

## California

### Single Family Homes • Self-Help Program

## Single mother builds first home for family through Self-Help Program

Johanna Diaz was a single mother living in an apartment when she got the opportunity to build her own home in Imperial, Calif.

"It's easy to buy a house, but to build it with your own hands – it's amazing," Diaz exclaimed.

Diaz started building her home in January 2019 and moved in on May 27, 2020.

"It was hard during summer, because it gets so hot," she said. "But, we did it!"

Her and her family outgrew the apartment they were living in and needed another solution.

"There wasn't enough space for our family," she said. "My girls would always fight."

Her cousin built her home through this program and pointed her in this direction, so she went ahead and applied.

Diaz worked through the Coachella Valley Housing Coalition, which was a grantee of the USDA Rural Development 523 Technical Assistance Grant, said Patricia Coronado, USDA Rural Development single family home regional coordinator. These funds can be used to hire staff and pay other administrative costs to recruit families, provide homeownership counseling, package the loan applications that are turned into Rural Development to apply to the 502 Home Loan Program. Without the grantee, there would be no self-help program

"My cousin told me about the process and application; and I just went for it," Diaz explained. "Thank God I did it!"

Her life has improved tremendously as a result.

"I've always lived in apartments, and this is my dream home for my kids," Diaz said. "We have a playground in the back, I can paint it whatever colors I want, and even plant a garden."

"It was so emotional when we walked in for the first time," Diaz described. "I cried when I got the keys to my home."

Diaz praised the USDA Rural Development staff who helped her. They walked her through the process and explained everything in detail.

"Everyone who is interested – go ahead and apply – it's so worth it," Diaz exclaimed.



Johanna Diaz poses for a photo in front of her home that she built with the aid of the USDA Rural Development Self-Help Program.

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<b>Obligation Amount:</b>	\$171,000
<b>Date of Obligation:</b>	March 21, 2018
<b>Congressional District:</b>	Representative Vargas, CA 51st District; Senators Feinstein and Padilla
<b>Partners:</b>	AHP \$20,000
<b>Demographics:</b>	N/A
<b>Impact:</b>	Family moves into first home