



# Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council

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## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Manuel "Manny" Cruz

January 28, 2021

**RECEIVED**

FEB 18 2021

By:   
 County Judge

Honorable Richard F. Cortez  
 Hidalgo County  
 100 E. Cano, Second Floor  
 Edinburg, Texas 78539

Dear Judge Cortez:

The Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC) currently administers the State's 9-1-1 Program for Hidalgo County as directed by legislation enacted in 1987. LRGVDC – Emergency Communications/9-1-1 has more than met the legislative charge of providing emergency dispatch centers with the latest and best available equipment and technology and assuring that this equipment and technology is operating efficiently on a 24 hour/365-day basis.

I am writing this letter to you at the direction of the LRGVDC Board of Directors which is made up of elected and appointed officials from the entities that are served by the LRGVDC 9-1-1 program. We believe there is a positive opportunity for the participants in the LRGVDC program to have a real and larger impact on policy and fiscal matters than is now available through the state administrative program.

In the past legislative session, the Health and Safety Code was amended by SB 1108/HB 3462 to permit Councils of Government/Regional Planning Commissions to establish Regional Emergency Communications Districts (ECD). We see many advantages and opportunities that would be to our benefit by creating an ECD.

Currently, our citizens and businesses are charged \$0.50 cents on their phone bills to pay for 9-1-1 services. This money is remitted to and held by the state until the legislature appropriates all or part of it to the Texas Commission on State Emergency Communications (CSEC). CSEC then allocates these funds to councils of government. The problem is that the legislature does not always appropriate all the funds collected, but rather retains some of the funds to show (on paper) a balanced state budget.

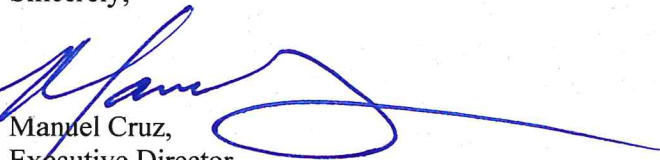
If we were to create an ECD, the monies collected through the maximum \$0.50 fee would be remitted in their entirety to this district. The major benefit from this, aside from all the funds collected in our region coming back to it, is that a long-range strategic plan could be adopted outlining future capital improvements and replacements for our dispatch centers based on a known and reliable stream of revenue. Under the present situation, we have no certainty of the amount of funding that the region will receive during any given biennium. This results in inefficiencies because it makes long-term planning for capital equipment difficult.

Another key benefit to having our own ECD is one of local control. Policy and budgetary matters would be decided by a board of directors consisting of local elected officials from entities served by the LRGVDC 9-1-1 Program. The new law specifies that councils of government, LRGVDC in our case, will continue to serve as staff for the district. This assures that there will be no disruption to the current services provided to our citizens and businesses through the already existing dispatch centers.

In order to become an ECD, the new law requires that the governing body of each local government now served by a council of government pass a resolution supporting the creation of an ECD. Our sixteen (16) Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP) and the LRGVDC Board of Directors have indicated an interest of creating an ECD and have approved the resolution that is being presented. Since June of 2020 staff has been in the process of contacting all communities involved and requesting approval and execution of the resolution. To-date, of the 27 resolutions required to move forward with the creation of the district, 23 have successfully passed with only 4 remaining.

Enclosed for your consideration is the approved sample resolution, which can be used to support the creation of an ECD. If you would like to meet to discuss the details of the process and benefits of becoming an ECD, my staff and I would be happy to visit with you at your convenience. We look forward to partnering with you on this important regional endeavor. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 956-279-4130 should you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Manuel Cruz,  
Executive Director

Cc: J.E. Eddie Guerra, Sheriff  
Robert Dominguez, Chief of Police, 9-1-1 Committee Chair  
Honorable James E. Darling, LRGVDC Board President

COUNTY OF HIDALGO RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CREATION OF THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL  
9-1-1 EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS DISTRICT

**WHEREAS**, Chapter 772, Subchapter H, of the Texas Health and Safety Code, cited as the Regional Emergency Communications District Act (the “act”), provides the creation of a Regional Emergency Communications District: and

**WHEREAS**, the act applies to a state planning region established under Chapter 391 of the Texas Local Government Code with a population of under 1.5 million, composed of counties and municipalities that operate a 9-1-1 system solely through a regional planning commission: and

**WHEREAS**, the Act requires that the governing bodies of each participating county and municipality in the region adopt a resolution approving the creation of the Regional Emergency Communications District (the “District”): and

**WHEREAS**, as of May 25, 1989, the County of HIDALGO exclusively receives 9-1-1 system services operated through the Council of Governments, a regional planning commission.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE COUNTY OF HIDALGO  
AUTHORIZES THE CREATION OF 9-1-1 EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS DISTRICT**

Passed and approved on the \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2021 at a regularly scheduled Council Meeting  
of the County of HIDALGO, Texas.

APPROVED:

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Mayor: Hon. Richard F. Cortez

ATTEST:

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Administrative Assistant: