

Preserving the Continuity of Childhood

By Merced Housing Texas



Merced Housing Texas' mission is to create and strengthen healthy communities by providing quality, affordable housing with supportive services for individuals, families, and older adults living in low-income households.

Critical Need in our Community and Population to Be Served by the Project:

In Bexar County, more than 2,300 children are currently in foster care. When children must be removed from unsafe or neglectful homes, timely placement with relatives is one of the strongest ways to preserve family bonds, reduce additional trauma, and provide stability during crisis. Kinship Family caregivers—such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings, and other relatives—help children remain connected to the people, routines, and relationships that matter most.

Too often, these placements are delayed or prevented because a relative's home does not meet state safety or licensing standards. Even modest repairs can be financially out of reach, creating an urgent barrier for families who are ready to step in. With few community resources available to address these needs, children may be separated from family not because a willing caregiver is unavailable, but because the home cannot be made placement-ready in time.

The Preserving the Continuity of Childhood (PCOC) program will address this critical gap by providing free home repairs to kinship families, removing housing-related barriers to placement and helping children remain safely with family. This project directly advances Impact SA's Family focus area by strengthening family relationships, preserving family unity, and increasing the ability of children and caregivers to stay connected during one of the most vulnerable periods in a child's life.

Merced Housing Texas (Merced) will provide home repair services to kinship families of foster care youth through referrals from nonprofit agency referrals. The program will serve Bexar County foster youth, from birth to age 17, and their kinship families. Eligible households must earn at or below 80% of area median income (AMI), ranging from \$64,400 for a two-person household to \$80,500 for a four-person household. Because this is a new program, gender and ethnicity data are not yet available; however, these and other demographic data will be collected at launch and reported at the end of the grant period.

Description of Project and Proposed Use of Impact SA Funds:

Whenever possible, foster care children are placed with relatives they know and trust. These kinship families—aunts, uncles, siblings, grandparents, etc.—can foster or adopt while helping children stay connected to their family, culture, and sense of stability during a vulnerable time. Some families are unable to qualify as foster homes simply because their houses do not meet state safety standards. Even small repairs can be financially out of reach for households already financially burdened and logistically stressed. For 24 years, Merced's Owner-Occupied Repair Program (OORP) has provided free critical health, safety, and accessibility repairs for low-income homeowners. The new PCOC program will operate under OORP to offer free home repairs that remove housing-related barriers for these families and make kinship placements possible. This program will help families qualify for licensing, gain access to resources reserved for licensed families and prevent placements from destabilizing.

Merced proposes to utilize \$100,000 in funding as follows:

- \$10,000 for administrative expenses.
- \$9,000 for Merced project managers to provide oversight and monitor/inspect each project and ensure compliance, quality and completeness.
- \$1,000 for transportation costs associated with site visits, monitoring project progress and meetings with foster care kinship families.
- \$80,000 of funds for direct program costs to include materials, construction costs, subcontractor fees and necessary permits.

Impact on People to Be Served - Measurable Outcomes (Described in "S.M.A.R.T." terms):

Specific: Merced will help kinship families of foster care youth effectively remove the home repair barriers that prohibit them from qualifying to become foster care parents.

Measurable: Merced will make repairs to 15-24 homes of foster care kinship families living in low-income households of 80% AMI or below.

100% of kinship families served will report placement of foster care next of kin in their homes.

100% of foster care youth and their kinship families will report decreased stress related to uncertainty related to cost-prohibitive home repair barriers.

100% of foster care youth and their kinship families will report increased physical wellness and feeling of safety and security due to improved environmental conditions in the home.

Achievable: Merced's values-based approach, proficiency and proven practices will ensure quality service delivery. While this program is a new initiative, we are confident that Merced's many years of experience in home repair will create a solid foundation for success. Partnerships with foster care agencies who can make vetted referrals, Merced's expertise in creating/cost-estimating/bidding project scopes, our intentional intake processes and our ability to objectively evaluate the program for continual improvement will make outcomes achievable.

Relevant: This program will be guided by Merced's values of compassion, collaboration, service and integrity and will:

- provide stable and safe housing for an underserved population living in low-income households.
- strengthen communities through strengthening families.
- contribute to better outcomes in physical health, academics, mental/emotional wellness, connectedness/enrichment and financial security through housing stability.

Time-Bound: This program will launch on July 1, 2026 and will be an ongoing program. Merced expects to repair 15-24 homes in a year.

Project Budget:

Project Expense Category	Amount	Narrative
Indirect Costs (Overhead)	\$10,000.00	N/A
Agency Personnel (Salaries, Wages, Benefits)	\$9,000.00	Supports staff time for project coordination, contractor oversight, compliance, inspections, and project administration.
Construction Costs	\$80,000.00	Covers direct home repair costs, including labor, materials, subcontractors, and health and safety improvements for eligible households.
Vehicle, Equipment, Furnishings & Related	\$1,000.00	Supports employee mileage reimbursement for project related site visits and inspections.
Total Expenses	\$100,000.00	