

OFFICE OF RURAL AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

- (1) From your agency's point of view, what regulations can be reduced to improve communication and cooperation between federal, state, and local governments within the Texas-Mexico border region? **N/A**
- (2) What are the main trade issues between the United States and Mexico that you have identified as having an impact (both positive and negative) on your agency or your area of work? **N/A**
- (3) Having studied the flow of commerce at ports of entry between this state and Mexico, including the movement of commercial vehicles across the border, what actions would you establish to aid that commerce and improve the movement of those vehicles? **N/A**
- (4) How do you work with federal officials to resolve transportation issues involving infrastructure, including roads and bridges, to allow for the efficient movement of goods and people across the border between Texas and Mexico? **N/A**
- (5) How does your agency work with federal officials to create a unified federal agency process to streamline border crossing needs? **N/A**
- (6) Has your agency identified problems involved with border truck inspections and related trade and transportation infrastructure? What are those? What solutions/recommendations does your agency propose? **N/A**
- (7) How do you work to increase funding for the North American Development Bank to assist in the financing of water and wastewater facilities?

ORCA provides grant funding and works in association with NADBank to fund water and wastewater facilities.

- (8) Has your agency explored the sale of excess electric power from Texas to Mexico? What are your findings? **N/A**
- (9) Has your agency identified any areas of environmental protection that need to be addressed cooperatively between Texas and the Mexican states? If so, which are those areas and what type of protective measures need to be taken? **N/A**
- (10) Has your agency identified common challenges to health care on which all border states can collaborate? If so, what are those challenges and how can all border states collaborate to overcome them?

Common challenges include uninsured individuals, healthcare workforce shortages, and undocumented immigrants that do not access needed care for fear of deportation. Collaboration may be established through the Border Health Initiative

office of the Health Resources and Services Administration. Dialogue between states may identify best practices and successful strategies.

(11) Has your agency developed any recommendations to address border challenges in general? If so, what are them?

All applicants should be required to register colonias with the Office of the Attorney General in order to be eligible to apply for funding from state agencies.

(12) What programs and services does your agency offer to border communities?

ORCA also supports health care initiatives in border areas and other rural communities by providing resources, including funding for rural medical facilities such as clinics and Critical Access Hospitals, and equipment such as automatic external defibrillator devices. ORCA programs such as the Medically Underserved Communities program encourage health professionals to practice in rural communities.

For additional information see the answer to Question 15.

(13) What are some regulatory and/or legislative recommendations to eliminate duplication and combine programs and services? N/A

(14) Please share any considerations from your agency regarding the effect of policies instituted by the federal government impacting the border region. N/A

(15) Please give a brief summary of all your agency's activities related to the Border and/or Mexico.

ORCA's primary goal in funding colonias is the elimination of existing conditions that adversely impact public health and safety in communities containing residents who primarily have low to moderate incomes. In colonias, ORCA's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program primarily funds water and wastewater projects, street paving, and drainage improvements.

Since January 2002 (when ORCA began operations), the agency has awarded 481 grants (totaling \$159,991,146) to 176 communities and counties (and colonias within those counties) along the Texas-Mexico Border to assist those communities, counties, and colonias in addressing community and economic development needs. As a result, 991,213 rural Texans along the Texas-Mexico border have benefited from ORCA's assistance. Of those rural Texans along the Texas-Mexico border, 602,927 are persons of low to moderate income.

ORCA funds colonias within 150 miles of the international border through the Colonia Fund and colonias beyond 150 miles of the international border through the Non-border Colonia Fund. Rural cities and counties throughout the state may also

apply for funding on behalf of colonias through the Community Development (CD)/CD Supplemental Fund. In addition, ORCA provides funding for the operation of seven Colonia Self-Help Centers, which are administered by the Office of Colonia Initiatives (OCI) of the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA). Services offered by the Colonia Self-Help Centers include tool libraries, housing rehabilitation, and contract for deed conversion.