

TCOG Board Approves FYE 2015 Annual Budget

SHERMAN, April 2, 2014 – The Texoma Council of Governments Governing Board approved at their March meeting the FYE 2015 Annual Budget for TCOG programs which runs May 1, 2014 through April 30, 2015. In addition to the \$7.57 million total budget for TCOG programs, the organization also has an administrative contract with Texoma Housing Partners to operate Public Housing Authorities in 18 small cities across Texoma. The Public Housing operating and capital budgets total \$2.6 million bringing the total TCOG operating budget to just over \$10 million. TCOG employs 60 people and operates facilities in Sherman, Bonham, and an office in Gainesville.

TCOG programs are divided into three departments including Aging Services, Client Services, and Planning and Development. The Aging Services Department's budget for FYE 2015 is \$1.74 million dedicated to operating the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) and Senior Corps programs. Federal funding for TCOG's AAA is down nearly 12%; however, other funding, such as recent Livengood Foundation awards, has helped to partially mitigate those funding cuts.

The Client Services Department is composed of Public Housing; Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher, a federal rental assistance program; 211 Texoma, and Energy Services programs which includes weatherization and utility assistance. FYE 2015 budget for Client Services is \$6.93 million, with nearly 70% of that funding committed to the housing programs.

The Planning and Development Department is TCOG's smallest department with a total budget of \$1.5 million, but it also the only department in the organization that is experiencing any measureable growth. This is in line with TCOG's mission to expand the types of services being offered to member jurisdictions. Community and Economic Development; Municipal Solid Waste Planning; emergency services planning, which includes homeland security, criminal justice and 911 planning services for the region; and TCOG's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) program comprise the Planning and Development Department. By expanding collaboration with Texoma cities and counties through events like Small City Workshops, TCOG plans to continue to grow the number of programs and services offered to local jurisdictions. Plans for FYE 2015 include exploring the idea of a local IT cooperative for small cities, increasing local training opportunities, and offering strategic planning services to members.

The Texoma Council of Governments is a voluntary association of the local governments in Cooke, Fannin, and Grayson Counties. Established in 1968, the Texoma Council of Governments promotes economy and efficiency in the coordinated planning and development of the tri-county region through its community and economic development activities. Either directly, or through contractors, the Council provides housing, utility assistance, and weatherization services for low-income citizens in the region and assists the elderly through a variety of Area Agency on Aging programs. The Council also facilitates the delivery of grant funding for homeland security and criminal justice.

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