

THE STATE OF TEXAS     §  
                                   §            CONTRACT FOR ELECTION SERVICES  
COUNTY OF HIDALGO     §

This Contract is entered into by and between the HIDALGO COUNTY ELECTIONS ADMINISTRATOR, **Hilda Ann Salinas**, hereinafter referred to as “ADMINISTRATOR”, on behalf of Hidalgo County, a political subdivision of the State of Texas, and **MERCEDES ISD** hereinafter referred to as the “ENTITY”, pursuant to Texas Election Code Section 31.092.

RECITALS

WHEREAS, the ENTITY, by appropriate action of its governing body acting in accordance with all applicable laws, has called a **GENERAL ELECTION** to be held on **NOVEMBER 5, 2024**;

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 31.092(a) of the Texas Election Code, the County Election Officer may contract with the governing body of a political subdivision situated wholly or partly in the county served by the officer to perform election services in any one or more elections ordered by an authority of the political subdivision; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 31.091(1) of the Texas Election Code, the County Election Officer means the Elections Administrator for Hidalgo County; and

WHEREAS, the ENTITY is a political subdivision in Hidalgo County that desires the County to conduct and supervise the **NOVEMBER 5, 2024**, election of the ENTITY(the “Election”); and

WHEREAS, the ENTITY and the COUNTY, through the ADMINISTRATOR, desire to enter into a contract setting out the respective responsibilities of the parties; and

WHEREAS, the COUNTY agrees to perform election services for the ENTITY; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 271.002(a) of the Texas Election Code that authorizes, if applicable, two or more political subdivisions to enter into an agreement to hold elections jointly in the election precincts that can be served by common polling places; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 271.003 (a) & (b) the location of a common polling place may be a regular county polling place used in a joint election, where the voters of a particular election precinct or political subdivision may be served in a joint election by common polling places located outside the boundary of the election precinct or political subdivision if the location can adequately and conveniently serve the affected voters and if it will facilitate the orderly conduct of the election; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 43.007 of the Texas Election Code, the COUNTY has approved participation in a **countywide** polling place program, which allows the commissioners court to eliminate county election precinct polling places and establish **countywide** polling places for the election held on **NOVEMBER 5, 2024**, and any resulting runoff; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 43.007(e), each countywide polling place must allow a voter to vote in the same elections in which the voter would be entitled to vote in the county election precinct in which the voter resides; and

WHEREAS, ADMINISTRATOR has provided costs for election services to be rendered by ADMINISTRATOR'S office pursuant to the terms of this Contract, which costs are set out in Article VI hereof; and

NOW, THEREFORE, the COUNTY, through the ADMINISTRATOR, and the ENTITY for good and valuable consideration, the adequacy of which is hereby acknowledged, do hereby agree to hold contract, covenant and agree as follows:

#### ARTICLE I PURPOSE

- 1.01. The parties hereto have entered into this Contract for election services described in Article II to be provided to the ENTITY for its election to be held on **NOVEMBER 5, 2024**, and any runoff, if applicable.
- 1.02. If applicable, acknowledgement of Shared Polling Places. The ENTITY acknowledges that the ADMINISTRATOR, as the County's Contracting Officer in accordance with Section 31.092 of the Texas Election Code, may enter into similar Election Services Contracts with any other entity in the same county that may be running their election concurrently. In such event, the ENTITY agrees to share common polling places with the other entities. It is not the intent of this paragraph to establish a joint election, but rather to share services, equipment, and the costs when it is appropriate, efficient, and economical to do so.

#### ARTICLE II SERVICES

- 2.01. The COUNTY, through the ADMINISTRATOR, agrees to provide to the ENTITY the following:
  - A. Procure, provide, code and distribute Hart Hybrid voting systems and election equipment, and transport equipment to and from the polling locations, including Early Voting and Election Day polling locations, for the ENTITY;
  - B. Prepare and provide Hart Hybrid device training for election workers;
  - C. Prepare and provide Logic and Accuracy testing on ENTITY's election ballot for every Hart Hybrid voting machine to be utilized by ENTITY during Early Voting and Election Day;
  - D. Procure, provide, prepare and code Electronic Poll Book(s) per polling locations with the Voter Registration Database. To include laptop(s), training for poll book, insurance, and delivery fee, as well as supplies such as but not limited to labels and printer;

- E. Provide and prepare all mail-in ballot supplies, including applications, paper ballots, envelopes and postage;
- F. Provide training for Judges/Clerks;
- G. Procure, provide, prepare, and distribute all necessary election supplies, including:
  - 1. Ballots (print and distribution only);
  - 2. Election kits and election paperwork;
  - 3. Ballot boxes and voting booths;
- H. Provide cages and covers, cage kit, to include, but not limited to surge protectors, tape, printer, headphones and scanner as well as supplies such as bags, aprons, clipboards, pens, pencils, rulers, magnifiers, inkpads, screen cloths, sanitizers and badges;
- I. Procure Early Voting polling places and Election Day polling places;
- J. Prepare Writ of Election to election officers and notice of appointment to Presiding and Alternate judges, as required by law;
- K. Prepare, distribute, and publicize joint notice of election (Texas Election Code Section 4.003(a)(1) and Early Voting and Election Day schedules; Notice will also be posted on the Hidalgo County elections website (Texas Election Code Section 4.008).
- L. Notify the election judges of the date, time and place of the election;
- M. Procure and pay election judges and clerks for Early Voting and Election Day voting;
- N. Provide general supervision during the contracted Election period. Advisory services in connection with the decisions to be made and the actions to be taken by the ENTITY may be provided on an as needed basis;
- O. Procure and pay Ballot Board members;
- P. Provide information for election officers;
- Q. Provide such incidental related services as may be necessary to conduct the election;
- R. Serve as the Early Voting Clerk;
- S. Establish a Central Counting Station for the purpose of tabulating ballots; and
- T. Tabulate election results in preparation for ENTITY's canvassing.
- U. Preserve locked ballot boxes containing voted ballots securely in a locked room for 60 days as required by Texas Election Code Section 66.058, at which time, the records will be retained by the Hidalgo County Elections Administrator to serve as custodian for the remainder of the twenty-two month preservation period.
- V. The ADMINISTRATOR shall be the agent of the ENTITY for the purposes of contracting with third parties with respect to the election expenses within the scope of the County Elections Administrator's duties;

- W. The COUNTY shall file copies of this Contract with the County Treasurer and the County Auditor;
- X. In accordance with Section 31.100(b) of the Texas Election Code, only actual expenses directly attributable to this Contract may be paid. The ADMINISTRATOR shall submit the actual costs for items contracted pursuant to the Contract with the ENTITY as soon as all invoices from third party vendors are received;
- Y. If applicable, the COUNTY agrees to provide the election services described herein for a Runoff election.
  - i. The County may combine polling locations in accordance with section 42.0051 of the Election Code, in order to properly supervise and conduct a Runoff election.
  - ii. If a Runoff election is required, the ENTITY hereby agrees to the combining of polling locations, in accordance with section 42.0051 of the Election Code.
  - iii. The COUNTY, through the ADMINISTRATOR, agrees to provide to the ENTITY the costs for any Runoff Election services to be rendered by the ADMINISTRATOR'S office pursuant to the terms of this Contract as soon as practicable, once a Runoff is determined necessary.
  - iv. In accordance with Section 31.100(b) of the Texas Election Code, only actual expenses directly attributable to this Contract may be paid. The ADMINISTRATOR shall submit the actual costs for items contracted pursuant to the Contract with the ENTITY as soon as all invoices from third party vendors are received regarding the Runoff.
- Z. Provide signage to be placed at each polling location that shows Texas Penal Code Section 46.03(a)(2) as it relates to prohibiting firearms on the premises of a polling place;

2.02 The ENTITY shall be responsible for performing the following:

- (A) Payment of all necessary election supplies as required by the COUNTY, including but not limited to ballots, election kits, mail-in ballot supplies, laptop rental, labels and combination forms;
- (B) Pay the proportionate cost of judges and election workers for hourly pay submitted by the County Elections Administrator at the rate of \$16.00 per hour for Election Judges and \$14.00 per hour for Alternate Judges and \$12.00 per hour for Clerks for both Early Voting and Election Day. The entity shall pay the proportionate cost of training for Election Workers at the rate of \$10.00 per hour per person, and Delivery / Pick Up Fee of \$50.00 for Election Judges for each Early Voting and Election Day Polling location.
- (C) Reimburse the COUNTY for the cost for liability insurance coverage for election workers employed for both Early Voting and Election Day;
- (D) Canvass the Election Results for the ENTITY'S governing body;

- (E) As stated in Section 31.096 of the Texas Election Code, this Contract may not change:
  - (1) the authority with whom applications of candidates for a place on a ballot are filed; and
  - (2) the authority with whom documents are filed under Title 15. Under this Contract, the Hidalgo County Elections Administrator shall be the custodian of voted ballots for 60 days after the date of the election, as required by Texas Election Code 66.058, at which time, the records will be retained by the Hidalgo County Elections Administrator to serve as custodian for the remainder of the twenty two month preservation period.
- (F) Reimburse the COUNTY for any and all costs associated with recounts and/or election contests associated with the election, as applicable;
- (G) Confirm and/or correct the boundaries of the political subdivision holding the election on a map provided by the County. Once confirmed and/or corrected, Entity certifies the veracity of the boundaries and geographical area that represents the Entity and the area subject to the election.
- (H) If applicable, in consideration for the services provided for a Runoff Election by the COUNTY, the ENTITY agrees to pay ADMINISTRATOR for the costs of services for a Runoff election.
- (I) Create the appropriate sample ballot and candidate placement for the Entity's election. Once confirmed and/or corrected Entity shall verify the appropriateness of their ballot under the law.

**ARTICLE III  
SCHEDULE FOR PERFORMANCE OF SERVICES**

- 3.01. Specific services to be provided related to the general services identified in Article II shall be performed in accordance with the time requirements set out in the Texas Election Code.

**ARTICLE IV  
SERVICES NOT PROVIDED BY COUNTY**

- 4.01. ADMINISTRATOR shall have no responsibility for ensuring the passage of the appropriate Election Order by the ENTITY, publishing and (or) posting the Election Order as required by the Texas Election Code section 3.004(3), or Texas Election Code 67.002(2) which is canvassing election results. In addition, ADMINISTRATOR shall have no responsibility for creating the appropriate ballot and candidate placement for the Entity's election.

**ARTICLE V  
TERM**

- 5.01. Except as hereinafter set out, the term of this Contract shall be from the time of execution until all items with respect to this Contract and the election held hereunder have been completed.

**ARTICLE VI  
COST OF SERVICE AND BILLING**

In consideration for the services provided hereunder by ADMINISTRATOR, the ENTITY agrees to pay ADMINISTRATOR for the following costs of services:

- 6.01 HART Hybrid voting machines:
- (A) One base charge of \$475.00 for Coding Hybrid voting machines, a \$25.00 additional charge per additional ballot styles and a minimum of a \$10.00 charge for requested changes on Coded Ballot;
  - (B) A \$10.00 recording fee for each Audio File;
  - (C) Cost of creating election media, such as but limited to V-drives, Verity Keys; etc. at \$100.00 per location.
  - (D) A fee of \$610.00 for each Verity Scan/ Ballot Box, a fee of \$150.00 for each Verity Duo Go (curbside voting machine), a fee of \$465.00 for each Verity Controller, and a fee of \$447.00 for each Verity Touch Duo Voting Machine, with a minimum of two per polling site.
  - (E) Cost of delivery and pick-up of Verity Duo Voting Equipment for Each Voting and Election Day to include fuel charge and mileage at COUNTY's cost;
  - (F) The above described fees shall be additionally charged for any Runoff Election.
- 6.02 Electronic Poll Book:
- (A) Database access at \$100.00 per day;
  - (B) To include but not limited to the Early Voting and Election Day laptop rentals at \$150.00 per location;
  - (C) Printer label fee of \$.03 per label (price subject to change);
  - (D) Creation of separate Username and password for each polling location at \$20.00 per location;
- 6.03 Fee for Early Voting and Election Day Combination forms, maps, election kits, Verity Access Thermal code paper and 'I VOTED' stickers. One-hundred sample ballots at no charge with additional sample ballots at twenty cents per copy; No charge for provisional bags, table tops if necessary, ballot box(es), custom signs and flags;
- 6.04 Reimbursement of ballot supplies, including applications, paper ballots, correspondence, envelopes and postage at COUNTY's cost;
- 6.05 Reimbursement fee for publications of all notices and newspaper advertisements (if applicable);
- 6.06 Reimbursement rental fees incurred for early voting polling places and Election Day polling places, as ordered and as applicable;
- 6.07 (A) Cost of judges and election workers for time worked to be submitted to the ENTITY by the ADMINISTRATOR. The ENTITY shall reimburse the COUNTY for a the cost of payroll for election workers at \$16.00 per hour for Election Judges, \$14.00 per hour for Alternate Judges and \$12.00 per hour for Clerks for both Early Voting and Election Day. The entity shall also pay the proportionate cost for training of Election Workers at the rate of \$10.00 per hour per person, and the Delivery / Pick Up Fee of \$50.00 for Election Judges for each Early Voting and Election Day polling location.

- (B) Reimburse the County for the cost of payroll overtime incurred by County for regular full time County employees who work during the contracted election (cost to be shared with each contracted entity);
- 6.08 Pay for the cost of the Early Voting Ballot Board judge at \$16.00 per hour, the Alternate Judge at the rate of \$14.00 per hour, and clerks at the rate of \$12.00 per hour;
- 6.09 One copy of canvass report will be provided to the ENTITY electronically at no charge; each additional canvass report requested to be reimbursed by the ENTITY at COUNTY's cost;
- 6.10 Reimbursement to the COUNTY for the cost of liability insurance coverage as set by the County for all election workers employed for the elections;
- 6.11 Reimbursement to the COUNTY for the cost of the use of wireless cell phones at polling locations with the rate set by the wireless vendor at the time of usage which includes an additional per minute fee as charged by the vendor, a service charge of \$10.00 per phone line and a vendor base fee of \$4.99 per phone line;
- 6.12 Billing:
- (A) The form of the invoice to be used in the final billing by the COUNTY, includes good faith estimate of costs which reflects 100% voter turnout based on the total amount of entity's registered voters and is attached hereto as Exhibit A.
- (B) After the election and as soon as practicable, upon receiving final invoice from third party vendors, the ADMINISTRATOR shall prepare and will send to the ENTITY, a final itemized invoice with the actual costs of the Election and will include the 10% Administrative Fee of the actual costs as set forth by Texas Election Code Sec. 31.100(d).
- (C) Full payment of the remaining balance, if any, shall be made by the ENTITY within thirty (30) days of receipt of the invoice.
- (D) Payment shall be made by check payable to the Hidalgo County Elections Department.
- (E) Notice. Except as may be otherwise specifically provided in this contract, all notices, demands, requests or communication required or permitted hereunder shall be in writing and shall either be (i) personally delivered against a written receipt, or (ii) sent by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, postage prepaid and addressed to the parties at the addresses set forth below, or at such other addresses as may have been theretofore specified by written notice delivered in accordance herewith:

Hilda Ann Salinas  
Elections Administrator  
Hidalgo County Elections Department  
PO Box 659  
Edinburg, Texas 78540

Jeanne Venecia  
Interim Superintendent  
206 W. 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
Mercedes, Texas 78570

(F) Any balances, if any remain after the payment of all costs of election bills, shall be paid in full within 30 days.

#### ARTICLE VII

- 7.01 IF ANY OF THE ELECTION EQUIPMENT IS LOST, STOLEN, DESTROYED, OR DAMAGED, THE CITY, SCHOOL DISTRICT OR ENTITY WHO CONTRACTED FOR USE OF THE EQUIPMENT IS LIABLE FOR THE DAMAGE AND AGREES TO PAY THE ADMINISTRATOR THE COST OF THE REPLACEMENT OR REPAIR OF THE ELECTION EQUIPMENT IF LOST, STOLEN, DESTROYED OR DAMAGED.

#### ARTICLE VIII GENERAL PROVISIONS

- 8.01. This Contract shall be construed under and in accordance with the laws of the State of Texas, and all obligations of the parties created hereunder are performable in Hidalgo County, Texas.
- 8.02. In case any one or more of the provisions contained in this Contract shall for any reason be held to be invalid, illegal or unenforceable in any respect, such invalidity, illegality or unenforceability shall not affect any other provision thereof, and this Contract shall be construed as if such invalid, illegal or unenforceable provision had never been contained herein.
- 8.03. This Contract constitutes the sole and only agreement of the parties hereto and supersedes any prior understanding or written or oral agreement between the parties respecting the written subject matter.
- 8.04. No amendment, modification, or alteration of the term hereof shall be binding unless the same be in writing, dated subsequent to the date hereof and duly executed by the parties hereto

SIGNED this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of October, 2024

APPROVAL COUNTY OF HIDALGO: Mercedes ISD  
ENTITY

BY: \_\_\_\_\_

RICHARD F. CORTEZ  
COUNTY JUDGE

BY: Jeanne Venecia  
Jeanne Venecia, Interim Superintendent

PRINT:  
TITLE:  
ATTEST:

BY: \_\_\_\_\_

ARTURO GUAJARDO, JR.  
COUNTY CLERK

BY: Sylvia S. Garza

PRINT: Sylvia S. Garza  
TITLE: CFO

ELECTIONS ADMINISTRATOR

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
HILDA ANN SALINAS

APPROVED AS TO LEGAL FORM:

OFFICE OF CRIMINAL DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
TORIBIO "TERRY" PALACIOS

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
LEIGH ANN TOGNETTI,  
Assistant District Attorney