

CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER OF HIDALGO, INC.
525 W. Wisconsin Rd. • Edinburg, Texas 78539 • Phone (956) 287-9754 • Fax (956) 287-9764
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Executive Director:
Roberto M. Garcia, MS

05/13/2011

Attn: Honorable Ramon Garcia
Hidalgo County Judge
100 E. Cano, Second Floor
Edinburg, TX 78539

RE: 381.004 (f) of the Local Government Code

Dear Judge:

It is that time of year when the Children's Advocacy Center requests funding assistance from the 381.004 (f) of the Local Government Code: Section (f) states "The commissioner's court of a county may support a children's advocacy center that provides services to abused children." As you may know or not know it was you and your administration that recommended and implemented this program initiative on your first term as Hidalgo County Judge from 2003 to 2007. Since past administration have taken your advice and leadership in implementing this funding stream program to better strengthen our Mission. Last year commissioner court supported the center in the amount of \$50,000 from this funding source and other funding sources.

As a community-based nonprofit established in June 2000, we are responsible for meeting the needs of child abuse victims by providing child forensic interviews conducted by trained interviewers, medical examinations, mental health psychological services, victim support and advocacy, case review using a multidisciplinary team, and tracking of case progress and outcomes etc. How quickly and well we do this is critical in determining how victims cope, first, with the immediate crisis and, later, with their recovery from the crime.

The long term impact of the services offered by the Children's Advocacy Center to the population living in Hidalgo and underserved Starr Counties has been substantial, fundamental, and indispensable. The impact of our project's services on the community has been substantial in various ways: (1.) Since 2001, the total number of victims served has increased an incredible 1,000%; (2.) Each year the center continues to serve an ever-increasing number of victims who need our services (from 2009 to 2010 the number of victims served increased by 56%). We have videotaped child interviews of **9,500** sexually abused children of which **50% (4,250)** are referred by the Hidalgo County Sheriff Office. Moreover, we have been averaging **450** child forensic interviews per year **since 2004**.

In fact, "Last year alone, more than (1,052) new child abuse cases were reported to the Children Advocacy Center of Hidalgo County. The serious nature of this problem is of major concern because children in our community are being victimized and robbed of their childhood. We have an obligation as a community non-profit to recognize and deal with this perpetuating cycle of abuse. Studies show that abused children who get early professional assistance are more likely to succeed in dealing and coping with the abuse. With early intervention, we can help break the cycle of abuse and, more importantly, significantly increase a child's chances of becoming a healthy adult and a good parent.

However, we currently find ourselves fiscally stressed and operating with a 20% budget decrease for the first time in ten years, as we struggle through a severe and extended recession. With slow economic growth, the prospects of private donations have been decreased by 90% year-to-date.



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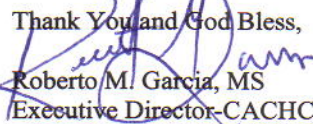
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ON: 5/17/11 BY: [Signature]



As we navigate the unfamiliar tides for our current budget and the never ending demand for child abuse services we are formally requesting funding support from **Funding Source 381.004 of the Local Government Code or other funding sources in the amount of \$50,000 at the same level as last year.** The requested funding will continue to put us in the forefront of providing vital victims services by filling needed child forensic interviews, medical and mental health services to child abuse victims throughout Hidalgo County using multi-disciplinary team approach (MDT) a team approach.

It is our sincere belief that a community united together to combat child abuse can make a possible higher quality of life and a safer place for all children to live. We are extremely appreciated of your unwavering commitment, support and the county commissioners in fight against child abuse. Thank you for being a champion for Abused Kids!

We look forward to continue working with you in a productive partnership so we can sow the seeds of hope in rebuilding their lives; re-join the community, and developing trust and confidence in the criminal justice system. Should you have any questions regarding this matter, please feel free to call me at (956) 287-9754. On behalf of the Board of Directors, we thank you for your time, your consideration, and your help in fighting the scourge of child abuse.

Thank You and God Bless,

Roberto M. Garcia, MS
Executive Director-CACHC



CC: Valde Guerra, Commissioner's Court Executive Budget Officer
CC: Monica Badillo, Commissioner's Court Administrator