



**Central Texas Council of Governments  
Public Planning Meeting for Texas CDBG-MIT Regional Mitigation Program's  
Method Of Distribution Development Milam County  
Tuesday, March 22, 2022, at 12:00 PM and 6:00 PM**

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet, or smartphone.

<https://meet.goto.com/229658829>

You can also dial in using your phone.

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## **Agenda**

Welcome and Introductions

Overview of Regional Method of Distribution Process

Discussion of the Development of Mitigation Projects

- Amount of Funding for Milam and Coryell County
- Eligible Activities
- Ineligible Activities
- Mitigation Needs of the Region
- Low to Moderate Income Requirements
- Proposed Funding Options

Questions from the Public

Receive Public Comments

Adjourn



**12:00-1:00PM  
Minutes**

- No attendees

**Comments**

- No comments made

**Responses to Comments**

- No responses

**6:00-7:00PM  
Minutes**

- One employee from the City of Rockdale (Housing Authority), one person from Places to Grow (assisting the Rockdale Housing Authority), and one public member (speaking for Rockdale Housing Authority) attended the in-person meeting.
- No virtual attendees.
- The GLO Process and eligible activities were explained, and Jesse requested any questions or comments.
- Mario Casarez, Executive Director of Rockdale Housing Authority (RHA), provided a handout (located below) of proposed mitigation activities they would like to have funded. He also discussed the comparison of available low-income housing in the City of Rockdale and the City of Cameron. He noted that the City of Cameron had a significantly larger amount of available housing for their community and that Rockdale is struggling to place needing residents in housing.
- Rebecca Ann Davis, Public Member and beneficiary of housing from RHA, explained how she became homeless and began the process of receiving assistance from RHA and being placed in an available unit. She went on to state that she was on the waiting list for roughly two years before she was placed in a unit.
- Mario furthered explained the need for mitigation projects to help with potholes, sewage, and flooding. He noted that issues such as these were preventing his organization from being able to refurbish existing units to make available to those in need. He stated that mitigation projects such as these would potentially prevent future damages and the need for repairs, which is creating the long wait times for availability.
- Mario inquired as to how the projects would be prioritized and if he should work CTCOG or the County Judge when discussing the proposed RHA mitigation projects. Jesse explained that the projects would be submitted to the GLO for prioritization and recommended that he should open a line of communication about his projects and funding with the County Judge. Jesse also stated CTCOG would continue to be available for further assistance if needed.



- Jesse mentioned that Milam County could potentially receive more funding if Coryell County was not able to meet the GLO Low-Moderate Income requirements. Jesse later followed up with Mario inform him that would not be happening, and that Milam County and Coryell County would be splitting the funding equally.

## Comments

- No comments made

## Responses to Comments

- No responses

Rockdale Housing Authority Handout

Input from Rockdale Housing Authority  
CDBG-MIT Funds –Milam County Allocation  
March 22, 2022

Rockdale Housing Authority requests for consideration that a distribution of no less than \$360,000 and up to \$4 million from CDBG-MIT funds be provided to Rockdale Housing Authority (RHA) to fund flood mitigation initiatives in public housing. These funds will build on efforts already begun at RHA to reduce the risks from flooding and other natural disasters impacting the health and quality of life for people with low incomes. One hundred percent of the proposed mitigation activities benefits those with low incomes.

In recent years, Rockdale has experienced flooding, tornadoes, drought, ice storms, and hail. As a housing provider for those in our community with low incomes, Rockdale Housing Authority is committed to bolstering its sixty homes to protect against these extreme weather events and natural disasters. Working together with prospective City, County, business and non-profit partners, we can develop neighborhood-based solutions that demonstrate for the larger community integrated flood mitigation efforts.

### PROPOSED MITIGATION ACTIVITIES

#### **Natural and Green Infrastructure**

**Rainwater harvesting** for RHA resident gardens and tree irrigation. Rain collection equipment reduces stormwater runoff and provides a water source for residents to garden. By introducing more plants into the landscape, residents are building a natural solution to the risks of flooding. Rainwater collection also benefits the City's Public Works efforts by reducing reliance on potable water for garden use. A potential planning partner in this would be the Milam County Agricultural Extension Office or a volunteer from the landscape architecture program at Texas A&M..

**Expanded tree canopy.** Several drought-hardy trees were purchased and planted in 2021 through one-time grant funds to provide needed shade and to soak up water in heavy rains. Additional plantings throughout the



housing authority neighborhood will reduce heat and improve energy efficiency of units, promote the walkability of the grounds, and reduce the potential for flooding and heat exhaustion from soaring temperatures. These “green” solutions also improve air quality and have aesthetic benefits to improve mental health. Potential partners include local nurseries, who may be able to offer a discount on trees for this project.

**Replacement of aging HVAC units** with energy efficient units. Fourteen of sixty units have already been replaced with discretionary funds. There are no HUD or other funds dedicated for the remaining forty-six units. The HVAC units are needed to protect people from the brutal heat of Texas summers and reduce the risks of heat-related illness. They also provide needed heating to protect people from prolonged below-freezing temperatures experienced in 2021 and 2022. Rockdale Housing Authority has inquired about rural development/energy funding through USDA Rural Development and does not fit the current scope or eligibility.

**Window replacement.** Rockdale Housing Authority apartments are thirty years old and in need of additional weatherization to protect households from adverse weather. Replacement of aging windows with energy efficient windows is a high priority. There are no designated HUD funds for

this needed work. The Housing Authority has inquired about rural development/energy funding through USDA Rural Development and does not fit the current scope or eligibility.

**Repair of potholes** caused or made worse by flooding. Potholes can cause vehicle damage and can hinder timely evacuation if ever needed in a flood or other natural disaster. The City of Rockdale could be approached as a partner for pothole repairs. Addition of a rain garden or vegetated basin (swale) will help prevent flooding and potholes at the south end of the complex.

**Solar energy.** Solar panels on rooftops can provide backup energy to help residents weather future storms. Incorporating a solar power system at the RHA main building/community room would also provide a place for people to charge their phones for emergencies if electricity was disrupted.

#### **Water and Sewer Facilities**

**Replace water lines at** Rockdale Housing Authority. Over many years there has been breakage of the 3” pipes and these have been patched. As the system of pipes further ages, the problem presents significant risk of line deterioration and collapse, which would lead to flooding both in homes and in the property outside. Replacement of the water lines will prevent this from occurring.

#### **Activities Designed to Relocate Families Outside of Floodplains**

**Build additional public housing with natural infrastructure outside of flood prone areas.**

Rockdale Housing Authority seeks investments that will enable it to expand public housing in Rockdale, offering suitable housing for those who are homeless and who are at risk of losing housing in floods. An additional 60 units would address this critical need.

#### **No-Cost, Complementary Activity**

**Disaster and emergency preparedness education.** RHA will work with partners in the CTCOG, City and County to educate residents and staff on how to prepare for an emergency. Having a plan can reduce anxiety and improve safety. RHA will also seek with partners in-kind donations to ensure there are basic supplies on hand at the Housing Authority for those who may be affected by a flood or other emergency. This is a no-cost activity complementing the other high-priority funding needs.

### A Strong Community Benefit

Through these proposed activities, the Rockdale Housing Authority provides emphasis on housing within the CDBG-MIT focus, at the same time that Milam County would potentially be addressing a CDBG-MIT focus on infrastructure through county road repair. This double-pronged approach for Milam County provides a strong community benefit that serves all people as well as targeted neighborhood solutions for those with very low incomes.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD)	
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT	
DESCRIPTION	PROJECTS
<p>The <u>Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program</u> provides funding to ensure decent affordable housing, provide services to the most vulnerable in our communities, and create jobs through expanding and retaining businesses. Since 2001, the <u>CDBG-Disaster Recovery Program</u> has provided additional assistance to areas affected by Presidentially declared disasters. This program supports disaster recovery activities such as housing redevelopment and rebuilding, infrastructure repair, and economic revitalization.</p> <p>In August 2019, HUD announced its first allocation of <u>CDBG-Mitigation funds</u>. Nearly \$7 billion was made available to 14 grantees affected by recent Presidentially declared disasters, solely for the purposes of mitigating future disasters.</p>	<p>CDBG-Disaster Recovery: Infrastructure, housing, and economic development projects may incorporate nature-based solutions, usually at the neighborhood or site scale.</p> <p>CDBG-Mitigation: In addition to infrastructure, housing, and economic development projects, planning and administration projects can reduce regulatory barriers to nature-based solutions and help make mitigation investments standard practice.</p> <p>CDBG Funding is unique in that it may be used as a non-Federal match for other mitigation programs, such as HMA and PA Mitigation.</p>

Source: FEMA Guide: [https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema\\_riskmap-nature-based-solutions-guide\\_2021.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_riskmap-nature-based-solutions-guide_2021.pdf)



### **About Rockdale Housing Authority**

Rockdale Housing Authority is advancing its mission of providing quality affordable housing for those with low incomes and disabilities, or who are displaced and facing homelessness. The housing authority is forward-thinking, addressing flood and other disaster risks to the property and households, while also seeking a continuum supports that will help individuals and families gain housing stability and move from renting to home ownership. Ultimately, Rockdale Housing Authority seeks to expand and create additional public housing apartments for low-income households in Rockdale, reducing the two-year wait list for public housing in our community.

There are 62 public housing units in Rockdale, far fewer than the 147 units in neighboring Cameron. Rockdale Housing Authority is uniquely positioned thirty minutes from Taylor, Texas– the future home of Samsung’s new semiconductor plant. It will also be impacted by development of the former Alcoa site. Rockdale will likely absorb many of those displaced by rising rental and homeownership costs in the area. Even without that influx, Rockdale Housing Authority already has a 2-3 year wait list and has closed its application process. Most of the wait-listed families are those who were born and raised in Rockdale.

When Rockdale Housing Authority’s Executive Director accepted the position, the Housing Authority was failing. Under his leadership of eighteen months, the Housing Authority has thrived and now is in good fiscal standing. The visionary team at Rockdale Housing Authority has also expanded partnerships with local organizations and has engaged residents in creating beautiful grounds that promote social interaction and healthy lifestyles.

Rockdale Housing Authority is making a significant impact in people’s lives. Residents serve on the Housing Authority Board of Commissioners and several residents helped lead a placemaking initiative that improved the grounds in 2021. These early investments totalled \$26,800 for placemaking team training with Temple College, a playscape with benches, several trees, patio garden plants, and movie nights. Partners included Episcopal Health Foundation, LifePark Center, and local churches.

Rockdale Housing Authority seeks additional investments through the CDBG-MIT funding that will address the critical housing needs for those with few financial resources. These proposed investments are highlighted on pages 1 and 2. These critical housing needs are outside the scope of the annual funding allotted through HUD. One hundred percent of the project funds benefit people with low incomes.