

Senate Bill 224 Grant Application for 2024

The Application was submitted by Richard F Cortez at 3/15/2024 12:52:40 PM and is now locked. The confirmation Number is 2024031500262.

Primary Agency / Grantee Legal Name: Hidalgo County
Organization Type: Law Enforcement
Organization ORI (if applicable): TX1080000: HIDALGO CO SO (MIP)

Program Title Please enter a short description of the proposed program that can be used as the title.
HCSO Catalytic Converter Grant

Application Category (See Request for Applications [RFA] for category details and descriptions RFA Priority Funding Section):
New Grant - 2024 is the first year of the MVCPA Catalytic Converter Program Grants. All 2024 grant applicants use the new grant category.

MVCPA Program Category (see RFA and TAC 43, 3 §57.14). Check all that apply.

- Law Enforcement, Detection and Apprehension
Prosecution, Adjudication and Conviction
Reduction of the Theft of Catalytic Converters
Education Programs and Marketing

Taskforce Grant Participation and Coverage Area

Provide a General Description of the Participating and Coverage Area of this Grant Application

Hidalgo County, the eighth largest county in Texas, covers 1,569 square miles and shares about 75 miles of international border with Mexico. As of the 2020 U.S. Census, Hidalgo County had a population of 870,781

Define in the tables below the grant relationships and geographic area of the Catalytic Converter program:

Applicant will add the participating and coverage agencies from the ORI list below. If an agency is not in the ORI list, please include the agency and role in the general description above. Make sure to follow the definitions below and select an agency in the dropdown. Use the Add as Participating Agency or Add as Coverage Agency button to populate the list.

Participating Agencies are agencies that materially participate in the grant application through the exchange of funds for reimbursement and cash match. Participating agencies are defined after the grant award by interlocal/interagency agreements. Each applicant must select their own agency first. Then select agencies that will receive or provide funding and/or resources. [Note: Interlocal/interagency agreements do not need to be submitted with the application. Interlocal agreements will need to be executed prior to the first payment being made if selected for a grant. Letters of support with the application from the participating agencies are strongly recommended.]

Coverage Agencies are agencies that provided some level of coverage, assistance or support by this grant application but will not materially exchange funds as cash match or reimbursement. The coverage is not supported by an after the award with interlocal/interagency agreements. Coverage agencies as law enforcement agencies may have jurisdictional coverage agreements unrelated to the grant (Ex. City Y is within County X or vice versa). Agencies selected in this list include agencies that will be covered or where the agency indicates that their agency will coordinate or call upon the program. Letters of support with the application from the participating agencies are strongly recommended.

Table with 2 columns: Participating Agencies, Coverage Agencies. Row 1: TX1080000 HIDALGO CO SO (MIP)

Other Coverage (Use if ORI not listed or explanation is necessary.):
No text provided.

National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) Used as Match (Documentation and time certification required.)

Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS)

Other State or Federal Agency (specify:)

Resolution: Complete a Resolution and submit to local governing body for approval. [Sample Resolution](#) is found in the Request for Application or send a request for an electronic copy to grantsMVCPA@txdmv.gov. The completed and executed Resolution must be attached to this on-line application.

Grant Budget Form

MVCPA recommends that the applicant complete the total costs (MVCPA and Cash Match combined) for this program. The applicant can then enter the desired amount of Cash Match (not less than 20% per TAC Title 43, Â§57.36). The system will then calculate the correct grant and match amounts.

Budget Entry Option:

Enter Total and let system calculate MVCPA Funds and Cash Match, Match Percentage: 0%

Enter MVCPA and Cash Match Amounts

Click on category name to edit budget detail for that category.

Budget Category	MVCPA Expenditures	Cash Match Expenditures	Total Expenditures	In-Kind Match
Personnel	\$90,243	\$0	\$90,243	\$0
Fringe	\$69,279	\$0	\$69,279	\$0
Overtime	\$122,951	\$0	\$122,951	\$0
Professional and Contract Services	\$40,000	\$0	\$40,000	\$0
Travel				
Equipment	\$80,000	\$0	\$80,000	\$0
Supplies and Direct Operating Expenses (DOE)				
Total	\$402,473	\$0	\$402,473	\$0
Cash Match Percentage		0.00%		

Description	Subcategory	Pct Time	MVCPA Funds	Cash Match	Total	In-Kind Match
Personnel						
Deputy Sheriff I	Investigator/LEO	100	\$50,410	\$0	\$50,410	\$0
Criminal Intelligence Research Analyst	Crime Analyst/LE Professional	100	\$39,833	\$0	\$39,833	\$0
Total Personnel		200	\$90,243	\$0	\$90,243	\$0
Fringe						
Deputy Sheriff I	Investigator/LEO		\$46,672	\$0	\$46,672	\$0
Criminal Intelligence Research Analyst	Crime Analyst/LE Professional		\$22,607	\$0	\$22,607	\$0
Total Fringe			\$69,279	\$0	\$69,279	\$0
Overtime						
Overtime	Investigator/LEO		\$110,656	\$0	\$110,656	\$0
Overtime	Crime Analyst/LE Professional		\$12,295	\$0	\$12,295	\$0
Total Overtime			\$122,951	\$0	\$122,951	\$0
Professional and Contract Services						
Lease of Vehicle	Other	100	\$40,000	\$0	\$40,000	\$0
Total Professional and Contract Services		100	\$40,000	\$0	\$40,000	\$0
Travel						
Total Travel						

Equipment

Description	Subcategory	Pct Time	MVCPA Funds	Cash Match	Total	In-Kind Match
License Plate Readers			\$80,000	\$0	\$80,000	\$0
Total Equipment			\$80,000	\$0	\$80,000	\$0

Supplies and Direct Operating Expenses (DOE)

Total Supplies and Direct Operating Expenses (DOE)

Budget Narrative

A. Personnel

Deputy Sheriff I would be assigned to a Task Force to identify and investigate Catalytic Converter theft. Criminal Intelligence Research Analyst will be assigned to the Task Force and will assist with statistical data entry as well as contacting friendly forces to Hidalgo County Sheriff's Office.

B. Fringe

Fringe Benefits for full time positions, Fringe is based of 21.26% made of Health Ins., Life Ins., FICA , Retirement, and Unemployment Comp. Fringe Benefits includes fringes related to Overtime as well as the base salary of the two positions.

C. Overtime

Overtime for Investigator and Crime Analyst

D. Professional and Contract Services

Lease of vehicle to be utilized while performing business inspections and following leads from investigations.

F. Equipment

Funds to be utilized to purchase two LPRs at an estimated cost of \$40,000 each unit.

Revenue

Indicate Source of Cash and In-Kind Matches for the proposed program. Click on links to go to match detail pages for entry of data.

[Cash Match](#)

[In-Kind Match](#)

Statistics to Support Grant Problem Statement

Reported Cases	2022	2023
Jurisdiction	Catalytic Converter Theft	Catalytic Converter Theft
Hidalgo County	34	37

[Add/Edit Statistics](#)

Application Narrative

Grant Introduction (Executive Summary) and General Information

1.1 Briefly describe the organization and program operation. Provide a high level summary to the application and how it will affect the local community. (500 words or less)

The Hidalgo County Sheriff's Office is a vital institution in our community, equipped with a dedicated force of over 270 certified law enforcement officers. This formidable team is further bolstered by over a dozen specialized criminal investigative units, each focused on combating specific criminal activities. Among these units, the Auto Theft division stands out as one that urgently requires additional resources to effectively address the challenges posed by the rampant auto theft in our area. Currently, our Auto Theft Division operates with only two officers responsible for investigating an overwhelming average of 380 auto theft cases reported to the Hidalgo County Sheriff's Office. This staggering workload places an immense strain on our officers and severely limits our ability to adequately respond to and investigate these crimes. With such a high volume of auto theft occurring within our jurisdiction, it's evident that we must take immediate action to bolster our resources and enhance our capabilities in combating this criminal activity. Securing funding for the expansion of our Auto Theft Division is imperative to address this pressing issue. Specifically, the addition of a full-time Task Force Team (TFT) member and an analyst would significantly augment our agency's ability to tackle the complexities of investigating auto theft cases. By allocating resources to these critical positions, we can streamline our investigative processes, improve the efficiency of our operations, and ultimately enhance our capacity to apprehend perpetrators and recover stolen vehicles. A full-time Task Force Team member dedicated to the Auto Theft division would provide invaluable support to our existing officers. This additional personnel would enable us to increase our presence in the field, respond promptly to reported incidents, and conduct thorough investigations into each case. Furthermore, the specialized skills and expertise brought by a TFT member would enhance our ability to identify patterns, gather evidence, and apprehend repeat offenders, thereby deterring future auto thefts. In addition to a TFT member, the incorporation of an analyst into our Auto Theft Division would further enhance our investigative capabilities. An analyst would play a crucial role in processing and analyzing data related to auto theft trends, identifying hotspots, and generating actionable intelligence for our officers. By leveraging advanced analytical tools and techniques, the analyst would assist in identifying suspects, connecting related cases, and developing comprehensive investigative strategies. This analytical support would not only expedite the

resolution of individual cases but also contribute to our broader efforts to combat auto theft at a systemic level. In conclusion, the Hidalgo County Sheriff's Office must prioritize the enhancement of its Auto Theft Division to effectively address the pervasive issue of auto theft in our community. By investing in additional resources such as a full-time Task Force Team member and an analyst, we can bolster our investigative capabilities, improve our efficiency, and ultimately work towards reducing auto theft rates. It is imperative that we take proactive measures to combat this criminal activity and ensure the safety and security of our residents.

1.2 Describe the taskforce governing, organization and command structures. Include a description of the nature of support and agreements that will be in place if the grant is awarded. Provide any details unique to the taskforce organization or geographical target area. Describe whether any part of this grant will be directed to serve a specific target population (or subset of the community)?

The Hidalgo County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) specialized Task Force will be aimed at addressing catalytic converter theft and the illegal trade of stolen converters. This Task Force will operate as a reporting agency located at our headquarters in north Edinburg, serving as a central hub for coordinating efforts within Hidalgo County. We are seeking cooperation from local police departments, including McAllen PD, Edinburg PD, Pharr PD, and Mission PD. By collaborating with these agencies, we can leverage shared resources and intelligence to identify patterns of criminal activity. Statistical data gathered from police reports will be analyzed to pinpoint areas of heightened criminal activity. The Task Force's strategy involves targeting points of high criminal activity to deter thefts. Additionally, proactive visits to local auto part shops will be conducted to investigate any involvement in the sale of stolen items. Gathering information on suppliers and tracing the origins of stolen parts are crucial steps in dismantling criminal networks. Situated near the Mexico border, Hidalgo County is particularly susceptible to auto-related crimes due to the ease of smuggling stolen vehicles and parts across the border. Many thefts go unnoticed by vehicle owners until it's too late. Therefore, the Task Force's efforts will play a vital role in combating auto theft and protecting the community from this pervasive criminal activity.

Grant Problem Statement

2.1 Provide an assessment of the Catalytic Converter Theft problem in the coverage area of this application. Include loss data consistent with the reported incident numbers above.

Hidalgo County's geographical location along the border renders it susceptible to auto theft, with statistics indicating a significant impact on the community. In 2022, the Hidalgo County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) reported 397 auto thefts, with an additional 664 reported to neighboring law enforcement agencies within the county. The following year, in 2023, HCSO recorded 320 vehicle thefts. Moreover, the neighboring Cameron County also faced auto theft challenges, reporting 500 stolen vehicles in 2022. Although catalytic converter theft appears comparatively lower, with 20 incidents reported to Hidalgo County and another 17 to neighboring agencies in 2023, and 34 incidents in 2022, it remains a concern. The presence of numerous junkyard shops selling used car parts exacerbates this issue. The lack of regulations governing these establishments increases the likelihood of them dealing with stolen vehicle parts. Organized criminal entities operating across the border in Mexico specifically target vehicles, dismantle them, and sell the metal and parts in the US. Addressing these challenges necessitates a multifaceted approach, including the establishment of a Task Force Team (TFT) to target catalytic converter theft. TFT's focus on these thefts is crucial given the intricate nature of organized crime networks involved in the illicit trade of stolen vehicle parts. By dedicating resources to investigate and disrupt these operations, law enforcement agencies can mitigate the impact of auto theft on the community.

Grant Goals and Activities

There are two parts to this section: 1) Functions of Proposed Program and 2) Goals Strategies and Activities (GSA). In the following boxes, describe the functions of the proposed program and then complete a fillable form called GSA.

MVCPA programs must completely describe the actions, methods and tactics that law enforcement and civilian staff will perform for each of the categories below. Describe the reliance on technology or other program elements to solve the problem statement above and goals below. Functions must be detailed and consistent with the requested budget. If a grant is awarded, funds expended towards activities not described in this section will result in the reimbursement being denied.

Part 1

3.1 Functions of the proposed program related to Catalytic Converter Theft from a motor vehicle.

The Hidalgo County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) is implementing a multifaceted strategy to address catalytic converter theft. The Task Force Team (TFT) will spearhead various operations aimed at identifying, recovering, and apprehending individuals and groups involved in these crimes. One key initiative involves conducting business inspections targeting salvage yards, repair shops, and parts recycling centers. By inspecting these establishments, HCSO aims to uncover stolen parts or vehicles. Subsequent investigations will trace the origins of these stolen goods, holding businesses accountable for any involvement in the trade of stolen items. Additionally, HCSO plans to conduct bait car operations in areas with high theft activity. This proactive approach aims to catch organized groups of thieves in the act, leading to their apprehension and dismantling of criminal networks. Furthermore, undercover operations will be deployed to infiltrate and gather intelligence on organized criminal enterprises involved in catalytic converter theft. These covert investigations will provide valuable insights into the workings of these networks, aiding in their disruption and dismantlement. By employing a combination of business inspections, bait car operations, and undercover investigations, HCSO is committed to tackling catalytic converter theft effectively and safeguarding the community against these crimes.

3.4 Functions of the proposed program related to preventing Catalytic Converter Theft

In addition to enforcement efforts, the Hidalgo County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) is implementing proactive strategies to prevent catalytic converter theft and raise public awareness. HCSO plans to conduct outreach events to educate the public on catalytic converter theft prevention measures, offer VIN etching services to deter theft, and make public announcements to raise awareness. Furthermore, HCSO will launch social media campaigns aimed at disseminating information on catalytic converter theft prevention to a wider audience. With a substantial following on platforms like Facebook, these campaigns will reach a significant portion of the Hidalgo County population, amplifying awareness and promoting vigilance. Additionally, HCSO will install outdoor signage along roadways in

targeted areas to serve as a visual deterrent, warning potential thieves and encouraging heightened security measures among motorists. Moreover, the use of License Plate Readers (LPRs) will be employed in hot zones as a physical deterrent, enhancing law enforcement's ability to monitor and deter criminal activity related to catalytic converter theft. These comprehensive measures aim to empower the community and enhance safety across Hidalgo County.

3.6 Collaboration Effort -- Describe the taskforce method to collaborate, and not duplicate existing activities. Describe the cross boundaries regional approach to grant activity implementation. Describe how the applicant staff and jurisdiction will coordinate with other taskforces and law enforcement agencies to implement this program.

The Task Force Team (TFT) will collaborate extensively with partnering agencies to combat catalytic converter theft and related criminal activities. This collaboration involves several key strategies: 1. Direct Action Operations: TFT will conduct targeted operations to directly address catalytic converter theft, apprehend suspects, and recover stolen converters. 2. Interdiction Operations: These operations will focus on intercepting stolen converters and disrupting criminal networks involved in their illicit trade. 3. Intelligence Sharing: TFT will facilitate regular group meetings and briefings to share intelligence gathered from investigations, including sharing "hot sheets" and BOLOs (Be On the Lookout alerts) via group emails to keep all agencies informed and coordinated. 4. LPR Alerts: The use of License Plate Readers (LPRs) will be employed to generate alerts when vehicles linked to converter theft are detected, aiding in surveillance and apprehension efforts. By leveraging these collaborative efforts and sharing information effectively, TFT aims to enhance operational efficiency, improve intelligence gathering, and ultimately reduce catalytic converter theft in the region.

3.7 If the proposed application requests any exceptions or deviation from any general grant rules, RFA conditions or grant administrative policy, please indicate in the section below. Indicate the section of the specific issue and citation that you are asking the MVCPA to consider and the rationale for the request.

N/A

Part II

Goals, Strategies, and Activities

[Select Goals, Strategies, and Activity Targets](#) for the proposed program described in the application.

Click on the link above to open a new table called Goals, Strategies, and Activity. Applicants will review the statutory and optional activities. The first section is the statutory measures. Grantees may not provide targets for this section but need to review the descriptions to ensure that they understand the statutory minimum requirements associated with this grant. Applicants will then review the other items and estimate targets for only the activities that the applicant has described and plans to complete under this application.

ID	Activity	Measure	Target
Measures for Grantees. Add Target values for those that you will measure.			
1	Goal 1: Reduce the Incidence of Catalytic Converter Theft through Enforcement Strategies		
1.1	Strategy 1: Conduct Activities that Result in the Arrest, Clearance, and Recoveries of Catalytic Converter Theft		
1.1.1	Identify groups of catalytic converter theft offenders through intelligence gathering, crime analysis and the use of informants	Number of catalytic converter theft groups identified. Include gangs, cartels or other criminal enterprise with two or more members	15
1.1.2	Identify and document/record prolific Catalytic Converter Theft offenders [Prolific is defined as "linked to Catalytic Converter Theft offenses three or more times"]	Number identified/documented offenders	20
1.1.5	Conduct inspections of local businesses related to vehicle enterprise (transportation code or occupation code authorized companies such as salvage yard, repair shop, parts recycling center, used car dealership, salvage rebuilder, title service company, other).	Number of businesses inspected	48
1.1.6	Conduct bait vehicle operations that target Catalytic Converter Theft offenders	Number of bait vehicle deployments. Include Catalytic Converter Theft bait operations here.	1
1.1.8	Deploy license plate readers (LPR)	Number of times LPR deployed. Deploy: If stationary unit then total number of days or partial days unit was operable and on. Mobile unit number of days the unit was on and operable.	365
1.1.9	Respond to taskforce license plate reader (LPR) alert notifications	Number of times investigators responded to taskforce LPR alert notifications regardless of whether vehicle was located	52
1.1.12	Conduct covert operations targeting Catalytic Converter Theft offenders	Number of covert operations	12
1.1.13	Conduct warrant "round-up" operations targeting catalytic converter crime offenders, including	Number of warrant round-up operations performed Catalytic Converter Theft	2

ID	Activity	Measure	Target
	people wanted for Catalytic Converter Theft		
1.1.15	Increase the recovery rate of stolen motor vehicle Catalytic Converter Theft	Report the number of Catalytic Converters recovered by taskforce	36
1.1.16	Increase the clearance rate of Catalytic Converter Theft	Report the number of Catalytic Converter Theft cases cleared	7
1.1.17	Increase the number of persons arrested for Catalytic Converter Theft	Report the number of persons arrested for Catalytic Converter Theft by taskforce	12
1.2	Strategy 2: Conduct Collaborative Efforts that Result In Reduction of Incidents of Catalytic Converter Theft		
1.2.1	Provide Agency Assists for Catalytic Converter Theft	Number of agency assists related to catalytic conveter theft. Assist means responding or answering questions via phone, e-mail, or in person. Providing recommendation, guidance, strategy, support or information that other LEOs will use to resolve their cases. The assist generally does not have the direct responsibility for an investigation nor uses LEO authority. The assist helps another LEO or agency investigate cases. Analysts and civilian employees will record their assists to outside LEOs and agencies met here along with officers.	240
1.2.2	Collaborate with other units or divisions (i.e. homicide, vice, narcotics, etc.) within the taskforce department(s) where there were crimes involving catalytic converter theft. Include all participating jurisdiction departments here.	Number of times collaborated within departments or SOs participating in taskforce related to Catalytic Converter Theft. Collaboration means physically using law enforcement resources, tactics and authority to perform activity on cases that draw upon or aid in the investigation intended to further the resolution of any case, identify parties to crime, identify vehicles, interview witnesses/suspects and apprehend suspects. Collaboration will include any help, recommendation, contribution or support requested from or provided to another unit or offered by the taskforce that aids in the furtherance of Catalytic Converter Theft investigations.	20
1.2.3	Collaborate with all other outside LE agencies and other organizations that assist in the reduction of Catalytic Converter Theft. Include all coverage jurisdictions here	Number of times collaborated with coverage area agencies or other law enforcement agencies and organizations that assist in the reduction of Catalytic Converter Theft. Collaboration means physically using law enforcement resources, tactics and authority to perform activity on cases that draw upon or aid in the investigation intended to further the resolution of any case, identify parties to crime, identify vehicles, interview witnesses/suspects and apprehend suspects. Collaboration will include any help, recommendation, contribution or support requested from or provided to another unit or offered by the taskforce that aids in the furtherance of Catalytic Converter Theft investigations	40
1.2.5	Conduct intelligence information-sharing (Personal attendance)	Number of intelligence meetings attended (include attending as presenter, participant or attendee)	4
1.2.6	Conduct intelligence information-sharing (Written information)	Crime analysis bulletins disseminated (include information distributed to law enforcement agencies via text, e-mail, or intra-net communications)	52
1.2.7	Collaborate with other MVCPA taskforces	Number of times collaborated with other MVCPA taskforces that assist in the reduction in Catalytic Converter Theft	5
3	Goal 3: Educate/Train Citizens and Qualified Personnel in Detection and Prevention of Catalytic Converter Theft		
3.1	Strategy 1: Conduct Public Awareness Related Activities Used to Educate Citizens		
3.1.1	Conduct educational outreach events (include trade show, exhibits, booths at community events, vehicle displays, brochures, etc.)	Number of outreaches	5
3.1.2	Conduct educational presentations to the public	Number of presentations. Presentation means in person, on-line, original written document, article, or webpage.	10
3.1.4	Conduct vehicle identification initiative/event	Number of etching events. Including catalytic converters.	4
3.1.4.1	Conduct vehicle identification initiative/event	Number of Participants/Attendees Catalytic Converters Marked)	60
3.1.5	Purchase advertisements in local outlets	Number of advertisements purchased or provided complimentary for taskforce. Include all types of media purchased or provided free (social, tv, utility inserts, billboards, transportation, etc.)	0
3.1.7	Utilize social media outlets (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)	Number of postings in social media outlets	260
3.1.8	Deploy outdoor public notification signage	Number of deployments per month (if sign remains several months, count as 1 deployment per month)	100
3.1.10	Conduct media outreach, including, public service announcements, press releases, and interviews	Number of outreaches	4
3.2	Strategy 2: Conduct Law Enforcement Training Activities to Educate Officers on Recognition and Apprehension of Stolen Vehicles and Property		

ID	Activity	Measure	Target
3.2.1	Conduct law enforcement training (TCOLE)	Number of classes provided for TCOLE credit	3
3.2.3	Conduct vehicle crimes presentations to law enforcement agencies (non TCOLE)	Number of classes or presentations. Presentations may include electronic roll call documents, shift BOLOs and other written or presented materials based on local practices.	27

Grant Evaluation

4.1 Describe the local method and/or practice used to collect the data for reporting Goals, Strategies, and Activities and to evaluate the grant program effectiveness. Describe management and staff participation. Include descriptions of systems (forms and software) that will be used to ensure reliable and accurate data is collected and reported. Describe any other evaluation methods used in the applicant agency to determine effectiveness or cost efficiency of the program.

The Task Force will utilize the current Records Management System (RMS), "Spillman," within the Hidalgo County Sheriff's Office. As the agency prepares to transition into the "New World" system, TFT will ensure all statistics are maintained in both systems. This dual approach enables the team to generate reports and easily convert them to Excel format for enhanced usability and analysis. Before inputting data into the RMS, supervisors will review collected data for accuracy. This meticulous review process ensures that the information entered into the system is reliable and can be effectively utilized for strategic decision-making and operational planning within the TFT.

4.2 Provide any other suggested measures that would better reflect the law enforcement or prevention work that the proposed program will perform. If the suggested measure fits into one of the stated goals above please indicate.

None.

TxGMS Standard Assurances by Local Governments

We acknowledge reviewing the [TxGMS Standard Assurances by Local Governments](#) as promulgated by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts and agree to abide by the terms stated therein.

Print

TxDMV - MVCPA, ppri.tamu.edu © 2017