

# COUNTY of HIDALGO

**ELLIE TORRES**

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*COUNTY COMMISSIONER, PCT. No. 4*

November 10, 2022

Via Email to [FEMA-BRICDirectTechnicalAssistance@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:FEMA-BRICDirectTechnicalAssistance@fema.dhs.gov)

RE: Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC)  
Non-Financial Direct Technical Assistance Letter of Interest

Hidalgo County, through Hidalgo County Precinct 4 Commissioner Ellie Torres, hereby submits a request for non-financial Direct Technical Assistance. For the record, the Hidalgo County Commissioners' Court authorized the submission of the present during its November 15, 2022, Commissioners' Court Meeting.

As background, Hidalgo County is one of the fastest growing counties in the State of Texas. With a population of approximately 1 million people, it is the 7th largest county by population out of the 254 counties in the State of Texas.

Unfortunately, chronic flooding has affected the economy and health and safety of the citizens of Hidalgo County. Over the last seven years, Hidalgo County has suffered significant catastrophic flood events that have resulted in six Major FEMA Disaster Declarations: FEMA-4223-DR (2015), FEMA-4245-DR (2015), FEMA-4272-DR (2016), FEMA-4377-DR (2018), FEMA-4454-DR (2019), and FEMA-3530-EM (2020).

Hidalgo County is seeking to expand the Hidalgo County Master Drainage System ("Proposed Project"), which serves as the primary stormwater outfall for most of the county.

With a sticker price of over \$100 million, the expansion of the Hidalgo County Master Drainage System will require multiple phases to complete. Hidalgo County would like to coordinate with FEMA about the best approach on how to apply and seek funding for the Proposed Project. By dividing the Proposed Project in phases, each self-standing phase will provide tremendous drainage improvements on its own.

Hidalgo County is also proposing to team up with several of the largest local government agencies, including Hidalgo County Drainage District No. 1 as well as several large cities in its submittal of future BRIC applications. Hidalgo County is also exploring the possibility of teaming up with non-governmental entities, such as non-profit organizations, as well.

Overall, we are exploring the possibility of submitting several applications for different phases of the Proposed Project over a period of several years for BRIC funding to complete as many phases as possible of the Proposed Project.

Hidalgo County believes that expanding its master drainage system will produce the most profound and cost-effective mitigation benefits for our region. The improvements resulting from this project will exponentially increase the safety of our citizens. Additionally, the project will save money in the long run, as better infrastructure will decrease the need for disaster funds from the state and federal government.

Our point of contact information is as follows:

**Name:** Velinda Reyes

**Position:** Chief of Staff for External Affairs, Hidalgo County Precinct 4

**Address:** 1051 N Doolittle Rd., Edinburg, Texas 78542

**Phone Number:** (956) 383-3112

**Email:** velinda.reyes@co.hidalgo.tx.us

Hidalgo County is available to provide staff resources, as needed, to assist in the non-financial Direct Technical Assistance activity.

Hidalgo County is requesting non-financial direct technical assistance. Our regional drainage needs are too financially challenging for local governments to solve on their own. The only way Hidalgo County and the State of Texas will be able to overcome these tremendous challenges posed by flooding is to combine and leverage federal, state, and local resources.

We share the belief that only through partnerships, innovation, and sustainable solutions will we be able to make the necessary infrastructure improvements to reduce flooding and safeguard the health and safety of citizens of Hidalgo County and the State of Texas for generations to come. We look forward to creating a partnership with FEMA to address flooding concerns in our communities for generations to come.

Sincerely,



Ellie Torres

Hidalgo County Precinct 4 Commissioner

Cc: Honorable Richard Cortez, Hidalgo County Judge  
Raul Sesin, General Manager/ P.E., HCDD No 1