



**HOUSING AUTHORITY
CITY OF BROWNSVILLE**

Contact CARLA MANCHA
Telephone 956-214-1531
Direct Line 956-214-1531
Email CMANCHA@HACB.US
Website WWW.HACB.US

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 13, 2016



(L to R): David Pohler, SA Field Office Director of Public Housing, Zuleika Romero Morales, SA Field Office HUD Director, Lourdes Castro Ramirez, HUD Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, HACB Chairman Patricio Sampayo, HACB CEO Carla Mancha, HUD Regional VI Deputy Administrator Nicolas Ramon, and SC2 White House Lead Laura Gomez

HACB, COB AND PARTNERS FORMALLY KICKOFF NATIONAL CHOICE NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING GRANT WITH COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

Brownsville TX. September 13th, 2016. - On Wednesday, September 7th, 2016, the Housing Authority of the City of Brownsville, and the City of Brownsville celebrated with the Community the award of a \$500,000 Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Brownsville is one of three communities in the State of Texas, and the first on the United States / Mexican border to receive a HUD Choice Neighborhood Grant. HACB's vision reflects the goals of HUD's Choice Neighborhood program, which is housing, people and communities. Receiving the Buena Vida Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant is a great example of the collaboration of many partners, such as the work by Ms. Laura Gomez, White House Lead for Brownsville for the Strong Cities Strong Communities Initiative, and the aspiration of a common goal to benefit the community at large. The valuable contribution of Mayor Martinez's vision and the support received by Congressman Vela have made this grandiose accomplishment a reality for the Brownsville community.

This Celebration officially informed the public of the purpose of the grant and the planning process. This grant will assist in developing a transformation plan that will address the entire neighborhood of Buena Vida. The boundary includes 6th St. to 22nd Street and frontage to Madison St. It is a two-year planning project that will entail community involvement and commitment, as well as the continuous support and/or leverage from the different partners who believe in this initiative. The goal is to develop a plan that create a resilient community by addressing issues of housing, transportation, health, education, infrastructure, security and safety. Moreover, the plan will be driven by the vision of the grant application which is, "Creating Community Connections." By connecting the Buena Vida Neighborhood to the needed services and to everything that Brownsville offers will strengthen the families and improve the quality of life for all.

Once the plan is complete, HACB will submit a Choice Neighborhood Implementation Grant to HUD, for the next phase. HUD has awarded approximately five grants each year, since the inception of the program, for an average of 30 million dollars in funding for each awardee. By being awarded a Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant, HACB is in a very real position to develop an excellent plan that will be successful for the next phase.

The synergy in which the community agencies, the City of Brownsville, the HACB Resident Advisory Board, HACB staff, volunteers and the residents of the Buena Vida Neighborhood collaborated and celebrated, reflected the interest for a holistic approach to transform the Buena Vida Neighborhood. The event was attended by over five hundred people. The Community is excited of the opportunity HUD has bestowed on this neighborhood and the City of Brownsville.

HACB was honored to have the HUD Team spend the day with staff, residents, local leaders and also participate in the event. HUD was represented by the D.C. office with Ms. Lourdes Castro Ramirez,

Housing and Urban Development Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary and Ms. Erica Gonzalez, Senior Policy Advisor; Forth Worth Region VI Deputy Administrator Mr. Nicolas Ramon; and San Antonio Field Office Director Ms. Zuleika Romero Morales and Public Housing Director Mr. David Pohler. HUD expressed their appreciation and interest in the innovative work being developed and implemented by HACB Leadership and Administration. Both HUD and HACB discussed opportunities that will impact the entire Brownsville Community and HUD has voiced they will follow HACB's progress closely.

“On behalf of Chairman Patricio Sampayo and the Board of Commissioners, I would like to thank the HACB Team for their dedication and commitment to making the Buena Vida Choice Neighborhood Celebration a success. We appreciate your service to this community and the agency. In addition, we want to thank co-applicant the City of Brownsville, our Partners, and Camiros, for believing in this project. We look forward to our continued collaboration. Thank you to Mayor Martinez and Mrs. Laura Villarreal, HACB RAB President for also addressing the public. Furthermore, thank you to the Buena Vida neighborhood and all who attended. We encourage you to participate in this very important process. Finally, a sincere thank you to the HUD Team for being with us and learning about our community.” Carla Mancha, CEO for HACB.

The Housing Authority of the City of Brownsville is a High Performing Housing Authority for both the Housing Choice Voucher and Public Housing program. HACB serves over 3,500 low-income families in our community. HACB is the twelfth largest housing authority in the State of Texas and the largest south of San Antonio, Texas. HACB has authority to administer 2,208 Housing Choice Vouchers, operates and manages ten Public Housing developments (510 units), and is the General Partner to seven tax credit developments (1,002 units) all located within the City of Brownsville.

###

If you would like more information about this topic, please contact CARLA MANCHA at 956-214-1531 or email at CMANCHA@HACB.US.