

# THE HIDALGO COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM

**The Hidalgo County Library System**

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**HCLS President/County Librarian:**

Marisol Vidales, Director – Dr. Hector P. Garcia Memorial Library

**HCLS Vice President:**

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**HCLS Secretary:**

Arnoldo Becho, Director – Mayor Joe V. Sanchez Public Library

**HCLS ILS Coordinator:**

Jorge L. Gonzalez – McAllen Public Library

## Memorandum

To: Hidalgo County Commissioner's Court  
CC: Valde Guerra, Executive Officer  
From: Arnoldo Becho, Librarian - Weslaco Public Library  
Subject: Establishment of a County Electronic Library  
Date: July 11, 2016

Esteemed Gentlemen,

I am writing today as a representative of the Hidalgo County Library System (HCLS) in order to formally request your support for the establishment of a County Electronic Library. EBooks are an essential part of the modern library and they account for more than 10% of some libraries' circulations. HCLS currently does not have an EBook collection. We have the capacity to open a new, innovate, electronic library within the year and we hope to have your support.

Specifically, HCLS has created a plan to establish an electronic library which will garner public interest and have the capacity to grow into a robust, permanent county resource that will attract new readers to the library and increase literacy. The plan calls for initial funding of \$400,000 in FY 2017 to establish the system and collection, followed by \$75,000 of annual funding to continue to build the collection. More than 95% of these funds will go to EBooks that will be permanent property of Hidalgo County.

Literacy is the most important factor in creating a more prosperous community. Texas lags behind the US and the RGV lags even behind Texas. Thus the situation is urgent. This is an opportunity to drastically improve literacy in our community and bring public attention to the importance of reading. The conversation and public interest which a project like this could spark would touch thousands of lives. Thank you for your time. If you would like more information or would like to meet regarding the subject please contact me via the information below. In the following pages we provide supplemental information regarding implementation and HCLS.

Sincerely,

Arnoldo Becho, HCLS EBook Coordinator / Librarian - Weslaco Public Library  
Phone: 956.973.3144      Email: abecho@weslacopl.us

## Why support this project?

- It allows for the opening of a new, innovate, electronic library within the year!
- Literacy is a very real issue in the RGV and this initiative could make a real difference
- This is an excellent PR opportunity to increase the community's awareness of the County's fight against illiteracy.
- HCLS needs additional funding. We are very much in danger of losing accreditation due to funding requirements from the State of Texas. Losing accreditation would endanger millions in grants.
- County residents need more support: 33% of HCLS customers are County residents but only 2% of funding for their services comes from the County.
- HCLS's county budget was cut in half in FY 2000 and is still significantly smaller, this really contributes to accreditation issues.

## What is the Value of HCLS to Hidalgo?

2,521,870 visits	Less than a penny per visit
181,017 event attendance	About a dime to entertain a child
1,103,767 computer uses	About two pennies to provide computers and internet
1,377,009 questions answered	Less than two pennies to help someone
<u>1,805,190 books checked out</u>	<u>About a penny to provide someone a book</u>

## Budget

### FY 2017

**System Fees** \$10,000 (TBD) –website, mobile app, technical support, training and other cost.

**Books** \$390,000 – It is important to make a large investment the initial year. This investment will create a collection of about 40,000 books. Enough to market and serve the public from the get go.

### FY 2018 and beyond

**System Fees** \$10,000 (TBD)

**Books** \$65,000 – Yearly budget to increase collection size and serve demand.

## Implementation plan and timeline

- Jan. 2017 - Consideration and possible funding allocation.  
- Marketing and technical planning  
- Creation of circulation rules and procedures
- Feb. 2017 - Launch of Public Relations campaign  
- Book collection development
- March 2017 - Technical implementation and system testing  
- Staff training
- April 2017 - Electronic library is opened to the public