



Hidalgo County • Department of Budget & Management
American Rescue Plan Act 2021

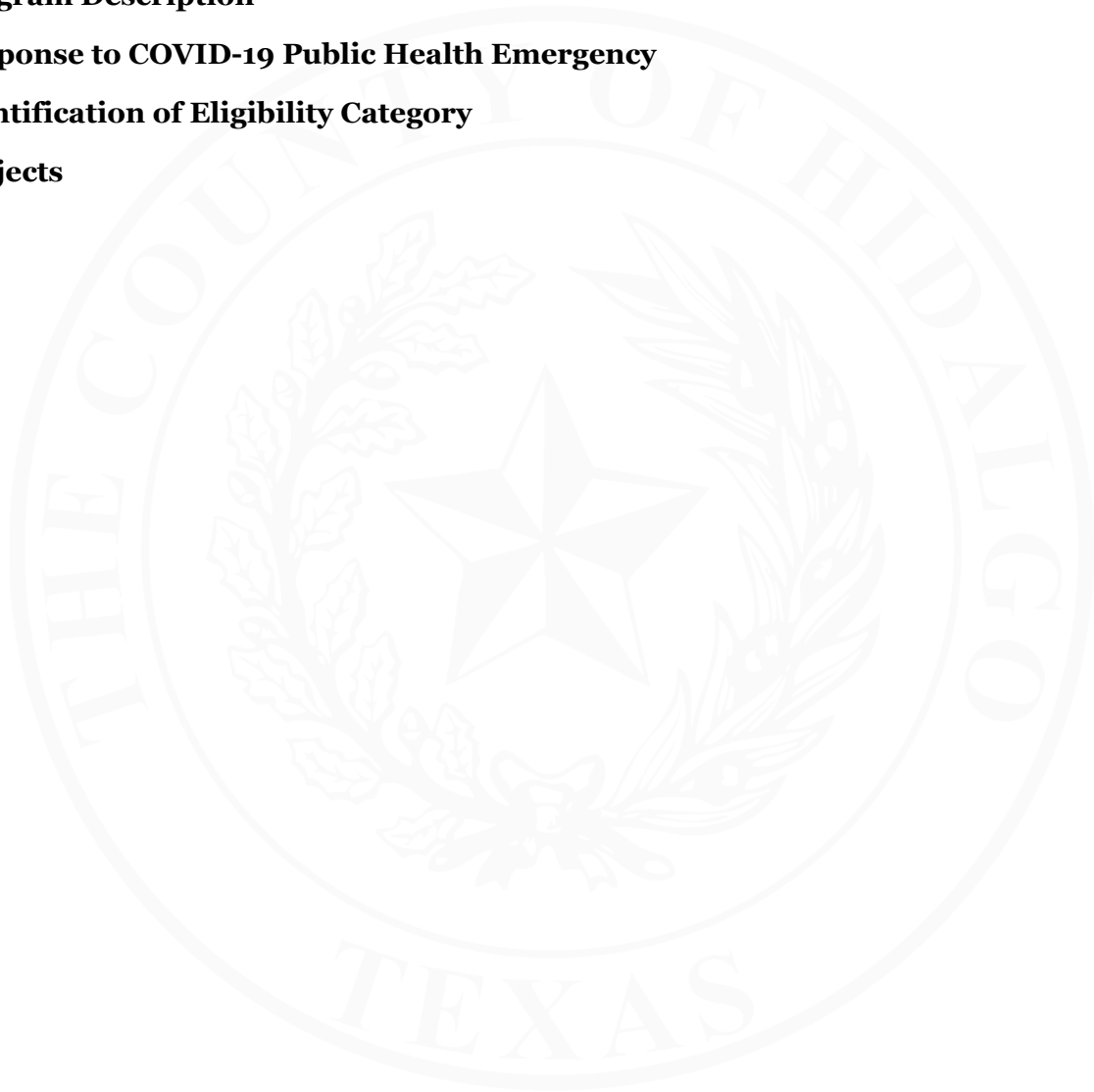
**Hidalgo County American Rescue Plan Act Stormwater System
Improvement Program**





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Background Information

In order to recognize and address areas of critical need, the U.S. Treasury’s Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (CSLFRF) Interim Final Rule allows state and local governments to expend funds to enhance existing storm and wastewater infrastructure. State and federal regulations have established treatment requirements for public water systems to prevent pathogens from contaminating the water. However, there are areas in Hidalgo County that have limited or no access to clean water or viable stormwater systems.

In the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), Congress recognized the critical role that clean drinking water and services for the collection and treatment of stormwater play in protecting public health.¹ In addition, investing in water and sewer infrastructure will improve access to clean drinking water, support vital wastewater and stormwater infrastructure.

Moreover, there are an array of infrastructural enhancements that are desperately needed countywide, from leaking pipes and overwhelmed sewers that have been clogged from waste and trash to outdated treatment plants. Clean water and adequate stormwater systems are ultimately an enabler for health and opportunity. However, many constituents find this essential quality of life need inaccessible or unaffordable.

Low-income communities and minority communities often face some of the greatest water inequities, such as increased lead exposure and risk of infection from exposure to fecal matter. Moreover, storm and wastewater overflows inundate the streets and backyards of the most vulnerable communities due to a lack of serviceable infrastructure.

During the rainy season, the streets, avenues and main roads of Hidalgo County are affected by the collapse of drains. The flooding caused by inadequate stormwater systems damages houses, harms constituents, destroys property, spreads disease and erodes roads. Efficient sewage services directly translate into a healthier community by providing clean water and avoiding potential environmental disasters. These basic needs are critical to the health and ability to work and learn of low-income minorities.

¹ Department of the Treasury. (n.d.). Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. (pg. 105)



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For example, residents in “Colonias,” extremely low-income areas located within 150 miles of the Texas-Mexico border, lack essential services, such as drinking water, sewage treatment, and paved roads. The absence of the most basic infrastructure contributes to the proliferation of disease, including COVID-19, which already disproportionately affects low-income minority groups.

Program Description

The Hidalgo County American Rescue Plan Act Stormwater Improvement Program will enhance stormwater infrastructures to address any health disparities that the COVID-19 public health emergency may have exacerbated. The program is focused on improving infrastructure to deliver clean water to areas in need and equipping systems to prevent flooding in low-lying land.

The Hidalgo County American Rescue Plan Act Stormwater Improvement Program’s objective is to improve and repair wastewater treatment plants, control nonpoint sources of pollution and substantiate the resilience of infrastructure to severe weather events.

The Hidalgo County American Rescue Plan Act Stormwater Improvement Program will focus on underserved communities that reside in informal settlements located on low-lying land, riverbanks and floodplains. Therefore, servicing communities that are consistently susceptible to impacts of flooding and waterborne diseases.

Response to COVID-19 Public Health Emergency

The Hidalgo County American Rescue Plan Act Stormwater System Improvement Program directly addresses the COVID-19 public health emergency by making proper sanitation practices accessible to constituents.

Identification of Eligibility Category

According to the U.S. Treasury’s Interim Final Rule, the Hidalgo County American Rescue Plan Act Stormwater Improvement Program would fall under category 5.6 Clean Water: Stormwater, which refers to projects that make the necessary investments in water and sewer infrastructure needs.²

² Department of the Treasury. (n.d.). Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. (pg. 98)



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The CSLFRF Interim Final Rule allows recipients added flexibility in the types of allowable projects by permitting projects that would be eligible under the existing Environmental Protection Agency Clean Water State Revolving Fund programs.

The U.S. Treasury's Interim Final Rule emphasizes qualified projects, particularly for Qualified Census Tracts (QCT), which are a common, readily-accessible and geographically granular method of identifying communities with a large proportion of low-income residents. Projects focused on QCT sectors will benefit our community by fixing stormwater infrastructural problems in these areas of need.

Projects

Multiple projects will be included as part of the Hidalgo County American Rescue Plan Act Stormwater System Improvement Program including, but not limited to, the projects listed below:

- Stormwater Improvements to Glasscock Road - Project Number: ARPA-21-123-009
- Stormwater Improvements to the Tierra Dorada - Project Number: ARPA-21-123-008.
- Hidalgo County Precinct 2 Stormwater Management Project - Project Number: ARPA-21-122-017