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**From:** "Dina Trevino" <dina.trevino@co.hidalgo.tx.us>  
**To:** "joel espinoza" <joel.espinoza@co.hidalgo.tx.us>  
**Cc:** "Sergio Cruz" <sergio.cruz@co.hidalgo.tx.us>, "Rosie" <rosalinda.cantu@co.hidalgo.tx.us>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2013 5:20:25 PM  
**Subject:** JAG Grant-Meeting Recap

Mr. Espinoza,

This is to recap yesterday's meeting in reference to the JAG Grant. You were informed that the JAG grant award amount was not sufficient to sustain the current expenditures of two positions.

Commissioners' Court has indicated that any salary related agenda items will not be considered since we are faced with a 14 million deficit for 2014. Therefore, as discussed during our meeting and in an effort not to displace any county employee we recommended other possible alternatives such as accommodations by other courts that have vacancies.

The total grant award approved by Commissioners' Court is in the amount of \$66,516.00 which partially covers one full time position however, that funding is currently exhausted.

The table below illustrates in detail the positions currently under the JAG Grant:

Bailiff position	57,544.91
Court Coordinator	63,734.47
Total estimated salaries	121,179.38

Please note that the next grant award is estimated to be 56,980.00 less than currently awarded.

Thank you,  
**Dina R. Trevino**  
**Assistant, Budget Officer**  
County of Hidalgo, Texas  
Department of Budget & Management  
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MEMO

DATE: October 1, 2013

To: Hidalgo County Budget Department

From: Judge Rudy Delgado

Subj: Auxiliary Courts' Budget

In addition to my duties as the Judge of the 93<sup>rd</sup> District Court of the State of Texas and Hidalgo County, I have been elected by the Board of Judges of Hidalgo County to be the Overseer of Auxiliary Courts A and B of Hidalgo County. I am in charge of establishing the schedule for Visiting Judges to preside over these Courts and to recommend their appointment to the Fifth Region administrative Judge.

Appointed Judges visit on a weekly basis and their duties are restricted to presiding over Felony Criminal cases. They do not hear Civil nor Family Law cases!

I am also charged with the responsibility to supervise the staff required for the operation of these Courts. Each Court requires a Court Coordinator, Court Reporter and Bailiff for a total of 6 people who are required to assist the appointed Judges to handle the case load.

It does require Tax dollars to operate these Courts and historically, the operation of the courts was funded from a myriad of sources. The Fifth Administrative Region of Texas provided the bulk of the Visiting Judges' Salaries while the Hidalgo County Commissioners' Court provided the logistical support, accommodations and the majority of the funds necessary for Court staff salaries. County personnel were also instrumental in obtaining funding to subsidize both Judges Salaries and Court Staff including the application for grants to adequately fund these Courts.

These Courts were created in the late 90's to assist the District Courts of Hidalgo County with their Criminal

Dockets and to alleviate Jail overcrowding. While several District Courts have been created for Hidalgo County since then, the new Courts are simply not enough to keep up with our population growth and the impact that growth has on our crime rate and jail overcrowding. Hidalgo County has continued to utilize the Auxiliary Courts and to fund them and their continued utilization and funding is vital to the operation of the Court System of Hidalgo County.

Funding has been a problem as we are all aware that there are a great many projects that need to be funded for the proper function of County Government. Federal, State and County funds are utilized toward this goal. Each year the limited resources of these entities are stretched and, at times, funding sources are diminished, drastically cut or eliminated altogether. Such has been the case with the funding of the Auxiliary Courts. I have been aware at the outset of my becoming the overseer for these courts that they had not been adequately funded in the area of staff salaries. Specifically, 1 Court Coordinator position and 1 bailiff position were not adequately funded due to a cutback in the grant that had previously been utilized for these salaries.

On August 21, 2013 I was advised via an email that there were insufficient funds in the JAG Grant to sustain the current expenditures of two positions. I was further advised that Commissioners' Court had indicated that any salary related agenda items will not be considered since the county faced a 14 million deficit for 2014. The email went on to add that the total grant award approved by the Commissioners' Court was in the amount of \$66,516 which partially covers one full-time position and that the sum of money is currently exhausted. The email continues that the positions currently under the JAG Grant are 1 bailiff position at \$57,544.91 and 1 court coordinator position at \$63,734.47 for a total of \$121,179.38. Obviously, the JAG Grant could never have covered the two positions. Surely it would have been contemplated that Commissioners' Court would make up the difference in salaries. The email concludes that the next grant award is estimated to be \$56,980 which is even less than the amount currently awarded which could never satisfy two positions totaling \$121,179.38.

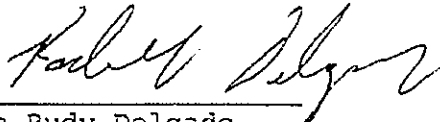
The Auxiliary Courts are obviously operating in the red because of the lack of adequate funding. I have brought

this to the attention of the budget department and we have conferred on the matter and this writing memorializes our meeting. Consideration has been given to a reduction in staff to remain within the amounts awarded, however the Auxiliary Courts cannot continue to function with a reduction in staff. A court reporter is required for all proceedings. A bailiff is required for all proceedings to assist the Judge and maintain order. A court coordinator is likewise indispensable to the proper operation of the courts. Simply stated, eliminating one position is not possible.

The only other alternative would be the elimination of 1 Auxiliary Court or both and that is not feasible as it would result in overcrowded dockets and jail overcrowding. The Auxiliary Courts are not a luxury rather they are a necessity. Their continued operation will assist in the overall operation and efficiency of the justice system in Hidalgo County. These courts need to be Adequately funded.

I have requested that the matter be placed on the agenda for our next board of judges meeting on October 10, 2013. I anticipate that the board of judges will approve that the matter be placed before commissioners court for adequate funding for fiscal year 2013 And 2014.

Please include this matter before the commissioners court Of Hidalgo County.



Judge Rudy Delgado  
93<sup>rd</sup> District Court

cc: Board of Judges

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**From:** "Deborah Fischer" <deborah.fischer@auditor.co.hidalgo.tx.us>  
**To:** "Sergio Cruz" <sergio.cruz@co.hidalgo.tx.us>  
**Cc:** "Hector Sandoval" <hector.sandoval@auditor.co.hidalgo.tx.us>, "Linda Fong" <linda.fong@auditor.co.hidalgo.tx.us>, "Manuel Chapa" <manuel.chapa@co.hidalgo.tx.us>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 22, 2013 8:49:35 AM  
**Subject:** 2013 Jag Grant FY16

Good morning Sergio,

The new 2013 Jag Grant has still not been appropriated yet. The grant adjustment has been approved by the grantor agency via an email authorization. An employee change of status needs to be prepared to move the court coordinator to the new fiscal year of the Jag grant and move the bailiff to the general fund. Please prepare the agenda item so that the appropriation and salary schedules can be approved through commissioner's court.

The 2012 Jag grant is closed and we can no longer charge employee salaries to that fiscal year (FY15). This grant has been running negative balances due to the fact that the salaries are continuing to charge to the closed grant.

However, there is a small problem in that there will not be enough money to cover 100% of the Court Coordinator's salary with benefits at \$61,920.82 for the year. The total 2013 grant award is for only \$56,980.00. The annual salary of the Bailiff with benefits is \$56,322.24 which could have been covered 100% by the grant.

The final quarterly report for the 2012 and the 1<sup>st</sup> quarterly report for the 2013 are due this month on October 30, 2013. We need to take care of this before the due date of the reports. We have only one Commissioner's Court meeting left (10/29/13) before the report due date.

Please advise me as to how you wish to take care of these grants and when you will be able to process the needed corrections.

Thank you.

**Deborah L Fischer**

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