

AN ACT

relating to services provided by colonia self-help centers and a study on colonias in this state.

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

1 home construction and improvement for the benefit of property
2 owners in colonias who are building or repairing a residence or
3 installing necessary residential infrastructure;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

24 (i) securing employment;

25 (ii) establishing or expanding a small
26 business;

27 (iii) developing professional skills; or

1 (iv) managing personal finances and
2 achieving financial literacy;

3 (10) providing assistance in obtaining loans or grants
4 to enable an individual or a family to acquire fee simple title to
5 property that originally was purchased under a contract for a deed,
6 contract for sale, or other executory contract; and

7 (11) providing monthly programs to educate
8 individuals and families on their rights and responsibilities as
9 property owners.

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

15 SECTION 2. (a) In this section, "colonia" has the meaning
16 assigned by Section 2306.581, Government Code.

17 (b) A joint interim committee is established to study
18 colonias and colonia initiatives in this state.

19 (c) The joint interim committee is composed of the members
20 of the standing committees of the legislature with primary
21 jurisdiction over colonias and colonia issues. The committee
22 members shall select a presiding officer from among the membership.

23 (d) In conducting the study under this section, the joint
24 interim committee shall:

25 (1) determine the best methods for updating and
26 maintaining colonia identification systems and for identifying and
27 classifying colonias in which the highest public health risks

1 exist;

2 (2) consider whether colonias should be defined
3 uniformly across all relevant state agencies and whether that
4 definition should include essential metrics such as:

5 (A) economic mobility levels;

6 (B) poverty levels;

7 (C) mortality rates;

8 (D) health professional shortage area scores;

9 and

10 (E) the average level of education attained by
11 colonia residents;

12 (3) to address the enduring lack of services and
13 infrastructure in colonias, assess best practices and funding needs
14 for surveying the services and infrastructure available in, and
15 demographics of, each colonia;

16 (4) assess the status of state agency tracking and
17 reporting of state-funded colonia projects and whether
18 improvements to the tracking or reporting mechanisms are necessary;

19 (5) determine and assess any non-infrastructure needs
20 within colonias and options for this state to address those needs;
21 and

22 (6) assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on
23 colonias and whether additional state services are necessary to
24 address those impacts.

25 (e) The joint interim committee has all other powers and
26 duties provided to a special or select committee by the rules of the
27 senate and house of representatives, by Subchapter B, Chapter 301,

1 Government Code, and by policies of the senate and house committees
2 on administration.

3 (f) Not later than September 1, 2022, the joint interim
4 committee shall prepare and submit to the governor, the lieutenant
5 governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the
6 legislature a written report that includes the findings of the
7 committee under this section, including any legislative
8 recommendations.

9 (g) The joint interim committee established under this
10 section is abolished and this section expires November 1, 2022.

11 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2021.

President of the Senate

Speaker of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 1301 was passed by the House on April 30, 2021, by the following vote: Yeas 79, Nays 49, 1 present, not voting; and that the House concurred in Senate amendments to H.B. No. 1301 on May 28, 2021, by the following vote: Yeas 93, Nays 46, 2 present, not voting.

Chief Clerk of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 1301 was passed by the Senate, with amendments, on May 24, 2021, by the following vote: Yeas 28, Nays 2.

Secretary of the Senate

APPROVED: _____

Date

Governor