



**Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
Criminal Justice Advisory Committee**

CJAC Meeting

January 14, 2026 @ 2:30 pm

LRGVDC Ken Jones Executive Board Room

301 W Railroad St. Bldg. B

Weslaco, TX

CJAC MINUTES

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Patrick "Kelly" McCormick at 2:32 P.M.

II. Roll Call

Present: Annie Romero, Michael Cortez (Proxy for Mario G. Perea), David K. Longoria, Gloria Ocampo, Rene Garza (Proxy for Luis Saenz), Guadalupe Flores-Palomo (Proxy for Pablo Almaguer), Rose Gomez, Rosie Mendoza, Juan Sebastian Gonzalez (Proxy for Tom Hushen), Antonio "Rick" Gonzalez, Carla Rodriguez, Tony Garza (Proxy for Eddie Guerra), Mark Perez, Patrick Kelley McCormick, Olga Cardoza (Proxy for Patricia "Cookie" Bader), Toribio "Terry" Palacio, Rosa Hernandez, Rosie Martinez, Robert Lopez, Maryann Denner, Annette Hinojosa, Frank Garcia, Uvaldo Zamora, Raul Garza, Daniel Rodriguez (Proxy for Monica H. Sanchez).

Absent: Laura Soule, Christina Sprawls,

III. Public Comments

None received.

IV. Action Items

- a. Discussion and action to approve draft minutes from December 10, 2025, meeting.

No Changes were made. Motion to approve by David K. Longoria, seconded by Rene Garza. All in favor. Motion passes.

V. Old or New Business

a. Department updates:

1. Updates on Criminal Justice funding and disbursement of grants.

The Committee was briefed on currently available criminal justice funding and disbursement grants. Staff reviewed active grants, including Criminal Justice Grants, General Victim Assistance grant program, Juvenile Justice and Youth Diversion, Victim Services, and Violence Against Women grants. Applications for these programs will continue to be monitored by the CJAC as in prior years. Mr. Merla informed the committee that Homeland Security grants have not yet open, which may result in an increased number of applicants from the Homeland security side.

Criminal Justice grant applications are schedule to close on February 12. Batching is expected in April, with submission due by May 9. The April meeting will remain flexible to accommodate this timeline. The committee will be informed of any changes. Mr. Merla explained to the committee that both CJAC and HSAC are eligible to apply for these grants, provided they meet all required criteria.

2. Recap of Grant Application workshop.

Mr. Merla reported that a grant workshop was held in December shortly after the RFAs became available. The committee review the current criminal justice funding sources to be considered for this funding cycle. Members were informed of updated application requirements, including the requirement that a governing body resolution must now be submitted at the same time as application, rather than after submission. It was also noted that applications require certification by an authorize official and completion of the NGO/CEO certification confirming compliance with eligibility requirements. The committee was advised that four primary funding sources are available for review this year.

3. Review of scoring sheets per funding category and regional budget expenditure.

Mr. Merla reviewed the grant scoring sheet and confirmed that the process remains unchanged from the previous year to ensure consistency. Applications will be entered under the appropriate categories, including JAG, Truancy Prevention, Victim assistance, and Violence Against Women Program. Scores will be automatically tabulated through the established formula, with staff verifying total as needed.

4. Upcoming trainings.

Mr. Merla confirmed that there will be a Crisis Leadership training on February 4, 2026, from 9am to 1pm in the LRGVDC at Ken Jones executive board room. This training is open to all managers, leaders and everyone who works in crisis leadership.

Mr. McCormick notified the committee that the Prosecution Unit will host its annual free training for law enforcement and prosecutors at South Padre Island, Margaritaville, at the end of February. The training provides approximately 10 hours of TCOL credit. The registration link was sent to Mr. Merla so that it can be distributed to all interested parties.

5. Review of latest Completeness Report.

Mr. Merla review that latest completeness report with the committee and explained the importance of achieving a 90% completeness as it would affect those jurisdictions applying for grants within their county. A recommendation was given to try to avoid continuance and put for a conviction or disposition of the case.

Mr. Rene Garza brought up a point, stating that their office was impacted by COVID and have brought it up to the Governor's office, granting them a COVID exception on the closing of the cases. Mrs. Annette Hinojosa added that some of their cases from Willacy County are transferred to Cameron County stating that they might have an impact due to that. Mr. Merla stated he would consider drafting something for the committee to review depending on the recommendations to send to the Governor's Office.

- b. Open floor –
None received.

VI. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Carla Rodriguez and seconded by David K. Longoria. The meeting was adjourned at 2:56 P.M.

Next CJAC Meeting February 11, 2026 @ 2:30 pm.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____