

# **MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT**

**Between the**

**U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development**

**And the**

**U.S. Department of Agriculture**

## **I. Purpose**

The purpose of this Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is to establish a general working agreement between the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (U.S.D.A.) to coordinate policies and activities aimed at improving the housing, community, and economic conditions of residents of the Southwest border region of the United States, including residents of the Colonias and very low-income migrant/farmworkers.

## **II. Background**

The Southwest border region has multiple challenges that make it a highly appropriate focus of interagency cooperation. It is one of the poorer sections of the United States, with many areas of high unemployment. Yet it is growing rapidly, with population growth approximately twice that of the nation as a whole. Rates of certain illnesses are high, in part due to the lack of potable water and inadequate wastewater infrastructure in many areas. The cultural, linguistic, and physical isolation of many residents complicates the delivery of government services.

Within the Southwest border region, the most needy communities are the Colonias – identifiable communities that lack potable water, adequate sewage systems, or decent, safe or sanitary housing. Many Colonias also lack paved roads or proper drainage for the roads. HUD and U.S.D.A. both have programs targeted to providing assistance to the Colonias and very low-income workers employed in agriculture/agriculture-related industries, as well as broader programs that could be used to assist Colonias residents and very low-income migrant/farmworkers.

## **III. Agreement**

HUD and U.S.D.A. agree to work together to improve the coordination of programs and services to families in the Southwest border region, including the Colonias and very low-income migrant/farmworkers. This may include, to the extent permitted by law:

- A. Developing recommendations for coordinating and streamlining the delivery of HUD and U.S.D.A. programs and services to residents of the Southwest border region. This could include recommendations for the cross-marketing of HUD and U.S.D.A. programs and services, the cross-training of HUD and U.S.D.A. staff, the preparation of joint

informational or marketing materials on government programs, and other strategies to make it easier for grant recipients to access HUD and U.S.D.A. programs and services and make those programs and services more effective.

- B. Implementing those recommendations for coordinating the delivery of programs and services to residents of the Southwest border region that each agency determines to be practicable and desirable, in light of budgetary and other limitations.
- C. Working together on one or more pilot projects intended to evaluate whether the improved coordination of programs and services between HUD, U.S.D.A., and other cooperating agencies can materially improve conditions within the Colonias and in areas along the border region heavily populated by very low-income migrant/farmworkers.
- D. Exchanging information on housing, community, and economic conditions in the Southwest border region, the availability and effectiveness of programs to assist residents in that region, and other information relevant to the subject matter of this MOA.
- E. Working together on research projects involving the Southwest border region, as well as on conferences, meetings, and other activities related to the region.
- F. Such other activities as the Parties determine are appropriate to advance the purposes of this MOA.

#### **IV. Definition**

For the purposes of this MOA, the term “Southwest border region” shall mean: the area of the United States within 150 miles of the border between the United States and Mexico, in the States of Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas, except that the term does not include any standard metropolitan statistical area that has a population exceeding 1,000,000. (This definition is based on the statutory definition of “United States-Mexico Border region” in Title IX, Section 916(e)(4) of the National Affordable Housing Act of 1990.)

#### **V. Limitations**

This MOA represents a non-binding expression of intent for U.S.D.A. and HUD to work together to help families living in the Southwest border region. Nothing in this MOA shall be construed as a legally binding commitment of the Parties hereto either individually or collectively. This MOA does not create any rights, either on the part of any Party hereto or any third party. Any provision of this MOA that conflicts with federal law will be null and void.

## **VI. Effective Date**

This Memorandum will become effective upon signature by the Secretary of U.S.D.A. and by the Secretary of HUD and shall remain in effect until termination by any of the Parties. Either of the Parties may terminate this MOA upon 90 days written notice to the other Party. This MOA may be modified at any time upon mutual written consent of the Parties.

Within 30 days of the execution of this MOA, each Party shall designate a contact person to coordinate that Party's activities under this MOA.

EXECUTED this 16<sup>th</sup> day of June 2003 by:

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Ann M. Veneman  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture

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Mel Martinez  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Housing and  
Urban Development