

Program Narrative (Attachment II)

Located in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, Hidalgo County sits along the Mexican border between Starr County and Cameron County. Hidalgo County covers 1,583 square miles with four ports of entry and a population of 849,843 (US Census, July 2016). The Hidalgo County Sheriff's Office is uniquely positioned on the international border between the US and Mexico. As a result of its proximity to the border, Hidalgo County experiences a high volume of criminal activity that is stemmed by various factors including a high unemployment rate, economically disadvantaged households, below national average education levels, illegal immigrant entries, drug trafficking and human smuggling, among others. The Hidalgo County Sheriff's Office is subject to both domestic and international threats. The Department's responsibility to respond to any incident or violent attacks and/or terrorism is not only within its' jurisdiction but the entirety of the county. The Hidalgo County Sheriff's Office is tasked by protecting the unincorporated rural areas of Hidalgo County while also providing to the local law enforcement agencies within the incorporated cities. The Hidalgo County Sheriff's office serves 22 communities in the County of Hidalgo. The Hidalgo County Sheriff's responds to an average of 100,000 calls for service from the community and an average of 5,000 traffic stops annually.

The Hidalgo County Sheriff's Office has an ongoing commitment to provide better resources for its staff which increases deputy safety both individually and collectively as a department. The presence of a skilled, well trained and properly equipped law enforcement deputies substantially reduces the risk of injury or loss of life to citizens, law enforcement officers, and suspects.

The TASER X26P -Conducted Electrical Weapon (CEW) is not intended to replace a firearm, but provide a safer means of dealing with non-deadly force situations. TASERS which are Conducted Electrical Weapons (CEWs) and are used worldwide by law enforcement to temporarily incapacitate dangerous, combative or high-risk subjects who pose a risk to law enforcement officers or themselves. TASERS are generally recognized as a safer alternative to other uses of force.

The Hidalgo County Sheriff's Department intends to utilize JAG funding to purchase Conducted Electrical Weapons as a standard of protection. To assist in the data collection efforts, the Hidalgo County Sheriff's Office will maintain an accurate record of all equipment expenditures purchased tracked via generally accepted accounting principles observed in Hidalgo County. They will also track Taser details (serial numbers, officer assignment... etc.). In addition, the Hidalgo County Sheriff's Office will also track any problems encountered, as well as any realized high-risk callout response efficiencies. They will also report any BJA required specific performance data.

Since the JAG Program allows a recipient to purchase equipment/supplies such as Tasers/accessories, Hidalgo County has decided to utilize the Edward J. Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program to increase the safety and security of the general public, assist with current border initiatives/surveillance and protect our deputies.