



Department of Justice  
Office of Justice Programs

Bureau of Justice Assistance

Office of Justice Programs

Washington, D.C. 20531

August 21, 2009

The Honorable J.D. Salinas  
Hidalgo County  
100 E. Cano Street, 2nd Floor  
Edinburg, TX 78539-4548

Dear Judge Salinas:

On behalf of Attorney General Eric Holder, it is my pleasure to inform you that the Office of Justice Programs has approved your application for funding under the FY 09 Recovery Act Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program Local Solicitation in the amount of \$519,453 for Hidalgo County.

Enclosed you will find the Grant Award and Special Conditions documents. This award is subject to all administrative and financial requirements, including the timely submission of all financial and programmatic reports, resolution of all interim audit findings, and the maintenance of a minimum level of cash-on-hand. Should you not adhere to these requirements, you will be in violation of the terms of this agreement and the award will be subject to termination for cause or other administrative action as appropriate.

If you have questions regarding this award, please contact:

- Program Questions, Esmeralda C. Womack, Program Manager at (202) 353-3450; and
- Financial Questions, the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, Customer Service Center (CSC) at (800) 458-0786, or you may contact the CSC at [ask.ocfb@usdoj.gov](mailto:ask.ocfb@usdoj.gov).

Congratulations, and we look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James H. Burch II".

James H. Burch II  
Acting Director

Enclosures



**Department of Justice  
Office of Justice Programs  
Office for Civil Rights**

*Washington, D.C. 20531*

August 21, 2009

The Honorable J.D. Salinas  
Hidalgo County  
100 E. Cano Street, 2nd Floor  
Edinburg, TX 78539-4548

Dear Judge Salinas:

Congratulations on your recent award. In establishing financial assistance programs, Congress linked the receipt of Federal funding to compliance with Federal civil rights laws. The Office for Civil Rights (OCR), Office of Justice Programs (OJP), U.S. Department of Justice is responsible for ensuring that recipients of financial aid from OJP, its component offices and bureaus, the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) comply with applicable Federal civil rights statutes and regulations. We at OCR are available to help you and your organization meet the civil rights requirements that come with Justice Department funding.

**Ensuring Access to Federally Assisted Programs**

As you know, Federal laws prohibit recipients of financial assistance from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, or disability in funded programs or activities, not only in respect to employment practices but also in the delivery of services or benefits. Federal law also prohibits funded programs or activities from discriminating on the basis of age in the delivery of services or benefits.

**Providing Services to Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Individuals**

In accordance with Department of Justice Guidance pertaining to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d, recipients of Federal financial assistance must take reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to their programs and activities for persons with limited English proficiency (LEP). For more information on the civil rights responsibilities that recipients have in providing language services to LEP individuals, please see the website at <http://www.lep.gov>.

**Ensuring Equal Treatment for Faith-Based Organizations**

The Department of Justice has published a regulation specifically pertaining to the funding of faith-based organizations. In general, the regulation, Participation in Justice Department Programs by Religious Organizations; Providing for Equal Treatment of all Justice Department Program Participants, and known as the Equal Treatment Regulation 28 C.F.R. part 38, requires State Administering Agencies to treat these organizations the same as any other applicant or recipient. The regulation prohibits State Administering Agencies from making award or grant administration decisions on the basis of an organization's religious character or affiliation, religious name, or the religious composition of its board of directors.

The regulation also prohibits faith-based organizations from using financial assistance from the Department of Justice to fund inherently religious activities. While faith-based organizations can engage in non-funded inherently religious activities, they must be held separately from the Department of Justice funded program, and customers or beneficiaries cannot be compelled to participate in them. The Equal Treatment Regulation also makes clear that organizations participating in programs funded by the Department of Justice are not permitted to discriminate in the provision of services on the basis of a beneficiary's religion. For more information on the regulation, please see OCR's website at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ocr/etfbo.htm>.

State Administering Agencies and faith-based organizations should also note that the Safe Streets Act, as amended; the Victims of Crime Act, as amended; and the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, as amended, contain prohibitions against discrimination on the basis of religion in employment. Despite these nondiscrimination provisions, the Justice Department has concluded that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) is reasonably construed, on a case-by-case basis, to require that its funding agencies permit faith-based organizations applying for funding under the applicable program statutes both to receive DOJ funds and to continue considering religion when hiring staff, even if the statute that authorizes the funding program generally forbids considering of religion in employment decisions by grantees.

Questions about the regulation or the application of RFRA to the statutes that prohibit discrimination in employment may be directed to this Office.

### **Enforcing Civil Rights Laws**

All recipients of Federal financial assistance, regardless of the particular funding source, the amount of the grant award, or the number of employees in the workforce, are subject to the prohibitions against unlawful discrimination. Accordingly, OCR investigates recipients that are the subject of discrimination complaints from both individuals and groups. In addition, based on regulatory criteria, OCR selects a number of recipients each year for compliance reviews, audits that require recipients to submit data showing that they are providing services equitably to all segments of their service population and that their employment practices meet equal employment opportunity standards.

### **Complying with the Safe Streets Act or Program Requirements**

In addition to these general prohibitions, an organization which is a recipient of financial assistance subject to the nondiscrimination provisions of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act (Safe Streets Act) of 1968, 42 U.S.C. § 3789d(c), or other Federal grant program requirements, must meet two additional requirements: (1) complying with Federal regulations pertaining to the development of an Equal Employment Opportunity Plan (EEO Plan), 28 C.F.R. § 42.301-.308, and (2) submitting to OCR Findings of Discrimination (see 28 C.F.R. §§ 42.205(5) or 31.202(5)).

#### **1) Meeting the EEO Plan Requirement**

In accordance with Federal regulations, Assurance No. 6 in the Standard Assurances, COPS Assurance No. 8.B, or certain Federal grant program requirements, your organization must comply with the following EEO Plan reporting requirements:

If your organization has received an award for \$500,000 or more and has 50 or more employees (counting both full- and part-time employees but excluding political appointees), then it has to prepare an EEO Plan and submit it to OCR for review within 60 days from the date of this letter. For assistance in developing an EEO Plan, please consult OCR's website at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ocr/eop.htm>. You may also request technical assistance from an EEO Plan specialist at OCR by dialing (202) 616-3208.

If your organization received an award between \$25,000 and \$500,000 and has 50 or more employees, your organization still has to prepare an EEO Plan, but it does not have to submit the EEO Plan to OCR for review. Instead, your organization has to maintain the EEO Plan on file and make it available for review on request. In addition, your organization has to complete Section B of the Certification Form and return it to OCR. The Certification Form can be found at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ocr/eop.htm>.

If your organization received an award for less than \$25,000; or if your organization has less than 50 employees, regardless of the amount of the award; or if your organization is a medical institution, educational institution, nonprofit organization or Indian tribe, then your organization is exempt from the EEO Plan requirement. However, your organization must complete Section A of the Certification Form and return it to OCR. The Certification Form can be found at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ocr/eop.htm>.

#### **2) Submitting Findings of Discrimination**

In the event a Federal or State court or Federal or State administrative agency makes an adverse finding of discrimination against your organization after a due process hearing, on the ground of race, color, religion, national origin, or sex, your organization must submit a copy of the finding to OCR for review.

### **Ensuring the Compliance of Subrecipients**

If your organization makes subawards to other agencies, you are responsible for assuring that subrecipients also comply with all of the applicable Federal civil rights laws, including the requirements pertaining to developing and submitting an EEO Plan, reporting Findings of Discrimination, and providing language services to LEP persons. State agencies that make subawards must have in place standard grant assurances and review procedures to demonstrate that they are effectively monitoring the civil rights compliance of subrecipients.

If we can assist you in any way in fulfilling your civil rights responsibilities as a recipient of Federal funding, please call OCR at (202) 307-0690 or visit our website at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ocr/>.

Sincerely,



Michael L. Alston  
Director

cc: Grant Manager  
Financial Analyst