



## TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

*www.tdhca.state.tx.us*

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February 10, 2017

*Writer's direct phone # 512-475-2125  
Email: Michael.deyoung@tdhca.state.tx.us*

To: Interested Parties

RE: Request for Applications ("RFA") to Administer the Community Services Block Grant ("CSBG") in Dimmit and La Salle Counties

The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (the "Department") is seeking interested organizations to apply to administer the CSBG in Dimmit and La Salle counties and be designated as the CSBG Eligible Entity for these counties. An organization that submits an application must be willing to administer the program throughout the entire service area. In accordance with the CSBG Act, the Department will give preference in awarding the funding to an eligible private nonprofit.

Interested applicants must meet the requirements set forth in the RFA and must submit a complete application through the established system described in the RFA by Monday, April 10, 2017, 5:00 p.m. Austin local time.

The application forms contained in this packet and submission instructions are available on the Department's web site at <http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/community-affairs/nofas.htm>. The Department looks forward to receiving your completed application. Should you have any related questions, please contact Gavin Reid at (512) 936-7828 or [gavin.reid@tdhca.state.tx.us](mailto:gavin.reid@tdhca.state.tx.us).

Sincerely,

Michael DeYoung  
Director  
Community Affairs Division

MDY/gr



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## **I. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS**

### **A. Application Deadline:**

All applications must be submitted before **Monday, April 10, 2017, 5:00 p.m. Austin local time.**

### **B. Electronic Submission:**

All applications must be submitted electronically to be considered eligible applications. Applications are to be submitted through the Wufoo using the following link:

<https://tdhca.wufoo.com/forms/rfa-to-administer-the-csbg-in-dimmit-and-la-salle/>

### **C. Application Questions**

Application questions may be submitted via electronic mail to [gavin.reid@tdhca.state.tx.us](mailto:gavin.reid@tdhca.state.tx.us)

**The deadline to submit questions related to the content of the RFA and Application is Wednesday April 5, 2017, by 5:00 p.m. Austin local time.** Questions related to the content of the RFA submitted after this deadline may not be answered.

### **D. Eligibility Requirements:**

Applications which are not materially complete will not be reviewed nor scored. In order for an application to be deemed eligible for review, the following minimum requirements must be met:

1. An Applicant must meet all requirements as set forth in II. General Information, C. Eligible Applicant Organizations;
2. An Applicant that is a private nonprofit must provide documentation of their status as a tax-exempt entity under Section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code;
3. An Applicant must provide Fiscal Accountability Documentation as set forth in III. Application Content, 4. Financial Information;
4. Neither an Applicant nor any of its current principal parties may be included in the System for Award Management (formerly Excluded Parties List System);
5. Successful Applicants will be reviewed by the Department's Executive Award Review Advisory Committee in accordance with 10 TAC Chapter 1, Subchapter C, but treated as a discretionary CSBG award, as the entity is not yet an Eligible Entity for Dimmit and La Salle counties.

## **II. GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **A. Background**

The CSBG Program provides annual funding support through states to a network of eligible entities to maintain a local program service delivery system on behalf of low-income individuals and families. The CSBG Act requires that 90% of the annual CSBG funds received by the Department from USHHS be passed-through to this network of local organizations for administrative support, direct services to clients, and to facilitate the delivery of services for low-income population groups. Eligible entities, upon Department approval, are designated by the Governor to provide a broad range of services designed to eliminate poverty and foster self-sufficiency. Once such designation by the Governor is made the eligible entity retains the responsibilities under the CSBG Act, as well as the due process rights

under that Act until and unless it either voluntarily relinquishes that status or is terminated in accordance with the requirements of the CSBG Act.

Tex. Gov't Code §2306.097 requires energy services programs that serve low-income individuals, such as Community Energy Assistance Program ("CEAP"), to operate in conjunction with the CSBG. The Department has been designated to administer the CEAP and CSBG for the State of Texas pursuant to Tex. Gov't Code §2306.094. Therefore, the Department will award points to an applicant that currently administers CEAP funds.

The Department is seeking an organization to serve as the eligible entity for and to administer the CSBG in Dimmit and La Salle counties. Organizations that submit an application must be willing to administer the program throughout the entire counties.

## **B. Purpose of CSBG**

The purpose of the CSBG is to reduce poverty, revitalize low-income communities, and empower low-income individuals and families to become self-sufficient. This is accomplished by using CSBG funds to support local efforts to identify, reduce, or eliminate the causes of poverty and to help solve problems that block the achievement of self-sufficiency among individuals. While use of CSBG funds has broad latitude for creativity in addressing the specific needs of a community, there are specific requirements relating to assessing and identifying those needs; more information of the preparation of a Community Needs Assessment can be found at <http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/community-affairs/csbg/docs/15-CommNeedsAsmtGuide.pdf>. The program also has an extensive performance management and accountability framework. There are comprehensive National Performance Indicators ("NPIs") that federally govern programming and success; more information on the NPIs can be found at [http://www.nascsp.org/data/files/csbg\\_is\\_survey/csbgis\\_npi\\_instructions\\_nascsp\\_2015.pdf](http://www.nascsp.org/data/files/csbg_is_survey/csbgis_npi_instructions_nascsp_2015.pdf).

## **Eligible Applicant Organizations**

Organizations eligible to apply to serve an unserved area must be a private nonprofit organization. Per the CSBG statute 42 USC §9909(c), a political subdivision of the State will not be considered in the first round of review and will not be considered unless there is no qualified private nonprofit organization, as defined in 10 TAC §5.2(b)(43). If that occurs, the Department will release another RFA open to political subdivisions. At this time, submissions from political subdivisions will not be accepted. The successful applicant will be designated as the eligible entity (as defined in 42 U.S.C. §9902(1)(A)) for the counties in the service area. An organization that is eligible to be designated as a new CSBG eligible entity may be:

- a private nonprofit organization (which may include an existing Eligible Entity) that is geographically located in the unserved area, that is capable of providing a broad range of services designed to eliminate poverty and foster self-sufficiency, and that meets the requirements of the CSBG Act;
- a private nonprofit eligible entity that is geographically located in an area contiguous to or within reasonable proximity of the unserved area and that is already providing related services in the unserved area, and is willing to add additional board members to ensure adequate representation of the new service area; or
- if no private nonprofit organization is identified or determined to be qualified to serve the unserved area as an eligible entity, under 42 USC §9909(e) the Governor may designate an appropriate political subdivision of the State to serve as an eligible entity for the area. In

order to serve as the eligible entity for the area, the political subdivision shall have a board or other governing mechanism as required by 42 USC §9910(b), as approved by the Department in writing.

In order to be an eligible applicant, the applicant cannot owe the Department more than \$25,000, and cannot be currently delinquent in their submission of any required Single Audit to the Federal Clearinghouse or the Department, as applicable.

#### **D. Eligible Use of Funds**

CSBG funds are made available to local organizations under contract with the Department to provide administrative support, to provide direct services to eligible low-income clients, and/or to mobilize resources to provide an array of services to the low-income clientele in the designated service area.

Per requirements of the CSBG Act, CSBG funds are to be used locally to support activities that are designed to assist low-income families and individuals to:

- remove obstacles and solve problems that block the achievement of self-sufficiency;
- secure and retain meaningful employment;
- attain an adequate education, with particular attention toward improving literacy;
- make better use of available income;
- obtain and maintain adequate housing and a suitable living environment;
- obtain emergency assistance through loans, grants, or other means to meet immediate and urgent needs;
- achieve greater participation in the affairs of the communities involved;
- address the needs of youth in low-income communities through youth development programs. Such programs may include, but are not limited to, after-school child care programs and youth mentoring, mediation, life skills training, and jobs programs; and
- make more effective use of and to coordinate with other programs in the community.

Case management services must be provided to assist eligible low-income individuals to attain an income above the 125% level of poverty income guidelines. The provision of case management includes: an assessment of the household's needs; a plan of action to meet the client's needs; and regular follow-up to ensure that clients are making progress in meeting established goals.

#### **E. FFY 2017 Funding Estimates for Service Area**

The applicant organization chosen through this competitive process will be offered a CSBG contract for Program Year 2017 and for each year that funds are made federally available and in accordance with federal requirements.

The estimates for FFY 2017 funding are based upon the amount of funds provided for the service area in FFY 2016. These estimates are for planning purposes for the release of the RFA. Final allocation amounts may vary. The available funds are to be utilized to cover costs related to administration, direct program staff costs, and for the provision of the services and assistance.

## **F. Allocation Estimates**

The estimated FFY 2017 allocation for the Dimmit and La Salle county CSBG service area is \$150,000. For existing CSBG Eligible Entities that intend to apply, it should be noted that the funding associated with this award would be significantly lower than that figure. Consistent with the formula denoted in 10 TAC §6.203, the prior provider for these counties received \$150,000 because of the minimum floor in place. However, because the floor is applied on a per entity basis an existing Eligible Entity is already being calculated based on that floor so this award would reflect only the added allocation for the given counties, estimated to be \$75,000. Stated another way, the base and floor in place for the two counties would not be available as a source of funding for existing CSBG Eligible Entities that are applying to expand their service area. However, the Department has also allotted some 2017 CSBG-Discretionary funds for existing entities that may absorb other counties, and, if the awarded entity is an Existing Entity, the Department will work with that awardee to assist with eligible start-up costs in that regard.

## **G. Subrecipient Requirements**

### **1. Tripartite Board or “Other Mechanism” Requirements**

In order for a private nonprofit entity to be considered to be an eligible entity, the entity shall administer the CSBG through a tripartite board that fully participates in the development, planning, implementation, and evaluation of the program to serve low-income communities. The members of the Board shall be selected by the entity and the Board shall be composed so as to assure that: 1/3 of the members are elected public officials or their representatives; not fewer than 1/3 of the members are persons that are democratically selected to assure that these members are representative of low-income individuals and families in the neighborhood served; and, the remainder of the members are officials or members of business, industry, labor, religious, law enforcement, education, or other major groups and interests in the community served.

The rules governing the CSBG entity’s board requirements are found in 10 TAC Chapter 6, Subchapter B, §§6.209 – 6.214. An entity must be fully prepared to bring its board into compliance with these board requirements within 180 days of selection as the new Eligible Entity. Department staff will also be willing to provide the successful Applicant technical assistance on compliance with this and other requirements of the CSBG Act and the Department’s rules.

### **2. Service Area Coverage Requirement**

The Department is seeking an organization to administer the CSBG in Dimmit and La Salle counties. Organizations that submit an application must be willing to administer the program throughout the entire county.

### **3. Results Oriented Management and Accountability Systems and CSBG Organizational Standards**

The applicant awarded funds to serve as the CSBG eligible entity must participate in the Results Oriented Management and Accountability System to report performance to the Department and must meet the requirements of the CSBG Organizational Standards. Information regarding these requirements can be found on the Department’s website at <http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/community-affairs/csbg/guidance.htm>. Department staff will also be willing to provide the successful Applicant technical assistance on compliance with this and other requirements of the CSBG Act and the Department’s rules.

### **4. Client Eligibility Requirements**

Clients to be served with the support of the CSBG must have an annualized income not to exceed 125% of the poverty income guidelines as provided by the USHHS.

## **5. Program Administration**

CSBG awardees must operate the program in accordance with the CSBG Act, the Texas Administrative Code regulations in Title 10, Part 1, Chapters 1 and 2; Title 10, Part 1, Chapter 6, Subchapters A and B; and in accordance with the Texas Uniform Grant Management Standards (“UGMS”), except where preempted by 2 CFR Part 200.

Applicants should review each of these documents to fully understand all requirements for program administration before making the decision to submit an application. Department staff will also be willing to provide the successful Applicant technical assistance on compliance with this and other requirements of the CSBG Act and the Department’s rules.

## **6. Ineligible Use of Funds**

CSBG funds may not be used to purchase or improve land, or for the purchase, construction, or permanent improvement (other than low-cost weatherization or other energy-related home repairs) of any building or other facility.

Any entity that receives funds from this proposal and assumes responsibility for planning, developing, and coordinating CSBG activities shall be deemed a State or local agency for certain purposes. The funds shall not be used in the provision of services or the employment or assignment of personnel to support the following activities: any partisan or non-partisan political activity or any political activity in an election for public or party office; any activity to provide voters or prospective voters with transportation to the polls or similar assistance in connection with any such election; or any voter registration activity. Utility and rent deposit refunds from vendors must be reimbursed to the Subrecipient and not the customer. Refunds must be treated as program income, and returned to the Department within ten days of receipt. Any other prohibited uses or activities identified in state or federal statute or rule will also be ineligible.

## **7. Reporting Requirements**

### ***a. Monthly Reporting***

Subrecipients must submit monthly financial reports and monthly performance reports for CSBG. The monthly reports are due the 15th of the month following the month being reported. This is a monthly report, submitted electronically to the Department, and contains fiscal expenditures and programmatic performance information.

### ***b. CSBG Community Needs Assessment, Strategic Plan, and Community Action Plan***

The Department requires that each CSBG eligible entity conduct and submit a Community Needs Assessment every three years. These assessments serve to redirect service delivery based on gaps in services and new needs for the low-income sector as determined by feedback from local officials, the low-income clientele, and other interest groups.

The Department requires that each CSBG eligible entity conduct and submit an agency strategic plan every five years. During the first year, the awardee must submit their strategic plan as part of documentation for meeting CSBG Organizational Standards. Among other things, the strategic plan serves to re-examine why the organization exists and its aspirations for the future, to produce decisions and actions that guide the organization’s programs and operation, to help prioritize efforts and determine the allocation of resources, and to improve effectiveness and efficiency through agreed upon strategies and goals.

The Department requires that each CSBG eligible entity submit an annual Community Action Plan (“CAP”) for review and approval. Within 45 days of receipt of funding notification, a CAP must be submitted to the Department for approval and before contract execution. The CAP serves to inform the Department of each eligible entity’s intent to use the CSBG funds in accordance with applicable state and federal regulations.

**8. Transitioning Persons Out of Poverty**

The Department requires each eligible entity to transition persons out of poverty and annually assigns a goal to each CSBG eligible entity. CSBG awardees will be assigned a goal for transitioning persons out of poverty.

**9. Auditing Requirements**

The Department requires that each subrecipient organization that expends \$750,000 or greater in total federal financial assistance during the organization’s fiscal year arrange for the performance of an annual audit conducted in accordance with the State and Federal Single Audit Act provisions, as applicable. Subrecipient organizations expending less than \$750,000 in state/federal financial assistance shall arrange for an annual audit of their financial statements. Audits must be performed by a qualified, licensed, and properly procured auditor, and audits must be submitted to the Department within 30 days of the completion of the audit, but not more than nine (9) months after the end of the fiscal audit period.

**10. Policies and Procedures**

The organization shall establish and maintain bylaws and current policies and procedures on items required by 2 CFR Part 200 and Uniform Grant Management Standards (“UGMS”), including but not limited to personnel, travel, financial/accounting, and procurement. The personnel policies and procedures document should include nondiscrimination assurances, grievance procedures, conflict of interest/nepotism provision, and time and leave policies. The organization’s procurement procedures should include information for all purchasing activity relative to equipment, supplies, services, facility rent, leases, etc. Fiscal accountability documentation, including current fidelity bond coverage and a complete copy of the last full fiscal audit for fiscal period indicated must also be maintained. All applicants will be required to obtain and submit to the Department proof of fidelity bond coverage before entering into a contract for CSBG funding as required by 10 TAC §1.406.

The organization shall also establish, maintain, and utilize systems and procedures to prevent, detect, and correct waste, fraud, and abuse in activities. The systems and procedures shall address possible waste, fraud, and abuse by the subrecipient organization, its employees, clients, vendors, subcontractors and administering agencies. The organization’s internal control systems and all transactions and other significant events are to be clearly documented.

### **III. APPLICATION CONTENT**

All pages of the application, excluding the audit, must be numbered. Each application must contain the items listed below in the following order:

1. Table of Contents – must include page numbers.
2. Attachment A – Applicant Information Form – Form must be placed on the top of the application.

3. Attachment B – Application Questions – Complete the RFA Application Questions document. Applications that do not include a completed document with responses to RFA Questions may be deemed ineligible.

Please use the following format to provide any information which is requested in response to questions in the Application Questions document:

- Minimum 11 font
  - Standard 8½ “ x 11” paper with 1” margins
  - Provide brief descriptions of requested information.
4. Attachment C – Financial Information – All applications must include documentation of fiscal accountability, even if this information has been previously submitted to the Department.
    - A. All applications must include a completed Audit Certification Form, found on the Department’s website at <http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/pmcomp/forms.htm>.
    - B. Organizations that are subject to single audit requirement must submit one copy of the organization’s most recent Single Audit report.
    - C. Organizations not subject to the single audit requirement must submit a third-party audit prepared by a Certified Public Accountant, including any notes to the audit.
  5. Attachment D – Uniform Previous Participation Form for Single Family and Community Affairs.
  6. Attachment E – Certifications Regarding Legal Actions, Debarment & Compliance with Laws.
  7. Attachment F – Private Nonprofit Organization’s Tax-Exempt Status Documentation and Evidence of Good Standing with the Texas Secretary of State.
    - A. Existing Internal Revenue Service (IRS) ruling – All private nonprofit organizations must document their status as a tax-exempt entity under Section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code. The Department prefers that the ruling be on IRS letterhead which is legible and signed by the IRS District Director. Expired advanced rulings from the IRS are not acceptable.
    - B. Documentation of local nonprofit affiliate of a state or national nonprofit can be submitted if the organization is a subsidiary of a parent organization. Provide a copy of the page listing the affiliate organization in the documents filed with the IRS by the parent organization.
    - C. Documentation of the certificate of Good Standing from the Texas Secretary of State.
  8. Attachment G – Audit Certification Form
  9. Attachment H – Applicant Certifications

The certification must be signed by the organization’s Executive Director. If such cannot be attested, then attach a document explaining why.
  10. Attachment I – CSBG Budget Worksheets:

- A. The proposed budget for CSBG is to be submitted utilizing the Attachment J form. There are several tabs within the spreadsheet to complete. Complete the budget based on the estimated funds available noted in Section II. E. FFY 2017 Service Area Funding Estimates.
- B. The Department strongly encourages applicants to budget no more than **20%** of the CSBG funds for **administrative costs** (overhead and staff costs related to administrative staff not involved in the direct delivery of services).
- C. The CSBG does not have limitations on the amount of funds utilized for the provision of direct services or for the costs of staff assigned to provide the direct services.

## IV. APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

### 1. Eligibility Prescreening Review

The Department will review project applications to determine if they meet the following eligibility threshold requirements. If the Department determines any of these criteria are not met, the application will be eliminated from the competition. Such determination can occur due to:

- a. Submitting an application after the application deadline.
- b. Failing to submit any of the completed *threshold documents*, which include:
  - Attachment A: Applicant Information Form
  - Attachment B: Application Questions
  - Attachment C: Financial Information
  - Attachment D: Uniform Previous Participation Information
  - Attachment E: Certifications Regarding Legal Actions, Debarment & Compliance with Laws
  - Attachment F: Private Nonprofit Organization's Tax-Exempt Status Documentation Evidence of Good Standing with the Texas Secretary of State
  - Attachment G: Audit Certification Form
  - Attachment H: Applicant Certifications
  - Attachment I: CSBG Budget Worksheets

### 2. Scoring of Applications

Applications will be scored based on the response to the Attachment B questions and submission of requested documents. The Attachment B questions are designed to evaluate the applicant's capacity in the following areas:

- Part 1: Organizational Capacity
- Part 2: Board Governance
- Part 3: Financial Information
- Part 4: Efficiency
- Part 5: Services and Activities

The Department will consider and evaluate prior monitoring and/or audit issues during its application review. Factors to be considered in the review of each application will include, but not be limited to:

- Eligibility Requirements set forth in Sections I and II;
- Compliance with RFA instructions;
- Submission of requested information;
- Response to Attachment B questions Part 1 – Part 5;
- Capacity to effectively administer federal funds and to ensure compliance with regulations;
- Ability to demonstrate staff and organizational capacity to deliver the proposed services; and,
- Ability to demonstrate positive past performance with Department or other federally funded programs, including the results of Department monitoring reviews, timeliness of submission of reports, results of the last fiscal audit, and other information deemed relevant to performance.

### 3. **Evaluative Review and Deficiencies**

Applications that meet all eligibility requirements (including a minimum self-score of 600) will be reviewed for completeness and scored using a standard review instrument using the scoring structure found in the Attachment B questions. If all applicants self-score below the minimum point threshold, the Department reserves the right to review the top scoring entity and if, in the Department’s judgment, they can appropriately administer the CSBG, may recommend an award to its Governing Board.

After the application receipt deadline, the Department will not consider any unsolicited information that an applicant may want to provide. After the Department receives an application, however, the Department may contact the applicant to clarify items in its application or issue a deficiency notice.

Applicants may be issued a deficiency notice detailing any of the required application information that is unclear or that may have been omitted in error. Applicants will have three business days from the date of issuance of the deficiency notice to provide the Department with the requested information. If not provided in that time period, the applicant will be sent a notice of its elimination from the competition. **Deficiency notices will not be issued for failure to submit threshold documents or for the submission of substantially incomplete threshold documents. If an applicant fails to complete or submit one of the threshold documents, the application may be considered incomplete and may not be considered for further review.**

### 4. **Appeals Process**

Applicants may appeal the results of the Department’s review and selection process if they believe an error has occurred. Appeals must be submitted in writing by following the procedures stated in the Texas Administrative Rule Title 10, Part 1, Chapter 1, Subchapter A, §§1.7 and 1.8.

## V. **APPENDICES**

### **Federal and State Requirements:**

- A. CSBG Act Coats Human Services Reauthorization Act of 1998, available at <http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/community-affairs/csbg/guidance.htm>
- B. Texas Administrative Code - 10 TAC Chapter 1, Administration, available at [http://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac\\$ext.ViewTAC?tac\\_view=4&ti=10&pt=1&ch=1](http://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=4&ti=10&pt=1&ch=1)
- C. Texas Administrative Code - 10 TAC Chapter 2, Enforcement, available at [http://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac\\$ext.ViewTAC?tac\\_view=4&ti=10&pt=1&ch=2](http://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=4&ti=10&pt=1&ch=2)
- D. Texas Administrative Code - 10 TAC Chapter 6, Subchapter A, General Provisions, available at [http://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac\\$ext.ViewTAC?tac\\_view=5&ti=10&pt=1&ch=6&sch=A&rl=Y](http://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=5&ti=10&pt=1&ch=6&sch=A&rl=Y)
- E. Texas Administrative Code - 10 TAC Chapter 6, Subchapter B, CSBG, available at [http://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac\\$ext.ViewTAC?tac\\_view=5&ti=10&pt=1&ch=6&sch=B&rl=Y](http://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=5&ti=10&pt=1&ch=6&sch=B&rl=Y)

## VI. LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

Ensure all application documents are submitted. Attachments are posted separately on the TDHCA website as fillable MS Word forms and Excel documents:

<http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/community-affairs/nofas.htm>

### THRESHOLD DOCUMENTS:

If any of the *Threshold Documents* are missing from the Application submission, the entire Application may be eliminated from consideration.

- Attachment A: Applicant Information Form
- Attachment B: Application Questions
- Attachment C: Financial Information
- Attachment D: Uniform Previous Participation Information
- Attachment E: Certifications Regarding Legal Actions, Debarment & Compliance with Laws
- Attachment F: Private Nonprofit Organization's Tax-Exempt Status Documentation and Evidence of Good Standing with the Texas Secretary of State
- Attachment G: Audit Certification Form
- Attachment H: Applicant Certifications
- Attachment I: CSBG Budget Worksheets