

VPI-030**Hidalgo County - Navigating Hope: Building Community Understanding of Mental Health Systems in Hidalgo County**

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Eligibility

The Hogg Foundation for Mental Health is dedicated to organizations that support the mental health and well-being of all the people of Texas. The foundation is a component of The University of Texas System and currently is under the purview of The University of Texas at Austin. Due to the University's internal governance decision and in compliance with Senate Bill 17, the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health cannot fund organizations whose mission statement or programs are solely focused on race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

Does your program or mission statement solely focus on race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender identity? No

▼ Organization Details

Organization:	Hidalgo County
Primary Point of Contact (PPOC):	JoAnne Garcia
Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) - Signatory:	Valde Guerra
Financial Officer (FO):	JoAnne Garcia
Grant Liaison (GL):	JoAnne Garcia
Second Signatory (SS):	Valde Guerra

All of the above contacts will be notified in the event of an award or declination.

Organizational Mission Statement:**Weblink to Mission Statement:****▼ Proposal Summary**

Project Title:	Navigating Hope: Building Community Understanding of Mental Health Systems in Hidalgo County
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Project Summary:

The Probate Court No. 1 of Hidalgo County seeks to build on its existing efforts that promote mental health awareness through social media, public education, and partnerships with local governments, healthcare providers, and community organizations, the project will create a civic education initiative that helps residents better understand local mental health systems and available resources.

The campaign will increase awareness of mental health services, reduce stigma, and improve public understanding of mental health warrants and temporary commitments. It will also educate families caring for aging loved ones with cognitive conditions that often create behavioral and mental health challenges. Through culturally responsive bilingual education, the Court will provide practical information that helps families access services, navigate crises, and develop an understanding of the role of county government in mental health.

Working with a policy advisor, communications professionals, and community partners, the Court will develop bilingual educational videos, resource guides, community information sessions, and digital outreach campaigns. Planned deliverables include at least 27 videos, 3 resource guides, and 9 community presentations throughout Hidalgo County.

By increasing public understanding of mental health systems and resources, the project seeks to improve access to care, strengthen civic engagement, reduce caregiver burden, and promote healthier outcomes.

Total funding requested: \$210,000.00

Have you or your organization applied for an award from the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health before? Yes

Did you or your organization receive an award from the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health? Yes

Are you a domestic public charity or non-profit? No

Is your agency based in the state of TEXAS or doing business as a Texas-based affiliate of U.S. company? Yes

Does your organization require a board signature for approval of legal documents? Yes

Will you be using a fiscal agent in the administration of this grant? No

Payable to: (Legal Agency name for award payments)

Hidalgo County
100 E. Cano Suite 201
Edinburg, TX 78539

Is the above Organization Name and Address the same Name and Address for Award Payments? No

Payable Address

Legal Agency Name:	Hidalgo County
Address:	100 N Closner
Address 2:	3rd Floor, Probate Court No. 1
City:	Edinburg
State:	Texas
Zip Code:	78539

▼ Proposal Details

You will be asked to answer the questions below, which serve as the proposal narrative. Although there is no character limit, we recommend 10,000 characters in total.

1. What is your organization's origin story, and how do your current local advocacy efforts support the mental health and well-being of your community?

The Probate Court No. 1 of Hidalgo County serves one of the fastest-growing and most diverse populations in Texas. In addition to its traditional probate and guardianship jurisdiction, the Court has significant responsibilities related to mental health proceedings, including mental health warrants, temporary commitments, guardianships, and other judicial processes designed to protect vulnerable individuals while safeguarding their constitutional rights.

The Court regularly works with families facing mental health crises, including those caring for aging loved ones experiencing Alzheimer's disease, dementia, and other cognitive conditions that can present significant behavioral, psychiatric, and safety concerns. Through both its guardianship and mental health jurisdictions, the Court witnesses firsthand the challenges families face in navigating complex healthcare, legal, and community support systems.

Over time, the Court has observed a growing need for public education surrounding mental health systems and resources. Families often come into contact with the Court during periods of crisis, yet many are unfamiliar with available mental health services, legal protections, caregiver supports, and pathways to treatment. These experiences revealed a critical gap between the existence of resources and community awareness of those resources.

In response, the Court has expanded its role beyond adjudication and embraced public advocacy and education as essential components of community service. Current efforts include social media campaigns that highlight local mental health and caregiver resources, educational information regarding mental health services and guardianship

alternatives, partnerships with community organizations, and participation in collaborative discussions with healthcare providers, law enforcement agencies, local governments, aging services organizations, and nonprofit partners. These efforts aim to reduce stigma, increase awareness, support caregivers, and connect residents to services before crises escalate.

Through these initiatives, the Court has become a trusted convener capable of bringing together diverse stakeholders to address mental health challenges affecting individuals, families, caregivers, and older adults throughout Hidalgo County.

2. What policy issues are impacting mental health and well-being in your community, and how is your organization best suited to address these issues?

Several interconnected policy challenges affect mental health and well-being throughout Hidalgo County and the Rio Grande Valley. These include a system pressure of an aging population, limited awareness of available mental health services, language barriers, stigma surrounding mental illness, and insufficient public understanding of county-level mental health systems and decision-making processes.

Between 2010 and 2020, the population of people 65 years and over saw the largest and fastest growth in any decade since 1880 to 1890, reaching 55.8 million or 16.8% of the total U.S. population in 2020. Texas was 1 of 3 states in the U.S. which saw its 65-and-over population increase by more than one million people. It is estimated that the population of Americans ages 65 and older is projected to increase from 58 million in 2022 to 82 million by 2050 (a 47% increase) or 23% of the total US population. With regard to Hidalgo County, Census Data reflects this same trend: from 2000 to 2020 the population of 65 and over increased by 48,068 people (a 2.2% increase). The overall population profile of Hidalgo County indicates an aging population, with the largest percentage of proportionate growth in the over 65 age category.

Some of the biggest challenges facing this aging population will be economic disparities between Latinos and non-Hispanic whites and a caregiving gap. Caregivers, oftentimes family, fill in for professional guardians. The implications of an aging population are increased caseloads in the areas of wills and estates, mental health matters, establishment of guardianships, and disputes over eligibility for and the scope of governmental services.

David Slayton, former Administrative Director of the Texas Office of Court Administration, warned that the exploding elderly population would stress Texas's guardianship system. The number of active guardianships has increased by 37% in the past five years and is one of the fastest growing case types in Texas. In addition to the rising number of cases expected as a result of the aging population, the prevalence of mental illness and an increase in mental impairment is expected to continue to make an impact on the need for guardianships.

Furthermore, along with the rise in probate and guardianship filings, there has also been a steady increase in the filing of mental health commitments. According to data from the Texas Office of Court Administration, temporary mental health commitment filings in the Probate Court No. 1 have increased 159.16% from 2015 to 2024.

This rise in civil commitments correlates to the growth in demand for mental health services. However, according to the Texas Department of State Health Services, Hidalgo County is designated as a Mental Health Professional Shortage Area. Limited access to preventative and outpatient mental health services often leads to crises that necessitate emergency intervention, such as emergency detentions by peace officers and temporary mental health commitment filings in the Court.

Many residents are unaware of how local government influences behavioral health services through funding decisions, partnerships with local mental health authorities, crisis response systems, aging services, and judicial

intervention processes. As a result, families often encounter mental health systems only during emergencies, when they are least prepared to understand available resources or advocate effectively for their loved ones. This challenge is particularly acute for families caring for aging relatives with Alzheimer's disease, dementia, and other cognitive disorders, who frequently struggle to navigate complex healthcare, social service, and legal systems while managing significant caregiving responsibilities.

One of the most significant knowledge gaps involves emergency mental health intervention processes. Families frequently do not know that mental health warrants and temporary commitment procedures exist as legal mechanisms to assist individuals experiencing severe mental health crises. Likewise, many caregivers of older adults are unaware of available legal protections, community resources, and alternatives that may help address behavioral and safety concerns associated with cognitive decline. Even when these processes become necessary, families often lack reliable information about how to access them, what standards apply, what rights individuals maintain, and what outcomes they can expect.

The Probate Court No. 1 is uniquely positioned to address these challenges because it serves at the intersection of healthcare, aging services, public policy, local government, and the justice system. Through its mental health and guardianship jurisdictions, the Court witnesses firsthand how policy decisions affect individuals, caregivers, and families and has developed trusted relationships with stakeholders across the behavioral health and aging-services continuum.

Through this project, the Court will leverage those relationships to convene stakeholders, educate residents, and translate complex mental health, aging, and legal systems into understandable and actionable information for the public.

3. How are your organization's priorities informed by the communities you serve? Please provide examples.

The Court's advocacy priorities are informed directly by interactions with families, community partners, healthcare providers, and local government leaders. Through daily operations, public speaking engagements, community meetings, and collaborative partnerships, the Court consistently hears concerns regarding access to information and mental health services.

Families frequently express confusion regarding available legal options when a loved one experiences a psychiatric crisis. Community stakeholders have similarly identified the need for more accessible and culturally relevant educational materials regarding mental health intervention systems.

These concerns are particularly significant in Hidalgo County, where many residents prefer receiving information in Spanish and where cultural perceptions of mental illness may discourage individuals from seeking assistance. The Court has recognized the importance of delivering information in a manner that is linguistically accessible, culturally responsive, and easy to understand.

As a result, bilingual public education and mental health literacy have emerged as core priorities. The proposed project reflects direct community feedback requesting more information about mental health resources, crisis intervention options, and available legal processes.

4. How would your advocacy improve the mental health and well-being of individuals in your community?

This initiative would improve mental health and well-being by increasing public understanding of available resources, reducing barriers to accessing services, and empowering residents to participate in local systems that shape mental health outcomes.

The project will develop bilingual educational content delivered through social media campaigns, community presentations, informational workshops, and partnerships with local organizations. Content will address mental health awareness, available treatment resources, crisis intervention services, the role of county government in supporting mental health infrastructure, and practical guidance regarding mental health warrants and temporary commitment proceedings.

A dedicated policy advisor will help ensure that educational content goes beyond awareness by connecting information to meaningful civic engagement opportunities. Residents will learn not only how mental health systems operate but also how local policy decisions affect service delivery and how community members can participate in conversations that shape mental health priorities.

The project will also strengthen collaboration among local governments, behavioral health providers, hospitals, law enforcement agencies, advocacy organizations, and community leaders. By fostering shared understanding and coordinated messaging, the initiative will improve community capacity to support individuals experiencing mental illness and their families.

Ultimately, the project seeks to create a more informed community where residents understand available resources, seek assistance earlier, and feel empowered to engage in efforts that improve mental health outcomes throughout the Rio Grande Valley.

5. How would this opportunity improve your organization's ability to engage in policy advocacy?

This opportunity would significantly strengthen the Probate Court's capacity to engage in sustainable and impactful public advocacy.

Funding would support the creation of a multidisciplinary team consisting of the presiding judge, a policy advisor with expertise in public policy and advocacy, a project intern, and professional communications specialists. Together, this team would transform the Court's institutional knowledge into accessible public education and civic engagement resources.

The policy advisor will play a critical role by helping the Court identify policy topics most relevant to community mental health, develop strategic messaging, ensure content accuracy, and connect educational efforts to broader civic engagement opportunities. This structure will enable the Court to move beyond traditional public information efforts and implement a comprehensive advocacy framework focused on systems-level understanding and community participation.

Grant support will also allow the Court to create professional bilingual content, expand outreach throughout underserved communities, host educational forums, develop community partnerships, and evaluate the effectiveness of advocacy efforts over time.

The initiative aims to engage at least 600 residents through educational programs, distribute more bilingual resources, and reach at least 50,000 community members through digital and partner outreach. The

communications and social media marketing firm would be able to track digital metrics and provide measurable impact.

Examples of bilingual brochures/resources this project may develop:

- Mental Health Warrants Guide
- Temporary Commitment Process Guide
- Alzheimer's/Dementia Caregiver Resource Guide
- Community Mental Health Resource Directory
- Guardianship Alternatives Resource Guide

At the conclusion of the grant period, the Court will have established a sustainable model for community-centered mental health advocacy that can continue serving Hidalgo County residents and potentially serve as a model for other probate courts throughout Texas.

▼ Proposed Staff

List all key project staff, including employees, potential contractors, and potential consultants who will be involved in this grant project by clicking the green “plus” button on the right-hand side of the screen. Resumes and/or job descriptions will be uploaded into the Documents section below.

Key Project Staff

- | | |
|---|--|
| • Jessica Gomez; Policy Advisor | Edit  |
| • Future Hire; Project Coordinator | Edit  |
| • JoAnne Garcia; Presiding Judge of Probate Court No. 1 | Edit  |
| • OG Marketing; Videography and Digital Marketing Firm | Edit  |

▼ Taxonomic Data

The following questions will help the Hogg Foundation understand who and where we fund in Texas. These terms come from classification standards developed by the Foundation Center, the Library of Congress, and Texas Health and Human Services. Language often evolves faster than classification standards, so some terms may not be what is currently or commonly accepted. We are collecting this information to share with the public and other foundations, thus furthering our transparency and helping others build on our achievements and learn from our challenges.

Definitions of population terms may be found [here](#).

Will this proposal focus on all people or specific populations? All People

Will this proposal focus on all of Texas or specific regions? Specific Regions

Please select regions and/or counties that will be served by the proposal.

Region 11: Lower South Texas / Hidalgo

Please reference: Texas Health and Human Services Regional Map

▼ Application Documentation

▼ Additional Proposal Requirements

Following is a list of proposal documents to be uploaded. For further explanation of what should be included in each file, please refer to the RFP. To download templates, you may need to right-click the link and "Save link as..."

<u>Required Document</u>	<u>Instructions</u>	<u>Format</u>
Proposed Budget	Budget template; complete and upload; instructions	Excel
Job description(s) (if applicable)	Upload	PDF
Letter of Approval to Submit Proposal (if applicable)	Organization completes; applicant uploads If a university, this must be written/signed by your university's grant office (e.g. Office of Sponsored Projects) Example letter	PDF
Letters of Support from Partner Organizations (if applicable)	Partner completes; applicant uploads	PDF
Additional requirements (if applicable)	Upload	PDF

Click the green plus to upload the required document.
Please be sure to select a file type for the document.

DOCUMENTS	
Filter by Type	All document types (8) ▼

	VPI RFP Budget Template.xlsx	
Proposed Budget		
Added by Lexi Arons at 3:50 PM on June 11, 2026		
	VPI RFP Budget Template.xlsx - VPI.pdf	
Proposed Budget		
Added by Lexi Arons at 3:50 PM on June 11, 2026		
	Letter of Support.pdf	
Letter of Support		
Added by JoAnne Garcia at 9:07 PM on June 5, 2026		
	Letter of Approval.pdf	
Letter of Approval to Submit Proposal		
Added by JoAnne Garcia at 9:06 PM on June 5, 2026		
	JessicaGomez_Master_Resume_Final.pdf.pdf	
Proposed Staff resume(s) and/or job description(s)		
Added by JoAnne Garcia at 7:46 PM on June 5, 2026		
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▼ Fiscal Documents

Following is a list of fiscal documents to be uploaded. These will assist the foundation in assessing the organization's fiscal soundness. The foundation may request additional fiscal documents when reviewing proposals.

Please be aware that applicants may not delete files in this section once uploaded; please contact Hogg-Grants@austin.utexas.edu for assistance.

Required Document

Format

IRS letter of determination of 501(c)(3) status or tax-exempt status
 501(c)(3) Approval Letter example
 Tax Exempt Letter example

PDF

Most recent IRS Form 990 or other indication of financial status IRS Form 990 IRS Form 990 Instructions	PDF
Current operating budget (for universities: unit or departmental budget)	PDF
Statement of activities (income statements) from the past year	PDF
Statement of financial position (balance sheets) from the past year	PDF
Church Status Verification Form (if applicable)	PDF
Organization Logo (if available)	JPG

Click the green plus to upload the required document.
Please be sure to select a file type for the document.

FISCAL DOCUMENTS	
Filter by Type	All document types (13) ▼
 2025 REVENUE REPORT ON RESTRICTED FUND.pdf Statement of activities (income statements) from the past year (PDF) Required Added by JoAnne Garcia at 10:42 AM on June 5, 2026	
 2025 RESTRICTED FB-CC JUDGES EDUCATION.pdf Statement of financial position (balance sheets) - from the past year (PDF) Required Added by JoAnne Garcia at 10:42 AM on June 5, 2026	
 2025 BALANCE SHEET OF RESTRICTED FUND2.pdf Statement of financial position (balance sheets) - from the past year (PDF) Required Added by JoAnne Garcia at 10:42 AM on June 5, 2026	

 2025 BALANCE SHEET OF RESTRICTED FUND.pdf	
Statement of financial position (balance sheets) - from the past year (PDF)	
Required	
Added by JoAnne Garcia at 10:42 AM on June 5, 2026	
 2026 Current Court Budget.pdf	
Current operating budget (PDF) Required	
Added by JoAnne Garcia at 10:33 AM on June 5, 2026	
1 - 5 of 13 Records	1 2 3
Jump to Page	

▼ Help Us Improve (Optional)

How would you rate the ease of completing this application? (1 = easy, 5 = difficult):

Approximately how many hours were spent completing this application?

Additional feedback:

EMAIL AND ALERT COMMUNICATIONS

Application Received
Sent to JoAnne Garcia at 11:45 AM on June 23, 2026

Application Received
Sent to JoAnne Garcia at 9:08 PM on June 5, 2026