

**Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
Criminal Justice Advisory Committee
Bylaws
FY2024-2025**



**LRGVDC Public Safety - Criminal Justice Program
301 W. Railroad St.
Weslaco, TX 78596**

Contact Us



www.lrgvdc.org



956-682-3481



ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of the Committee shall be the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC) Criminal Justice Advisory Committee (CJAC).

ARTICLE II - AUTHORITY

The CJAC is hereby created by the LRGVDC under the authority of the LRGVDC Bylaws. The CJAC is a subcommittee of the LRGVDC Board of Directors. The CJAC shall furnish policy guidance to the LRGVDC Board of Directors and shall recommend programs to reduce crime and improve the criminal justice system throughout the region.

ARTICLE III - FUNCTIONS OF COMMITTEE

The CJAC shall carry out the following:

1. Advise the LRGVDC's Board of Directors on matters related to criminal justice.
2. Provide input on the LRGVDC's Regional Criminal Justice Strategic Plan.
3. The CJAC reviews and prioritizes grant applications submitted to CJD.

Funding sources under the CJAC Committee are:

- General Victim Assistance - Direct Services Programs
- Violent Crimes Against Women Criminal Justice and Training Projects – Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Dating Violence, and Stalking
- Criminal Justice Programs
- General Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Programs
- Truancy Prevention
- Child Sex Trafficking
- Sexual Assault Forensic Exam (SAFE) Ready Facilities Program

ARTICLE IV - PROCEDURES, MEMBERSHIP, AND RECORDS

The following rules shall govern the procedures, membership, and records of the Criminal Justice Advisory Committee (CJAC).

Parliamentary Authority

The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* shall govern the CJAC in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws and any special rules of order the CJAC may adopt.

Election of Officers

The CJAC shall elect a Chair, Vice-Chair and Parliamentarian/Secretary from among the primary representatives. Election of a Chair, Vice-Chair and Parliamentarian will occur at the time of member elections/renewals on the first Wednesday of October of the Federal Fiscal Year. Only the individual elected by the CJAC shall be eligible to carry out the functions of the office to which that person is elected, i.e., alternate/proxy representatives from the same member area cannot serve in the officer's absence unless dully elected. Thereafter, the purposed candidate must be confirmed by simple majority of the CJAC members i.e the majority of the votes.



Officers

The officers shall be a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Parliamentarian/Secretary. The election for the officers shall be conducted at a regularly scheduled CJAC meeting and approved by the LRGVDC Board of Directors biennially.

Elected Officers will serve a two (2) year term which will begin on the first meeting in October of the Federal Fiscal Year. These officers shall constitute the CJAC Executive Committee. Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy Counties shall each have a representative on this committee.

In the event of the Chairperson's vacancy, the Vice Chairperson will ascend to Chairperson and the Parliamentarian/Secretary will ascend to Vice Chairperson thus creating a vacancy of Parliamentarian/Secretary who will be nominated from the corresponding county. In order to ascend, officers must attend all meetings.

If neither the Vice Chairperson or the Parliamentarian/Secretary accept the automatic ascension to Chairperson, nominations of CJAC members who have served for two (2) or more years on the CJAC may be submitted and voted into office by members by simple majority vote.

Membership

Total CJAC membership shall be twenty-eight (28) persons appointed for a term of two (2) years elected by the CJAC members and ratified by the LRGVDC Board of Directors. A single group/discipline may not constitute more than one-third (1/3) or nine (9) of the CJAC and must be a representative of any the three (3) counties.

The CJAC membership must have a multi-disciplinary representation of members from the region. The CJAC's membership must include individuals from the following groups/disciplines:

- citizens or parents
- substance abuse prevention
- education
- juvenile justice
- law enforcement
- mental health
- nonprofit organizations
- prosecution or courts
- victim services
- municipalities/counties

The CJAC's members' terms will begin on the first meeting in October at the beginning of the Federal Fiscal Year. Vacancies shall be filled by the CJAC members to complete an unexpired term as a replacement from the same county, not to exceed the (1/3) membership rule. There is no maximum number of terms that a members can serve. All persons nominated by the CJAC shall be submitted for approval to the LRGVDC Board of Directors. LRGVDC staff shall offer an annual CJAC training for all current and new members and the assigned alternate/proxy. An Ex-Officio Liaison can be appointed by the LRGVDC Board of Directors as a liaison to the CJAC with no voting powers. A signed Biennium Commitment Statement will be included as a requirement of all CJAC members before they can participate in any official proceedings. This acknowledgement will be signed biennially by all CJAC members and will explain the six (6) Total Absences rule.



Professional Conduct

Members will maintain objectivity and professionalism when carrying out business of the CJAC. In the event a CJAC member acts in a manner which is not objective or professional, it shall be the responsibility of the CJAC Executive Committee to address the incident with the LRGVDC CJAC Liaison. Once the CJAC Liaison is notified, the CJAC Liaison will report to the LRGVDC Board of Directors of any incidents, actions and recommendations.

Vacancy

A vacancy occurs when:

- 1) A member's term expires, and the member is not reappointed.
- 2) A member resigns (resignations shall be in writing to the LRGVDC CJAC).
- 3) A member may be removed upon recommendation of three-fourths ($\frac{3}{4}$) of the CJAC's quorum.
- 4) A member no longer meets the discipline requirements as listed under membership or attendance; or on the advice of the board of directors.
- 5) A member dies.

Alternates

- 1) CJAC Members shall name up to two (2) alternates/proxy at the time they sign the Biennium Commitment Statement. An alternate cannot represent more than one member.
- 2) Alternates shall, insofar as possible, represent the same functional discipline as primary Criminal Justice Advisory Committee members subject to applicable regulations and guidelines outlined in Article III (Memberships) of these bylaws.
- 3) Only primary Criminal Justice Advisory Committee members or their designated alternates shall have voting privileges during any committee meeting.
- 4) Prior to any scheduled CJAC meetings, the primary member must provide training to their alternate(s).
- 5) During the grant priority process, alternates cannot have voting privileges unless the alternate(s) was present during the grant category that is being presented.

Voting

- 1) Each member of the CJAC or the alternate/proxy shall have one (1) vote.
- 2) Each member or his/her alternate must be present to cast a vote.
- 3) The Member or Alternate who is present at roll call shall be the only one authorized to vote on any action items for that meeting.
- 4) For the prioritization meeting(s), the Member or Alternate who is present at roll call shall be the only one authorized to vote on any action items for that category.

Officers Duties

- 1) The Chairperson shall preside at CJAC meetings.
- 2) In the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice Chairperson shall assume the duties of the Chairperson, or in the event of the Chairperson's inability or refusal to act, the Parliamentarian/Secretary shall have the powers of, and shall perform the duties of the Chairperson.
- 3) In the absence of both Chairperson and Vice Chairperson the Parliamentarian/Secretary shall assume the duties of the Chairperson. The Parliamentarian/Secretary shall give advice on parliamentary procedures to officers and members of the CJAC.
- 4) In the event there is no officer present, the CJAC Members can select a member to preside over the meeting.



Quorum for Business

The quorum for transaction of any business shall be fifty-one percent (51%) of the voting membership present. A quorum for this committee consists of fourteen (14) members with a majority of being eight (8) members.

Attendance

Consecutive Absence Rule. Members and/or alternates/proxy who fail to attend six (6) total meetings shall be subject to removal from the CJAC. After the fourth absence, LRGVDC staff will notify the CJAC member to advise him/her of the Total Absence Rule by email and written correspondence.

On the fourth absence, the member will be notified by regular and electronic mail to inform him/her of the attendance provision. After the sixth (6th) absence, a member will be subject to removal, and a letter, signed by the LRGVDC Executive Director will be sent to the member informing him/her of their removal. Members so removed may appeal in writing (both email and hardcopy letter) to the LRGVDC Board of Directors within two (2) weeks of the date of notification. Appeals will be handled in a timely manner as designated by the LRGVDC Board of Directors and the member will be notified in writing (both email and hardcopy letter) of the decision. Throughout the appeal process, the LRGVDC staff will keep the LRGVDC Board of Directors informed. An absence from any subcommittee meeting is exempt from the Total Absence rule.

The total absence rule applies starting the first meeting in October of the Federal Fiscal Year.

Meetings

Regular meetings will be held eleven (11) months of the calendar year with the purpose to modify/review the bylaws, policy manual and membership for a new grant cycle, for a training session regarding scoring procedures prior to new grant cycle, and to prioritize grant applications. Special meetings will be called to orient new members about the function of the CJAC and to address other business that the CJAC deems necessary. The Chairperson shall announce the meeting and provide written notice of the date, hour, place and subject of the meeting via the LRGVDC staff. This notice shall be submitted at least (72) hours in advance of the meeting date, in compliance with the Texas Open Meetings Act. CJAC meetings maybe conducted via teleconference call and/or video call using either Microsoft Teams, Zoom or another approved format.

Minutes

Minutes of all meetings shall be recorded by the staff of the LRGVDC Criminal Justice Department.



Temporary Subcommittees

The Chairperson of the CJAC shall be responsible for the designation of the membership of any standing and temporary subcommittees. Subcommittees shall be created to improve the quality of service provided by the CJAC.

The subcommittees are comprised of the following categories:

Membership Subcommittee which will be assigned with:

- Reviewing and recommending new appointments to the CJAC;
- Review and recommend nominees to the Executive Board; and
- If a member appeals their removal from the CJAC based on the consecutive absence rule, the committee will consider the appeal and make the recommendation to the CJAC board.

Bylaws Subcommittee which will be assigned with reviewing and recommending any revisions of the bylaws on an annual basis.

Policies and Procedures Subcommittee which will be assigned with reviewing and recommending any revisions the policies and procedures on an annual basis.

ARTICLE V - ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT OF THESE BY-LAWS

The following rules shall govern the procedures for the adoption and amendments of the bylaws contained herein.

Adoption of Amendments

These bylaws may be adopted by the Board of Directors of the LRGVDC. An Amendment to these procedures may be proposed by a majority vote of the CJAC members present. A proposed amendment passed by the CJAC shall be submitted for approval to the LRGVDC Board of Directors one week prior to a regular monthly meeting of the LRGVDC Board of Directors.

Disclosure: Bylaws implemented at the local level can only be superseded by the State of Texas,

**Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
Criminal Justice Advisory Committee
Policies & Procedures
FY2024-2025**



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THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR'S CRIMINAL JUSTICE GRANTS DIVISION AND THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

The Office of the Governor's (OOG) Criminal Justice Division (CJD) is the entity responsible for administering and awarding a number of grant programs across the State of Texas. The grant funding assists Texas jurisdictions to improve public safety and support victims of crime by filling system gaps and promoting innovative solutions to common challenges. The LRGVDC is one of twenty-four Councils of Government (COG) in the State of Texas and is the liaison between the OOG and local jurisdictions in the three county regions, which includes the counties of Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy.

POLICIES AUTHORITY

The following policies and procedures will govern the LRGVDC's Criminal Justice Advisory Committee's (CJAC) application review and prioritization process for designated funding sources. In addition, these policies and procedures will govern the operation of LRGVDC's Criminal Justice planning as outlined in the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement between CJD and the LRGVDC. These policies are reviewed annually to align with local, regional and state guidelines.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CJAC)

The CJAC is a volunteer committee comprised of a multi-disciplinary representation of members from the region as per CJD requirements. Members are appointed by the LRGVDC's Executive Committee. The responsibility of the CJAC is to advise the LRGVDC on matters related to criminal justice.

The discipline areas include:

- citizens or parents
- substance abuse prevention
- education, juvenile justice
- law enforcement
- mental health
- non-profit organizations
- prosecution or courts
- victim services
- municipalities/counties

No single group or discipline may constitute more than one-third (1/3) of the CJAC.

FUNDING SOURCES

The CJAC will review and prioritize the following CJD funding sources:

- General Victim Assistance Direct Services Program
- Violent Crimes Against Women Justice and Training Program
- Criminal Justice Programs
- Juvenile Justice and Truancy Prevention
- Child Sex Trafficking
- Sexual Assault Forensic Exam Ready Facilities Program



GRANT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

All applicants regardless of funding status must meet ALL the requirements as set forth by the Office of the Governor/Public Safety Office's Criminal Justice Division's Request for Funding Announcement (RFA), no exceptions.

The LRGVDC's Criminal Justice staff and the CJAC shall ensure that the funding recommendations on applications are based on the following factors: the LRGVDC's Criminal Justice Strategic Plan, CJAC Policies, CJD requirements, reasonableness, and cost effectiveness.

MANDATORY GRANT WORKSHOP

All applicants are required to attend one grant workshop sponsored by the LRGVDC's Criminal Justice staff. Representatives can be one of the three grant designated officials, or a knowledgeable employee of the agency that is applying. Applicants who fail to attend a mandatory grant workshop shall be ineligible. Applicants can attend the grant workshop virtually if not physically able to attend.

APPLICATIONS

All applications shall be submitted on CJD's online grant management system, egrants.gov.texas.gov. All submission deadlines are determined by the Office of the Governor/Public Safety Office's Criminal Justice Division.

EQUIPMENT ONLY FUNDING REQUESTS

Applicants requesting funding for equipment only and no programmatic services, will be considered a biennium only applicant.

INELIGIBLE APPLICATIONS

Duplicate applications submitted for more than one COG administered CJD funding source will be considered under one funding source only. Applicants will be responsible for deciding which funding source they will apply under.

The CJAC reserves the right to deny recommendation for funding on any application, ineligible activity or line item that is not permitted under the funding source. LRGVDC staff will notify the Criminal Justice Division of such decisions.

LRGVDC's CRIMINAL JUSTICE REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

All eligible applications must address one or more of the priorities outlined in the regional strategic plan. The plan is available on the LRGVDC's website, www.lrgvdc.org.

The regional strategic plan describes the following:

- how local communities are engaged in the planning process
- how the data is used to support the plan
- stakeholders participating in the planning process
- gaps in resources for criminal justice needs
- criminal justice priorities identified during the planning process
- how the plan will be used by the CJAC during the prioritization process



PRIORITIZATION PROCESS

CJAC Members will be given a minimum of two-weeks to review and prioritize applications. Members will use a scoring instrument to record and tabulate application scoring. COG staff will tabulate scores and compile a priority list. The scoring instrument is reviewed annually and is updated as needed to reflect local, state, and federal guidelines. Once the scores are tabulated, the CJAC will hold a prioritization meeting to review rankings and determine budget allocations.

- **Tie Breaking Procedures**

The highest and lowest score will be removed and recalculated to obtain the new aggregated score and will not affect the overall rankings of all the other applicants.

Depending on ongoing health and safety factors, the prioritization meeting will be either online, or in person. Applicants will be notified of the prioritization meeting date and platform, but attendance is not mandatory.

The CJAC reserves the right to recommend an amount less than the requested amount based on the budget cost effectiveness, reasonableness, or previous performance under all funding sources.

COG staff will submit the CJAC's recommended priority lists for all the funding categories to the LRGVDC Board of Directors to review and approve. The LRGVDC Board of Directors reserves the right to endorse or disallow the CJAC's recommendations. Once approved, the COG will submit the approved priority lists of grant projects to CJD. All projects are conditionally approved until CJD makes the final determination.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The COG shall ensure that members of the COG's governing body, the CJAC, and COG staff abstain from scoring and voting on any grant application, other than a grant application submitted by a COG, during the prioritization process if the member or an individual related to the member within the third degree by consanguinity or within the second degree by affinity:

- is employed by the applicant agency and works for the unit or division that would administer the grant, if awarded;
- serves on any governing board that oversees the unit or division that would administer the grant, if awarded; or
- owns or controls any interest in a business entity or other non-governmental organization that benefits, directly or indirectly, from activities with the applicant agency; or
- receives any funds from the applicant agency as a result of the grant, if awarded; or
- receives any funds, or a substantial amount of tangible goods, or services, from the applicant agency as a result of the grant, if awarded.

If a CJAC member has a conflict of interest regarding a particular grant application, the member must abstain from voting, commenting, or otherwise influencing the prioritization process from the entire fund source in that category.

If any applicant, CJAC member, COG personnel or other individual has reason to believe that favoritism or inappropriate actions occurred during the scoring or prioritization of PSO/CJD projects, the COG shall ensure that concerns are shared with PSO/CJD as soon as possible.



NOTIFICATION OF PRIORITIZATION RESULTS

The COG shall notify all applicants of the approved prioritized lists within thirty (30) calendar days of the LRGVDC's Board of Directors' approval.

LOCAL APPEALS PROCESS

Please note that appeals cannot be based on areas of discretion in the CJAC scoring criteria. An applicant may appeal based on the following:

- Mathematical error (i.e. the score on any selection criteria is arrived at incorrectly by COG staff due to human or computer error)

The appeal must be submitted in writing to the LRGVDC Board of Directors Chair within ten (10) business working days from the date of the notification of prioritization results. All appeals must include the specific alleged procedural violation(s).

An applicant must base their appeal upon a verifiable error made during the prioritization of the review process and the applicant must show that the error actually caused the denial of the application (or a portion of the application). The applicant must submit written documentation supporting the appeal.

Appeals made regarding a CJAC decision will be handled by the COG only. If an applicant appeals to CJD, they will be requested to go back to their COG for resolution. The responsibility and decision to consider initially filed appeals lies solely with the LRGVDC Board of Directors. CJD does not accept or provide an appeals process.

The LRGVDC Board of Directors may take one of the following actions:

- Concur with the appeal and make the appropriate adjustments to the applicant's scores.
- Disagree with the appeal and provide the basis for rejecting the appeal to the applicant.

FINAL REVIEW BY CJD

The COG shall submit the priority list of applications to the Office of the Governor's Criminal Justice Division. If revisions on applications are deemed necessary, CJD will notify grantees directly. Grantees will be expected to submit the revisions to CJD. All funding decisions made by the Criminal Justice Division are final. No appeals will be accepted by the Criminal Justice Division regarding their funding decisions.



**CRIMINAL JUSTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CJAC)
BIENNIUM MEMBERSHIP COMMITMENT FORM**

This CJAC Biennium Membership Commitment form acknowledges that as a member:

- 1) I am agreeing to commit to all CJAC proceedings; and
- 2) I understand failing to attend six (6) total meetings will be subject to removal from the CJAC.

CJAC Member	
Email Address Phone Number	
Mailing Address	

CJAC Member Alternates/Proxy

A CJAC Member shall name up to three (3) alternates/proxy at the time they sign the Biennium Membership Commitment form. Only the primary CJAC Member, or their designated alternate/proxy shall have voting privileges during any committee meeting.

1st Alternate/Proxy Name	
Email Address & Phone Number	
2 nd Alternate/Proxy Name (if applicable)	
Email Address & Phone Number	
3 rd Alternate/Proxy Name (if applicable)	
Email Address & Phone Number	

I hereby understand and acknowledge the CJAC membership requirements.

I understand that it is my responsibility to inform LRGVDC staff of my continued participation in the CJAC and to provide LRGVDC my updated contact info.

CJAC Member's Signature	Date