



## Project Description

**Project Name:**

Hidalgo County Public Safety COVID-19 Response

**Project Number:**

ARPA-24-115-377

**Department Name:**

Budget and Management

**ARPA Expenditure Category:**

3: Public Health-Negative Economic Impact: Public Sector Capacity

**ARPA Eligibility Category:**

3.1: Public Sector Workforce: Payroll and Benefits for Public Health, Public Safety, or Human Services Workers

**Project Description:**

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), correctional and detention facilities face challenges in controlling the spread of infectious diseases because of crowded, shared environments and potential introductions by staff members and new intakes.<sup>1</sup> Strategies to manage the spread of COVID-19 continue even with the end of the public health emergency. As of July 3, 2023, 647,349 inmates and 246,858 staff working in prisons have tested positive for COVID. 2,933 inmates and 292 staff have died due to the disease.<sup>2</sup> To combat the virus that has significantly impacted operations, many correctional and detention facilities shifted operations to address healthcare and public health needs in addition to traditional security and public safety priorities.<sup>3</sup> The same holds true for Hidalgo County. The Hidalgo County Detention Facility continues to implement operational preparedness and prevention of disease transmission strategies to preserve the health and well-being of those who reside and work in the facility as a result of the pandemic and in preparation for future health responses, including infectious diseases. For that reason, employees at this facility are continuously dedicated to responding to COVID-19. As such, Hidalgo County aims to dedicate ARPA funds for payroll and benefits for Hidalgo County Detention Facility employees as permitted in the Final Rule.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6919e1.htm>

<sup>2</sup>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10696818/#:~:text=As%20anticipated%2C%20Department%20of%20Correction.COVID%20Prison%20Project%2C%202023>).

<sup>3</sup> [https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/30/13/23-0776\\_article](https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/30/13/23-0776_article)



## Hidalgo County • Department of Budget & Management

### American Rescue Plan Act

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Under the interim final rule, funds may be used for payroll and covered benefits for public safety, public health, health care, human services, and similar employees of a recipient government, for the portion of the employee’s time that is spent responding to COVID–19. For administrative convenience, the recipient may consider public health and safety employees to be entirely devoted to responding to COVID–19, and therefore their full payroll and covered benefits eligible to be covered, if the employee, or his or her operating unit or division, is “primarily dedicated” to responding to COVID–19, meaning that more than half of the employee, unit, or division’s time is dedicated to responding to COVID–19.<sup>4</sup> Public safety employees include correctional and detention officers and those who directly support those employees. In the final rule, Treasury is clarifying that recipients will be permitted to fund the full payroll and covered benefits of public health and safety staff primarily dedicated to COVID–19 response throughout the period of performance for the SLFRF program, though recipients should periodically reassess their determination of primarily dedicated staff, including as the public health emergency and response evolves.<sup>5</sup>

**Fiscal Impact:** \$7,162,259.74

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<sup>4</sup> Department of the Treasury. (2022). Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. *Federal Register*, 87(18), p. 4384

<sup>5</sup> Department of the Treasury. (2022). Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. *Federal Register*, 87(18), p. 4385