

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

BOARD PUBLIC HEARING
LOW INCOME HOUSING PLAN AND ANNUAL REPORT 2002

9:00 a.m.
Wednesday,
November 14, 2001

Room E1.028
Capitol Extension
1400 Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas

BOARD MEMBERS:

MICHAEL JONES, Chairman
C. KENT CONINE, Vice Chairman
BETH ANDERSON
SHADRICK BOGANY
BETH ANDERSON

STAFF PRESENT:

RUTH CEDILLO, Executive Director

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1
2 MR. JONES: I'd like to call to order the board
3 public hearing for the Texas Department of Housing and
4 Community Affairs for November 14, 2001, and this is the
5 public hearing with regard to the State Low Income Housing
6 Plan and Annual Report for 2002.

7 The first order of business is the call to
8 order and roll call. Beth Anderson?

9 MS. ANDERSON: Here.

10 MR. JONES: Shadrick Bogany?

11 MR. BOGANY: Here.

12 MR. JONES: Kent Conine?

13 MR. CONINE: Here.

14 MR. JONES: Vidal Gonzalez is absent; Norberto
15 Salinas is absent; Michael Jones is present. So we have
16 four members present and two members absent, and I do
17 certify that we do have a quorum.

18 At this point we will be taking public comment
19 concerning the State Low Income Housing Plan and Annual
20 Report for 2002, and if you plan to comment, we do need
21 you to submit a witness affirmation form for this hearing.

22 Now, I would say this is our public hearing, this is not
23 the board meeting.

24 I have two witness affirmation forms that have
25 been submitted, one by Mr. Sherman and one by Ms.

1 Anderson. Are there any others? Yes, sir, if you would
2 bring them forward. Delores, could you get those for me?

3 Thank you so much.

4 Our first speaker will be Ms. Anderson.

5 MS. P. ANDERSON: Good morning, Mr. Chairman,
6 members, Ms. Cedillo. For the record, my name is Patty
7 Anderson; I'm the executive director of United Cerebral
8 Palsy of Texas. We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit
9 organization providing services and advocacy to persons
10 with disabilities across the state.

11 I'm very pleased to be here this morning to
12 offer some comments on the 2002 State of Texas Low Income
13 Housing Plan and Annual Report. I'd also like you to know
14 that United Cerebral Palsy of Texas serves as the lead
15 organization for the Texas Home of Your Own Coalition and
16 we do have contracts with the department to do down
17 payment and barrier removal assistance through the HOME
18 Program.

19 Specifically, we wanted to offer our support
20 for the department's commitment to a partnership with the
21 Texas Home of Your Own Coalition. We call it HOYO, so
22 I'll refer to it as HOYO just to keep it brief and simple.

23 HOYO continues to expand opportunities for home ownership
24 among a greatly underserved population -- that is, persons
25 with disabilities who are low income.

1 Down payment and barrier removal assistance to
2 prospective home buyers with disabilities is a major
3 activity of the project to promote home ownership
4 opportunities. Because people with disabilities are
5 considered an underserved population, this assistance is
6 an especially important activity to support and to have
7 addressed in the plan.

8 The identification of HOYO as a cooperating
9 organization really provides that tangible and
10 demonstrated support to the partnership, and we appreciate
11 it and we look forward to continuing to work with the
12 department.

13 I specifically wanted to list our support for
14 some commitments that are in the plan, those being an
15 increase from 10 percent to 20 percent of the annual HOME
16 allocation to applicants serving persons with special
17 needs.

18 The second item is the addition of scoring
19 criteria for applicants targeting programs that support
20 the de-institutionalization of persons with disabilities.
21 Establishing a higher amount of down payment assistance,
22 funding available for eligible home buyers with
23 disabilities is also a component, and compliance with
24 Senate Bill 623 which provides four universal design
25 features in new single family home construction by

1 organizations that receive HOME funding from TDHCA.

2 The establishment of an advisory committee to
3 address the issues facing people with disabilities to
4 obtain housing services in Texas is also a major step in
5 the right direction.

6 In addition to those goals in the plan, we also
7 see that there is an opportunity for the department to
8 promote and educate the larger community on the housing
9 needs that people with disabilities have in our state. We
10 continue to feel that the department has a proper role and
11 can be the catalyst for full compliance with Fair Housing
12 laws, as well as promote policies that increase integrated
13 accessible and affordable housing opportunities for people
14 with disabilities.

15 In the past we have supported the Statewide
16 Architectural Barrier Removal Program -- it's been called
17 SABR within the department -- and the goal of that program
18 is to systematically increase the stock of accessible
19 housing in the state. There's really a tremendous need
20 out there for barrier removal programs and we would very
21 much like to offer that the plan needs to have a clear
22 demonstrated commitment to that particular activity too.
23 There's very little funding or technical assistance in
24 replicating barrier removal programs across the state.

25 I have five very quick recommendations about

1 the plan, and I do have these in writing so I'm going to
2 turn them in to you also. The first recommendation is
3 that we modify the language of the State Low Income
4 Housing Plan to read -- this is goal number 1 that I'm
5 specifically addressing: The TDHCA will increase and
6 preserve the availability of safe, decent -- and then add
7 the words integrated and accessible -- and then continue
8 with affordable housing for very low, low, and moderate
9 income persons and families.

10 Our second recommendation is that the
11 department would increase the monitoring efforts of
12 recipients of funds for compliance with all state and
13 federal requirements for accessibility by the use of a
14 self-evaluation tool to be included in the uniform
15 application prior to funding. The self-evaluation, we
16 believe, should include all offices, any models that are
17 used, any other facilities that are used by the recipient
18 to provide services so that there's full physical
19 accessibility to persons with disabilities.

20 Our third recommendation is to undertake a
21 capacity-building effort to provide technical assistance
22 to potential grantees and others throughout the state on
23 the successful program model to develop a consumer-driven
24 barrier removal services -- this is the home modification
25 piece that I spoke to a moment ago.

1 And our fourth recommendation is that the
2 department commit funds for those barrier removal programs
3 within HOME, CDBG and the Housing Trust Fund Program.

4 And our last recommendation is that there be a
5 creation of a minimum 15 percent set-aside specifically
6 for projects serving people with disabilities in the
7 Housing Trust Fund in support of initiatives to address
8 the state's response to the Olmstead decision which we've
9 addressed the board about before.

10 I'd be happy to answer any questions. Thank
11 you.

12 MR. JONES: Thank you. Ms. Susan Maxwell?

13 MS. MAXWELL: Good morning. I'm Susan Maxwell;
14 I'm from the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities
15 and I'm here representing the council.

16 As you probably know, the council is a
17 governor-appointed board of 30 members and we have 60
18 percent that are people with disabilities and the rest are
19 state agency folks who serve people with disabilities that
20 are on the board or council, and we'd like to offer the
21 following comments on the Low Income Housing Plan and
22 Annual Report.

23 We would really like to express our
24 appreciation for the progressive actions that have come
25 about in the last year. We see that the department in the

1 state plan acknowledges the need for people with
2 disabilities to be integrated into community settings, and
3 this has been something that's just very important; people
4 don't like to be isolated in housing just for people with
5 disabilities.

6 And this has taken on a special sense of
7 importance, in that we're also initiating and getting off
8 the ground in our state the Olmstead Supreme Court
9 decision that says that people that have been forced to
10 live in institutions because there was no state services
11 and support for them in the community should be moved into
12 the community, and when they get to that community, I'm
13 sure they want to know that it is going to be integrated,
14 so we appreciate the department's understanding of
15 integration.

16 Our council applauds you on the formation of
17 the task force regarding people with disabilities so that
18 the staff can work with folks who just have a little
19 expertise in this area and all the policies that can be
20 brought forth and programs can have these things looked at
21 before they come to you.

22 Another thing that's been really great to see
23 is the participation of the department on the interagency
24 committee to get the Olmstead initiative or the Promoting
25 Independence initiative out in the state, and to agree to

1 take upon the extra 35 vouchers that HUD has given to get
2 them out to people who are going to be leaving
3 institutions. The department has shown an extra
4 dedication to this effort; you should be applauded for
5 that.

6 There's also additional money in the HOME
7 Program for barrier removal and that's always a good thing
8 for people with disabilities. To be able to access
9 housing is one thing, but to be able to actually get in
10 with ramps or wider hallways and get into the bathroom is
11 real important, so the barrier removal section there is
12 wonderful. And I see that there's a new pieces in tenant-
13 based rental assistance and that's a really good thing
14 too.

15 The next steps that we see the department can
16 do to make things even better is to provide capacity
17 building and educating people all around the state, as it
18 is your role to reach many people, and providing for how
19 to do barrier removal, and a lot of times the self-
20 directed barrier removal that we talk about, the consumer-
21 driven barrier removal means that we'll spend less money
22 because people know that they only need this or that and
23 not just the whole gamut of things that are in some of the
24 documents, so bringing that expertise would be good.

25 And then the other thing is to help people

1 around the state understand the laws of the state that
2 provide for people with disabilities and the compliance
3 issues with that. A lot of people just don't get the
4 word, and we feel like when they make application to TDHCA
5 by doing self-assessment, they can check off, oh, I didn't
6 know that. It would be good for them as a way to get
7 information out so that we can see better compliance and
8 more housing for people with disabilities.

9 So capacity building and barrier removal
10 compliance, those are the things that we speak of, and I'd
11 like to thank you for this opportunity to talk to you this
12 morning.

13 MR. JONES: I'd like to thank you for being
14 here. Thank you so much.

15 Those are the only two witness affirmation
16 forms that I have for this. There's another one? Excuse
17 me, I didn't have it. Who is it?

18 SPEAKER: Carol Eisenberg.

19 MR. JONES: I'm sorry, I don't have it, but
20 we'd be happy to have her speak. Thank you for being
21 here.

22 MS. EISENBERG: Thank you. I work at the
23 Housing Council for the Texas Homeward Bound Coalition.
24 I'm also a Home of Your Own client. In 1997 I was
25 delighted to become the third person in the state of Texas

1 to actually purchase a home through Home of Your Own, and
2 it's made a wonderful change in my life.

3 I know from experience because now since over a
4 year and a half ago I've been working as a housing
5 counselor with Texas Home of Your Own. I've been dealing
6 with individuals with disabilities and families with
7 children with disabilities who are very interested in
8 exploring home ownership as a possibility to improve their
9 lifestyle, and without Home of Your Own, there is really
10 very little that they can do to save enough money to
11 participate in the program.

12 I also get a lot of calls from outside the
13 regions that we serve. Right now Central Texas serves the
14 counties of Bastrop, Blanco, Burnet, Caldwell, Hays,
15 Travis and Williamson. We also have programs, because the
16 program has been so popular, that we've expanded to the
17 Dallas area, to the Fort Worth area, to Houston and El
18 Paso.

19 But I get a lot of calls at that 800 number
20 that we have from people living out in Lufkin or Matagorda
21 or lots of other places where we do not have any barrier
22 removal programs and we do not have a Home of Your Own
23 program so that people cannot purchase a home using the
24 benefits that Home of Your Own offers which include down
25 payment assistance, home modifications funds, and a Fannie

1 Mae Home Choice loan that we offer or that's offered
2 through our lenders which is designed specifically for
3 people with disabilities and is a lot easier to get into
4 that kind of loan and offers a person the option of using
5 non-traditional forms of credit to get a Fannie Mae Home
6 Choice loan.

7 Also, since I bought my house, the Fannie Mae
8 Home Choice loan is offered at lower than the going rate;
9 I'm still paying the going rate but that may change.

10 But anyway, we really need to have an expansion
11 of the barrier removal program. That would be critical to
12 meeting the needs of the people who I get calls from who
13 live in the outlying areas throughout the state where
14 Texas Home of Your Own does not serve, and we can only
15 refer them to the Texas area -- the area agencies for
16 community action which may or may not have first-time home
17 ownership programs or barrier removal. Very, very rarely
18 do they have barrier removal programs so the contractors
19 out there do not even know what barrier removal is
20 supposed to look like. It's a big problem in Texas

21 I'm fortunate to live in an urban area where
22 people do know about it, but we need to get this
23 information out across the state, so anything that you
24 guys can do to make this more progressive than it already
25 is to reach citizens throughout the state would be most

1 welcome.

2 I know that Texas Home of Your Own Coalition
3 has put together a program to help educate consumers and
4 construction personnel as to what barrier removal is and
5 how to go about doing that, but right now we don't have
6 the funds to actually go out and do it. But this is
7 something that we want to be working on, and I think TDHCA
8 could be a big part of that. And if anybody has any
9 questions, I'd be glad to take them.

10 MR. JONES: Thank you. Any questions?

11 MS. EISENBERG: Thank you very much.

12 MR. JONES: Thank you. We appreciate you being
13 here.

14 Is there anybody else I've missed?

15 (Pause.)

16 MR. JONES: Hearing none, I assume this closes
17 our public comment. Seeing that that's all that's on our
18 agenda for this particular public hearing, by common
19 consent, I will adjourn the meeting if there are no
20 objections from board members. The meeting is then
21 adjourned.

22 (Whereupon, at 9:28 a.m., the meeting was
23 concluded.)

C E R T I F I C A T E

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MEETING OF: TDHCA Board Public Hearing
LOCATION: Austin, Texas
DATE: November 14, 2001

I do hereby certify that the foregoing pages,
numbers 1 through 15, inclusive, are the true, accurate,
and complete transcript prepared from the verbal recording
made by electronic recording by Sunny Peer before the
Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs.

11/26/01
(Transcriber) (Date)

On the Record Reporting, Inc.
3307 Northland, Suite 315
Austin, Texas 78731