

Jefferson County
Cheek Community First Time Sewer Service for Low-Income Homeowners
SEP No. 2011-31

Project Description

Jefferson County shall provide first time sewer service to low-income residents of the Cheek Community located in the western portion of Jefferson County. Residences in Cheek Community have open sewage pits or poorly maintained on-site sewage systems, which are hazardous to human health and the environment. The lack of adequate sewage treatment in the Cheek Community has resulted in the discharge of sewage into local neighborhoods, ditches, and waterways, including coastal bays, bayous, and coastal estuaries. Jefferson County will only use SEP Funds to assist low-income homeowners in the Cheek Community. Low-income households fall at or below the 80 percent median income level for households in the county where they live.

Jefferson County shall use SEP Funds to install a low-pressure sewer system consisting of grinder pump stations and ancillary equipment, including electrical controls, house tie-ins, and piping, located at each home. The grinder pump stations will push wastewater to the main sewer line, allowing the houses to tie-in to the City of Beaumont's wastewater treatment plant system.

Households in the Cheek Community will complete standard income documentation to determine their eligibility for this low-income program. Jefferson County shall review applications for low-income eligibility for assistance at Jefferson County's expense. After a candidate household's income is verified, Jefferson County shall hire a contractor to design and install a grinder pump station and tie-in from the house to the main sewer line. Jefferson County shall use SEP Funds to pay the contractor for labor and equipment and proper abandonment of existing septic tanks according to applicable regulations.

Jefferson County has no prior obligation to perform this Project. Homeowners will not be charged for any costs associated to this Project. Jefferson County shall ensure that all repairs, replacements, and installations are performed in compliance with local, state, and federal rules. Jefferson County shall ensure that only properly licensed contractors are utilized for all work under this Project.

Eligible Sites

Eligible sites will be limited to those where the household qualifies as low-income as defined by TEX. GOV'T CODE § 2306.004(15).

Environmental Benefit

Each failing septic system that is replaced will improve the water quality in waterways and watersheds by preventing raw sewage with high levels of bacteria, viruses, and protozoa from entering the environment. Removal of sewage as a point source of pollution will also protect ground, surface, and drinking water from contamination. This Project has the potential to not only improve water quality but will also improve the public health for a sector of the population that is least able to afford health care. Diseases that result from sewage contaminated water range from mild gastroenteritis (causing stomach cramps and diarrhea) to life threatening ailments such as cholera, dysentery, infectious hepatitis, and severe gastroenteritis. People can be exposed through sewage in drinking water sources, direct contact from water in lawns or streets, and inhalation and skin absorption.

In addition, sewage overflows may damage the environment. Sewage overflows may reach rivers, lakes, streams, or aquifer systems. In addition to potential spread of disease, sewage in the environment contributes excess nutrients, metals, and toxic pollutants that contaminate water quality, cause algae blooms, and kill fish and other organisms in aquatic habitats.

Eligible Areas and Counties

Chambers and Jefferson Counties

Minimum Contribution Amount

\$1,000

Total Project Budget

\$98,800