

[Print This Page](#)

**Agency Name:** Hidalgo County  
**Grant/App:** 4430805 **Start Date:** 9/1/2026 **End Date:** 8/31/2027

**Project Title:** Forensic Evidence Testing Grant  
**Status:** Application Pending Submission

**Profile Information**

**Applicant Agency Name:** Hidalgo County  
**Project Title:** Forensic Evidence Testing Grant  
**Division or Unit to Administer the Project:** Administration/Felony  
**Address Line 1:** 100 East Cano Street  
**Address Line 2:** 2nd Floor  
**City/State/Zip:** Edinburg Texas 78539-3563  
**Start Date:** 9/1/2026  
**End Date:** 8/31/2027

**Regional Council of Governments(COG) within the Project's Impact Area:** Lower Rio Grande Valley  
Development Council  
**Headquarter County:** Hidalgo  
**Counties within Project's Impact Area:** Hidalgo

**Grant Officials:**

**Authorized Official**

**Name:** Richard F. Cortez  
**Email:** countyjudge@co.hidalgo.tx.us  
**Address 1:** 100 East Cano, 2nd Floor  
**Address 1:**  
**City:** Edinburg, Texas 78539  
**Phone:** 956-318-2600 Other Phone:  
**Fax:** 956-318-2699  
**Title:** The Honorable  
**Salutation:** Judge  
**Position:** Hidalgo County Judge

**Financial Official**

**Name:** Leticia Chavez  
**Email:** lettyg.chavez@auditor.co.hidalgo.tx.us  
**Address 1:** 2808 S. Business Highway 281  
**Address 1:**  
**City:** Edinburg, Texas 78539  
**Phone:** 956-318-2511 Other Phone:  
**Fax:** 956-318-2577  
**Title:** Ms.  
**Salutation:** Ms.  
**Position:** County Auditor

**Project Director**

**Name:** Toribio Palacios  
**Email:** terry.palacios@da.co.hidalgo.tx.us  
**Address 1:** 100 East Cano Street, 2nd Floor  
**Address 1:**  
**City:** Edinburg, Texas 78539  
**Phone:** 956-292-7604 Other Phone: 956-318-2300  
**Fax:** 956-318-2078  
**Title:** The Honorable  
**Salutation:** Mr.  
**Position:** Criminal District Attorney

**Grant Writer**

**Name:** Toribio Palacios

**Email:** terry.palacios@da.co.hidalgo.tx.us

**Address 1:** 100 East Cano Street, 2nd Floor

**Address 1:**

**City:** Edinburg, Texas 78539

**Phone:** 956-292-7604 Other Phone: 956-318-2300

**Fax:** 956-318-2078

**Title:** The Honorable

**Salutation:** Mr.

**Position:** Criminal District Attorney

You are logged in as **User Name:** HidalgoCoDA

[Print This Page](#)

**Agency Name:** Hidalgo County

**Grant/App:** 4430805 **Start Date:** 9/1/2026 **End Date:** 8/31/2027

**Project Title:** Forensic Evidence Testing Grant

**Status:** Application Pending Submission

**Grant Vendor Information**

**Organization Type:** County

**Organization Option:** applying to provide services to all others

**Applicant Agency's State Payee Identification Number (e.g., Federal Employer's Identification (FEI) Number or Vendor ID):** 17460007176062

**Unique Entity Identifier (UEI):** LHACK1UL6NR3

You are logged in as **User Name:** HidalgoCoDA

[Print This Page](#)

**Agency Name:** Hidalgo County

**Grant/App:** 4430805 **Start Date:** 9/1/2026 **End Date:** 8/31/2027

**Project Title:** Forensic Evidence Testing Grant

**Status:** Application Pending Submission

## **Narrative Information**

### **Introduction**

The District Attorney Testing of Forensic Evidence Grant Program provides reimbursement to district attorney offices for costs associated with forensic analysis of physical evidence.

### **Certifications**

In addition to the requirements found in existing statute, regulation, and the funding announcement, this program requires applicant organizations to certify compliance with the following:

### **Constitutional Compliance**

Applicant assures that it will not engage in any activity that violates Constitutional law including profiling based upon race.

### **Texas Forensic Science Commission Accreditation**

Applicant assures that it will only utilize accredited laboratories that comply with state regulations and rules for accreditation, including forensic analyst licensing for mandatory disciplines, promulgated by the Texas Forensic Science Commission in 37 Tex. Admin. Code § 651.5 (2025) promulgated by the Texas Department of Public Safety in the Texas Administrative Code, Title 37, Part 1, Chapter 28, Subchapter I.

### **DNA Testing of Evidentiary Materials**

When funds are used for DNA testing of evidentiary materials, any resulting eligible DNA profiles must be uploaded to the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) by a government DNA lab with access to CODIS.

### **Resolution from Governing Body**

Applications from nonprofit corporations, local units of governments, and other political subdivisions must submit a fully executed resolution with the application to be considered eligible for funding. The resolution must contain the following elements (see [Sample Resolution](#)):

- Authorization by your governing body for the submission of the application to the Public Safety Office (PSO) that clearly identifies the name of the project for which funding is requested;
- A commitment to provide all applicable matching funds;
- A designation of the name and/or title of an authorized official who is given the authority to apply for, accept, reject, alter, or terminate a grant;
- A designation of the name and/or title of a financial officer who is given the authority to submit financial and/or performance reports or alter a grant; and
- A written assurance that, in the event of loss or misuse of grant funds, the governing body will return all funds to PSO.

### **Cybersecurity Training Requirement**

Local units of governments must comply with the Cybersecurity Training requirements described in Section 772.012 and Section 2054.5191 of the Texas Government Code. Local governments determined to not be in compliance with the cybersecurity requirements required by Section 2054.5191 of the Texas Government Code are ineligible for OOG grant funds until the second anniversary of the date the local government is determined ineligible. Government entities must annually certify their compliance with the training requirements using the [Cybersecurity Training Certification for State and Local Government](#). A copy of the Training Certification must be uploaded to your eGrants application. For more information or to access available training programs, visit the Texas Department of Information Resources [Statewide Cybersecurity Awareness Training](#) page.

### **Criminal History Reporting**

Entities receiving funds from PSO must be located in a county that has an average of 90% or above on both adult and juvenile dispositions entered into the computerized criminal history database maintained by the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) as directed in the *Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, Chapter 66*. The disposition completeness percentage is defined as the percentage of arrest charges a county reports to DPS for which a disposition has been subsequently reported and entered into the computerized criminal history system.

Counties applying for grant awards from the Office of the Governor must commit that the county will report at least 90 percent of convictions within five business days to the Criminal Justice Information System at the Department of Public Safety.

### **Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR)**

Eligible applicants operating a law enforcement agency must be current on reporting complete UCR data and the Texas specific reporting mandated by 411.042 TGC, to the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) for inclusion in the annual Crime in Texas (CIT) publication. To be considered eligible for funding, applicants must have submitted a full twelve months of accurate data to DPS for the most recent calendar year by the deadline(s) established by DPS. Due to the importance of timely reporting, applicants are required to submit complete and accurate UCR data, as well as the Texas-mandated reporting, on a no less than monthly basis and respond promptly to requests from DPS related to the data submitted.

### **Entities That Collect Sexual Assault/Sex Offense Evidence or Investigate/Prosecute Sexual Assault or Other Sex Offenses**

In accordance with Texas Government Code, Section 420.034, any facility or entity that collects evidence for sexual assault or other sex offenses or investigates or prosecutes a sexual assault or other sex offense for which evidence has been collected, must participate in the statewide electronic tracking system developed and implemented by the Texas Department of Public Safety. Visit DPS's [Sexual Assault Evidence Tracking Program](#) website for more information or to set up an account to begin participating. Additionally, per Section 420.042 "A law enforcement agency that receives evidence of a sexual assault or other sex offense...shall submit that evidence to a public accredited crime laboratory for analysis no later than the 30th day after the date on which that evidence was received." A law enforcement agency in possession of a significant number of Sexual Assault Evidence Kits (SAEK) where the 30-day window has passed may be considered noncompliant.

## **Compliance with State and Federal Laws, Programs and Procedures**

Local units of government, including cities, counties and other general purpose political subdivisions, as appropriate, and institutions of higher education that operate a law enforcement agency, must comply with all aspects of the programs and procedures utilized by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security ("DHS") to: (1) notify DHS of all information requested by DHS related to illegal aliens in Agency's custody; and (2) detain such illegal aliens in accordance with requests by DHS. Additionally, counties and municipalities may NOT have in effect, purport to have in effect, or make themselves subject to or bound by, any law, rule, policy, or practice (written or unwritten) that would: (1) require or authorize the public disclosure of federal law enforcement information in order to conceal, harbor, or shield from detection fugitives from justice or aliens illegally in the United States, 8 U.S.C. § 1324(a)(1)(A)(iii); (2) impede federal officers from exercising authority under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), § 1226(c), § 1231(a), § 1357(a), § 1366(1), or § 1366(3); (3) encourage or induce an alien to come to, enter, or reside in the United States in violation of law, 8 U.S.C. § 1324(a)(1)(A)(iv); (4) result in the illegal transport or movement of aliens within the United States, 8 U.S.C. § 1324(a)(1)(A)(ii). Lastly, eligible applicants must comply with all provisions, policies, and penalties found in Chapter 752, Subchapter C of the Texas Government Code.

Each local unit of government, and institution of higher education that operates a law enforcement agency, must download, complete and then upload into eGrants the CEO/Law Enforcement Certifications and Assurances Form certifying compliance with federal and state immigration enforcement requirements. This Form is required for each application submitted to OOG and is active until August 31, 2027 or the end of the grant period, whichever is later.

### **Overall Certification**

Each applicant agency must certify to the specific requirements detailed above as well as to comply with all requirements within the PSO Funding Announcement, the *Guide to Grants*, the *Grantee Conditions and Responsibilities*, any authorizing or applicable state and federal statutes and regulations to be eligible for this program.

**— I certify to all of the application content & requirements.**

### **Project Abstract :**

This project will support the Hidalgo County Criminal District Attorney's Office in funding independent forensic testing for evidence in ongoing felony criminal cases. By accelerating the testing process, the project aims to speed up the timeline for bringing these cases to trial, reduce the backlog at other forensic labs, and ultimately provide justice more quickly. This will help deliver timely closure for victims and their families, ensuring that cases are resolved efficiently and fairly.

### **Problem Statement :**

Hidalgo County is currently facing a significant backlog of felony criminal cases awaiting forensic evidence testing. This delay in testing causes cases to take months or even years to reach trial, with many defendants remaining in county jail at taxpayer expense. The situation has been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has slowed down the court system and contributed to a substantial increase in case backlogs over the past three years. This project aims to address these delays by providing additional resources for forensic testing, helping to reduce the backlog and expedite the trial process as the court system works toward recovery.

### **Supporting Data :**

Hidalgo County currently has 13 district courts (soon to be 14) responsible for handling adult felony cases, each of which has numerous cases awaiting forensic evidence testing. These include serious offenses such as continuous sexual assault of a child, adult sexual assault, and murder. As of the most recent data, many defendants in these cases have been incarcerated in Hidalgo County for over a year while awaiting trial due to delays in evidence testing. The backlog in forensic testing has significantly impacted the timely resolution of these cases, contributing to extended pretrial detentions at taxpayer expense and preventing victims from receiving timely justice.

### **Project Approach & Activities:**

This project will enable the Hidalgo County Criminal District Attorney's Office to contract with independent, accredited forensic laboratories (not funded by the State of Texas) to conduct expedited testing of evidence, including, but not limited to, DNA, biological samples, and ballistics. Evidence currently awaiting testing at the Texas Department of Public Safety Laboratories will either be transferred to these contracted labs for faster processing or sent directly if a backlog is confirmed. This approach will help reduce delays in forensic analysis, ensuring that critical evidence is tested more quickly, which will, in turn, expedite the progression of criminal cases to trial.

#### **Capacity & Capabilities:**

The Hidalgo County Criminal District Attorney's Office has a dedicated team of experienced felony trial prosecutors who will identify and prioritize pending cases, with a focus on those involving incarcerated defendants or long delays. These prosecutors will work closely with local investigative agencies and the Texas Department of Public Safety Laboratories to coordinate the transfer of evidence awaiting testing to contracted, accredited forensic labs for expedited analysis. Once the forensic results are obtained, the evidence reports will be promptly shared with defense counsel in accordance with legal requirements, ensuring transparency and fairness. The cases will then proceed to trial without unnecessary delays. The Office's extensive experience managing complex criminal cases and collaborating with forensic experts ensures that this project will be effectively implemented, driving timely case resolution and ensuring justice for victims.

#### **Performance Management :**

Success for this project will be measured by the reduction in time it takes to resolve pending felony criminal cases, specifically focusing on the time it takes to receive forensic analysis and move cases toward trial. Currently, many of these cases have been awaiting forensic testing for several months, contributing to delays in the legal process. By contracting with accredited external laboratories using grant funds, we expect to reduce the average turnaround time for forensic results to less than 30 days. To track progress, the Hidalgo County Criminal District Attorney's Office will maintain a detailed case tracking system that logs each case's forensic testing status, time spent in the lab, and subsequent movement through the court system. Regular reports will be generated to monitor the reduction in case delays, and the data will be reviewed periodically to ensure that the project is meeting its goals. This data will be used to assess the impact on case resolution timelines, identify areas for improvement, and ensure accountability throughout the grant period.

#### **Target Group :**

The services provided through this project will primarily benefit individuals involved in pending felony criminal prosecutions in Hidalgo County, particularly those cases awaiting forensic testing. This includes incarcerated defendants who have been waiting for extended periods for their cases to move forward. The project aims to reduce delays in the court system, allowing for faster resolution of these cases. Key stakeholders involved in this process include the Hidalgo County District Attorney's Office, defense counsel, law enforcement agencies, accredited forensic laboratories, and the local court system. By expediting forensic analysis, this project will help ensure more timely trials and resolutions for both defendants and victims, ultimately improving the efficiency of the Hidalgo County criminal justice system.

#### **Evidence-Based Practices:**

The Texas Department of Public Safety's forensic laboratories are currently facing significant delays due to an overwhelming backlog of evidence, particularly in DNA testing. This backlog delays the resolution of serious felony cases, such as sexual assault of a child, continuous sexual abuse, aggravated kidnapping, and murder. Research shows that delays in forensic testing can significantly extend case resolution times, which in turn prolongs pretrial detention and hinders timely justice. By contracting with accredited independent forensic labs, this project seeks to address these delays by providing quicker turnaround times for critical evidence analysis. This approach is supported by best practices in case management, which highlight the importance of reducing forensic testing backlogs to expedite case resolutions. Timely forensic results are essential not only for bringing cases to trial but also for providing victims and their families with much-needed closure. This model has been successfully implemented in other jurisdictions facing similar backlogs and has proven to reduce case delays, improve court efficiency, and increase public confidence in the justice system.

[Print This Page](#)

**Agency Name:** Hidalgo County

**Grant/App:** 4430805 **Start Date:** 9/1/2026 **End Date:** 8/31/2027

**Project Title:** Forensic Evidence Testing Grant

**Status:** Application Pending Submission

### Project Activities Information

#### Introduction

This section contains questions about your project. It is very important for applicants to review their funding announcement for guidance on how to fill out this section. Unless otherwise specified, answers should be about the EXPECTED activities to occur during the project period.

#### Selected Project Activities:

ACTIVITY	PERCENTAGE:	DESCRIPTION
----------	-------------	-------------

#### CJD Purpose Areas

PERCENT DEDICATED	PURPOSE AREA	PURPOSE AREA DESCRIPTION
-------------------	--------------	--------------------------

You are logged in as **User Name:** HidalgoCoDA

[Print This Page](#)

**Agency Name:** Hidalgo County  
**Grant/App:** 4430805 **Start Date:** 9/1/2026 **End Date:** 8/31/2027

**Project Title:** Forensic Evidence Testing Grant  
**Status:** Application Pending Submission

**Measures Information**

Objective Output Measures

OUTPUT MEASURE	TARGET LEVEL
----------------	--------------

Objective Outcome Measures

OUTCOME MEASURE	TARGET LEVEL
-----------------	--------------

Custom Output Measures

CUSTOM OUTPUT MEASURE	TARGET LEVEL
-----------------------	--------------

Custom Outcome Measures

CUSTOM OUTCOME MEASURE	TARGET LEVEL
------------------------	--------------

[Print This Page](#)

**Agency Name:** Hidalgo County  
**Grant/App:** 4430805 **Start Date:** 9/1/2026 **End Date:** 8/31/2027

**Project Title:** Forensic Evidence Testing Grant  
**Status:** Application Pending Submission

**Budget Details Information**  
**Budget Information by Budget Line Item:**

CATEGORY	SUB CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	OOG	CASH MATCH	IN-KIND MATCH	GPI	TOTAL	UNIT/%
----------	-----------------	-------------	-----	---------------	------------------	-----	-------	--------

You are logged in as **User Name:** HidalgoCoDA

[Print This Page](#)

**Agency Name:** Hidalgo County  
**Grant/App:** 4430805 **Start Date:** 9/1/2026 **End Date:** 8/31/2027

**Project Title:** Forensic Evidence Testing Grant  
**Status:** Application Pending Submission

**Source of Match Information**

**Detail Source of Match/GPI:**

DESCRIPTION	MATCH TYPE	AMOUNT
-------------	------------	--------

**Summary Source of Match/GPI:**

Total Report	Cash Match	In Kind	GPI Federal Share	GPI State Share
\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

You are logged in as **User Name:** HidalgoCoDA

[Print This Page](#)

**Agency Name:** Hidalgo County  
**Grant/App:** 4430805 **Start Date:** 9/1/2026 **End Date:** 8/31/2027

**Project Title:** Forensic Evidence Testing Grant  
**Status:** Application Pending Submission

**Budget Summary Information**

**Budget Summary Information by Budget Category:**

CATEGORY	OOG	CASH MATCH	IN-KIND MATCH	GPI	TOTAL
----------	-----	------------	---------------	-----	-------

**Budget Grand Total Information:**

OOG	CASH MATCH	IN-KIND MATCH	GPI	TOTAL
\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

You are logged in as **User Name:** HidalgoCoDA

[Print This Page](#)

**Agency Name:** Hidalgo County  
**Grant/App:** 4430805 **Start Date:** 9/1/2026 **End Date:** 8/31/2027

**Project Title:** Forensic Evidence Testing Grant  
**Status:** Application Pending Submission

### Lobbying

For applicant agencies requesting grant funds in excess of \$100,000, have any federally appropriated funds been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any federal contract, the making of any federal grant, the making of any federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any federal contract, grant loan, or cooperative agreement?

Select the appropriate response:

- Yes
- No
- N/A

For applicant agencies that selected either **No** or **N/A** above, have any non-federal funds been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress in connection with this federal contract, loan, or cooperative agreement?

Select the appropriate response:

- Yes
- No
- N/A

### Debarment

Each applicant agency will certify that it and its principals (as defined in 2 CFR Part 180.995):

- Are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, sentenced to a denial of Federal benefits by a State or Federal Court, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any federal department or agency;
- Have not within a three-year period preceding this application been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (federal, state, or local) transaction or contract under a public transaction; violation of federal or state antitrust statutes or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property; or
- Are not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (federal, state, or local) with commission of any of the offenses enumerated in the above bullet; and have not within a three-year period preceding this application had one or more public transactions (federal, state, or local) terminated for cause or default.

Select the appropriate response:

- I Certify
- Unable to Certify

If you selected **Unable to Certify** above, please provide an explanation as to why the applicant agency cannot certify the statements.