

# Hidalgo County Library System Bylaws

## ARTICLE I – NAME, AUTHORITY AND DEFINITIONS

Section 1. NAME. The name of the organization shall be [Hidalgo County Library System](#) (HCLS).

Section 2. AUTHORITY. The [County of Hidalgo](#) shall provide a County Free Library System to its citizens as set forth in Local Government Code Chapter 323.011.

Section 3. DEFINITION. HCLS shall consist of the public libraries within Hidalgo County whose city governments have agreed to an annual Interlocal agreement with Hidalgo County.

Section 4. DEFINITION. The HCLS Board shall consist of the directors of the member public libraries and one lay member from each county precinct.

## ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

Section 1. PURPOSE. The HCLS's mission shall be to promote, coordinate and support full and free library services to all residents of Hidalgo County.

Section 2. GENERAL POWERS AND OBJECTIVES. HCLS shall be governed by the [Hidalgo County Commissioners' Court](#), through the HCLS Board. Its objectives are

- a. *To promote* cooperation among member libraries and with other libraries and library systems to the furtherance of Hidalgo County library services;
- b. To make member library resources (with respect to the needs of the lending library) accessible throughout Hidalgo County;

c. To research, implement and evaluate services and programs which meet the informational, educational, recreational and cultural needs of Hidalgo County residents;  
*and*

d. To support the goals and objectives of the [American Library Association](#) and the [Texas Library Association](#).

### ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP

**Section 1. ELIGIBILITY.** Initial membership shall be available to each legally established public library in Hidalgo County which is eligible for accredited membership in the Texas State Library, according to the rules and regulations in effect for the current biennium of the Texas Library Systems Act.

Provisional membership is available to libraries who have not been members in the past, who are a legally established public library in Hidalgo County, but who are not yet an accredited member or eligible for accreditation in accordance with the rules and regulations under the current biennium of the Texas Library Systems Act. Provisional members are treated as regular members approved on the first year of “probationary” status beginning from January 1 in the year following their approval. Provisional members may request “probationary” status from the HCLS Board for no more than three consecutive years.

**Section 2. APPLICATION.** -Eligible public libraries shall submit a letter of application for membership to the HCLS Board for consideration. This letter shall be signed by their Mayor or City Manager. It shall include the ordinance or resolution of the governing body establishing the library (Texas Library Systems Act, §1.73).

**Section 3. APPROVAL.** Final approval for System membership shall rest with the Hidalgo County Commissioners' Court upon the Board's recommendation.

**Section 4. WITHDRAWAL.** After a city has been a part of HCLS for two years, the governing body of the city may withdraw from the system by giving a minimum of six months advanced notice, in writing, to the HCLS Board. The Hidalgo County Commissioners' Court shall be informed of any member library's withdrawal.

**Section 5. TERMINATION.** Library membership in HCLS may be recommended for termination through the Termination Review process. A Termination Review may be proposed for failure to meet the individual library accreditation standards as set by the Texas State Library or failure to attend or participate in half of the monthly meetings per calendar year or three consecutive meetings without just cause.

To begin the Termination Review process a majority of HCLS Board Members must vote to conduct a Termination Review within an HCLS meeting. The proposal of a Termination Review should appear on the agenda of the chosen meeting and the specific criteria creating cause for review should be noted in the minutes.

The library facing the Termination Review will then have an opportunity to defend themselves in the following regular meeting. If the library is not able to make this meeting, HCLS may postpone the review until the 2nd meeting following the vote to approve a Termination Review. HCLS is not required to postpone the review to the 2nd meeting. In the absence of a defense, the members may vote to recommend termination or vote to not recommend termination in either meeting.

Following the Termination Review, a 3/4ths majority of libraries is needed to recommend the termination of a library's membership in HCLS. The Hidalgo County Commissioners' Court shall be informed of the recommendation and the President will be responsible for soliciting a decision from the Commissioners' Court regarding whether or not to begin the removal process outlined in the annual Interlocal Agreement.

#### ARTICLE IV – BOARD OF DIRECTORS

##### **Section 1. NUMBER AND QUALIFICATIONS.**

- a. **BOARD MEMBERS AND VOTING:** Each member library shall be represented by its director as its Board member. In addition, the County shall appoint one lay member for each precinct. Lay members shall serve staggered terms of two years each. Each member shall have one vote.

Lay members missing more than three consecutive meetings without reason may be considered to have resigned. The HCLS President will inform the Commissioners' Court of any resignation, whether by lay member action or by nonattendance.

b. **ALTERNATES:** Each Library Director may appoint one alternate. Each library shall notify the Board of its alternate, or any changes in alternate status. Alternates shall be entitled to all rights and privileges of full membership in the absence of their library's representative; and shall assume the duties of a full voting member.

## **Section 2. DUTIES.**

**Board duties shall consist of the following:**

a. To evaluate HCLS programs and services; and to develop policies to carry out the HCLS mission and purpose.

b. To prepare and approve an annual budget and service plan. These shall be submitted in sufficient time to meet the requirements of the Hidalgo County Judge, who serves as the County's chief fiscal officer.

c. To take action, make recommendations and formulate policy on any matter pertinent to the mission of HCLS as outlined in these Bylaws.

d. To act on all requests for admission to the System and to act on all requests for probationary status;

e. To elect officers of the HCLS Board. Board officers shall consist of a President, Vice-President and Secretary; and other officers the Board may deem necessary to better fulfill the HCLS mission. The Board President shall be presented to the County Commissioners' Court for confirmation as the Coordinator for HCLS.

To elect officers of the HCLS Board. Board officers shall consist of a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Integrated Library System Coordinator; and other officers the Board may deem necessary to better fulfill the HCLS mission. The Board President shall be presented to the County Commissioners' Court for confirmation as the Coordinator for HCLS.

## **ARTICLE V – OFFICERS**

**Section 1. NUMBER AND ELECTION. The permanent officers of the HCLS Board shall be a President, Vice-President and Secretary.**

The permanent officers of the HCLS Board shall be a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Integrated Library System Coordinator.

**The President and Vice President shall be elected from the public library directors of the Board. They shall be elected in November of every second year and shall take office the following January.**

**The Secretary shall be elected from the remaining Board members including the lay representatives**

The Integrated Library System (ILS) Coordinator may be elected from the remaining Board members or other library staff with the Library Director's approval. The ILS Coordinator is only required to attend six (6) of the annual meetings.

**Section 2. TERMS. All officers shall serve terms of two years.**

**Section 3. TERM LIMITS. No Board member shall serve in the same office for more than three consecutive terms.**

**Section 4. VACANCY OF PERMANENT OFFICERS. In case of vacancy of the President, Vice-President or Secretary, the position may be filled by election of a new officer who shall complete the term. Elections shall take place within 60 days of notification of vacancy. The Board shall then present its slate, or the replacement name in case of vacancy, to the County Commissioner's Court for approval.**

## ARTICLE VI - DUTIES OF OFFICERS

**Section 1. PRESIDENT.** The President shall preside at Board meetings. The President shall account for all funds received by the System and present an annual financial statement at the March Board meeting. The President assists members in all library-related activities, serves as the HCLS representative with the Commissioners' Court, and performs other duties as prescribed by the Board.

**Section 2. VICE-PRESIDENT.** The Vice-President shall perform all duties as may be assigned by the President or Board. In the absence or resignation of the President, the Vice-President shall serve as interim President until selection of a new President per these Bylaws.

**Section 3. SECRETARY.** The secretary shall record and sign meeting minutes, maintain attendance records, and perform other duties as assigned by the President or Board.

## ARTICLE VII COMMITTEES AND OTHER POSITIONS

**Section 1. GENERAL.** Committees and other positions may be appointed by the President as the need arises, or on the request of a majority of the HCLS Board.

**Section 2. STANDING COMMITTEES.** There may be two standing committees, which may be appointed by the President. The President may be an ex officio member of both.

**a. BUDGET COMMITTEE:** The members shall be appointed by the President at the second meeting of the fiscal year. The Committee shall be composed of at least three members of the Board. The Budget Committee pursues funding through the County and maintains the annual budget. The committee annually prepares a budget report for the County and quarterly reports to the HCLS Board. The committee should also solicit funding from the County Commissioners for projects created by the Systems Committee and approved by the HCLS Board.

**b. SYSTEMS STUDY COMMITTEE:** Members shall be appointed by the President at the second meeting of the fiscal year. The committee may be composed of at least three

members of the Board and the chairman of the Budget Committee. The Systems Committee proposes a plan of service for implementation through the budget year, including the creation of projects and initiatives, and looks for opportunities to share resources on a consortium level. This committee may also establish long-term goals for HCLS.

**Section 3. NOMINATING COMMITTEE.** At the September board meeting of every second year, the president may appoint a nominating committee to report to the Board in November.

### **ARTICLE VIII - MEETINGS**

**Section 1. REGULAR MEETINGS.** The HCLS Board shall normally meet every third Thursday of each month. Meetings may be changed with due notice because of holiday schedules; to take advantage of regional library meetings and workshops, or other reasons.

The HCLS Board shall meet regularly on a monthly basis, twelve (12) times, annually, at each member libraries location. A public notice shall be issued at least 72-hours prior to meetings, in accordance with Texas Open Meetings Act and posted on the Hidalgo County Library System website.

**Section 2. MEETING NOTICE.** Notice of each board meeting shall be sent to member libraries and the Hidalgo County Commissioners' Court, at least three days prior to the Board meetings. Such notice shall state the time, place, and agenda of the meeting and business to be transacted.

**Section 3. PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE.** All meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

**Section 4. SPECIAL MEETINGS.** Special meetings for any purpose may be called by the President or any three members of the Board. These meetings may be called by notifying each of the Board members and the Hidalgo County Commissioners' Court at least three days beforehand. Notice of special meetings shall state the time, place, and business to be transacted.

**Section 5. QUORUM.** A majority of Board members shall constitute a quorum for business. When a quorum is present at any meeting, a majority vote of the Board members present shall decide any questions under consideration.

#### **ARTICLE IX - FISCAL YEAR**

The fiscal year of the System shall be that of the County of Hidalgo.

#### **ARTICLE X - RECORDS AND FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING**

**Section 1. FILE LOCATION.** All records of the System and Board shall be maintained by the Secretary.

**Section 2. REPORTS.** Copies of the Board minutes shall be sent to each member library and the Commissioners' Court. Copies of financial reports and disbursements shall be distributed to each library following County fund disbursements.

**Section 3. FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING.** The County Commissioner's Court maintains records of all financial disbursements and transactions. These are the official financial records. HCLS may request records for verification, state reports and for other reasonable and lawful disclosure.

#### **ARTICLE XI – INTER LIBRARY LOAN AND TRAVELING PATRONS**

**Section 1. CIRCULATION POLICY.** HCLS member libraries may participate in loan of materials to other libraries for patron checkout. The library which owns the item sets the circulation policy for the item. If no policy is specified, the circulating library may use its procedure to loan the item. The loan period should not exceed one month without previous consent from the owning library.

**Section 2. FINES OR FEES OF MATERIALS WITHIN HCLS.** If a patron loses or damages an item from another HCLS library, fees from the item's owning library shall be charged to that patron's account. The patron will compensate the item's owning library for these lost or damaged items. When possible, the circulating library is responsible for notifying the owning library when an item is lost or damaged. If an item is lost while in transit, all fines and fees shall be waived by the owning library. Fines (late charges) shall be collected by the item's owning library.

**Section 3. LOSS OR DAMAGE OF MATERIALS ORIGINATING OUTSIDE OF HCLS.** After sufficient attempts to contact the patron to correct the issue have been made, the patron is blocked at all HCLS Libraries, and compensation is agreed upon with the originating library.

**Section 4. TRAVELING PATRONS.** Patrons may check out materials at any HCLS library according to the library's circulation policy.

## ARTICLE XII – AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

**Section 1. PROCEDURES.** These bylaws may be altered, amended, or expanded by the procedures set forth below:

a. A notice containing a full statement of the existing Bylaws and proposed amendment(s) and the date, time and location of the meeting shall be sent to Board representatives and alternates at least ten days prior to the meeting.

b. At such meeting, after proper notice has been given and a quorum established, the Board may adopt the proposed amendment(s) by a 2/3 majority vote of the members present.

**Section 2. APPROVAL.** These bylaws and subsequent changes shall be submitted to the Hidalgo County Commissioners' Court for approval.

### **Initial Establishment:**

**August 9, 1971**            The Hidalgo County Commissioners' Court first appointed the County Library Board

**January 1, 1972**        The Hidalgo County Library Board bylaws were approved with the initial terms of Board Members beginning this date

**Most Recent Revisions (in reverse chronological order):**

<b>March 4, 2025</b>	<b>Bylaws revision/addition approved by the Hidalgo County Commissioners' Court</b>
<b>January 17, 2025</b>	<b>Bylaws revision/addition approved by the Hidalgo County Library System Board</b>
<b>April 30, 2024</b>	<b>Bylaws revision/addition approved by the Hidalgo County Commissioners' Court</b>
<b>February 16, 2024</b>	<b>Bylaws revision/addition approved by the Hidalgo County Library System Board</b>
<b>January 17, 2020</b>	<b>Bylaws revision/addition approved by the Hidalgo County Commissioners' Court</b>
<b>January 5, 2016</b>	<b>Bylaws revision/addition approved by the Hidalgo County Commissioners' Court</b>
<b>December 14, 2015</b>	<b>Bylaws revision/addition approved by the Hidalgo County Library System Board</b>
<b>May 19, 2009</b>	<b>Bylaws revision/addition approved by the Hidalgo County Commissioners' Court</b>
<b>January 22, 2009</b>	<b>Bylaws revision/addition approved by the Hidalgo County Library System Board</b>
<b>May 28, 2002</b>	<b>Bylaws revision/addition approved by the Hidalgo County Commissioners' Court</b>
<b>April 18, 2002</b>	<b>Bylaws revision/addition approved by the Hidalgo County Library System Board</b>
<b>January 1, 2001</b>	<b>Bylaws revision/addition approved by the Hidalgo County Commissioners' Court</b>
<b>October 10, 2000</b>	<b>Bylaws revision/addition approved by the Hidalgo County Library System Board</b>
<b>August 10, 1998</b>	<b>Bylaws revision/addition approved by the Hidalgo County Commissioners' Court</b>
<b>July 28, 1998</b>	<b>Bylaws revision/addition approved by the Hidalgo County Library System Board</b>
<b>September 8, 1987</b>	<b>Bylaws revision/addition approved by the Hidalgo County Commissioners' Court</b>

<b>July 28, 1987</b>	<b>Bylaws revision/addition approved by the Hidalgo County Commissioners' Court</b>
<b>June 9, 1986</b>	<b>Bylaws revision/addition approved by the Hidalgo County Library System Board</b>
<b>April 22, 1986</b>	<b>Bylaws revision/addition approved by the Hidalgo County Library System Board</b>