

**Response from TDHCA Executive  
Director Tim Irvine**

**Zimbra****jaime.longoria@co.hidalgo.tx.us****Fwd: On behalf of Tim Irvine**

**From :** Jaime Longoria <jaime.longoria@co.hidalgo.tx.us>  
Tue, Jan 03, 2017 08:41 AM  
1 attachment

**Subject :** Fwd: On behalf of Tim Irvine

**To :** Erika Reyna <erika.reyna@co.hidalgo.tx.us>

**Cc :** juliancuatemartine <juliancuatemartine@gmail.com>

Thanks,

Jaime

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: "Laura Saintey" <laura.saintey@tdhca.state.tx.us>  
Cc: "Tim Irvine" <tim.irvine@tdhca.state.tx.us>, "Brooke Boston" <brooke.boston@tdhca.state.tx.us>, "Michael DeYoung" <michael.deyoung@tdhca.state.tx.us>, "Cathy Collingsworth" <cathy.collingsworth@tdhca.state.tx.us>  
Sent: Friday, December 30, 2016 2:43:58 PM  
Subject: On behalf of Tim Irvine

Dear Members of the Community Action Network:

Recently an email below was widely circulated among this network (and perhaps beyond) making allegations of cover-ups and other improprieties. Although we immediately reported it to a number of offices involved in overseeing our activities and plan to provide a full report to both our Audit Committee and our Governing Board when they meet in January, I wanted to provide you with some express assurances.

With respect to what transpired in Hidalgo County, there was an agency that had a number of significant issues, and we dispatched three of our best - Michael De Young, Cathy Collingsworth, and Laura Saintey - to assist them in organizing and handling a

massive backlog and restoring the flow of utility assistance payments. Today, under new leadership, that agency has demonstrated visible improvement in serving its community. Our auditors, the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, and others were kept apprised of these matters.

When our compliance monitors next monitored the agency, the client files were reviewed and imperfections were noted. However, all households were found eligible, training and technical assistance was underway to help Hidalgo move forward, and Department staff approved payments; so the imperfections were not addressed in the monitoring report. It would not have been appropriate to assign responsibility for those matters to the agency.

Any reference to a cover-up is ill informed and inaccurate. This was all done with utter transparency. Any reference to anyone having been terminated in connection with these matters is likewise wholly inaccurate.

As regards to our attitude towards the network of community action agencies, I assure you that we deeply value and appreciate all that you do. However, from time to time, at isolated agencies, we have encountered some matters of significant concern. These matters have been identified in monitoring reports. Technical assistance has been offered and provided. Opportunities to take corrective action have been provided. Where these matters have involved disallowed costs we have worked with agencies to accommodate reasonable plans of repayment. In limited instances these measures have been insufficient to restore the affected agencies to a state where we were comfortable that they could administer their programs compliantly, and in those instances we have taken the required measures to ensure that those programs were being administered by an agency capable of serving eligible Texans in a lawful and compliant manner. We are always mindful that the objective here is to assist eligible households as effectively as possible.

I accept responsibility for the handling of these matters, but I also want to make a public expression of my complete support for this team (with one exception, noted below), especially Patricia Murphy and Michael De Young. These are knowledgeable and dedicated people who work hard every day to ensure that these programs are being operated as intended and are truly helping low income Texans.

Finally I sincerely apologize for the email that was sent. I do not know who sent it, but I do know that it was sent without knowledge of the relevant facts and without taking these concerns to the proper people (including our Internal Auditor, our General Counsel, our Ethics Officer, our Audit Committee, our Board, and others). Whoever sent it does not have my support for the manner in which they handled this.

Sincerely,  
Tim Irvine

Laura Saintey  
Project Manager of Training  
Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs  
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"When we are no longer able to change a situation - we are challenged to change ourselves.

<[http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/v/viktorefr121087.html?src=t\\_change](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/v/viktorefr121087.html?src=t_change)>" Viktor E. Frankl

#### About TDHCA

The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs is committed to expanding fair housing choice and opportunities for Texans through the administration and funding of affordable housing and homeownership opportunities, weatherization, and community-based services with the help of for-profits, nonprofits, and local governments. For more information about fair housing, funding opportunities, or services in your area, please visit [www.tdhca.state.tx.us](http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us)<<http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/>> or the Learn about Fair Housing in Texas<<http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/housing-center/fair->

[housing/index.htm](#) > page.

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