

Section 504 Policy Against Discrimination based on Handicap and Grievance Procedures

In accordance with 24 CFR Section 8, Nondiscrimination based on Handicap in federally assisted programs and activities of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. 794), and Section 109 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended (42 U.S.C. 5309), County of Webb (*Grant Recipient that employs fifteen or more persons*) hereby adopts the following policy and grievance procedures:

1. Discrimination prohibited. No otherwise qualified individual with handicaps in the United States shall, solely by reason of his or her handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).
2. County of Webb does not discriminate on the basis of handicap in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its federally assisted programs and activities.
3. County of Webb's recruitment materials or publications shall include a statement of this policy in 1. above.
4. County of Webb shall take continuing steps to notify participants, beneficiaries, applicants and employees, including those with impaired vision or hearing, and unions or professional organizations holding collective bargaining or professional agreements with the recipients that it does not discriminate on the basis of handicap in violation of 24 CFR Part 8.
5. For hearing and visually impaired individuals eligible to be served or likely to be affected by the TxCDBG program, County of Webb shall ensure that they are provided with the information necessary to understand and participate in the TxCDBG program.
6. Grievances and Complaints
 - a. Any person who believes she or he has been subjected to discrimination on the basis of disability may file a grievance under this procedure. It is against the law for County of Webb to retaliate against anyone who files a grievance or cooperates in the investigation of a grievance.
 - b. Complaints should be addressed to: Mr. Juan Vargas, Economic Development Director, 1308 San Agustin Ave., Laredo, TX 78040, 956-523-4605, who has been designated to coordinate Section 504 compliance efforts.
 - c. A complaint should be filed in writing or verbally, contain the name and address of the person filing it, and briefly describe the alleged violation of the regulations.

- d. A complaint should be filed within thirty (30) working days after the complainant becomes aware of the alleged violation.
- e. An investigation, as may be appropriate, shall follow a filing of a complaint. The investigation will be conducted by Mr. Juan Vargas, Economic Development Director. Informal but thorough investigations will afford all interested persons and their representatives, if any, an opportunity to submit evidence relevant to a complaint.
- f. A written determination as to the validity of the complaint and description of resolution, if any, shall be issued by Mr. Juan Vargas, Economic Development Director, and a copy forwarded to the complainant with fifteen (15) working days after the filing of the complaint where practicable.
- g. The Section 504 coordinator shall maintain the files and records of the County of Webb relating to the complaints files.
- h. The complainant can request a reconsideration of the case in instances where he or she is dissatisfied with the determination/resolution as described in f. above. The request for reconsideration should be made to the County of Webb within ten working days after the receipt of the written determination/resolution.
- i. The right of a person to a prompt and equitable resolution of the complaint filed hereunder shall not be impaired by the person's pursuit of other remedies such as the filing of a Section 504 complaint with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Utilization of this grievance procedure is not a prerequisite to the pursuit of other remedies.
- j. These procedures shall be construed to protect the substantive rights of interested persons, to meet appropriate due process standards and assure that the County of Webb complies with Section 504 and HUD regulations.