



**Hidalgo County • Department of Budget & Management**  
American Rescue Plan Act 2022

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## **Project Description**

**Project Name:**

City of Mercedes: Paramedic Initiative

**Project Number:**

ARPA-22-110-113

**Department Name:**

Hidalgo County Judge's Office

**ARPA Expenditure Category:**

2: Negative Economic Impacts

**ARPA Eligibility Category:**

2.10: Assistance to Unemployed or Underemployed Workers\*^

**Project Description:**

The Paramedic Initiative project will be started in Mercedes, Texas and its commencement should occur early August 2022. This initiative will provide funds to the City of Mercedes to initiate a paramedic training program in Hidalgo County. This program has been developed in conjunction with every municipally operated emergency medical service in Hidalgo County, including the City of Mercedes, the City of Mission, the City of Plainview, the City of Pharr, the City of Weslaco, and the City of Alton. The municipalities collectively agreed that the City of Mercedes is best suited to serve as the operations center for this initiative.

In the last two years, COVID-19 has greatly impacted the nation and, in particular, regions of low socioeconomic status. Currently, 26.9% of Hidalgo County's population lives below the poverty line, and the pandemic's impact on the county's public health is evident. Providing a first responder training program will be an investment in the underserved Hidalgo County population and will produce more first responders. The need for additional first responders has become apparent with the ongoing public health emergency. The rising COVID-19 cases have resulted in a rise in paramedic services and have taken a toll on emergency response services. With an increase in COVID-19 cases, a 2019 study showed a job outlook of a 6% increase for EMTs and Paramedics. A recent 2020 study showed a job outlook of 11%. This increase demonstrates the rise in demand for EMTs and Paramedics due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The need for first responders is dire and the training program will ensure underserved residents who have been impacted by the COVID-19 public health emergency continue to receive critical lifesaving services.

Creating or providing assistance to a training program for Paramedics and Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) would likely be considered an eligible expense. According to the Coronavirus SLFRF guidelines, “recipients may provide job training or other enumerated types of assistance to individuals that are currently employed but are seeking to move to a job that provides better opportunities for economic advancements, such as higher wages or more opportunities for career advancement.” As such, the creation of a project which provides job training for the underserved population of Hidalgo County is an eligible use. Moreover, the project will allow Hidalgo County to effectively address the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency and future public health emergencies.

**Fiscal Impact:**

Estimated Budget: \$26,450.00