards \\$36 Million to Promote Employment and Self-Sufficiency for Public Housing Residents](#)

[Secretary Ben Carson
Announces \\$655 Million to
Help Tribes Support More
Affordable Housing](#)

[HUD Awards \\$20 Million to
Help Public Housing
Residents Secure Higher
Paying Jobs](#)

[Field Office Contacts](#)

Arkansas

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Louisiana

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Email: Bam.V.Gressett@hud.gov
Phone: 504-671-3741
Web: <http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/states/louisiana>

New Mexico

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Texas

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Houston Field Office Director:
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Web: <http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/states/texas>

You May Also Call:

For Public Housing: 1-800-955-2232

For Housing Counseling: 1-800-569-4287

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ARWebmanager@hud.gov (Arkansas),
LAWebmanager@hud.gov (Louisiana),
NMWebmanager@hud.gov (New Mexico),
OKWebmanager@hud.gov (Oklahoma)

At www.hud.gov, you can find information on most of our programs, including HUD information and resources related to coronavirus/COVID-19 at www.hud.gov/coronavirus

If your mortgage is insured by FHA: 1-800-Call-FHA (1-800-225-5342) or Email: Answers@hud.gov

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offers the most up-to-date information on COVID-19. For updates from CDC, please visit www.coronavirus.gov.

Quick Links
(CTRL + Click to follow)

[The Federal Register: Housing and Urban Development Significant & Recently Published Documents](#)

[GRANTS.GOVSM Opportunities with the Department of Housing and Urban Development](#)

[The HUD Experience - Region VI e-News Brief](#)
We welcome your feedback and invite you to share your news with Patricia Campbell at Patricia.A.Campbell@hud.gov If you know anyone who would like to receive *The HUD Experience*, please feel free to share. We safeguard and do not rent, sell or permit the use of our lists. To subscribe or unsubscribe, please email: Patricia.A.Campbell@hud.gov

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