



2023 – 2024 GRANT CYCLE
SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT No. 2

JULY 1, 2023 – DECEMBER 31, 2023



Mortgage Grant Fund

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Mortgage Grant Advisory Committee

Ann Baddour, Consumer Advocate and Presiding Officer (6 Year Term)
Martin Green, Banking and Financial Services Attorney (6 Year Term)
Molly Curl, Financial Industry Advisor (4 Year Term)
Patricia Hord, OCCC Representative and Grant Administrator (2 Year Term)

Grant Coordinator

Andrea Herrera, Department of Savings and Mortgage Lending

2023 – 2024 MGF Grant Recipients

Organization	Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)
Brazos Valley Affordable Housing	College Station-Bryan, TX
Credit Coalition	Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX
Foundation Communities	Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown, TX
Galilee Community Development	San Angelo, TX
Grassroots Community Development	Waco, TX
Habitat for Humanity Camp County	Longview, TX
Houston Habitat for Humanity	Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX
Habitat for Humanity of Jefferson County	Beaumont-Port Arthur, TX
Habitat for Humanity of San Antonio	San Antonio-New Braunfels, TX
Fort Worth Area Habitat for Humanity	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX

Summary

The Mortgage Grant Fund awarded 10 organizations an aggregate amount of \$576,176.00 in funds for program activities related to the 2023 – 2024 grant cycle.

During the second reporting period (July 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023), the Grantees met and/or exceeded their objective goals to support mortgage financial literacy and financial counseling.

Funds Disbursed to Date:

Amount Awarded for the 2023-2024 Grant Cycle:	\$576,176.00
Total Reimbursed from First Reimbursement Request:	\$122,186.62
Reimbursement Requests (July 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023)	
Brazos Valley Affordable Housing	\$ 21,796.09
Credit Coalition	\$ 792.37
Foundation Communities	\$ 9,389.80
Galilee Community Development	\$ 6,311.29
Grassroots Community Development	\$ 10,299.85
Habitat for Humanity Camp County	\$ 5,426.87
Houston Habitat for Humanity	\$ 11,560.00
Habitat for Humanity of Jefferson County	\$ 10,227.08
Habitat for Humanity of San Antonio	\$ 54,835.00
Fort Worth Area Habitat for Humanity	\$ 17,417.59
Total Requested for Reimbursement:	\$148,055.94
Total Requested Amount to Date:	\$270,242.56
% of Funds Expended to Date:	47%
Amount of Funds Remaining:	\$305,933.44

Brazos Valley Affordable Housing Corporation (BVAHC)

BVAHC serves Brazos, Leon, Burleson, Robertson, Madison, Grimes, and Washington counties. Since 2017, their Financial Fitness Center program has helped clients gain financial stability by developing healthy habits. Within five years, clients build financial stability and have savings to purchase their first home. The journey begins with \$25 — a savings account to establish a foundation for financial self-sufficiency.

Program Name: \$25 Solution
Amount Awarded: \$80,000.00
Grant Term: 2 Years

Second Reporting Period (July 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023)

Program Activities:

One on One Financial Counseling	Number of individuals directly served	210
	Number of direct contact hours with participants	315
	Number of participants who established or raised credit score	51
	Average credit score increases (%)	15%
	Number of participants who established or increased savings	183
	Average increase in savings (\$)	\$ 300.00

Achievements:

- 200 clients continue to build their savings accounts
- 200 clients increased their credit scores through education in credit literacy.
- 2 new part-time staff were hired to meet the demands of financial counseling.

Challenges:

Within their geographic area, properties continue to be purchased above market value, some with cash. Additionally, increased interest rates have raised economic barriers. As a result, clients with homeowners savings that were built during the Financial Fitness Center program are unable to find homes within their budget.

In response, BVAHC continues to provide financial support until clients overcome these setbacks and purchase their first home. Additionally, the organization is refining the program to further advance its mission, meeting with other organizations to brainstorm ways to create affordable homes for first-time homebuyers within their geographic area.

Success Story:

The support of the MGF program has strengthened the organization's capabilities to meet the needs of the community. BVAHC hired two part-time staff to provide one-on-one financial counseling on evenings and weekends, accommodating participants' busy lives.

Credit Coalition

Credit Coalition has served Harris County, Jefferson County, and surrounding areas for more than 30 years. Their purpose is to empower consumers through financial and homebuyer counseling and education to make informed, reasonable, and responsible decisions regarding their financial and housing goals.

Credit Coalition offers pre- and post-homeowner education: Fundamentals of Good Credit (FOGC), and Life as a Homeowner, respectively. Some of their other services include Foreclosure Intervention Counseling and Reverse Mortgage Counseling.

Program Name: Fundamentals of Good Credit
Amount Awarded: \$50,000.00
Grant Term: 2 Years

Second Reporting Period (July 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023)

Program Activities:

Online Class	Number of online classes hosted	4
	Number of individuals in attendance with online classes	233
In-Person Class	Number of in-person classes given	3
	Number of individuals in attendance for in-person classes	65
One on One	Number of individuals directly served	6
	Number of direct contact hours with participants	26

Achievements:

- 4 FOGC class series (a total of 15 hours)
- 3 classes of Life as a Homeowner (4 hours)
- 12 families received one-on-one pre-purchase counseling.

Challenges:

Credit Coalition strove to increase classroom presence by creating a hybrid class with in-person participants and Zoom participants. However, in-person attendance remained low. Recent feedback shows that participants prefer virtual classes, and Credit Coalition is addressing the topic.

Additionally, Credit Coalition continues efforts to increase their media presence for 2024.

Success Story:

During their first hybrid class, the classroom lost its internet connection. To complete the hybrid class, the quick-thinking instructor signed into the Zoom meeting via phone connection. The virtual students, still connected on Zoom, were able to hear the remainder of the presentation. All students — virtual and in-person — completed the class that day.

Foundation Communities

Foundation Communities (FC) has served Austin and North Texas communities for over 30 years. They also create housing where individuals and families succeed by utilizing a housing-plus services model that empowers low-income residents and neighbors with the tools and support they need to stabilize and increase their economic standing.

Recently, an FC survey found that a majority of residents showed interest in purchasing a home. Catering to the residents' needs, FC started their Pre-Mortgage Financial Wellness Program. Through rent reporting, 1:1 financial coaching, and affordable homeownership workshops, they are providing the community with tools to achieve the goal of homeownership.

Program Name: Pre-Mortgage Financial Wellness Program
 Amount Awarded: \$48,690.00
 Grant Term: 2 Years

Second Reporting Period (July 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023)

Program Activities:

In-Person Class	Number of in-person classes given	2
	Number of individuals in attendance for in-person classes	50
One on One Financial Counseling	Number of individuals directly served	348
	Number of direct contact hours with participants	473
	Number of participants who established or raised credit score	4
	Average credit score increases (%)	10%
	Number of participants who established or increased savings	4
	Average increase in savings (\$)	N/A

Achievements:

Since FC began their credit reporting program for their residents, 60 percent of the participants saw an increase in their credit scores, and another 7 percent established a credit history — thus, a credit score. Practicing the first steps of financial literacy, participants continue to strive toward their goal of purchasing their first home.

Challenges:

Participating residents experienced additional financial challenges as a result of discontinued government-assisted pandemic programs and increased inflation. FC adjusted their program goals to help restructure residents' budgets in response to the challenges.

Success Story:

Foundation Communities expand their financial education program by hiring a Financial Case Manager to provide one-on-one financial counseling to residents that struggle with debt management.

Galilee Community Development Corporation

Galilee Community Development Corporation (Galilee CDC) serves the Concho Valley area. Galilee CDC's mission is to create decent, affordable housing for low- and moderate-income families by: a) revitalizing blighted neighborhoods; b) producing single-family and multi-family housing; c) engaging in new construction; d) rehabilitating and repairing homes; e) removing artificial barriers and prejudices in housing opportunities; f) preparing households for the transition from renters to buyers to owners; g) supporting economic and community development

In 2021, Galilee CDC expanded their services to include mortgage financial literacy. They provide pre-purchase and post-purchase homeownership education to the community. With this new program, they continue to build their financial education program.

Program Name: Financial Literacy
Amount Awarded: \$51,903.00
Grant Term: 2 Years

Second Reporting Period (July 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023)

Program Activities:

Online Class	Number of online classes hosted	4
	Number of individuals in attendance with online classes	11
In-Person Class	Number of in-person classes given	5
	Number of individuals in attendance for in-person classes	37
One on One	Number of individuals directly served	5
	Number of direct contact hours with participants	5

Achievements:

In this reporting period, Galilee CDC saw a 16 percent increase of participants. Of those individuals, 21 attended two or more classes, and five participated in 1:1 counseling.

Challenges:

Initially, Galilee CDC used the Eventbrite platform to promote their financial education classes. Unfortunately, the platform resulted in inaccurate counts of registrants. Since Galilee CDC discontinued the use of Eventbrite, they have a lower participation rate; however, the newly implemented registration process provides more accurate counts of registrants.

Success Story:

Galilee CDC continues to partner with organizations within the community such as Jeremiah Plan Transitional Housing Program (JP). One participant attended all of the financial classes, then implemented the skills she learned. As a result, she purchased her first home in August 2023.

Grassroots Community Development

Grassroots Community Development (Grassroots) serves Waco and surrounding communities. Grassroots utilizes an asset-based community development approach to serve neighbors, children, and communities.

Grassroots points to a 2019 study conducted by the Swiss Journal of Economics and Statistics, which indicates most people severely lack financial literacy. Grassroots' goal is to confront the lack of literacy by offering free financial literacy classes, homebuyer education, and an Individual Development Account (savings program).

Program Name: Homebuyer/Financial Literacy Education/Counseling
Amount Awarded: \$40,000.00
Grant Term: 2 Years

Second Reporting Period (July 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023)

Program Activities:

Online Class	Number of online classes hosted	5
	Number of individuals in attendance with online classes	46
One on One	Number of individuals directly served	163
	Number of direct contact hours with participants	265

Achievements:

This reporting period, 125 families graduated from financial literacy classes, a 58% increase in graduates from the first reporting period. This is yet another goal Grassroots achieved and exceeded.

Challenges:

Grassroots' programs are geared toward financial wellness, specifically mortgage financial literacy. Participants develop skills and confidence to navigate the home purchase process without Grassroots' continued counseling. As a result, the organization lacks knowledge to tailor their programs to better suit the communities' needs. Grassroots seeks feedback by implementing the use of post-program anonymous satisfaction surveys (in addition to their existing surveys).

Success Story:

Grassroots partnered with La Puerta to provide financial education in Spanish. They recruited local professionals to assist financial education in that language. Fifteen families — an astounding number for the initial class — attended financial literacy classes in their primary language.

Habitat for Humanity of Camp County

Habitat for Humanity of Camp County (Habitat Camp County) creates a better human habitat in which to live and work by making safe, modest, adequate housing for the community that has needs but are limited in resources.

In 2009, this branch of Habitat for Humanity was closing. However, several individuals were determined to keep it running. They rebuilt the organization in Pittsburg, Texas with such success that it outgrew its limited office space. Habitat Camp County recently purchased a building, intending to remodel it to a bigger office as well as classrooms.

Program Name: Home Dreamers Financial Literacy Program
Amount Awarded: \$50,000.00
Grant Term: 2 Year

Second Reporting Period (July 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023)

Program Activities:

One on One	Number of individuals directly served	12
	Number of direct contact hours with participants	10

Achievements:

Habitat Camp County has completed the remodeling and furnishing of the building. They now have larger classrooms and private workstations for 1:1 counseling. The organization created a committee to fully utilize the MGF grant program, improving service in their community and surrounding areas.

In December, the committee hosted a three-hour financial literacy seminar, which included speakers from the community that are credit literate. The seminar presented the building and maintaining credit; and improving a credit score.

Challenges:

A number of Habitat Camp County's volunteers, as well as the Director, enrolled in a program to become HUD Certified Housing Counselors with the original goal of certification by the end of 2023. However, the organization's focus on other financial literacy activities delayed enrollees to meet that goal. They project to become certified by the end of February 2024.

Success Story:

Habitat Camp County's efforts to expand their financial literacy program have resulted in three families that have signed up to become homeowners through the Habitat for Humanity program.

Houston Habitat for Humanity

Houston Habitat for Humanity (Houston Habitat) serves the counties of Houston and Harris. Through providing shelter, they empower people to build a better future.

Their Affordable Homeownership Program started in 1987 and continues to grow. A part of this program teaches the clients to save over a period of six to twelve months in an Individual Development Account (IDA) savings account. Clients may receive up to a \$2,000.00 match on their savings.

Program Name: Affordable Homeownership Program
Amount Awarded: \$66,900.00
Grant Term: 3 Years

Second Reporting Period (July 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023)

Program Activities:

Train the Trainer New Curriculum	Number of individuals directly trained through program	3
	Number of participants reached through trained individuals	32
	Number of direct contact hours with the participants	80
One on One Financial Counseling	Number of individuals directly served	61
	Number of direct contact hours with participants	691
	Number of participants who established or raised credit score	26
	Average credit score increases (%)	2%
	Number of participants who established or increased savings	45
	Average increase in savings (\$)	\$ 2,500.00

Achievements:

Houston Habitat is building relationships with community members through outreach efforts on Facebook and within the Hispanic communities.

Since last reporting period, hours of direct credit counseling have increased by 90%, and 73 percent of participants established credit and credit scores. There is also an increased participant rate for sessions that are presented in Spanish.

Challenges:

Of their three employees, one completed training and became certified as a credit counselor in December 2023. With the growth of the Habitat program, the other two employees' training was put on hold. Currently, they have completed their training and are scheduled to take the rigorous exam in April.

Success Story:

By the end of 2023, Houston Habitat successfully educated and counseled 26 families and helped them accomplish their goal to becoming homeowners.

Habitat for Humanity of Jefferson County

Habitat for Humanity of Jefferson County (Habitat Jefferson County) serves the Golden Triangle community. Their program educates in the home-buying process as well as financial literacy.

Most of their non-profit assistance helps elderly residents and their families restore older homes, rebuild homes damaged from hurricanes, and work with other organizations by providing free financial literacy services.

Program Name: Financial Literacy Program
Amount Awarded: \$33,585.00
Grant Term: 2 Years

Second Reporting Period (July 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023)

Program Activities:

Online Class	Number of online classes hosted	6
	Number of individuals in attendance with online classes	20
One on One	Number of individuals directly served	5
	Number of direct contact hours with participants	6

Achievements:

Since completing updated literacy modules, Habitat Jefferson County held their first literacy class via Zoom from September – November 2023. Their curriculum provided information about debt management; Texas law; programs that offer downpayment and closing costs assistance; and the preparation of homes to withstand natural disasters, which are prevalent in their area.

Challenges:

When updating their financial curriculum, the organization created detailed training modules with an amount of information that may overwhelm some participants.

For 2024, their goal is to continue to fine-tune their modules and to create additional visual presentations to enhance their inclusive financial literacy program.

Success Story:

Their first literacy class began with 20 registrants, a tremendous number of students for a first class. Five participants completed the program.

The MGF award allowed the organization to seek additional grants in surrounding areas to provide various types of financial education.

Habitat for Humanity of San Antonio, Inc.

Habitat for Humanity of San Antonio, Inc. (Habitat San Antonio) services Bexar and Guadalupe counties. They are an organization that builds modest, decent, and affordable homes without interest or profit.

The organization provides free credit reports and roadmaps to families that want to become Habitat families but need to improve credit reports to qualify. These roadmaps guide families to break financial barriers with the goal of enabling them to eventually qualify for an affordable home.

Program Name: Habitat's Family Services
Amount Awarded: \$75,000.00
Grant Term: 1 Year

Second Reporting Period (July 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023)

Program Activities:

In- Person Class	Number of in-person classes given	1
	Number of individuals in attendance for in-person classes	8
One on One	Number of individuals directly served	32
	Number of direct contact hours with participants	64

Achievements:

Habitat San Antonio completed its one-year grant program to create the Habitat 101 program, their first bilingual financial program. The program includes videos, curriculum, and a workshop in both Spanish and English. Habitat San Antonio met their goal of customizing the program for families with low incomes interested in homeownership and better financial outcomes.

Challenges:

Between high staff turnover and economic inflation, there were some challenges to complete the Habitat 101 project within a year. Habitat San Antonio's budget had increased due to inflation.

The Commissioner authorized additional funds to Habitat San Antonio, enabling the organization to successfully complete all their objectives of the MGF program.

Success Story:

Habitat San Antonio hosted their first Habitat 101 class and scheduled monthly bilingual seminars, both in person and virtually.

Fort Worth Area Habitat for Humanity, Inc. DBA Trinity Habitat for Humanity

Fort Worth Area Habitat for Humanity, Inc. DBA Trinity Habitat for Humanity, (Trinity Habitat) serves the Arlington, and Fort Worth areas. They also serve families in Tarrant, Parker, Wise, Johnson, and Palo Pinto counties.

Their program consists of six areas of financial literacy/counseling: 1) financial behaviors; 2) borrowing, credit, and debt; 3) investing; 4) spending, savings, and budget; 5) community engagement; and 6) Habitat U (which wraps up with a class on home maintenance training).

Program Name: Habitat U
Amount Awarded: \$78,200.00
Grant Term: 2 Years

Second Reporting Period (July 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023)

Program Activities:

Online Class	Number of online classes hosted	36
	Number of individuals in attendance with online classes	310
In-Person Class	Number of in-person classes given	8
	Number of individuals in attendance for in-person classes	131
One on One	Number of individuals directly served	93
	Number of direct contact hours with participants	156

Achievements:

After Trinity Habitat hired a person to teach classes in Spanish, participation increased by 98 percent. With the bilingual staff member, the organization can add in 1:1 counseling in Spanish.

Challenges:

Their program is growing quickly, and Trinity Habitat needs information to improve their class curriculum. The implementation of post class surveys provides valuable information, and Trinity Habitat is adjusting class curriculum to further meet the needs of the community.

Success Story:

This reporting period the organization educated more than 100 families graduated from Habitat University. Ninety-three families received additional education through 1:1 counseling.