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**Agency Name:** Hidalgo County  
**Grant/App:** 4426101 **Start Date:** 9/1/2022 **End Date:** 8/31/2023

**Project Title:** Juvenile Mental Health Court Program  
**Status:** Application Pending Submission

### Eligibility Information

**Your organization's Texas Payee/Taxpayer ID Number:**  
174600071

### Application Eligibility Certify:

Created on:1/4/2022 3:38:06 PM By:Renee Rodriguez-Betancourt

### Profile Information

**Applicant Agency Name:** Hidalgo County  
**Project Title:** Juvenile Mental Health Court Program  
**Division or Unit to Administer the Project:** Juvenile Mental Health Court Program  
**Address Line 1:** 100 East Cano Street  
**Address Line 2:**  
**City/State/Zip:** Edinburg Texas 78539  
**Start Date:** 9/1/2022  
**End Date:** 8/31/2023

**Regional Council of Governments(COG) within the Project's Impact Area:** State Agency  
**Headquarter County:** UNDEFINED  
**Counties within Project's Impact Area:** Hidalgo

### Grant Officials:

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**Title:** The Honorable  
**Salutation:** Judge  
**Position:** Hidalgo County Judge

#### Financial Official

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**Position:** Budget Officer

#### Project Director

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**Title:** The Honorable  
**Salutation:** Judge  
**Position:** District Judge

**Grant Writer**

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**Title:** Ms.  
**Salutation:** Ms.  
**Position:** Court Coordinator

**Grant Vendor Information**

**Organization Type:** County  
**Organization Option:** applying to provide services to all others  
**Applicant Agency's State Payee Identification Number (e.g., Federal Employer's Identification (FEI) Number or Vendor ID):** 174600071  
**Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS):** 103110834

**Narrative Information****Introduction**

The purpose of this funding is to support specialty court programs as defined in Chapter 121 and Chapter 129 of the Texas Government Code.

The funding announcement, located on the [eGrants Calendar](#) page, describes the organization types, activities, and costs that are eligible under the announcement. The PSO's [eGrants User Guide to Creating an Application](#) guides applicants through the process of creating and submitting an application in eGrants. Information and guidance related to the management and use of grant funds can be found in the PSO's Guide to Grants, located on the [PSO Resource for Applicants and Grantees webpage](#).

**Program-Specific Questions****Specialty Courts - Participant Fees**

Does this specialty court collect participant fees pursuant to Sec. 123.004 of the Texas Government Code?

Yes

No

If yes, what is the current dollar amount charged to participants?

0

In the last fiscal year, how many participants were charged a fee?

0

Of those participants charged, how many paid the fee?

0

**Certifications**

In addition to the requirements found in existing statute, regulation, and the funding announcement, this program requires applicant organizations to certify compliance with the following:

### **Constitutional Compliance**

Applicant assures that it will not engage in any activity that violates Constitutional law including profiling based upon race.

### **Information Systems**

Applicant assures that any new criminal justice information systems will comply with data sharing standards for the Global Justice XML Data Model and the National Information Exchange Model.

### **Program Income**

Applicant agrees to comply with all federal and state rules and regulations for program income and agrees to report all program income that is generated as a result of the project's activities. Applicant agrees to report program income through a formal grant adjustment and to secure PSO approval prior to use of the program income. Applicant agrees to use program income for allowable costs and agrees to expend program income immediately after PSO's approval of a grant adjustment and prior to requesting reimbursement of funds.

Deduction Method - Program income shall be deducted from total allowable costs to determine the net allowable costs. Program income shall be used for current costs unless PSO authorizes otherwise. Program income which the grantee did not anticipate at the time of the award shall be used to reduce the PSO award and grantee match rather than to increase the funds committed to the project.

Asset Seizures and Forfeitures - Program income from asset seizures and forfeitures is considered earned when the property has been adjudicated to the benefit of the plaintiff (e.g., law enforcement entity).

### **Twelve-Step Programs**

Grant funds may not be used to support or directly fund programs such as the Twelve Step Program which courts have ruled are inherently religious. OOG grant funds cannot be used to support these programs, conduct meetings, or purchase related materials.

### **Cybersecurity Training Requirement**

Local units of governments must comply with the Cybersecurity Training requirements described in Section 772.012 and Section 2054.5191 of the Texas Government Code. Local governments determined to not be in compliance with the cybersecurity requirements required by Section 2054.5191 of the Texas Government Code are ineligible for OOG grant funds until the second anniversary of the date the local government is determined ineligible. Government entities must annually certify their compliance with the training requirements using the Cybersecurity Training Certification for State and Local Governments. A copy of the Training Certification must be uploaded to your eGrants application. For more information or to access available training programs, visit the Texas Department of Information Resources Statewide Cybersecurity Awareness Training page.

### **Criminal History Reporting**

Entities receiving funds from PSO must be located in a county that has an average of 90% or above on both adult and juvenile dispositions entered into the computerized criminal history database maintained by the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) as directed in the *Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, Chapter 66*. The disposition completeness percentage is defined as the percentage of arrest charges a county reports to DPS for which a disposition has been subsequently reported and entered into the computerized criminal history system.

Counties applying for grant awards from the Office of the Governor must commit that the county will report at least 90% of convictions within five business days to the Criminal Justice Information System at the Department of Public Safety.

### **Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR)**

Eligible applicants operating a law enforcement agency must be current on reporting complete UCR data and the Texas specific reporting mandated by 411.042 TGC, to the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) for inclusion in the annual Crime in Texas (CIT) publication. To be considered eligible for funding, applicants must have submitted a full twelve months of accurate data to DPS for the most recent calendar year by the deadline(s) established by DPS. Due to the importance of timely reporting, applicants are required to submit complete and accurate UCR data, as well as the Texas-mandated reporting, on a no less than monthly basis and respond promptly to requests from DPS related to the data submitted.

### Specialty Court Certifications

If the applicant is a specialty court operated under Ch. 121 of the Texas Government Code, the following certifications apply:

1. The specialty court will develop and maintain written policies and procedures for the operation of the program.
2. The applicant will submit a copy of any project evaluations, evaluation plans, recidivism studies, or related reports that are completed during the grant period to PSO.

### Adoption of Adult Drug Court Best Practice Standards

Applicants operating an adult drug court certify that they are working towards full compliance with and adoption of Vol. I & II of the Adult Drug Court Best Practice Standards.

### Adoption of Family Drug Court Best Practice Standards

Applicants operating a family drug court certify that they are working towards full compliance with and adoption of the Family Treatment Court Best Practice Standards.

### Compliance with State and Federal Laws, Programs and Procedures

Local units of government, including cities, counties and other general purpose political subdivisions, as appropriate, and institutions of higher education that operate a law enforcement agency, must comply with all aspects of the programs and procedures utilized by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security ("DHS") to: (1) notify DHS of all information requested by DHS related to illegal aliens in Agency's custody; and (2) detain such illegal aliens in accordance with requests by DHS. Additionally, counties and municipalities may NOT have in effect, purport to have in effect, or make themselves subject to or bound by, any law, rule, policy, or practice (written or unwritten) that would: (1) require or authorize the public disclosure of federal law enforcement information in order to conceal, harbor, or shield from detection fugitives from justice or aliens illegally in the United States; or (2) impede federal officers from exercising authority under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), § 1226(c), § 1231(a), § 1357(a), § 1366(1), or § 1366(3). Lastly, eligible applicants must comply with all provisions, policies, and penalties found in Chapter 752, Subchapter C of the Texas Government Code.

Each local unit of government, and institution of higher education that operates a law enforcement agency, must download, complete and then upload into eGrants the [CEO/Law Enforcement Certifications and Assurances Form](#) certifying compliance with federal and state immigration enforcement requirements. This Form is required for each application submitted to PSO and is active until August 31, 2023 or the end of the grant period, whichever is later.

### Civil Rights Liaison

A civil rights liaison who will serve as the grantee's civil rights point of contact and who will be responsible for ensuring that the grantee meets all applicable civil rights requirements must be designated. The designee will act as the grantee's liaison in civil rights matters with PSO and with the federal Office of Justice Programs.

Enter the Name of the Civil Rights Liaison:

Raul Silguero, Jr. Director, Department of Human Resources

Enter the Address for the Civil Rights Liaison:

2818 S. Business Highway 281, Edinburg, Texas 78539

Enter the Phone Number for the Civil Rights Liaison [(999) 999-9999 x9999]:

956-318-2660

### Overall Certification

Each applicant agency must certify to the specific requirements detailed above as well as to comply with all requirements within the PSO Funding Announcement, the *Guide to Grants*, the *Grantee Conditions and Responsibilities*, any authorizing or applicable state and federal statutes and regulations to be eligible for this program.

**I certify to all of the application content & requirements.**

### Project Abstract :

Over 30 years ago, the Hidalgo County Juvenile Justice System was established. During these 30 years, the Juvenile Justice system in Hidalgo County began to grow. In 2007, the Judge Mario E. Ramirez, Jr. Juvenile Justice Center which is a 137,459 sq. ft. facility was built to accommodate the operations of a Juvenile Probation Department, a ninety-six (96) bed secured Pre-adjudication Detention Facility, and a State District Court specializing in processing juvenile cases. Subsequently, that juvenile court became the 449th District Court. In 2017, Judge Renee Rodriguez-Betancourt was elected to the 449th District Court. The 449th District Court is a general jurisdiction court but with a preference for juvenile matters. Since taking the bench, Judge Rodriguez- Betancourt has presided over 80% percent

of all juvenile cases in Hidalgo County. However, in these past three years, Judge Betancourt, began to take notice that juvenile females were being underserved in the juvenile justice system. Specifically, those female juveniles who were acting out and committing crimes in part because of negative experiences. In addition, Judge Betancourt discovered some of the underlying issues as to why young girls were finding themselves in the Juvenile Justice System. Issues such as high rates of physical and sexual abuse, undiagnosed and untreated mental health illnesses, moderate drug addiction, the lack of academic and employment achievement, and chronically dysfunction and abusive families. Judge Betancourt was born and raised in Hidalgo County. Her parents were migrant workers and had only a 9th grade education. Therefore, Judge Rodriguez- Betancourt, was very familiar with these underlying issues and knew the negative impact it has on a young girl. Judge Betancourt knew that to identify, and more efficiently, effectively, and expeditiously serve adolescent females involved with the Hidalgo County juvenile system, a specific court docket that focused specifically on girl's issues needed to be established, Therefore, Judge Betancourt conducted research on existing juvenile specialty courts located in Texas. Judge Betancourt visited Bexar County and El Paso County to conduct interviews with the program coordinators and Judges, to learn more about their court models. Furthermore, Judge Betancourt discovered the positive impact that specialty courts had on jurisdictions which have the same or similar demographics as Hidalgo County. Therefore, the requested funding will allow for one year of planning and implementation of a Girls Juvenile Mental Health Court Program called LIFELINES. LIFELINES Court Program will be created to target and offer special services, programs, and supervision to legally competent juvenile females. This Court Program can help parents understand how mental illness, trauma and other underlying issues affect their child but more importantly it will educate parents about mental health and diminish the idea that detention or a residential facility is the answer to prevent their child from re offending. LIFELINES will consist of a partnership between the 449th District Court, Hidalgo County Juvenile Probation, Hidalgo County District Attorney, Hidalgo County Public Defender's Office, treatment providers, and community agencies. Ultimately, the LIFELINES Court program once implemented can help reduce the commission of future crimes by juvenile females, bring more community resources to parents and families, increase public safety address the mental health/substance abuse needs of the female juvenile community and become a cost-effective alternative to detention and placement in residential facilities.

### **Problem Statement :**

During the three years Judge Betancourt had not been able to identify one clear underlying issue as to why young girls were entering into the juvenile justice system. She has come to see that there are numerous issues, and this is supported by data and research. Issues regarding underage girls include poverty, poor health, early sexual activity, parental negligence and abuse, undiagnosed mental health issues, and substance abuse. In her search for a solution, she began to order those psychological evaluations be conducted on those female juveniles who may have endured some trauma prior to committing a criminal offense and/or being detained. After reviewing numerous psychological evaluations, and social studies, Judge Betancourt discovered how the common thread of undiagnosed and untreated mental health issues and other contextual factors resulted in these young girls committing offenses and even falling into the cycle of addiction. In 2016, out of the 1,494 referrals made, 465 of those referrals were for females. Also in 2016, 284 juveniles were removed from their homes through a Juvenile Court Order and placed in a secure or non-secured residential placement program. These placements accounted for over 38,000 days at a total cost of over 5 million dollars for the 2016 calendar year. According to the Texas Juvenile Justice Department, in the last three fiscal years (FY 17, 18, and 19), there has been over four thousand Juvenile referrals made to the Hidalgo County Juvenile Probation Department. Referrals received at the Hidalgo County Juvenile Center consist of alleged delinquent and status offenses. Since 2016, the Juvenile Probation department noticed a sharp increase in formal referrals, adjudications, and of juveniles being placed in a residential placement program. Considering The Texas Demographic Center reports that Hidalgo has a population of 890,414 (2019) and has a significant population under the age of eighteen, 31.1% of which 51% are female, Hidalgo County has NO Juvenile Specialty Courts. In addition, the lack of available community based mental health and substance abuse treatment providers for the juvenile population who provide coordinated judicial services are minimal in Hidalgo County. Therefore, these barriers have resulted in higher recidivism rates, and a higher number of juveniles being placed in residential placements. Regarding the female juvenile population, there is a lack of services, education, and programming that is female gender specific. Judge Betancourt has made it a priority to identify these young girls, who have suffered trauma to maximize the girls' ability to successfully mitigate the underlying cause of their behaviors and have the foundation for a successful future.

### **Supporting Data :**

In the FY 2019, the number of referrals made by law enforcement to the HC Juvenile Probation department was 1408 referrals. The FY 2019 data indicates the following referral data: 473 Felonies of which 74 Felonies were committed by females, and 1103 Class A&B Misdemeanors, of which 280 were committed by female juveniles. In the FY 2018, the number of referrals made by law enforcement was 1322. The FY 2018 data indicates the following referral data: 443 Felonies of which 60 Felonies were committed by females, and 1077 Class A & B Misdemeanors of which 242 were committed by female juveniles. In FY 2017 the number of referrals made by law enforcement to HC Juvenile probation department was 1200. The FY 2017 data indicates the following referral data: 463 Felonies committed of which 79 were Felonies committed by females, and 1008 Class A & B misdemeanors of which 258 were committed by female juveniles. Judge Betancourt took note of the myriad of contextual factors adversely affect the girls in the 449th District Court since she has been on the bench. As she spoke with the other judges who preside over juvenile case in

Hidalgo County, they also agreed that the community and family-based factors were affecting the juveniles and most notably the girls. This includes family violence, intergenerational transmission of violence, living in crime-ridden neighborhoods, substance abuse, child abuse, having an incarcerated parent and teen pregnancy. She saw the struggles of families to understand the problem and how to help as they did not understand the contextual factors have been identified as contributing to these emotional and behavioral problems. Judge Betancourt acknowledged there was a contributing relationship and conduit between adverse experiences, traumas, and behaviors to include substance abuse, truancy, and delinquency. She continued looking for a solution and found research indicating that Hidalgo County also has a 31% poverty rate and 28.6% of Hidalgo County lives with food insecurity and there was an identified link between food insecurity and psychological problems as well as behavioral problems to include aggressiveness, hyperactivity and decreased concentration and academic abilities. These contextual realities are reflected in youth who are involved in the Hidalgo County Juvenile Justice System. The Hidalgo County Juvenile Probation Department data indicates that 47% of the population has an identified mental health problem as seen in the Positive Achievement Change Tool Pre-Screen and Full Assessment (PACT/RPACT) data. For the group without an identified mental health problem, 29% ranked in the moderate risk level and 12% at the high-risk level. The Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) scores corresponded with these PACT scores in that moderate risk level was associated with an average Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) score of 2.65 while high risk was associated with an average ACE score of 4.37. The juveniles also had identified significant risk factors for reoffending to include the exposure to adverse childhood experiences. All the aforementioned factors are amongst the criteria/risk identified in the literature for the cradle to prison pipeline. In addition, for FY 2017, 2018, and 2019, an average of 200 females each year were testing positive for an illegal substance such as marijuana. As for mental health diagnosis, an average of 350 females per year (FY17, 18, and 19) had one or more Mental Health Diagnosis. All these factors and data combined indicate that a Specialty Court is needed to adequately address these issues.

### **Project Approach & Activities:**

Lifelines Female Juvenile Mental Health court will serve as an alternative to prosecution and substitutes a problem-solving model for traditional juvenile court proceedings. The program will adopt a non-adversarial approach to ensure the best interest of the participant is the main point of all discussions. In keeping with that goal, the Lifelines Program will be a six month Deferred Prosecution term with a potential of a six-month extension that can be order by the Judge. Potential participants in this court program will be referred by a probation officer from the Hidalgo County Juvenile Probation department. The Hidalgo County District Attorney may also refer females on deferred adjudication to the Lifelines Probation Officer. Eligible cases will be screened by the probation officer or at the Lifelines Court. If the initial screening indicates possible eligibility, then a comprehensive assessment is completed by one of the LIFELINES Court psychologists. The Lifelines Judge in consultation with the Lifelines team, which will include the Hidalgo County District Attorney's Juvenile Division, treatment providers, Hidalgo County Juvenile Public Defender, and a Lifelines case manager/social worker, will make the final decision as to whether a case will be accepted. The eligibility criteria for those participating in the Lifelines Court will most likely be a juvenile female who has been diagnosed with a mental health issue, has a history of substance abuse, have experienced past trauma and/or abuse, has a supportive adult who will commit to participating and is legally competent. Once a case has been accepted into the Lifelines court, the participant and the family will have to agree to the terms of the Lifelines Court (which will be created during the implementation of the Lifelines Court). Then the LIFELINES' master's in social work intern (University of Texas Rio Grande Valley partnership) will conduct a LIFELINE Psychosocial intake for the child and the parents/family member, to asses' strengths, areas of needs, and motivational goals. Then a plan is developed for each individual participant based on the entire intake and eligibility package. Once that is completed, a treatment plan is developed for each individual participant. The goals for the treatment plans go beyond the traditional wrap around program as it has a foundation base of psychoeducation to assure all involved are trained in trauma informed care and the families have the additional understanding of readjustment caregiving. Judge Betancourt has compiled a extensive list of community-based providers who have at one point or currently are providing services to juveniles from Hidalgo County. These providers are all willing to provide services and each bring a specialized set of services. This includes targeted mental health interventions, family violence prevention and intervention services, counseling for anger management and impulsivity, family counseling and readjustment caregiving, academic enhancement programs, substance abuse treatment, and leadership and resiliency group support services. Each participant will be part of a trauma informed and comprehensive program that will be accomplished in three phases for a period not to exceed six months. Each phase will consist of Court Review hearings which will start at possibly one to two per month, Frequency of Treatment provider visits, curfew, Drug testing, Mandatory meetings, and advancement criteria to move forward in Phases. If the Lifelines team finds that one of the participants needs more comprehensive needs, there can be a possible six-month extension. Advancement from one phase to the next will be the decision of the Lifelines team. The team will work with participants to ensure they are successful in graduating from the program. Lifelines is a comprehensive program that will include the girls developing the ability to make positive decisions developing their self-esteem and self-respect. This will empower each girl to take responsibility for their decisions and learn to make positive life choices. Along with the success recognition there will be incentive to include filed trips and special activities which are planned throughout the life of the program. In addition, there is a supportive and reinforcing component as the Court hearings will include all the girls in the program hearing not only the success of one another and celebrating them, but also, difficulties and challenges of other girls and the consequences and corrective action needed (i.e., positive drug test). This program will assist the girls in developing a new source of support and social

contacts who will share this program assist the girls in developing a new source of support and social contacts who will share the same goal of changing their lives and reinforce the building of resiliency, positive self-esteem, and empowerment.

### **Capacity & Capabilities:**

In 2017, Judge Renee Rodriguez-Betancourt was elected to the 449th District Court. At the time she was elected, she was the youngest District Court Judge, Texas. (Texas Judicial Branch). Prior to taking the bench, Judge Betancourt did extensive research on juvenile specialty courts in Texas. She was impressed with the different approaches taken by different counties and the positive results these courts were obtaining. Judge Rodriguez-Betancourt was determined to create the first ever Juvenile specialty court in Hidalgo County. Although, it took a little longer than expected, Judge Rodriguez-Betancourt wanted to take the time to learn and understand the specific needs of those juveniles who were coming before her court, to decide which type of Juvenile specialty courts would best suit those needs. Since 2017, Judge Betancourt has presided over 2000 Juvenile Petitions (Some of those Petitions include multiple charges). Currently, Judge Rodriguez-Betancourt serves on two committees with the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. She currently serves on the 2019 Supreme Court of Texas Children's Commission Dual Status Task Force in which she co-chairs the Judicial Practices Sub Committee. Also, she has been appointed to serve on the Legislative Sub-Committee Juvenile Justice of the Judicial Section for the State of Bar of Texas. Judge Rodriguez-Betancourt is also a Fellow of the Texas Bar Foundation. Judge Rodriguez-Betancourt is a judge who is known in the community for building community partnerships all for the benefit of having the resources needed for the youth she presently sees in the 449th District Court. She has developed a cohesive team who collaborates efforts for the youth of Hidalgo County. In addition, Judge Betancourt has surrounded herself with agencies and individuals who are also dedicated to assisting the girls in building resiliency while addressing the underlying factors. The Lifelines Court's team includes specialists in substance abuse, trauma and mental health, life skills building, and domestic violence, who are committed to work as active team members alongside the Court, Hidalgo County District Attorney, Hidalgo County Juvenile Probation, Hidalgo County Public Defender, and other crucial community partners. Judge Betancourt chose to have a diverse team as opposed to one third party provider due to the expansiveness of Hidalgo County and the lack of a mass transportation system. The diversity of the team allows services to be available in diverse areas of the county allowing maximal participation in services. The Hidalgo County Juvenile Probation's mental health team consisting of six professionals that include mental health professionals, who consist of one licensed substance abuse professional, four licensed mental health professionals, and one licensed social worker. They have a diverse set of skills to include rational emotive behavior therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, Bowen Family System based therapy, Person Centered therapy, motivational interviewing, and dialectic behavioral therapy. The John Austin Pena Primary Care and Substance Abuse Treatment Facility center has a long-standing relationship with the Court and offers comprehensive care for substance abuse issues to include community education, individual, group and family-based substance abuse and behavioral health services. Because they are associated with the medical school, they have available a wealth of providers. Tropical Texas Behavioral Health Center offers a comprehensive set of services to include behavioral health, substance abuse services, and primary care. They are the state mental health authority for the area which include Hidalgo County. Their services include crisis resolution, case management, counseling, family education and training, medication management, psychiatric services, and respite services. These services are done in a wrap-around program style allowing an enrichment experience for the youth and family. They also offer a wealth of community-based educational services. The Hope Family Medical Center offers primary care medicine, counseling, mental health treatment, prevention classes, and are a clinic working on a sliding scale fee. They can offer comprehensive care to the entire family as needed. Evolving Steps is a mental health center offering specialty interventions to include Dialectical Behavioral Therapy, Motivational Interviewing, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Systematic Desensitization, Expressive Arts, and Complex PTSD interventions as well as parenting classes. The Nueva Luz Foundation has established itself as a leader in trauma informed and specific care with children, high risk families, first responders, and military veterans. Their services include offering training and awareness in trauma informed care for providers and readjustment caregiving training and programs for families, and trauma informed groups for youth. Avance is an agency specializing in programs strengthening the family unit, marriage, and the parent-child relationship. Their services include parenting programs to include specialized programs for fathers, parent-child education, and assisting in healthy marriages. Behavioral Health Solutions offers a comprehensive set of services to include specialized service to single and teen mothers, parenting, substance abuse services, and behavioral health services. In addition, Judge Betancourt has a set of individual community providers that includes 5 mental health providers group practices, 2 individual therapy providers, 1 licensed sex offender therapist, 5 psychologists, and 2 psychiatrists. These additional providers will be utilized as needed. The core team covers distinct areas of the county to assure access to services.

### **Performance Management :**

Judge Betancourt's approach has included assuring she monitors the effectiveness of services for the youth while also monitoring if the services are impacting symptoms and behaviors. Judge Betancourt's overall goals for the Lifelines Court, is to reduce the commission of future crimes, reduce recidivism among juveniles with mental illness, improve the quality of life for participants and their family, and cost savings for Hidalgo County. Judge Betancourt is interested in formalizing the program effectiveness assessment and possibly contract with a licensed clinical psychologist from the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Psychology Department. This professional not only has expertise in clinical

work, but also experience in research and program analysis and multicultural issues. This contractor will develop forms for the accurate data gathering and evaluation will assure the assessments and service components meet the needs of the girls, while also assuring crucial information sharing amongst the program team. The program’s service provision, documentation, and adherence to protocols will be reviewed on a bi-weekly basis in a staff case review and monthly basis for the ongoing program evaluation. This not only assures an ability to measure the effectiveness of the program and services, but it also allows our team to assess the needs of the girls are being met on an ongoing basis. The statistical evaluation report of the data will be completed at the six month and 12-month stage of the program. The girls will then be followed for one year to verify they have not reoffended.

**Target Group :**

The targeted group will be girls between the ages of 13-17, legally competent, who have been charged with misdemeanor offenses and/or Class A offenses such as assault, have a past adverse experience or trauma, diagnosed with a mental health condition, history of substance abuse, and have an adult who will commit to offering the girls a supportive relationship assisting in their trauma readjustment and rehabilitation, and who will commit to participate in the program.

**Evidence-Based Practices:**

After Judge Betancourt completed her research regarding Juvenile specialty courts. She traveled to San Antonio (Bexar County) and El Paso. There she visited with Program coordinators, core team members, and Judges. In El Paso, she was given an orientation of how the Juvenile Drug Court was created and they operate it as a highly structured court-centered outpatient substance abuse treatment program. They touched on issues such as funding, data management, specific trainings utilized prior to implementing the court. Moreover, Judge Betancourt was able to observe one of their weekly status hearings. She admired how Judge Sam Medrano conducted a non-adversarial hearing, in which he was encouraging but held the participants and their families accountable. This specific visit assisted Judge Betancourt in understanding the role a Judge should play regarding any type of Juvenile specialty court. Furthermore, she learned of how the PACT, an evidence-based screening and assessment tool is paramount for targeting and eligibility practices for their Juvenile Drug Court. Judge Rodriguez-Betancourt then traveled to Bexar County and met with Lynn Wilkerson, Chief of the Bexar Juvenile Probation Department, Judge Lisa Jarrett, and Judge Laura Parker. During her visit, Judge Rodriguez-Betancourt was given an overview of the various Juvenile specialty courts and a glimpse as to the positive results they were obtaining. Judge Rodriguez-Betancourt was able to observe the Crossroads Court, a girls juvenile mental health court. She noticed that most of the participants were Latina. She knew Hidalgo County and Bexar County had somewhat similar demographics. She took note of the similarities between Judge Medrano and Judge Parker, regarding how they conducted their weekly meetings. She was informed at that time (2016) there had been a total of 71 participants since the creation of the Crossroads Court. Thus, 71% of participants successfully completed the program. Data for January 1, 2010, through November 2013, showed a recidivism rate of 15%. In addition, when the program was created in 2010, the cost of the child to participate in the mental health docket was around \$22,000 for a total of 212 days. The cost per day being \$105. The cost of incarcerating a child or institutionalizing a child was \$138 per day. Bexar Counties findings was that there was a savings of \$83,000(Makany-Rivera, 2010). Therefore, Judge Betancourt decided this evidenced-based program would be the model utilized to implement the LIFELINES program. The importance of having gender responsive services has been recognized by the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act since 1992 and included the recognition that girls and their families needed assistance lining with multiple resources and coordinating services (Chesney- Lind & Irwin, 2008). She learned of the Girl’s Court in Honolulu was experiencing success and found that the core gender-responsive elements that focused on building healthy relationships and individualized therapy to address trauma significantly decreased girls’ law violations in a follow-up period for five cohorts (Davidson, Pasko, and Chesney-Lind, 2011). Moreover, these findings and Judge Betancourt’s Lifelines Court followed the current literature on issues most affecting girls. This included the fact girls are exposed to higher levels of abuse, violence and neglect and having peers who are involved in delinquent behaviors places girls at higher risk levels for abuse and offending (Leve, Chamberlin, Kim, 2015). Also, the literature recognizes that exposure to trauma increases the risk of females both internalizing (depression, anxiety) and externalizing (aggression, oppositional defiance) their problems (Ford, Chapman, Connor & Cruise., 2012). Judge Betancourt has sought out counsel from local professionals in the design of this specialty Court program to assure that all factors were taken into consideration.

**Project Activities Information**

**Introduction**

This section contains questions about your project. It is very important for applicants to review their funding announcement for guidance on how to fill out this section. Unless otherwise specified, answers should be about the EXPECTED activities to occur during the project period.

**Selected Project Activities:**

ACTIVITY	PERCENTAGE:	DESCRIPTION
Specialty	100.00	To provide services and each bring a specialized set of services. This includes targeted

Court - Juvenile	<p>mental health interventions, family violence prevention and intervention services, counseling for anger management and impulsivity, family counseling and readjustment caregiving, academic enhancement programs, substance abuse treatment, and leadership and resiliency group support services. Each participant will be part of a trauma informed and comprehensive program that will be accomplished in three phases for a period not to exceed six months. Each phase will consist of Court Review hearings which will start at possibly one to two per month, Frequency of Treatment provider visits, curfew, Drug testing, Mandatory meetings, and advancement criteria in order to move forward in Phases. If the Lifelines team finds that one of the participants needs more comprehensive needs, there can be a possible six month extension. Advancement from one phase to the next will be the decision of the Lifelines team. The team will work with participants to ensure they are successful in graduating from the program. Lifelines is a comprehensive program that will include the girls developing the ability to make positive decisions developing their self-esteem and self-respect. This will empower each girl to take responsibility for their decisions and learn to make positive life choices. Along with the aforementioned success recognition there will be incentive to include filed trips and special activities which are planned throughout the life of the program. In addition, there is a supportive and reinforcing component as the Court hearings will include all of the girls in the program hearing not only the success of one another and celebrating them, but also, difficulties and challenges of other girls and the consequences and corrective action needed (i.e. positive drug test).</p>
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**CJD Purpose Areas**

PERCENT DEDICATED	PURPOSE AREA	PURPOSE AREA DESCRIPTION
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**Measures Information**

Objective Output Measures

OUTPUT MEASURE	TARGET LEVEL
Number of carry-over individuals participating.	0
Number of individuals NEWLY participating.	25

Objective Outcome Measures

OUTCOME MEASURE	TARGET LEVEL
Number of individuals who will successfully complete the program.	15

## Custom Output Measures

CUSTOM OUTPUT MEASURE	TARGET LEVEL
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## Custom Outcome Measures

CUSTOM OUTCOME MEASURE	TARGET LEVEL
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**Resolution from Governing Body**

Applications from nonprofit corporations, local units of governments, and other political subdivisions must include a [resolution](#) that contains the following:

1. Authorization by your governing body for the submission of the application to the Public Safety Office (PSO) that clearly identifies the name of the project for which funding is requested;
2. A commitment to provide all applicable matching funds;
3. A designation of the name and/or title of an authorized official who is given the authority to apply for, accept, reject, alter, or terminate a grant (Note: If a name is provided, you must update the PSO should the official change during the grant period.); and
4. A written assurance that, in the event of loss or misuse of grant funds, the governing body will return all funds to PSO.

Upon approval from your agency's governing body, upload the [approved](#) resolution to eGrants by clicking on the **Upload Files** sub-tab located in the **Summary** tab.

**Contract Compliance**

Will PSO grant funds be used to support any contracts for professional services?

Select the appropriate response:

- Yes  
 No

For applicant agencies that selected **Yes** above, describe how you will monitor the activities of the sub-contractor(s) for compliance with the contract provisions (including equipment purchases), deliverables, and all applicable statutes, rules, regulations, and guidelines governing this project.

Enter a description for monitoring contract compliance:

"Upon award, a contract agreement will be executed between the court, and the contractor. The agreement will advise contractor of requirements imposed on them by state laws, regulations, and the provisions of the grant agreement. The contract will also outline the activities that are to be executed by the contractor, payment arrangements, reporting requirements, and performance outcomes and goals. Contractor will submit monthly reports summarizing services provided each month with attached support documentation. Monthly reports will be reviewed for accuracy by court staff prior to issuing payment".

**Lobbying**

For applicant agencies requesting grant funds in excess of \$100,000, have any federally appropriated funds been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any federal contract, the making of any federal grant, the making of any federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any federal contract, grant loan, or cooperative agreement?

Select the appropriate response:

- Yes
- No
- N/A

For applicant agencies that selected either **No** or **N/A** above, have any non-federal funds been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress in connection with this federal contract, loan, or cooperative agreement?

Select the appropriate response:

- Yes
- No
- N/A

**Fiscal Year**

Provide the begin and end date for the applicant agency's fiscal year (e.g., 09/01/20xx to 08/31/20xx).

Enter the Begin Date [mm/dd/yyyy]:

1/1/2022

Enter the End Date [mm/dd/yyyy]:

12/31/2022

**Sources of Financial Support**

Each applicant must provide the amount of grant funds expended during the most recently completed fiscal year for the following sources:

Enter the amount (in Whole Dollars \$) of Federal Grant Funds expended:

88660999

Enter the amount (in Whole Dollars \$) of State Grant Funds expended:

14742237

**Single Audit**

Applicants who expend less than \$750,000 in federal grant funding or less than \$750,000 in state grant funding are exempt from the Single Audit Act and cannot charge audit costs to a PSO grant. However, PSO may require a limited scope audit as defined in 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart F - Audit Requirements.

Has the applicant agency expended federal grant funding of \$750,000 or more, or state grant funding of \$750,000 or more during the most recently completed fiscal year?

Select the appropriate response:

- Yes
- No

Applicant agencies that selected **Yes** above, provide the date of your organization's last annual single audit, performed by an independent auditor in accordance with the State of Texas Single Audit Circular; or CFR Part 200, Subpart F - Audit Requirements.

Enter the date of your last annual single audit:

12/13/2019

**Debarment**

Each applicant agency will certify that it and its principals (as defined in 2 CFR Part 180.995):

- Are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, sentenced to a denial of Federal benefits by a State or Federal Court, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any federal department or agency;
- Have not within a three-year period preceding this application been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (federal, state, or local) transaction or contract under a public transaction; violation of federal or state antitrust statutes or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property; or
- Are not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (federal, state, or local) with commission of any of the offenses enumerated in the above bullet; and have not within a three-year period preceding this application had one or more public transactions (federal, state, or local) terminated for cause or default.

Select the appropriate response:

- I Certify  
 Unable to Certify

If you selected **Unable to Certify** above, please provide an explanation as to why the applicant agency cannot certify the statements.

## Fiscal Capability Information

### Section 1: Organizational Information

\*\*\* FOR PROFIT CORPORATIONS ONLY \*\*\*

Enter the following values in order to submit the application

Enter the Year in which the Corporation was Founded: 0

Enter the Date that the IRS Letter Granted 501(c)(3) Tax Exemption Status: 01/01/1900

Enter the Employer Identification Number Assigned by the IRS: 0

Enter the Charter Number assigned by the Texas Secretary of State: 0

Enter the Year in which the Corporation was Founded:

Enter the Date that the IRS Letter Granted 501(c)(3) Tax Exemption Status:

Enter the Employer Identification Number Assigned by the IRS:

Enter the Charter Number assigned by the Texas Secretary of State:

### Section 2: Accounting System

The grantee organization must incorporate an accounting system that will track direct and indirect costs for the organization (general ledger) as well as direct and indirect costs by project (project ledger). The grantee must establish a time and effort system to track personnel costs by project. This should be reported on an hourly basis, or in increments of an hour.

Is there a list of your organization's accounts identified by a specific number (i.e., a general ledger of accounts)?

Select the appropriate response:

- Yes  
 No

Does the accounting system include a project ledger to record expenditures for each Program by required budget cost categories?

Select the appropriate response:

- Yes  
 No

Is there a timekeeping system that allows for grant personnel to identify activity and requires signatures by the employee and his or her supervisor?

Select the appropriate response:

- Yes  
 No

If you answered 'No' to any question above in the Accounting System section, in the space provided below explain what action will be taken to ensure accountability.

Enter your explanation:

### Section 3: Financial Capability

Grant agencies should prepare annual financial statements. At a minimum, current internal balance sheet and income statements are required. A balance sheet is a statement of financial position for a grant agency disclosing assets, liabilities, and retained earnings at a given point in time. An income statement is a summary of revenue and expenses for a grant agency during a fiscal year.

Has the grant agency undergone an independent audit?

Select the appropriate response:

- Yes
- No

Does the organization prepare financial statements at least annually?

Select the appropriate response:

- Yes
- No

According to the organization's most recent Audit or Balance Sheet, are the current total assets greater than the liabilities?

Select the appropriate response:

- Yes
- No

If you selected 'No' to any question above under the Financial Capability section, in the space provided below explain what action will be taken to ensure accountability.

Enter your explanation:

### Section 4: Budgetary Controls

Grant agencies should establish a system to track expenditures against budget and / or funded amounts. Are there budgetary controls in effect (e.g., comparison of budget with actual expenditures on a monthly basis) to include drawing down grant funds in excess of:

a) Total funds authorized on the Statement of Grant Award?

- Yes
- No

b) Total funds available for any budget category as stipulated on the Statement of Grant Award?

- Yes
- No

If you selected 'No' to any question above under the Budgetary Controls section, in the space provided below please explain what action will be taken to ensure accountability.

Enter your explanation:

### Section 5: Internal Controls

Grant agencies must safeguard cash receipts, disbursements, and ensure a segregation of duties exist. For example, one person should not have authorization to sign checks and make deposits.

Are accounting entries supported by appropriate documentation (e.g., purchase orders, vouchers, receipts, invoices)?

Select the appropriate response:

- Yes
- No

Is there separation of responsibility in the receipt, payment, and recording of costs?

Select the appropriate response:

- Yes
- No

If you selected 'No' to any question above under the Internal Controls section, in the space provided below please explain what action will be taken to ensure accountability.

Enter your explanation:

**Budget Details Information**

**Budget Information by Budget Line Item:**

CATEGORY	SUB CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	OOG	CASH MATCH	IN-KIND MATCH	GPI	TOTAL	UNIT/%
Personnel	Probation Officer	Probation Officer: The probation officer will provide community supervision for all youth ordered into the program. Salary \$40,552+\$7,848 (Health Insurance) +\$43.56 (Life Insurance) + \$3,102.23 (FICA)+\$5,162.27 (Retirement)+\$243.31 (Unemployment) + \$141.93 (Worker's Compensation) = \$57,093.30 total Salary @ 71.03% = \$40,552 OOG portion, VACANT	\$40,552.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$40,552.00	100
Personnel	Court Coordinator	Court Coordinator: The Court Coordinator will provide service coordination for all youth and families referred to the court, will also serve as liaison between community and drug court. Salary \$64,352 +\$7,848 (Health Insurance) +\$43.56 (Life Insurance) + \$4,922.92 (FICA)+ \$8,192.01 (Retirement)+\$386.11 (Unemployment) + \$225.23 (Worker's Compensation) = \$ 85,969.83 total Salary @ 52.93%= \$45,500	\$45,500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$45,500.00	100

		OOG portion. VACANT						
Contractual and Professional Services	Mental Health Assessment Services	Comprehensive psycho-social assessments, drug testing, drug treatment, mental health interventions, and clinical oversight will be provided by external contractor. Contractor will be compensated at a flat rate of \$2625 x 12 mos.= \$31,500	\$31,500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$31,500.00	0
Contractual and Professional Services	Curriculum Development and/or Implementation Services	Contractor will facilitate and lead education and outreach efforts, leading the planning, management, and implementation of the agency's annual Girls Voice Conference. Flat Rate Fee of \$5,000.	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5,000.00	0
Travel and Training	In-State Registration Fees, Training, and/or Travel	Texas Association of Specialty Court Annual Conference. Relevance: The TASC Annual Conference provides sessions/workshops that present best practices in service delivery; collaboration and justice programming that enhance outcomes for participants in treatment courts, including juvenile mental health courts; presents research findings, feature data analysis and highlighted evidence-based practices to incorporate in proposed program. Date: TBA, Location: TBA. Cost Breakdown: Training for 2 people= \$2,594. This includes: \$600	\$2,594.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,594.00	0

		<p>Registration (\$300 x 2=\$600) + \$500                  Travel (\$250 x 2 = \$500) + \$528 Meals &amp; Incidentals (\$66 per day x 4 days= \$264 x 2 = \$528) + \$966 Lodging (\$161 x 2 rooms= \$322 x 3 night= \$966).</p>						
Travel and Training	Out-of-State Registration Fees, Training, and/or Travel	<p>National Center for Youth Opportunity and Justice (NCYOJ): Mental Health Training Relevance: The Mental Health Training for Juvenile Justice (MHT-JJ) – developed by and for juvenile probation, detention, and corrections staff – increases staff capacity to better work with adolescents experiencing behavioral health conditions. As the MHT-JJ curriculum requires specialized knowledge regarding juvenile justice systems and clinical training, NCYOJ encourages prospective attendees to apply in pairings that include a juvenile justice professional and a clinician. Date: TBA, Location: TBA                  Cost Breakdown:                  Training for 2 people= \$5,926 This Includes: \$3,900                  Registration (\$1,950 x 2=\$3,900) + \$600                  Travel (\$300x2=\$600) + \$610 Meals &amp; Incidentals (\$61 x 3 days=\$305 x 2 people=\$610) + \$816                  Lodging (\$102 x 2 rooms=\$204 x 4 nights= \$816)</p>	\$5,926.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5,926.00	0

Supplies and Direct Operating Expenses	Laptop System and Accessories (\$5,000 or less per unit)	Laptop to keep all data, and to utilize for hearings.	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00	0
Supplies and Direct Operating Expenses	Office Supplies (e.g., paper, postage, calculator)	Consumables used regularly in office environment to execute administrative tasks of the program including case management, program planning, and other related activities to include but not limited to Pens, Pencils, Markers, Note Pads, Composition/Theme Books, Post-It-Notes, copier paper, Index Cards, Labels, File Folders, File Organizers, Envelopes, Staplers, Scissors, Tape, Pushpins, Binders, Paper Clips, Rubber bands, Desktop Toner Cartridges, etc. = \$1,500 (Average of \$125 mo. X 12 mo).	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	0
Supplies and Direct Operating Expenses	Project Supplies (e.g., binocular, battery, flexicuff, drug testing kit)	Drug testing kits. Kits will be used for compliance by participants of the program with identified substance abuse problems. (\$25 ea. X 80 total tests)	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00	0
Supplies and Direct Operating Expenses	Presentation and/or Training Supplies	Training Supplies for Girls Voice Conference \$1,980 Flipchart \$148+Markers \$32 + Printing \$500 of Programs, and handouts, Team Building supplies (balls, games, crafts, etc.) \$600, Mobile TV \$400 Stand, TV for Presentations \$300.)	\$1,980.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,980.00	0

**Source of Match Information****Detail Source of Match/GPI:**

DESCRIPTION	MATCH TYPE	AMOUNT
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**Summary Source of Match/GPI:**

Total Report	Cash Match	In Kind	GPI Federal Share	GPI State Share
\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

**Budget Summary Information****Budget Summary Information by Budget Category:**

CATEGORY	OOG	CASH MATCH	IN-KIND MATCH	GPI	TOTAL
Contractual and Professional Services	\$36,500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$36,500.00
Personnel	\$86,052.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$86,052.00
Supplies and Direct Operating Expenses	\$6,480.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$6,480.00
Travel and Training	\$8,520.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$8,520.00

**Budget Grand Total Information:**

OOG	CASH MATCH	IN-KIND MATCH	GPI	TOTAL
\$137,552.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$137,552.00

**Condition Of Fundings Information**

Condition of Funding / Project Requirement	Date Created	Date Met	Hold Funds	Hold Line Item Funds
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