

STATE OF TEXAS §
COUNTY OF HIDALGO §

**INTERLOCAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS
RIO GRANDE VALLEY AND THE COUNTY OF HIDALGO**

Surveillance and Screening of Arboviral Diseases in the Lower Rio Grande Valley

This Interlocal Cooperation Agreement (Agreement”) is made on this 9thth day of December, 2025 by and between The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, (“UTRGV”), and the County of Hidalgo, acting by and through the Hidalgo County Health and Human Services Department (“County”), (collectively, the “Parties”), and pursuant to the provisions of the Texas Interlocal Cooperation Act, Texas Govt. Code 791.001 et seq., (“Act), as follows:

WITNESSETH:

WHEREAS, UTRGV is a political subdivision as defined by the Act, an Agency of the State of Texas organized under Chapter 79 of the Texas Education Code, an institution of higher education as defined by Texas Education Code Section 61.003(8), and is a component institution of The University of Texas System and has campuses in Hidalgo County, Texas; and

WHEREAS, County is a “local government” as defined by the Act, and a political subdivision of the State of Texas, and the Hidalgo County Health and Human Services Department is a Health Department within the network of the Texas Department of State Health Services in Edinburg, Texas; and

WHEREAS, UTRGV desires to provide an educational and research program experience of the highest quality for its students, under the direction of UTRGV personnel, through health promotion, education, recreation, disease prevention, community development, and other services which will be provided under this agreement (the “Program”); and

WHEREAS, UTRGV is willing to collaborate with County to promote health and community self-interest in the County by deepening the understanding of the prevalence and risk of arboviral diseases in the region; and

WHEREAS, UTRGV is willing to provide surveillance screening and vector-identification in collaboration with the County at no cost, based on duration and availability of funds for each of the Parties;

WHEREAS, UTRGV and County are authorized to enter into this Agreement pursuant to the Act, which authorizes local governments to cooperate with to perform governmental functions and services under the terms of the Texas Government Code;

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual promises contained herein, in order to establish and implement the Program involving Surveillance and Screening of Arboviral Diseases in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, the Parties agree to collaborate for the provision of the services through the Program as follows:

1) The Program will:

- a. Promote exchanges between both Parties through frequency communication of surveillance results and activities;
- b. Develop protocols for transport and testing of locally collected mosquito, flea, tick, and other arthropod specimens for identification and testing (if warranted due to increased probability of infection);
- c. Develop protocols for transport and testing of locally collected, de-identified blood, urine, and other bodily fluid samples (as needed) to be tested at the Western Gulf Center for Excellence in Vector-Borne Disease, UTRGV Campus. IRB approval will be secured prior to initiation of this activity.
- d. Allow for the immediate dissemination of positive results of these tests to the HCHHSD in the event of identification of an infected sample.
- e. State that the identification of a positive sample is not a diagnostic result, but merely a screening survey and additional testing will be required for positive confirmation of infected human samples;
- f. Allow for dissemination of results to scientific meetings, publications, or other venues as agreed upon by both parties.

2) Coordinator Contact Information:

The Parties hereby designate the following individuals to coordinate, oversee and facilitate the implementation of this Program:

For UTRGV: Christopher Vitek, Associate Professor
1201 West University Drive, Science Building 2.324
Edinburg, TX 78539
956-665-2845
Christopher.vitek@utrgv.edu

For County: Dairen Sarmiento Rangel, Director
1304 South 25th Ave.
Edinburg, TX 78539
dairen.sarmiento@hchd.org

3) Responsibilities of Designated Coordinators:

- a. To promote collaboration between the Parties to facilitate the goals of this Agreement;
- b. To act as principal contacts for individual and group activities and to plan and coordinate all activities within their organizations as well as with partner organizations;
- c. To share with each Party information about the participants, facilities, outreach efforts, and resources of the other organization; and
- d. To meet periodically to review and evaluate past activities and to work out new ideas for future cooperative agreements.

4) Transfer of Materials:

County may deliver to UTRGV samples collected in connection with the Program and/or services performed under this Agreement. The transfer of such samples from County to UTRGV shall be done under a simple “Letter Agreement” in the form attached as Attachment “A”, and incorporated herein by reference.

5) General Provisions

- a. **Term and Termination.** This Agreement shall be for a period of one (1) year commencing on December 22, 2025 and expiring on December 21, 2026. This Agreement may automatically renew for four (4) additional one (1) year terms under the same terms and conditions, or as amended by written agreement between the Parties. The Agreement may be terminated earlier by either party in accordance with this Agreement. Either Party may terminate this Agreement without cause by giving the other party ninety (90) days’ written notice.
- b. **Independent Contractors.** For the purposes of this Agreement and all services to be provided hereunder, the Parties are independent contractors and not agents or employees of the other Party. Neither Party shall have the authority to make any statements, representations nor commitments of any kind, or to take action, which shall be binding on the other Party, except as expressly provided herein or authorized in writing. Under no circumstances shall any employee or student of UTRGV be considered an agent or employee of County; they will be considered to be on the premises for the purpose of participating in the Program. County has no authority to dismiss UTRGV employees or students without UTRGV’s consent. However,

- h. **Additional Documents.** The Parties agree that they will use reasonable, good faith efforts to execute each such other and further instruments and documents as are or may become necessary or convenient to effectuate and carry out the terms of this Agreement.
- i. **Assignment.** This Agreement may not be assigned by either party without written consent of the other party.
- j. **Non-Discrimination.** The Program and all related activities shall be conducted in a manner that does not discriminate against any person on a basis prohibited by applicable law or UTRGV and/or County policy, including without limitation race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, veteran status, or disability.
- k. **Liabilities.** This Agreement is not intended to extend the liability of the Parties beyond that provided by law. Neither UTRGV nor County waive, nor shall be deemed to have hereby waived, any immunity or defenses that would otherwise be available to it against claims arising from third parties.
- l. **Performance of Governmental Functions.** The Parties hereto are entering into this Agreement for the purpose of providing for governmental services or functions. The Parties understand that the costs regarding the services to be provided under this Agreement are to be paid for by the Party who incurs the cost. Nothing contained in this Agreement is to be construed as providing for the sharing of profits or losses arising out of the efforts of either or both Parties. Neither Party will be liable to the other for any costs, expenses, risks or liabilities arising out of the other Party's efforts in connection with this Agreement.
- m. **Commitment of Current Revenues.** In the event that during the term hereof, the governing body of any Party does not appropriate sufficient funds to meet the obligations of such party under this Agreement, then any party may terminate this Agreement upon ninety (90) days written notice to the other party. Each of the parties hereto agrees to use its best efforts to secure funds necessary for the continued performance of this Agreement. The Parties intend this provision to be a continuing right to terminate this Agreement at the expiration of each budget period of each Party hereto.

EXECUTED as of the day and year first written above.

APPROVED BY COMMISSIONERS' COURT ON December 09, 2025.

Agenda Item No. 101526

Executive Office: _____

**THE UNIVERSITY OF
TEXAS RIO GRANDE VALLEY**

**COUNTY:
COUNTY OF HIDALGO**

Thomas Spencer, Ph.D.
Sr. Associate VP for Research Operations

Hon. Richard F. Cortez, County Judge

Read and Understood:

Dr. Christopher Vitek

Reviewed by: _____

APPROVED AS TO FORM
Office of the Criminal District Attorney,
Toribio "Terry" Palacios

ATTEST:

Michelle Lopez, Assistant District Attorney

Arturo Guajardo, Jr., County Clerk

ATTACHMENTS:
(If Applicable)

SUPPLEMENTAL SIGNATURES:
(If Applicable)