

	Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid
Application Completeness Check for 2026 HSAB Funding	San Marcos Justice and Stability Project
Amount Requested	\$200,000
Questions	
Are all questions answered?	Yes
Is the application signed? (this is a certification)	Yes
Does the program have measurable outcomes?	Yes
Is the agency a Human Services Agency?	Yes
Is the agency overseen by a Board of Directors?	Yes
Required Attachments	
BUDGETS	
1. Program budget for current fiscal year	(agency)
2. Program budget proposed for next fiscal year	No
3. Budget showing the exact uses of the HSAB funding, to be included in the contract	pending
BOARD OF DIRECTORS INFORMATION	
4. Board of Directors membership roster	Yes
5. Board of Directors City of Residence	Yes
6. Board of Directors Meeting Attendance Record	Yes
7. Board of Directors membership criteria	pending
ORGANIZATION INFORMATION	
8. Current IRS Form 990, pages 1 and 2 (not required for churches)	Yes
9. Non-discrimination policy statement	Yes
PROGRAM INFORMATION	
10. Final Performance Report for 2024 Funding (if funded)	NA
11. Letters of support for the program - how many	5 letters
12. Policies and Procedures for the proposed Program, if available	Not Available



MEMO

TO: Human Services Advisory Board

FROM: Staff Liaison Carol Griffith, Housing and Community Development Manager, Planning and Development Services

DATE: July 18, 2025

RE: Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid – 2026 HSAB Application

The original 2026 HSAB application submitted by Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid for the San Marcos Justice and Stability Project was 249 pages long, and contained information that is not required and staff believes to be unrelated to the HSAB review.

Below is a list of the pages cut from the application by City staff. If you wish to see any of this information, we will send it to you immediately:

Pages	Description
2-3	Application Instructions
17-74	Financial Statements for TRLA as an agency
75-82	Single Audit Reports
92-107	By-Laws for TRLA
121-146	Schedules attached to the IRS Form 990
152-244	TRLA Employee Handbook

City of San Marcos Human Services Grants
FY2026 Application

I. SUMMARY INFORMATION

Please spell out organization name and program name completely, without acronyms.

Applicant Organization: *Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid, Inc.*

Contact Name: *Ciara Ayala, Director of Grants*

Telephone: [REDACTED]

Contact E-Mail Address: [REDACTED]

Website: www.trla.org

Mailing Address: *301 S Texas Ave, Mercedes, TX 78570*

San Marcos Service Address for this Program: *4920 North I-35, Austin, TX 78751*

Who is authorized to execute program documents? *Robert Doggett, Executive Director*

Program Name: *San Marcos Justice and Stability Project*

Amount of Funds Requested: *\$200,000*

What percentage of the cost of this program is requested as funding through this application?

This budget reflects 100% of the anticipated costs to provide these services within San Marcos. This is approximately 5% of the total staffing costs and benefits for the staff necessary to provide services from the relevant teams (public benefits, guardianship law, family law, and housing law).

II. QUESTIONS

All questions must be answered. Please type your answers. Application evaluations will be based on, but not necessarily limited to the criteria stated in each section.

OVERVIEW

1. Summarize the program for which funding is being requested, the services it provides, and the clients it serves.
 - a. *Texas RioGrande Legal Aid (TRLA) seeks funding from the City of San Marcos to provide a multi-faceted civil legal services program to benefit low-income residents of San Marcos. This program will deliver direct legal assistance in the areas of public benefits, housing, family violence, and mental health. With support from the City of San Marcos, TRLA will provide services to help stabilize families, prevent homelessness, support survivors of domestic violence, and protect access to critical health and financial support programs. Our clients are low-income Texans, including survivors of abuse, people with disabilities, the elderly, and tenants at risk of eviction.*

COMMUNITY NEED AND JUSTIFICATION –15 POINTS

1. Describe in detail the need for this program in San Marcos.
 - a. *The need for accessible legal services in San Marcos has grown steadily over the years due to systemic factors such as rising housing costs, gaps in mental health and domestic violence services, and barriers to public benefits that negatively impact low-income residents. The 2024 U.S. Census reported that 1 in 5 San Marcos residents live below the federal poverty level, despite Hays County being one of the fastest growing in the state. In 2023, the Texas Office of Court Administration reported that Hays County recorded over 1,400 eviction filings. Tenants face high eviction rates and often lack knowledge of the legal rights and resources available to them. Even more evictions go unrecorded due to informal tenancy agreements. In 2022, the Eviction Lab found that tenants with legal representation are significantly more likely to avoid eviction, showing a direct correlation between legal guidance and increased housing stability. In 2022, Hays County law enforcement agencies reported that they responded to over 1,000 incidents of family violence. Survivors of family violence frequently struggle to obtain protective orders or safe custody arrangements. Texas has one of the highest guardianship caseloads in the nation, yet older adults and individuals with disabilities often encounter legal and procedural barriers to securing guardianship or exploring guardianship alternatives. Additionally, barriers to accessing public benefits and health care disproportionately impact low-income residents, especially those with limited English proficiency or those navigating mental health challenges. Without access to quality, compassionate legal representation, many San Marcos residents are at risk of losing housing, safety, health care, or economic stability. TRLA is an experienced legal aid provider that offers comprehensive services in the region to combat these challenges.*
 - b. Citations:
 - i. U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). QuickFacts: San Marcos city, Texas. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/sanmarcocitytexas>
 - ii. Texas Office of Court Administration. (2023). Eviction Case Data.
 - iii. Eviction Lab. (2022). The Eviction Crisis in the United States. <https://evictionlab.org>
 - iv. Texas Department of Public Safety. (2022). Crime in Texas Report – Family Violence. <https://www.dps.texas.gov/crimereports>
 - v. National Center for State Courts. (2021). Guardianship Trends and Challenges.
2. Has the need for this program been increasing in recent years?
 - a. *Yes, TRLA has seen a steady increase in the number of cases related to evictions or public benefits denials and has seen a maintained number of cases related to guardianship needs of family violence. Local service providers and courts continue to refer clients to TRLA for help navigating these complex legal systems. The recent passage of state laws affecting tenant rights has further increased the need for accurate, accessible legal support.*

IMPLEMENTATION –15 POINTS

Evaluation:

- *The application demonstrates that resources needed to manage the proposed program are available and ready.*
 - *Applicant has clearly defined objectives focusing on results and measurable outcomes vs. only program activities descriptions and numbers served.*
 - *Past performance of programs funded by Human Services Grants has met expectations.*
1. Are all resources in place to be able to implement this program? If not, what is missing?
 - a. *TRLA has the staff and infrastructure in place to implement this program immediately. We maintain a team of attorneys, paralegals, and legal support staff trained in housing law, public benefits, family law, and guardianship. Services will be delivered through our Austin office with dedicated time for San Marcos residents, including virtual consultations, court appearances, and additional case support.*

2. What specific, measurable outcomes or results do you hope to achieve with this program?
 - a. *TRLA will open at least 140 cases for residents of San Marcos in the areas of housing law, family law, guardianship law, and public benefits access.*
 - b. *TRLA will achieve favorable outcomes (included but not limited to outcomes such as maintaining/obtaining stable housing, maintaining/obtaining public benefits, securing guardianship or guardianship alternatives, or securing protective orders or custody orders)*
3. If funding is not available at the requested amount, what is the minimum Human Services Grant funding needed to be able to run this program?
 - a. *We are able to implement a scaled-down version of the program proposed in this application to be fulfilled with a \$100,000 budget. With this funding level, the projected service metric would decrease to 75 closed cases.*

IMPACT AND COST EFFECTIVENESS –15 POINTS

Evaluation:

- *impact on the identified need*
 - *implementation costs compared to impact*
 - *use of available resources (financial, staff, volunteer)*
 - *impact compared to other applicants*
1. Programs can provide value by deeply impacting the lives of a few, with effects that may ripple through generations, or by providing smaller but meaningful impact to a larger group. Describe in detail the impact this program will have on the identified need and on San Marcos residents.
 - a. *This program provides impactful legal support to help stabilize families, prevent homelessness, and protect vulnerable populations. For example, a single successful eviction defense can prevent a family from entering homelessness, reducing the strain on public services and preventing undue stress on vulnerable families. Legal aid for domestic violence survivors protects survivors and their dependents, reduces repeat violence, and decreases intake rates at emergency shelters. Assistance with public benefits appeals and applications helps individuals and families maintain stability and access basic needs, particularly during times of crisis. Guardianship legal services ensure that individuals with disabilities or declining capacity have safe, supportive arrangements in place, protecting them from potential abuse and neglect. TRLA leverages other funding sources to support staff and overhead costs, making this program cost-effective and impactful for San Marcos residents.*
 2. Briefly describe other funding sources, volunteers, or in-kind donations that will be used with this program.
 - a. *TRLA is funded in part by the Legal Services Corporation (“LSC”). As a condition of the funding received from LSC, TRLA is restricted in certain activities in all of its legal work—including work supported by other funding sources. TRLA may not expend any funds for any activity prohibited by the Legal Services Corporation Act, 42 U.S.C. §2996 et seq. or by Public Law 104-134. Public Law 104-234 §504(d) requires that notice of these restrictions be given to all funders or programs funded by the Legal Service Corporation. For a copy of these laws or any further information, please contact: Executive Director, Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, 301 S. Texas Avenue, Mercedes, Texas 78570; Tel: [REDACTED]*
 - b. *In addition to funding from LSC, TRLA also receives funding from other private and government agencies. The largest of these is the Texas Access to Justice Foundation (TAJF).*
 3. How many total annual unduplicated direct clients is this program expected to serve? What percentage will be San Marcos residents?
 - a. *We expect to serve 120 unduplicated clients with 100% residing in the city of San Marcos or Hays County. We anticipate closing at least 140 cases for these clients within the project period.*

COMMUNITY SUPPORT – 15 POINTS

Evaluation:

- *A minimum of three letters of reference that indicate strong local support for the program and the agency's ability to implement it as described in the application. Letters must be in support of the specific program requesting funding, not the agency as a whole. Letters will preferably be from San Marcos residents as well as direct clients of the program.*
 - *Evidence that volunteers play a vital role in the program or agency's operation.*
 - *Evidence that board members are actively involved in and supportive of the agency*
1. What actions do Board members take to support the programs of the agency?
 - a. *Our Board of Directors plays an important role in ensuring TRLA remains responsive to the needs of communities like San Marcos. Our board members contribute to governance, policy development, fundraising, and community outreach, supporting TRLA's mission and overall impact. Our client members bring lived experience and represent the diverse populations TRLA serves, ensuring that program priorities reflect community realities. The Board reviews and approves budgets, strategic plans, and service goals, ensuring that TRLA's work throughout our service region remains accountable, effective, and aligned with community needs. Board members also help raise awareness of TRLA's services across the region and strengthen partnerships with other local organizations to develop and support a coordinated, community-based approach to civil legal aid.*
 2. Briefly describe the number and role of volunteers in the program or agency's operation.
 - a. *TRLA had 15 volunteer paralegals/advocates during the 2024-2025 fiscal year. While TRLA's volunteers do not provide legal advice or assistance, they do help TRLA expand access to civil legal services by supporting our attorneys and caseworkers in a variety of ways, including but not limited to case intake support, research and preparation of documents, and providing interpretation or translation support. They often assist with any community outreach efforts presented by TRLA, such as intake clinics, distributing educational materials, and more. We do not anticipate utilizing volunteers to carry out the work described in this application.*

COUNCIL PRIORITIES - 30 POINTS

1. How long has this program served San Marcos residents? (10 points if at least 2 years)
 - a. *TRLA has provided legal services to the San Marcos area since the early 2000s when TRLA and Legal Aid of Central Texas merged into one organization. TRLA has also maintained a contract with the City of San Marcos since the Austin Tenant's Council joined TRLA in 2022.*
2. Does the agency have an office in San Marcos? (10 points if it does)
 - a. *TRLA does not have a physical office in San Marcos but provides regular service through our Austin office and virtual access.*
3. Describe how this funding will create an increase in services or an increase in the number of people served. (10 points if creates an increase)
 - a. *This funding will allow TRLA to dedicate additional staff time to San Marcos residents to increase the number of cases closed by at least 25%. During the 2024 calendar year, TRLA closed 114 cases related to housing law, public benefits, family law, or guardianship law. With this funding from the city of San Marcos, we hope to increase those service numbers to at least 140 closed cases.*

RISK - 10 POINTS

1. How many years experience does the agency have in implementing a program of this size and complexity? (5 points if more than 5 years)
 - a. *Texas RioGrande Legal Aid (TRLA) is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to promoting justice and equal rights for low-income Texans by providing high-quality civil legal assistance and related educational services. Founded in 1970, TRLA has emerged as one of the largest legal aid providers in the United States, championing the cause of those who might otherwise lack access to legal representation and support. With over fifty years of experience, TRLA operates across a vast region, covering 68 counties in Southwest Texas and serving over 16,000 clients annually.*
 - b. *At the core of TRLA's mission lies the unwavering commitment to promoting the dignity, self-sufficiency, safety, and stability of individuals and families with limited financial means by providing high-quality civil legal assistance and related educational services. By offering vital legal assistance, TRLA ensures that low-income Texans can navigate complex legal systems and protect their rights, breaking down barriers to justice and empowering them to overcome adversity.*
 - c. *Through a dedicated team of over 438 skilled attorneys, paralegals, and support staff, TRLA addresses a diverse range of civil legal issues, encompassing over 45 practice areas which are divided into seven groups: Community Preservation & Empowerment, Economic & Social Justice, Domestic Violence & Family Law, Housing, Labor & Employment, Public Benefits, and Response Team. As an organization with a deep sense of responsibility towards its community, TRLA is adept at understanding the unique challenges faced by their clients and tailors its services to meet their specific needs, irrespective of language or cultural background. The legal aid provided is not just a legal remedy; it's a step towards improving lives and nurturing a sense of security.*
 - d. *TRLA's impact is not limited to direct legal assistance alone. Recognizing the power of knowledge and education, the organization actively engages in outreach programs, workshops, and training sessions to empower clients with vital information about their rights and responsibilities. By promoting legal literacy, TRLA equips individuals with the tools they need to make informed decisions and assert their rights confidently.*
 - e. *As the needs of the community evolve, TRLA remains steadfast in its mission to uphold justice and protect the rights of low-income individuals. Through strategic partnerships, cutting-edge legal strategies, and a deep sense of compassion, TRLA continues to be a driving force in transforming lives and fostering equitable opportunities.*
 - f. *Ultimately, Texas RioGrande Legal Aid is an organization that stands as a symbol of hope and empowerment, ensuring that justice is not a privilege but a fundamental right accessible to all, regardless of socioeconomic status. With a legacy of impact and a vision of a brighter future, TRLA continues to make a profound difference in the lives of countless Texans, leaving an indelible mark on the journey towards a more just and inclusive society.*
2. What percentage of the program's funding is non-City? (5 points if at least 50%)
 - a. *TRLA supports 95% of total staffing costs and benefits necessary to provide services from the relevant teams (public benefits, guardianship law, family law, and housing law) with non-City funding.*

III. FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

By signing this application I certify the following to be true:

1. All Human Services Grant funding will be spent on San Marcos residents, except for school-based programs, in which case it may be spent within the San Marcos Consolidated Independent School District boundary.
2. Funding requested is not more than 50% of the total funding for the agency.

3. Funding will not be used to fund more than 20% of a full time position.
4. Agency has been in existence for at least 2 years. (This can include serving communities other than San Marcos.)

SUBMITTAL APPROVED BY:

Signature: Robert Doggett

Date: 07/18/2025

Printed Name: Robert Doggett

Title: Executive Director

Project Budget

San Marcos Justice and Stability Project

Expense	Total Project Budget
Personnel	
Salaries <i>Attorney, paralegal, and legal assistant staff positions funded at no more than 5% FTE each to the grant. No single staff member will be funded beyond 5% with the funding provided by this grant. Estimated dollar amount for salaries was created by multiplying salary amount for grant-funded staff by 0.05.</i>	\$ 127,800.00
Fringe <i>Including benefits and insurance for funded staff</i>	\$ 42,200.00
Subtotals: Personnel	\$ 170,000.00
Other Program Costs	
Indirect Costs <i>Including administrative costs and other non-personnel costs such as printing, supplies, and internet</i>	\$ 30,000.00
Subtotals: Other Program Costs	\$ 30,000.00
Total Project Budget	\$ 200,000.00

TRLA Case Coding/Billing Procedures:

TRLA utilizes a case management system called LegalServer for all data collection and reporting needs. LegalServer handles client tracking, case management, and data collection, and staff timekeeping. Each distinct grant TRLA receives is assigned a unique funding code that the Accounting Team uses to track grant expenses. Using Legal Server, TRLA staff can assign individual cases to specific funding codes, and generate timekeeping reports based on unique funding codes. The Grants Manager uses LegalServer to 1) ensure cases assigned to specific grant funding codes meet grant eligibility requirements and 2) generate timekeeping reports to track the exact time spent by staff on grant activities. The Accounting Team utilizes these timekeeping reports for billing purposes, ensuring only grant-related activities are charged to the funder.

Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, Inc.
Revised Projected Budget
October 1, 2024 through September 30, 2025

Support and Revenue

Legal Services Corporation	\$ 24,030,825
Texas Access to Justice Foundation	\$ 24,343,013
Other Civil Grants	\$ 6,417,563
Subtotal	\$ 54,791,401

Other Revenue

Attorneys Fees	\$ 150,000
Litigation Cost Recovered	\$ 6,250
Subtotal	\$ 156,250

Unrestricted

Individual Donations	\$ 100,000
Rental Income	\$ 156,000
Subtotal	\$ 256,000

Total Support and Revenue **\$ 55,203,651**

Personnel Cost

Attorneys	\$ 16,942,519
Paralegals	\$ 7,688,056
Others	\$ 9,159,800
Salary Subtotal	\$ 33,790,375
Employee Benefits	\$ 12,647,461
Total Personnel Cost	\$ 46,437,836

Non Personnel Costs

Space Cost	\$ 1,551,037
Utilities	\$ 233,274
Equipment	\$ 527,679
Supplies	\$ 1,211,891
Telephone	\$ 722,995
Travel	\$ 503,176
Training	\$ 760,080
Property	\$ -
Library	\$ 213,488
Litigation	\$ 1,316,228
Contractual Services	\$ 1,243,800
Due & Fees	\$ 13,881
Client Activity	\$ 9,757
Other	\$ 458,529
Total Non-Personnel Costs	\$ 8,765,815

Total Expenses **\$ 55,203,651**

Surplus (Deficit) **\$ 0**

Net Assets - Beginning of Year **\$ 1,529,264**

Net Assets **\$ 1,529,264**

Assumptions for Fiscal Year 2025 Budget

Revenue:

For the current fiscal year, all grants were reviewed to inform projections. If a grant is expected to renew, projections are based on the current awarded amount. For grants where we have been notified of a potential reduction, the projected amount is adjusted by the anticipated percentage of reduction. If a grant is not expected to renew, it is excluded from the projections.

Legal Services Corporation (LSC)

Legal Services Corporation (LSC) revenue is based on the 2025 Preliminary Grant Allocation for LSC Service Areas under the Continuing Resolution. We submitted a carryover request estimated at \$7,238,653, which was approved; however, the actual carryover amount was lower. We will submit the fiscal year 2024 audited financial statements reflecting the updated carryover amount of \$5,554,499. This revised carryover amount of \$5,554,499 is included in the budget.

Texas Access to Justice Foundation (TAJF)

Texas Access to Justice Foundation (TAJF) revenue is based on the grant cycle spanning September 1, 2023, through August 30, 2025. These are two-year grant awards. Projections include the remaining balances of the 2023-2025 grants as well as a one-month renewal for the 2025-2026 grant cycle.

Other Grants

All other grant revenue is based on existing grants and the remaining months in the fiscal year. For previously awarded grants, the awarded amount is projected for the remainder of the fiscal year.

For grants that were new awards in the previous fiscal year, we do not include them in projections unless we receive an indication that they will be renewed.

Grants that are time-based are budgeted according to the amount expected to be expensed during the fiscal year.

Other Revenue

The projected attorney fees are estimated at \$150,000, with anticipated litigation costs recovery of \$6,250

Unrestricted

Projections for unrestricted funds are based on historical trends, including revenue from donations and rental income generated by the Plains Capital building in Corpus Christi, ATM rentals in Mercedes, and parking lot rentals in Brownsville.

Expenses

Salaries

Salaries are based on current salary levels and include the increases negotiated with the union.

Fringe Benefits

The budget includes fringe benefits for current staff, a projected 5% increase for health insurance renewal in the next plan year, and a 1% increase in pension costs as part of the salary proposal.

Non Personnel

Non-personnel expenses are projected based on historical data from fiscal year 2024, with a 1% to 2% increase applied to the following line items: utilities, equipment, supplies, telephone, library, dues and fees, and other.

Space: A 2% increase was projected for general line items, including landscaping, alarm monitoring, pest control, and similar expenses. Additionally, \$945,500 was budgeted for building maintenance and improvements to address various office repairs across the organization.

Travel: The budget includes an increase in the meal allowance as outlined in the current union proposal.

Training:

- The budget for Attorney Continuing Legal Education (CLE) is based on 187 attorneys, with an allocation of \$1,000 per attorney per year, totaling \$187,000 for fiscal year 2025.

- An additional \$335,000 is budgeted for in-house training, including the New Lawyers Orientation/Training (Hunt) and the LASSA Shelter Conference.
- For non-attorney training, \$188,300 is allocated, based on 269 staff members at \$700 per person.
- Finally, \$23,000 is budgeted for board member training through NLADA.

Litigation and Contractual Services: These expenses were budgeted based on historical data from fiscal year 2024, with a projected 5% increase.

GOMEZ, FRAGOSO & ASSOCIATES, P.C.

CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

550 E. Levee St. / P.O. Box 4587 / Brownsville, Texas 78520

FAX (956) 541-7615

MOISES L. GOMEZ, CPA
LUPITA A. FRAGOSO, CPA

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

Board of Directors
Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, Inc.
Mercedes, Texas

Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, Inc. ("TRLA") (a nonprofit organization), which comprise the statement of financial position as of September 30, 2024, and the related statements of activities, functional expenses, and cash flows for the year then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements.

In our opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, Inc. as of September 30, 2024, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States and Legal Services Corporation's ("LSC") *Compliance Supplement for Audits of LSC Recipients*. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of TRLA and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinions.

Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about TRLA's ability to continue as a going concern within one year after the date that the financial statements are available to be issued.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and *Government Auditing Standards* and LSC's *Compliance Supplement for Audits of LSC Recipients* will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and *Government Auditing Standards* and LSC's *Compliance Supplement for Audits of LSC Recipients*, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of TRLA's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about TRLA's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control-related matters that we identified during the audit.

Supplementary Information

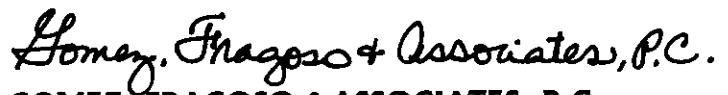
Our audit was conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the financial statements as a whole. The accompanying schedule of expenditures of federal awards and State of Texas awards, as required by Title 2 U.S. Code of Federal Regulations Part 200, *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards and Texas Grant Management Standards*, and the accompanying supplementary statements of activities by funding source, statements of activities – Legal Service Corporation, statements of activities – Texas Access to Justice Foundation, statement of revenues and expenses of Private Attorney Involvement Commitment and the Texas Access Foundation reports are presented for purposes of additional analysis and is not a required part of the financial statements. Such information is the responsibility of management and was derived from and relates directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements. The information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements or to the financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. In our opinion, the schedule of expenditures of federal and State of Texas awards are fairly stated, in all material respects, in relation to the financial statements as a whole.

Report on Summarized Comparative Information

We have previously audited TRLA's 2023 financial statements, and we expressed an unmodified audit opinion on those audited financial statements in our report dated December 6, 2023. In our opinion, the summarized comparative information presented herein as of and for the year ended September 30, 2023, is consistent, in all material respects, with the audited financial statements from which it has been derived.

Other Reporting Required by Government Auditing Standards

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we have also issued our report dated December 10, 2024, on our consideration of TRLA's internal control over financial reporting and on our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements and other matters. The purpose of that report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over financial reporting and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of TRLA's internal control over financial reporting or on compliance. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering TRLA's internal control over financial reporting and compliance.


GOMEZ, FRAGOSO & ASSOCIATES, P.C.
Certified Public Accountants

Brownsville, Texas
December 10, 2024



The projected budget for Texas RioGrande Legal Aid's (TRLA) 2027-2027 fiscal year has not yet been finalized, as the organization is still in the process of evaluating program needs, anticipated funding, and other financial projections for the upcoming fiscal year. Budget development typically occurs closer to the end of the current fiscal year to ensure it reflects the most accurate and up-to-date information available. Once finalized, TRLA will provide the budget to Texas Bar Foundation.

2025 Board Roster

Board Member Name	Board Position	Service (Years)	City of Residence
Ron Rangel	Board Member	6	San Antonio
Javier Espinoza	Board President	4	San Antonio
Diana Torres	Board Member	13	San Antonio
Ramona Casas	Board Member	9	Edinburg
Lisa L. Taylor	Treasurer	20	Harlingen
Gloria Rincones	Board Member	11	Brownsville
Selena N. Solis	Board Member	15	El Paso
Michael R. Wyatt	Executive Committee	14	El Paso
Ralph Carrasco	Vice President	11	El Paso
Elsa L. De Alejandro	Board Member	5	Weslaco
Jose Ozuna	Board Member	5	Edinburg
Roger Reed	Board Member	34	McAllen
Leonor Cortez	Executive Committee	17	Corpus Christi
Jeanne Chastain	Board Member	23	Corpus Christi
Carlos Blanco	Board Member	20	Laredo
Christina A. Mendiola	Board Member	17	Laredo
Ofelia Zapata	Board Member	23	Austin
William Hopkins	Board Member	1	Austin
Diana Abrego	Executive Committee	39	Del Rio
Victoria Guerra	Board Member	26	McAllen
W. Lee Keeling	Board Member	3	Victoria
Nathan L. Hecht	Board Member	1	Austin
Joseph A. Connors	Board Member	34	McAllen
Marta B. Pelaez	Board Member	12	San Antonio
Emma Alaniz	Board Member	9	Edinburg

Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, Inc.
Board of Directors Meeting Attendance

The Board of Directors of Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, Inc. held a regular meeting on December 14, 2024. The meeting commenced at 9:00 am o'clock a.m. CT at 103 9th Street, San Antonio, Texas.

1.&2. MEETING TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Board President Javier Espinoza called the meeting to order and welcomed all members. The following members were present:

Javier Espinoza
Ron Rangel
Diana Torres
Ramona Casas
Lisa Taylor
Gloria Rincones
Selena Solis
Michael Wyatt
Ralph Carrasco, Jr.
Elsa Laura de Alejandro
Jose Ozuna
Roger Reed
Leonor Cortez
Jeanne Chastain
Carlos Blanco, Jr.
Christina Mendiola
Ofelia Zapata
William Hopkins
Diana Abrego
Cindy Polinard
W. Lee Keeling
Joseph A. Connors, III

The following members were absent:

Ramona Casas
Victoria Guerra
Marta Pelaez

Staff members that attended the meeting included:

Robert W. Doggett, Executive Director
Nicole Maesse, Deputy Director
Diana Rodriguez, Director of Administration
Alma Rodriguez, Chief Financial Officer

Lorena Reyes, Director of Human Resources
Emma V. Villarreal, Board Secretary
Patricia Griggs, Program Coordinator
Hannah Allison, Director of Strategic Initiatives
Ciara Ayala, Director of Grants

3. Public Participation. There was no public participation.

Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, Inc.

Board of Directors Meeting Attendance

The Board of Directors of Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, Inc. held a regular meeting on March 29, 2025. The meeting commenced at 9:00 am CST in the Cascada Conference Room at La Cambria Hotel Convention Center, 701 South Ware Road, McAllen, Texas, 78501.

1.&2. MEETING TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Board President Javier Espinoza called the meeting to order and welcomed all members.

The following members were present:

Javier Espinoza

Diana Torres

Ramona Casas

Selena Solis

Michael Wyatt

Ralph Carrasco, Jr.

Roger Reed

Leonor Cortez

Jeanne Chastain

Carlos Blanco, Jr.

Victoria Guerra

Ofelia Zapata

William Hopkins

Cindy Polinard

W. Lee Keeling

The following members were absent:

Ron Rangel

Lisa Taylor

Gloria Rincones

Elsa Laura de Alejandro

Jose Ozuna

Christina Mendiola

Emma Alaniz

Diana Abrego

Joseph A. Connors, III

Marta Pelaez

Staff members that attended the meeting included:

Robert W. Doggett, Executive Director

Nicole Maesse, Deputy Director

Patricia Griggs, Program Coordinator

Diana Rodriguez, Director of Administration

Alma Rodriguez, Chief Financial Officer

Lorena Reyes, Director of Human Resources

Emma V. Villarreal, Board Secretary

Hannah Allison, Director of Strategic Initiatives

Jackie Davis, Deputy Civil Division Director

Ciara Ayala, Director of Grants

Nicole Bucheri, Staff Attorney

3. Public Participation. Nicole Bucheri, member of the Texas Legal Services Union/UAW Local 2320, addressed the Board with concerns of the Union.

Form **990**

OMB No. 1545-0047

Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax
Under section 501(c), 527, or 4947(a)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code (except private foundations)
Do not enter social security numbers on this form as it may be made public.
Go to www.irs.gov/Form990 for instructions and the latest information.

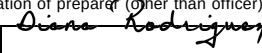
2023

Open to Public Inspection

Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service

A For the 2023 calendar year, or tax year beginning 10/01 , 2023 , and ending 9/30 , 20 2024	
B Check if applicable: ☐ Address change ☐ Name change ☐ Initial return ☐ Final return/terminated ☐ Amended return ☐ Application pending	C TEXAS RIOGRANDE LEGAL AID, INC. 301 SOUTH TEXAS MERCEDDES, TX 78570
D Employer identification number 74-1675230	E Telephone number [REDACTED]
G Gross receipts \$ 50,722,649.	
F Name and address of principal officer: SAME AS C ABOVE	
H(a) Is this a group return for subordinates? ☐ Yes ☒ No	
H(b) Are all subordinates included? ☐ Yes ☐ No If "No," attach a list. See instructions.	
I Tax-exempt status: ☒ 501(c)(3) ☐ 501(c) () (insert no.) ☐ 4947(a)(1) or ☐ 527	
J Website: WWW.TRLA.ORG	
K Form of organization: ☒ Corporation ☐ Trust ☐ Association ☐ Other	
L Year of formation: 1970	M State of legal domicile: TX

Part I Summary	
Activities & Governance	1 Briefly describe the organization's mission or most significant activities: <u>SEE SCHEDULE O</u>
	2 Check this box ☐ if the organization discontinued its operations or disposed of more than 25% of its net assets.
	3 Number of voting members of the governing body (Part VI, line 1a) 3 25
	4 Number of independent voting members of the governing body (Part VI, line 1b) 4 25
	5 Total number of individuals employed in calendar year 2023 (Part V, line 2a) 5 613
	6 Total number of volunteers (estimate if necessary) 6 149
	7a Total unrelated business revenue from Part VIII, column (C), line 12 7a 0.
b Net unrelated business taxable income from Form 990-T, Part I, line 11 7b 0.	
Revenue	8 Contributions and grants (Part VIII, line 1h) 52,418,569. 49,200,516.
	9 Program service revenue (Part VIII, line 2g) 7,769,800. 953,193.
	10 Investment income (Part VIII, column (A), lines 3, 4, and 7d) 312,859. 428,601.
	11 Other revenue (Part VIII, column (A), lines 5, 6d, 8c, 9c, 10c, and 11e) 24,850. 140,339.
	12 Total revenue - add lines 8 through 11 (must equal Part VIII, column (A), line 12) 60,526,078. 50,722,649.
Expenses	13 Grants and similar amounts paid (Part IX, column (A), lines 1-3) 6,500,000.
	14 Benefits paid to or for members (Part IX, column (A), line 4)
	15 Salaries, other compensation, employee benefits (Part IX, column (A), lines 5-10) 45,047,740. 41,639,496.
	16a Professional fundraising fees (Part IX, column (A), line 11e)
	b Total fundraising expenses (Part IX, column (D), line 25) 185,327.
	17 Other expenses (Part IX, column (A), lines 11a-11d, 11f-24e) 9,041,436. 8,106,375.
	18 Total expenses. Add lines 13-17 (must equal Part IX, column (A), line 25) 54,089,176. 56,245,871.
19 Revenue less expenses. Subtract line 18 from line 12 6,436,902. -5,523,222.	
Net Assets or Fund Balances	20 Total assets (Part X, line 16) 42,217,784. 30,156,959.
	21 Total liabilities (Part X, line 26) 28,556,099. 22,018,496.
	22 Net assets or fund balances. Subtract line 21 from line 20 13,661,685. 8,138,463.

Part II Signature Block	
Under penalties of perjury, I declare that I have examined this return, including accompanying schedules and statements, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, it is true, correct, and complete. Declaration of preparer (other than officer) is based on all information of which preparer has any knowledge.	
Sign Here	 Signature of Officer Date 2/11/2025 8:39 AM PST
Sign Here	DIANA RODRIGUEZ Type or print name and title DIRECTOR OF ADMIN
Paid Preparer Use Only	Print/Type preparer's name MOISES L. GOMEZ, CPA Preparer's signature MOISES L. GOMEZ, CPA Date 1/14/25 Check ☐ if self-employed PTIN P00175948
	Firm's name GOMEZ, FRAGOSO & ASSOCIATES, P. C. Firm's EIN 81-0606155
	Firm's address 550 E. LEVEE ST. Phone no. (956) [REDACTED]
	BROWNSVILLE, TX 78520
May the IRS discuss this return with the preparer shown above? See instructions ☒ Yes ☐ No	

Part III Statement of Program Service AccomplishmentsCheck if Schedule O contains a response or note to any line in this Part III ☒**1** Briefly describe the organization's mission:

SEE SCHEDULE O

2 Did the organization undertake any significant program services during the year which were not listed on the prior Form 990 or 990-EZ? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If "Yes," describe these new services on Schedule O.

3 Did the organization cease conducting, or make significant changes in how it conducts, any program services? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If "Yes," describe these changes on Schedule O.

4 Describe the organization's program service accomplishments for each of its three largest program services, as measured by expenses. Section 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) organizations are required to report the amount of grants and allocations to others, the total expenses, and revenue, if any, for each program service reported.**4a** (Code:) (Expenses \$ 51,900,844. including grants of \$) (Revenue \$)

LEGAL ASSISTANCE TO PERSONS FINANCIALLY UNABLE TO AFFORD LEGAL SERVICES.

4b (Code:) (Expenses \$ including grants of \$) (Revenue \$)**4c** (Code:) (Expenses \$ including grants of \$) (Revenue \$)**4d** Other program services (Describe on Schedule O.)

(Expenses \$ including grants of \$) (Revenue \$)

4e Total program service expenses 51,900,844.

TEXAS RIOGRANDE LEGAL AID

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK (June 2018)

V. EMPLOYEE POLICIES (pp.55-57)

18. SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

With respect to sexual harassment, TRLA prohibits the following:

Unwelcome sexual advance; requests for sexual favors; and all other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, especially when such conduct:

1. is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment; or
2. is used as the basis for an employment decision; or
3. unreasonably interferes with an employee's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to, the following: Verbal:

Sexual innuendoes, suggestive comments, jokes of a sexual nature, sexual propositions, threats

Non-verbal: Sexually suggestive objects or pictures, graphic commentaries, suggestive or insulting sounds, leering, whistling, obscene gestures

Physical: Unwanted physical contact, including touching, pinching, brushing the body, coerced sexual intercourse, assault

COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

Each member of management is responsible for creating an atmosphere free of discrimination and harassment, sexual or otherwise. Further, employees are responsible for respecting the rights of their co-workers.

Employees who believe they have been victims of job-related sexual harassment are directed to promptly report the incident to their supervisor, who will investigate the matter and take appropriate action, including reporting it to the Director of Administration. If an employee believes it would be inappropriate to discuss the matter with his or her supervisor, then the

employee may bypass the supervisor and report the matter directly to the Director of Administration. The Director of Administration shall conduct a prompt and thorough investigation. If appropriate and an employee prefers that the matter be heard and investigated by a person of the same sex as the employee, the Director of Administration shall make such appointment. The investigation shall be conducted in a way that respects, to the extent possible, the privacy of all the persons involved.

Persons who are found to have engaged in sexual harassment will be subject to discipline, up to and including immediate discharge. Where sexual harassment is found to have occurred, TRLA will take prompt and remedial action to stop the harassment and prevent its recurrence.

No employee who reports a matter of sexual harassment in good faith or who assists in a complaint investigation will be in any way disciplined or retaliated against. If, however, after investigating any complaint of harassment or unlawful discrimination, TRLA determines that a complaint was not made in good faith or that an employee has provided false information regarding a complaint, disciplinary action may be taken against the individual who filed the complaint or who gave the false information.

VI. EMPLOYMENT POLICIES (pp.74-77)

A. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

The following represents the current Affirmative Action Program approved by the TRLA Board of Directors:

Equal Opportunity Statement. The purpose of the TEXAS RIOGRANDE LEGAL AID, INC. (TRLA) Equal Opportunity Policy is to assure the right of all persons to work in, participate in, and receive the assistance provided by TRLA without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or AIDS-related illness. The policy protects (1) any person being served by or seeking the assistance of the program, (2) any person employed by, or seeking employment by, the program, and (3) any person participating on a program Board, advisory or planning committee.

Equal Opportunity Policy. It is a policy of TRLA to recruit, hire, train, and promote persons in all job classifications, without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or AIDS-related illness. It is also the policy of this organization to administer all its services to its eligible clients without regard to the previously stated criteria.

Affirmative Action Program Policy. TRLA will administer all personnel matters without regard to race, sex, religion, color, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or AIDS-related illness. It is the purpose of TRLA to abide by its

affirmative action plan in that all employment related decisions will be designed to further the principles of equal opportunity. These matters include compensation, transfers, layoffs, recall from layoffs, TRLA sponsored trainings, TRLA sponsored education, and all other related employment benefits.

When any position for employment is available, TRLA will seek qualified applicants without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or AIDS-related illness. In addition to following the guidelines of Sections 1006(b)(6) and 1007(a)(8) of the Legal Services Corporation Act, and Part 1616 of the Corporation Regulations, TRLA will abide by the following guidelines in recruitment:

1. Advertisements will be placed in media chosen to reach qualified persons, including minorities and women. All employment advertisements will contain the phrase "Equal Opportunity Employer".
2. All recruitment materials distributed by TRLA shall include the following statement: *"Texas RioGrande Legal Aid is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or AIDS-related illness."*
3. TRLA employment applications will notify applicants that discrimination on the basis of race, sex, religion, color, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or AIDS-related illness is prohibited by this agency.

In hiring, placement, and promotion of applicants and employees, TRLA will make decisions on the basis of individual ability and performance, and the staffing needs of TRLA consistent with the commitment to equal opportunity that is set forth in this statement of equal opportunity policies. All hiring, placement, and promotional activities will be periodically reviewed by TRLA to assure that full consideration, as required by program policy, has been given to all qualified minority and women applicants and employees.

All compensation and fringe benefits, including access to training and educational programs for employees of TRLA, will be determined without regard to race, sex, religion, color, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or AIDS-related illness.

This agency has assigned the overall responsibility for equal opportunity implementation to the Director of Administration. This person will provide assurances as may be requested to confirm that such a plan is being implemented. The Director of Administration will consult periodically with a designated staff person from the Texas Legal Services Union, Local No. 2, UAW/65 to assist in reviewing the Affirmative Action Program.

TRLA will adopt the applicable parts of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between TRLA and TLSU in addressing discrimination-related grievances of staff. Eligible TRLA

clients will be afforded the client complaint procedure for pursuing complaints based on a violation of this statement. Other complaints will be afforded the TRLA non-client (non-employee) complaint procedure as is described in the Essential info folder, Administrative Forms & General Info subfolder.

It is the policy of TRLA to make available information concerning TRLA's participation in the Affirmative Action Program to all employees, applicants for employment, and the general public through such means as:

- (a) posting the equal opportunity policy statement and federal equal employment opportunity posters in employee lounges and/or bulletin boards, etc;
- (b) inclusion of information on equal opportunity and Affirmative Action in new employee orientation materials;
- (c) training employees on these policies, including how respond to harassment and bullying in all forms;
- (d) noting that TRLA is an "Equal Opportunity Employer" in job descriptions, advertisements and recruiting materials, and;
- (e) establishing a practice, when possible, of contracting with equal opportunity employers.

B. ACCOMMODATION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

TRLA complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and applicable state and local laws providing for nondiscrimination in employment against qualified individuals with disabilities, TRLA also provides reasonable accommodation for such individuals in accordance with these laws. It is TRLA's policy to, without limitation:

- a. Ensure that qualified individuals with disabilities are treated in a nondiscriminatory manner in all terms, conditions and privileges of employment.
- b. Keep all medical-related information confidential in accordance with the requirements of the ADA and retain such information in separate confidential files.
- c. Provide applicants and employees with disabilities with reasonable accommodation, except where such an accommodation would create an undue hardship on TRLA.
- d. Notify individuals with disabilities that TRLA provides reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with disabilities, by including this policy in TRLA's employee handbook and by posting EEOC information on nondiscrimination

against individuals with disabilities and other protected groups throughout TRLA's offices.

Procedure for Requesting an Accommodation

Qualified individuals with disabilities may make requests for reasonable accommodation to TRLA's Human Resources department. The necessary forms -- Accommodation request form and Medical inquiry form for accommodation requests -- can be printed from TRLA's [Help Desk Wiki](#). Upon receipt of an accommodation request, the Human Resources department will meet with the requesting individual to discuss and identify the precise limitations resulting from the disability and the potential accommodation that TRLA might make to help overcome those limitations.

The Human Resources department, in conjunction with the appropriate supervisor, if applicable, will determine the feasibility of the requested accommodation, considering various factors, including, but not limited to, the nature and cost of the accommodation, the availability of outside funding, TRLA's overall financial Resources and organization, and the accommodation's impact on the operation of the office, including its impact on the office's ability to serve clients.

The Human Resources department will inform the employee of TRLA's decision on the accommodation request or on how to make the accommodation. If the accommodation request is denied, employees will be advised of their right to appeal the decision by submitting a written statement to the Director of Administration along with the reasons for the request.

A special 3-person committee will review all employee appeals. The committee makeup will be selected in the following manner: The Director of Administration will appoint one committee member; the local Union President will appoint another; and a third will be selected by a consensus of the Director of Administration and the Union President. After reviewing an employee's appeal, the committee will notify the Director of Administration of its decision. The Director of Administration will, in turn, notify the individual making the appeal of the decision, which will be final.

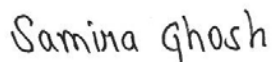
To the City of San Marcos Human Services Advisory Board,

Asian Family Support Services of Austin (AFSSA) is pleased to offer our support for Texas RioGrande Legal Aid's (TRLA) application for Human Services Grant funding to improve access to civil legal services in San Marcos. TRLA's work plays a critical role in protecting the rights and stability of low-income individuals and families, particularly those impacted by domestic violence, housing insecurity, and barriers to accessing public benefits.

Our agency serves immigrant and Asian communities across Central Texas, including survivors of gender-based violence who often face significant challenges when seeking help. For many of our clients, navigating the legal system without support is simply not an option. TRLA's attorneys provide compassionate and culturally aware legal support to help survivors obtain protective orders, resolve family law matters, and prevent displacement from their homes.

AFSSA has collaborated with TRLA frequently, and we believe their partnership enhances the safety planning, case management, and advocacy services we offer. We also recognize the critical gap in legal services across the San Marcos area, where many residents lack access to timely legal intervention. Expanding TRLA's service capacity in San Marcos would provide both immediate and long-term benefits to individuals in crisis. AFSSA fully supports this initiative and urges the City of San Marcos to invest in TRLA's efforts to advance justice, equity, and safety for all members of the community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Samina Ghosh". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Samina" and last name "Ghosh" clearly distinguishable.

Director of Advocacy and Client Services
Asian Family Support Services of Austin (AFSSA)

July 10, 2025

To the City of San Marcos Human Services Advisory Board,

On behalf of the Hays-Caldwell Women's Center (HCWC), I am writing in support of Texas RioGrande Legal Aid's (TRLA) application for Human Services Grant funding to support its legal services program for San Marcos residents, including legal services related public benefits, domestic violence, mental health, and housing.

TRLA is a trusted partner in our shared mission to support survivors of domestic violence and promote family stability. The civil legal services they provide, including protective orders, custody and divorce assistance, housing advocacy, and access to public benefits, are essential to ensuring long-term safety and stability for the survivors our organization serves. Their legal expertise supports HCWC's crisis and counseling services, and we frequently collaborate on cases involving complex legal needs.

The demand for these types of civil legal services in San Marcos is significant and growing. Many of our clients face a combination of legal and financial barriers to leaving unsafe situations and securing safe, stable housing for themselves and their children. TRLA's trauma-informed legal representation provides much-needed legal support on their path to safety and independence.

We strongly support TRLA's proposed expansion of civil legal services in San Marcos to address critical areas of need including family violence, eviction defense, and access to benefits. This project will directly benefit San Marcos residents and will also strengthen the network of support service providers working together to protect the most vulnerable members of our community.

We respectfully encourage the City of San Marcos to fund TRLA's proposed program.

Sincerely,



Melissa G Rodriguez
HCWC - Chief Executive Officer



July 18, 2025

Travis County Health & Human Services
5325 Airport Blvd.
Austin, TX 78751

To whom it may concern:

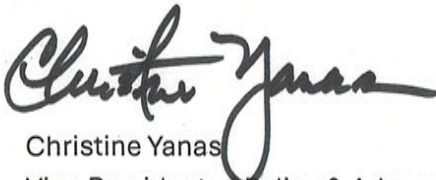
On behalf of Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas, Inc., I am writing to express our strong support for Texas RioGrande Legal Aid's (TRLA) application for Human Services Grant funding to support their civil legal services program in the city of San Marcos.

Our mission at Methodist Healthcare Ministries is to increase access to care for low-income and uninsured individuals across South Texas. We believe that health and well-being are shaped beyond access to medical services, but also necessitates the provision of safe housing, protection from violence, access to public benefits, and legal stability. We deeply value TRLA's role as a funded partner in helping positively impact the non-medical drivers of health of low-income Texans through comprehensive, trauma-informed legal services.

TRLA has been a trusted and valued partner since 2022, serving some of our most vulnerable residents in MHM's 74-county service region with compassion and excellence. Their work to provide civil legal services to increase access to public benefits helps fill a critical gap for our community members who otherwise face these challenges alone. TRLA's ability to integrate their legal aid services across multiple areas, including family law, disability rights, housing, and more, enhances their impact across the regions, especially in rural areas.

We enthusiastically support TRLA's proposal and their continued service to the people of San Marcos. Their work aligns closely with our mission and contributes significantly to the health and stability of the communities we serve. We anticipate a continuous and positive collaboration with TRLA, helping to ensure that every individual and family can live safely and with dignity.

Sincerely,



Christine Yanas
Vice President of Policy & Advocacy



2000 Texas Ave.
El Paso, TX 79901

www.projectbravo.org

July 17, 2025

City of San Marcos Human Services Advisory Board
630 E. Hopkins
San Marcos, TX 78666

Esteemed City of San Marcos Human Services Advisory Board:

On behalf of Project BRAVO, I am pleased to express our support for Texas RioGrande Legal Aid's (TRLA) application for Human Services Grant funding to expand its civil legal services in San Marcos. Project BRAVO is dedicated to empowering individuals and families through economic stability programs, and we understand the crucial role legal support plays in advancing housing security, public benefits access, and family safety.

Our work often connects us with individuals facing unsafe housing conditions, family instability, eviction, mortgage default, and other issues. These barriers to stability often involve legal challenges as well. For many low-income households, a legal issue can destabilize every other aspect of life. TRLA provides the skilled, trauma-informed legal assistance needed to prevent a temporary crisis from becoming a long-term setback.

Project BRAVO has referred clients to TRLA for legal assistance for more than ten years and has seen how their support directly contributes to housing stability, family resilience, and improved economic outcomes. Our partnership was especially critical after the Wal-Mart shooting on August 3, 2019, when 23 individuals were killed and their families had to navigate a myriad of legal issues related to public benefits and setting up trusts for vulnerable loved ones. We also worked in close partnership during the pandemic to stop unlawful evictions and connect families to rental assistance programs. Their partnership and presence in our community helps ensure that our most vulnerable residents have access to justice.

We believe TRLA's proposed program in San Marcos will strengthen the local support networks, directly benefitting your residents. Project BRAVO fully supports this effort and encourages the City of San Marcos to invest in TRLA's critical legal services. Should you need further information, please contact me at [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Ext. 115 or [REDACTED]

Sincerely,

Laura Ponce, MPA
Executive Director

July 9, 2025

City of San Marcos
630 E Hopkins
San Marcos, TX 78666

To the City of San Marcos Human Services Advisory Board,

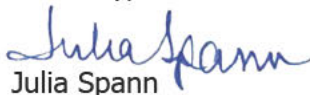
On behalf of The SAFE Alliance, I am writing to express strong support for Texas RioGrande Legal Aid's (TRLA) application for Human Services Grant funding to support their civil legal services work in San Marcos.

As a service provider supporting survivors of domestic and sexual violence across Central Texas, we understand how essential legal aid is to long-term safety and healing. TRLA has been a committed partner in this work, providing compassionate, trauma-informed legal assistance to survivors who are navigating difficult transitions in their life. TRLA's services related to protective orders, custody, divorce proceedings, and housing law have been life-changing for many of the clients we refer.

Supporting TRLA's services in San Marcos comes at a critical time where survivors in that community face not only immediate danger, but also a web of systemic barriers including a lack of affordable housing, confusing court processes, and limited access to legal representation. TRLA's comprehensive civil legal services model includes support for tenants, individuals with disabilities, and public benefits to recipients; all to address these intersecting challenges in a way that few organizations are able.

We proudly support TRLA and their proposed work in San Marcos, and believe it will fill an urgent gap in that community as it has in our community. TRLA's expertise and commitment to client-centered, equitable legal support makes them an ideal recipient of this funding. SAFE looks forward to continue to work with TRLA to support survivors in our region to access the resources needed to recover and thrive.

Sincerely,



Julia Spann
Chief Executive Officer
The SAFE Alliance



**ARTICLES OF AMENDMENT OF
THE BY-LAWS OF
TEXAS RIOGRANDE LEGAL AID, INC.**

I, the undersigned natural person, of the age of eighteen (18) years or more, acting as an officer of a corporation under the Texas Non-Profit Corporation Act, Tex. Rev. Civ. Stat. Ann. Art. 1396 (Vernon 1997) (the "Act"), do hereby acknowledge that the following Articles of Amendment for the By-Laws of such corporation were duly adopted at a meeting of the Board of Directors held on February 12, 2007 and received the vote of a two-thirds majority of the directors in office, there being no members.

ARTICLE III

Government

Section 2. **Composition.** The Board of Directors shall consist of between twenty-one and twenty-five members who shall be selected in accordance with the Legal Services Corporation Act, the regulations promulgated thereunder, and the rules and regulations established by the Board. Board composition shall reflect the constituencies served by Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, Inc., including appropriate representation by geographical area and significant specially-funded target populations.

(i) **Removal of Directors.** A Board member may be removed for the following reasons:

- (i) unexcused failure to attend two successive meetings of the Board, provided that voting by mail ballot shall not be considered as attendance at a meeting;
- (ii) failure to discharge or comply with the member's fiduciary responsibilities to the Corporation; or
- (iii) *violating any of TRLA's Policy Guidelines for Appropriate Conduct of Board Members.*

When a Director shall fail to appear at two (2) consecutive regular meetings of the board, the Secretary shall notify him in writing that the agenda for the next meeting of the board will include the question of whether such *Director* should be removed. *The Secretary shall also notify any Director in writing, at least seven (7) days in advance of the meeting, that the agenda for the next meeting of the board will include the question of whether such Director should be removed for alleged violations of such Director's fiduciary responsibilities to the Corporation or TRLA's policy guidelines for appropriate conduct of board members.*

ADDENDUM TO BYLAWS

TRLA'S POLICY GUIDELINES FOR APPROPRIATE CONDUCT OF BOARD MEMBERS

Board members of TRLA are expected to accept certain responsibilities, to adhere to acceptable standards of personal conduct while engaged in TRLA Board business, and to exhibit a high degree of professionalism and ethics at all times.

Types of behavior and conduct that TRLA considers inappropriate for its board members include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Falsifying TRLA records.
2. Violating TRLA's nondiscrimination and/or sexual harassment policy while engaged in TRLA business.
3. Soliciting or accepting gifts or gratuities from TRLA clients in excess of minimal value.
4. Establishing a pattern of excessive absenteeism or tardiness to TRLA board meetings or other required functions.
5. Engaging in excessive, unnecessary, or unauthorized use of TRLA's supplies, particularly for personal purposes.
6. Reporting to any TRLA board meeting intoxicated or under the influence of illegal drugs.
7. Illegally manufacturing, possessing, using, selling, distributing, or transporting illegal drugs.
8. Using alcoholic beverages while engaged in TRLA business except where authorized.

9. Fighting or using obscene, abusive, or threatening language or gestures while engaged in TRLA business.
10. Stealing property from TRLA, TRLA employees, TRLA board members or clients of TRLA.
11. Having unauthorized firearms on TRLA premises or while on TRLA business.
12. Disregarding safety or security regulations while engaged in TRLA business.
13. Engaging in disrespectful or disruptive behavior while engaged in TRLA business.
14. Failing to maintain confidentiality of TRLA or TRLA's clients' information.
15. Violating any rules regarding conflicts of interest as set out in Article X, Section 9, Subsection I of the State Bar Rules.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, I have hereunto set out my hand this 12th day of February, 2007.

Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, Inc.

By: 
Victoria Guerra, President

 Displaying title 45, up to date as of 7/22/2025. Title 45 was last amended 6/25/2025.

Title 45 —Public Welfare

Subtitle B —Regulations Relating to Public Welfare

Chapter XVI —Legal Services Corporation

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⦿ PART 1607—GOVERNING BODIES

Authority: 42 U.S.C. 2996g(e)

Source: 59 FR 65254, Dec. 19, 1994, unless otherwise noted.

⦿ § 1607.1 Purpose.

This part is designed to insure that the governing body of a recipient will be well qualified to guide a recipient in its efforts to provide high-quality legal assistance to those who otherwise would be unable to obtain adequate legal counsel and to insure that the recipient is accountable to its clients.

⦿ § 1607.2 Definitions.

As used in this part,

- (a) **Attorney member** means a board member who is an attorney admitted to practice in a State within the recipient's service area.
- (b) **Board member** means a member of a recipient's governing body or policy body.
- (c) **Eligible client member** means a board member who is financially eligible to receive legal assistance under the Act and part 1611 of this chapter, without regard to whether the person actually has received or is receiving legal assistance at that time. Eligibility of client members must be determined by the recipient or, if the recipient so chooses, by the nominating organization(s) or group(s) in accordance with written policies adopted by the recipient.
- (d) **Governing body** means the board of directors or other body with authority to govern the activities of a recipient receiving funds under § 1006(a)(1)(A) of the Act.
- (e) **Policy body** means a policy board or other body established by a recipient to formulate and enforce policy with respect to the services provided under a grant or contract made under the Act.
- (f) **Recipient** means any grantee or contractor receiving financial assistance from the Corporation under § 1006(a)(1)(A) of the Act.

[59 FR 65254, Dec. 19, 1994, as amended at 84 FR 1407, Feb. 4, 2019]

⦿ § 1607.3 Composition.

- (a) A recipient shall be incorporated in a State in which it provides legal assistance and shall have a governing body which reasonably reflects the interests of the eligible clients in the area served and which consists of members, each of whom is supportive of the purposes of the Act and has an interest in, and knowledge of, the delivery of quality legal services to the poor.
- (b) A recipient's governing body must be composed of:
 - (1) At least 33% attorneys;
 - (i) Attorney members may be selected by the recipient's governing body or may be selected by other organizations designated by the recipient which have an interest in the delivery of legal services to low-income populations.
 - (ii) Selections shall be made to ensure that the attorney members reasonably reflect the diversity of the legal community and the population of the areas served by the recipient, including race, ethnicity, gender, and other similar factors.
 - (2) At least one-third eligible client members who are eligible client members when initially selected by the recipient.
 - (i) Recipients must solicit recommendations for eligible client members from a variety of appropriate groups designated by the recipient that may include, but are not limited to, client and neighborhood associations and community-based organizations that advocate for or deliver services or resources to the client community served by the recipient.
 - (ii) Recipients should solicit recommendations from groups in a manner that reflects, to the extent possible, the variety of interests within the client community, and eligible client members should be selected so that they reasonably reflect the diversity of the eligible client population served by the recipient, including race, gender, ethnicity, and other similar factors.
 - (3) Other members selected by the recipients' governing body or in another manner described in the recipient's bylaws or policies.
 - (i) Recipients must appoint or select members so that the governing body as a whole reasonably reflects the diversity of the areas served by the recipient, including race, ethnicity, gender, and other similar factors.
 - (ii) Recipients should consider recruiting and selecting members possessing fiscal or nonprofit governance expertise or other skills necessary to effectively govern the recipient's operations.
 - (iii) Members of a governing body shall not be dominated by persons serving as the representatives of a single association, group or organization, except that eligible client members may be selected from client organizations that are composed of coalitions of numerous smaller or regionally based client groups.
- (c) Members of a governing body may be selected by appointment, election, or other means consistent with this part and with the recipient's bylaws and applicable State law.
- (d) Recipients shall make reasonable and good faith efforts to ensure that governing body vacancies are filled as promptly as possible.
- (e) Recipient staff may recommend candidates for governing body membership to its governing body and other appointing groups and should consult with the appointing organizations to ensure that:
 - (1) Appointees meet the criteria for board membership set out in this part, including financial eligibility for persons appointed as eligible clients, bar admittance requirements for attorney board members, and the general requirements that all members be supportive of the purposes of the Act and have an interest in and knowledge of the delivery of legal services to low-income populations;
 - (2) The particular categories of board membership and the board as a whole meet the diversity requirement described in paragraphs (b)(1)(ii), (b)(2)(ii), and (b)(3)(ii) of this section;
 - (3) Appointees do not have actual and significant individual or institutional conflicts of interest with the recipient or the recipient's client community that could reasonably be expected to influence their ability to exercise independent judgement as members of the recipient's governing body.
- (f) Members of a governing body may be selected by appointment, election, or other means consistent with this part and with the recipient's bylaws and applicable State law.
- (g) Recipients shall make reasonable and good faith efforts to insure that governing body vacancies are filled as promptly as possible.

- (h) Recipients may recommend candidates for governing body membership to the appropriate bar associations and other appointing groups and should consult with the appointing organizations to insure that:
 - (1) Appointees meet the criteria for board membership set out in this part, including financial eligibility for persons appointed as eligible clients, bar admittance requirements for attorney board members, and the general requirements that all members be supportive of the purposes of the Act and have an interest in and knowledge of the delivery of legal services to the poor;
 - (2) The particular categories of board membership and the board as a whole meet the diversity requirements described in §§ 1607.3(b)(3), 1607.3(c) and 1607.3(d);
 - (3) Appointees do not have actual and significant individual or institutional conflicts of interest with the recipient or the recipient's client community that could reasonably be expected to influence their ability to exercise independent judgment as members of the recipient's governing body.

[59 FR 65254, Dec. 19, 1994, as amended at 84 FR 1407, Feb. 4, 2019; 89 FR 65551, Aug. 12, 2024]

§ 1607.4 Functions of a governing body.

- (a) A governing body shall have at least four meetings a year. A recipient shall give timely and reasonable prior public notice of all meetings, and all meetings shall be public except for those concerned with matters properly discussed in executive session in accordance with written policies adopted by the recipient's governing body.
- (b) In addition to other powers and responsibilities that may be provided for by State law, a governing body shall establish and enforce broad policies governing the operation of a recipient, but neither the governing body nor any member thereof shall interfere with any attorney's professional responsibilities to a client or obligations as a member of the profession or interfere with the conduct of any ongoing representation.
- (c) A governing body shall adopt bylaws which are consistent with State law and the requirements of this part. Recipients shall submit a copy of such bylaws to the Corporation and shall give the Corporation notice of any changes in such bylaws within a reasonable time after the change is made.

§ 1607.5 Compensation.

- (a) While serving on the governing body of a recipient, no attorney member shall receive compensation from that recipient, but any member may receive a reasonable per diem expense payment or reimbursement for actual expenses for normal travel and other reasonable out-of-pocket expenses in accordance with written policies adopted by the recipient.
- (b) Pursuant to a waiver granted under § 1607.6(b)(1), a recipient may adopt policies that would permit partners or associates of attorney members to participate in any compensated private attorney involvement activities supported by the recipient.
- (c) A recipient may adopt policies that permit attorney members, subject to terms and conditions applicable to other attorneys in the service area:
 - (1) To accept referrals of fee-generating cases under part 1609 of these regulations;
 - (2) To participate in any uncompensated private attorney involvement activities supported by the recipient;
 - (3) To seek and accept attorneys' fees awarded by a court or administrative body or included in a settlement in cases undertaken pursuant to §§ 1607.5 (c)(1) and (2); and
 - (4) To receive reimbursement from the recipient for out-of-pocket expenses incurred by the attorney member as part of the activities undertaken pursuant to § 1607.5(c)(2).

[59 FR 65254, Dec. 19, 1994, as amended at 60 FR 2330, Jan. 9, 1995]

§ 1607.6 Waiver.

- (a) Upon application, the president shall waive the requirements of this part to permit a recipient that was funded under § 222(a)(3) of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 and, on July 25, 1974, had a majority of persons who were not attorneys on its governing body, to continue such nonattorney majority.

- (b) Upon application, the president may waive any of the requirements of this part which are not mandated by applicable law if a recipient demonstrates that it cannot comply with them because of:
 - (1) The nature of the population, legal community or area served; or
 - (2) Special circumstances, including but not limited to, conflicting requirements of the recipient's other major funding source(s) or State law.
- (c) A recipient seeking a waiver under § 1607.6(b)(1) shall demonstrate that it has made diligent efforts to comply with the requirements of this part.
- (d) As a condition of granting a waiver under § 1607.6(b)(2) of any of the requirements imposed upon governing bodies by § 1607.3, the president shall require that a recipient have a policy body with a membership composed and appointed in the manner prescribed by § 1607.3. Such policy body shall be subject to the meeting requirements of § 1607.4(a) and its attorney members shall be subject to the restrictions on compensation contained in § 1607.5. The policy body shall have such specific powers and responsibilities as the President determines are necessary to enable it to formulate and enforce policy with respect to the services provided under the recipient's LSC grant or contract.