

## Griffith, Carol

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**From:** Griffith, Carol  
**Sent:** Monday, March 2, 2026 5:14 PM  
**To:** 'Marc Porras'; Latreese.Cooke@melj.org  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Re: [EXTERNAL] San Marcos Grant Application Submission

Marc and Latreese,

The MELJ application form is complete, and the application is accepted, prior to the deadline.

Latreese emailed and called to clarify that this was intended as an HSAB application. All parts needed for the HSAB application were completed, and the application was signed, so this has been converted to an HSAB application instead of CDBG.

On March 3, we will review the whole packet of attachments and will notify you if anything is missing.

Thank you! Carol



**Carol Griffith**

Housing and Community Development Manager | Planning & Development Services  
630 E. Hopkins St, San Marcos, TX 78666  
512-393-8147

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**From:** Marc Porras <Marc@melj.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 2, 2026 4:45 PM  
**To:** Griffith, Carol <CGriffith@sanmarcostx.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: [EXTERNAL] San Marcos Grant Application Submission

We are sending more, please confirm receipt.

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**From:** Griffith, Carol <[CGriffith@sanmarcostx.gov](mailto:CGriffith@sanmarcostx.gov)>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 2, 2026 4:35 PM  
**To:** Marc Porras <[Marc@melj.org](mailto:Marc@melj.org)>; CDBG <[CDBG@sanmarcostx.gov](mailto:CDBG@sanmarcostx.gov)>  
**Cc:** Latreese Cooke <[Latreese.Cooke@melj.org](mailto:Latreese.Cooke@melj.org)>  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] San Marcos Grant Application Submission

Can you re-send as pdf's? I am unable to open the word documents

Also – are you planning to submit an HSAB application as well? You may have less competition for funding there

**Carol Griffith**



Housing and Community Development Manager | Planning & Development Services  
630 E. Hopkins St, San Marcos, TX 78666  
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**From:** Marc Porras <[Marc@melj.org](mailto:Marc@melj.org)>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 2, 2026 4:32 PM  
**To:** CDBG <[cdbg@sanmarcostx.gov](mailto:cdbg@sanmarcostx.gov)>  
**Cc:** Latreese Cooke <[Latreese.Cooke@melj.org](mailto:Latreese.Cooke@melj.org)>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] San Marcos Grant Application Submission

Good Afternoon,

Attached is a submission from the Melj Center for the San Marcos Grant.

Thank you!

Marc Porras  
Melj Center  
512-473-2525

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# CITY OF SAN MARCOS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT FY 2026-2027 PUBLIC SERVICES APPLICATION

## I. SUMMARY INFORMATION

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

Applicant Organization: Minorities for Equality in Economy, Education, Liberty, and Justice

Contact Name, Title: Latreese Cooke, Executive Director

Telephone: [REDACTED]

Contact E-Mail Address: Latreese.Cooke@melj.org

Website: <https://www.melj.org/>

Mailing Address: 403 E 15th Street, Austin, TX 78701

Do you have a location in San Marcos where people can walk in and ask questions about the program? If so, what is the address? N/A

Who is authorized to execute program documents? Latreese Cooke, Executive Director

Program Name: San Marcos Re-Entry Program

Amount of CDBG Funds Requested: 125,000

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

40 %

## II. SHORT ESSAY 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.

Minorities for Equality in Economy, Education, Liberty, and Justice (MELJ) seeks \$125,000 in CDBG Public Services funding to expand its San Marcos Re-Entry Program into the City of San Marcos.

This program provides **individualized case management that includes an employment component family stabilization, substance abuse management, socialization skills, and healthcare navigation referrals, and disability assistance as needed** structured workforce readiness training, individualized case management, youth redirection services, family stabilization support, and healthcare navigation referrals to:

- Formerly incarcerated individuals
- Individuals returning from correctional facilities
- At-risk youth in households affected by incarceration

- Low-to-moderate income San Marcos residents experiencing justice-related instability

The proposed program will serve 40 San Marcos residents whose household income does not exceed 80% of Area Median Income.

Services include:

- Job readiness certification
- Resume development and interview preparation
- Employment placement assistance
- Case management and accountability planning
- Healthcare referral coordination
- Substance exposure stabilization support
- Youth mentorship and life-skills redirection

The program addresses economic self-sufficiency, workforce reintegration, public safety, and family stability.

### **COMMUNITY NEED AND JUSTIFICATION –20 POINTS**

*Evaluation: documentation and justification of the need for the program in the City of San Marcos.*

1. Describe in detail the need for this program in San Marcos.

San Marcos and Hays County are experiencing increased instability among individuals returning from incarceration. Reentering individuals often face:

- Employment exclusion due to criminal record barriers
- Housing insecurity
- Lack of healthcare access
- Behavioral health challenges
- Family disruption

A growing concern in Hays County involves exposure to synthetic cannabinoids such as K-2 and other experimental substances within correctional facilities. Individuals released after prolonged exposure often experience:

- Cognitive impairment
- Heightened anxiety and paranoia
- Increased relapse vulnerability
- Behavioral destabilization

Without structured support, these challenges significantly increase the risk of unemployment, relapse, homelessness, and recidivism.

Additionally, at-risk youth in households affected by incarceration experience elevated exposure to poverty, instability, and disengagement from educational and workforce pathways.

San Marcos currently lacks an integrated reentry model combining employment training, case management, healthcare navigation, and youth redirection services. The expansion of MELJ fills this documented service gap.

2. Has the need for this program been increasing in recent years?

Yes.

The complexity of reentry cases has intensified due to:

- Increased synthetic drug exposure in correctional settings
- Rising housing costs
- Competitive labor markets
- Greater untreated behavioral health needs

The prevalence of synthetic substances such as K-2 has increased the need for coordinated healthcare navigation and stabilization support upon release.

Without intervention, untreated substance exposure and unemployment increase recidivism risk and economic strain on the broader community.

## **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 CDBG has met expectations.*

1. Are all resources in place to be able to implement this program? If not, what is missing?

Yes.

MELJ has successfully implemented this program model in Austin for multiple years. The organization has:

- Established curriculum
- Trained staff
- Case management tracking systems
- Financial compliance infrastructure
- Employer engagement processes

CDBG funds will support geographic expansion into San Marcos and the addition of a Healthcare Navigation Consultant to address increasing reentry complexity.

2. What specific, measurable outcomes or results do you hope to achieve with this program?

During the 12-month funding cycle, MELJ will serve a goal amount of 40 low-to-moderate income San Marcos residents.

Projected measurable outcomes include:

- 70–85% of participants will complete workforce readiness training components
- 45–60% of employment-seeking participants will obtain employment within 90 days of active program engagement
- 65–80% of participants will engage in structured case management services

- 60–75% of participants identified as needing healthcare support will receive navigation assistance and referral coordination
- 50–65% of participants referred to healthcare providers will complete at least one verified appointment
- Up to 20–25 participating households will receive stabilization or supportive services as needed

Income verification will be conducted using HUD-approved documentation methods.

## **IMPACT AND COST EFFECTIVENESS –20 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.

This program addresses immediate employment instability while preventing long-term recidivism and generational justice involvement.

Impacts include:

- Increased employment and income stability
- Reduced relapse and recidivism
- Improved healthcare access
- Strengthened family systems
- Reduced strain on emergency services

The cost per participant is approximately \$7,812.50.

2. Briefly describe other funding sources, volunteers, or in-kind donations that will be used with this program.

The program is supported through:

- Private donations
- Foundation grants
- Community contributions
- Volunteer engagement
- In-kind support

CDBG funds will not exceed 50% of the total San Marcos program budget.

## **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?

Board members:

- Provide governance oversight
- Approve budgets
- Support fundraising
- Assist with strategic planning
- Review program performance metrics

2. Briefly describe the number and role of volunteers in the program or agency's operation.

Volunteers assist in:

- Mentorship
- Resume workshops
- Interview preparation
- Outreach events
- Participant accountability

Volunteer engagement enhances program efficiency and impact.

## **COUNCIL PRIORITIES - 20 POINTS**

1. How long has this program served San Marcos residents? (10 points if at least 2 years)

This is an expansion of an existing program model successfully operated in Austin for multiple years. Though MELJ is not specifically targeted towards San Marcos residents, we have intermittently served many clients outside the Austin region, in cities such as (but not limited to) Round Rock, Pflugerville, Georgetown, Houston, and San Marcos through 23 years of operation.

2. In what ways does your agency actively conduct outreach to engage San Marcos residents in its programs and services? How will San Marcos residents access those services? (up to 10 points)

Outreach strategies include:

- Community enrollment events
- Online intake forms
- Direct engagement with probation and justice networks
- Collaboration with local community stakeholders
- Targeted outreach in low-income areas

Residents will access services through scheduled appointments and structured workshops conducted within San Marcos.

## **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)

MELJ has more than 20 years of experience implementing programs of comparable size and complexity.

2. What percentage of the program's funding is non-City? (5 points if at least 50%)

More than 50% of total program funding will be from non-City sources.

### III. PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES

#### TYPE OF PUBLIC SERVICE (choose all that apply)

05A Senior Services  05B Handicapped Services

05C Legal Services  05D Youth Services

05E Transportation Services  05F Substance Abuse Services  05G Battered and Abused Spouses Services  05H Employment Training

05I Crime Awareness  05J Fair Housing Activities

05K Tenant/Landlord Counseling  05L Child Care Services

05M Health Services  05N Abused and Neglected Children Services  05O Mental Health Services  05P Screening for Lead Paint/Lead Hazards  05Q Subsistence Payments  05R Homeownership Assistance (Not Direct)

Other:

#### PROGRAM INFORMATION

1. Program eligibility (please select one):

a.  This is a new program.

b.  This is an existing program that: (select one of the following)

Has previously received CDBG funding and the amount requested for this year is the same or less than previous funding; or

will expand to serve more beneficiaries or to provide more services if the CDBG funding as requested is approved. *Please attach an analysis that details how the program or service will be expanded, how many new beneficiaries will be served by the expansion, and how this number was determined.*

2. Is there a fee to clients to participate in the program?  Yes  No

There is a one-time \$20 intake fee assessed per participant upon enrollment in the program. This fee is intended solely to offset a portion of administrative costs associated with intake processing, materials, participant file development, and program supplies.

The intake fee:

- Is charged only once per participant
- Does not recur annually or monthly
- Is not required to receive essential program services

**Griffith, Carol**

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**From:** Latreese Cooke <Latreese.Cooke@melj.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 9, 2026 11:39 AM  
**To:** Griffith, Carol; Marc Porras  
**Cc:** Escobar, Lorena; Ravi Bassett  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: Questions for HSAB grant

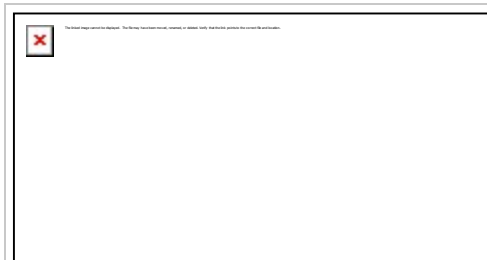


403 E. 15<sup>th</sup> Street  
Austin, Texas 78701

**Good Morning, Carol:**

***Please see the answers below. Carol, I am out of town at a convention so I do not have the file nor access to it. If there is a correction needed to my reply, either Marc or Ravi will update. Thanks so much!***

**Latreese Cooke, Executive Director**  
**MELJ Center**  
**[www.melj.org](http://www.melj.org)**



**[MELJ CENTER - Effecting Change & Opportunity for All](http://www.melj.org)**

MELJ Center Minorities for Equality in Economy, Education, Liberty and Justice  
Effecting Change & Opportunity for All

**[www.melj.org](http://www.melj.org)**

**(512) 473-2525 (Office)**  
**(512) 394-2055 (Cell)**

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**From:** Griffith, Carol <CGriffith@sanmarcostx.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 9, 2026 11:23 AM

**To:** Latreese Cooke <Latreese.Cooke@melj.org>; Marc Porras <Marc@melj.org>

**Cc:** Escobar, Lorena <LEscobar@sanmarcostx.gov>

**Subject:** Questions for HSAB grant

Latreese and Marc,

I have realized that a couple of questions were not on the CDBG application that are on the HSAB application. Will you please provide an answer to these 2 questions?

- 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? \$60K but that would also limit how many people we can bring on within the area to contract/employ.
- Please list the agencies with which you partner to provide this program's services. Central Texas Food Bank, Texas Criminal Justice Coalition, Family Crisis Center, and a housing partner (undisclosed) This is not an all inclusive list of partners but this is the ones we will utilize most for this contract.
- How many total annual unduplicated direct clients is this program expected to serve? 40 (from the CDBG application) What percentage will be San Marcos residents? We expect that 90% will be city residents, the others maybe within the ETJ or county.

We have provided your entire application (CDBG format) to the Human Services Advisory Board, but I want to be sure they have these answers clearly in the HSAB format.

Thank you. Carol



**Carol Griffith**

Housing and Community Development Manager | Planning & Development Services  
630 E. Hopkins St, San Marcos, TX 78666  
512-393-8147

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- May be reduced or waived for participants experiencing financial hardship

No participant will be denied services based on inability to pay. Fee revenue will be used exclusively to support allowable program-related administrative expenses and will not supplant CDBG funds.

3. Describe the days and hours of operation of the program:

The San Marcos Re-Entry Program will operate Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., with scheduled evening appointments available as needed to accommodate working participants. Services will be delivered through structured intake sessions, case management meetings, workforce training workshops, and scheduled follow-up appointments.

Day-to-day operations center around comprehensive intake and individualized case assessment. During intake, staff collect detailed information regarding incarceration history, housing stability, employment barriers, healthcare needs, family circumstances, and current legal obligations. This assessment allows the program to develop individualized reintegration plans tailored to each participant’s needs.

Following intake, participants are assigned to a designated case manager who conducts ongoing check-ins, monitors progress, and coordinates resource allocation. Staff actively assist participants with employment readiness, healthcare referrals, behavioral health stabilization resources, and connections to community support services. Dedicated personnel conduct routine follow-up to ensure accountability and service engagement.

In addition to direct services, program staff engage in advocacy efforts related to reentry policy and public awareness. The organization develops publications and educational materials highlighting systemic barriers faced by justice-involved individuals and promotes community-informed solutions that support successful reintegration.

This structured approach ensures that participants receive both immediate stabilization support and long-term reintegration planning.

*Applicant must be able to document that at least 51% of the beneficiaries have an annual income that is at or below 80% of the Area Median Income and are San Marcos residents.*

**A. PRESUMED BENEFIT:** See definition above of “Presumed Benefit”.

1. Will all of the program’s beneficiaries be in a Presumed Benefit Category? \_\_\_\_ Yes or X No If “yes”, list the categories:

2. How many persons in each presumed category are proposed to be assisted if funding is received?

Abused Children	Elderly Persons	Battered Spouses	Homeless Persons	Severely Disabled Adults	Illiterate Adults	Persons living with AIDS

3. If this program was carried out the previous full program year (10/1 – 9/30), how many persons were served in each presumed category:

Abused Children	Elderly Persons	Battered Spouses	Homeless Persons	Severely Disabled Adults	Illiterate Adults	Persons living with AIDS

**B. BENEFICIARIES WHO ARE NOT CONSIDERED “PRESUMED”**

1. How many persons are proposed to be assisted if funding is received?

If this program was carried out the previous program year (10/1 – 9/30), how many persons were served?

Proposed to be assisted: 40

Previously served: 0 (San Marcos expansion)

2. How do you propose to document the income of the beneficiaries? (Check all that apply)

Evidence that the child is approved for free or reduced lunch

Evidence that the family lives in housing sponsored by the Housing Authority

Evidence that the family is WIC approved

Income documentation using one of the 3 HUD approved methods

Self-certification, with income verification required of 20% of certifications

Other, describe:

**III. PROJECTED IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE WITH PERFORMANCE GOALS**

Projected Start Date: Projected Completion Date: 10/1/2026 - 9/30/2027

Activity Description	Start Month/Year	End Month/Year	Performance Measurement Goal
Outreach & Intake	Oct 2026	Ongoing	40 residents enrolled
Workforce Training	Oct 2026	Sept 2027	70-85% of enrolled participants complete workforce readiness training
Structured Case Management	Oct 2026	Sept 2027	65-80% of participants engage in ongoing case management services
Healthcare Navigation	Oct 2026	Sept 2027	60-75% of participants identified with healthcare needs receive navigation support
Employment Placement	Oct 2026	Sept 2027	40-60% of employment-seeking participants obtain employment within 90 days

## IV. ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Organization Type:

501(c) Non-Profit Corporation  Public Corporation  Government Entity Other:

2. Name and title of Board of Directors chair or president: Juliet E. K. Walker

3. How many years has your organization been in business? 21 Years

4. Organization's Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN): 74-2994703

5. Organization's Unique Entity Identifier Number (if available):

6. Is organization currently registered in the federal System for Award Management (SAM)?  Yes  No

### FINANCIAL INFORMATION

1. What is the date of your fiscal year end? 12/31/2025

2. Does your organization have a purchasing policy?  Yes  No

3. Has your organization currently or within the past five years had any litigation that is pending or has been resolved?  
 Yes  No

*If "Yes", please attach a summary of the litigation and its status, including any outstanding judgments.*

4. Has your organization filed a petition for bankruptcy or has a petition for bankruptcy been filed against your organization?  Yes  No

*If "Yes", please attach an explanation that includes the status.*

5. During the last fiscal year, did your organization spend \$750,000 or more in Federal financial assistance?  
 Yes  No

6. What level of financial review does your organization obtain from an independent source? Select from the following options:

Single Audit  Audited Financial Statement

Reviewed Financial Statement  Compiled Financial Statement

No independent review  Other (describe):

7. What period was covered by your most recent financial review? 2024

8. Has your organization received City of San Marcos funding in the past two years?  Yes  No *If yes, please attach a short summary of the purpose and amount of City funding.*

### PERSONNEL AND POLICIES

1. Name and Title of your chief administrator Latreese Cooke, Executive Director

Number of years in this position? 21 Years

2. Total number of current employees at all locations 4

3. Total number of current employees who will be involved in this project 4

4. Total number of new employees expected to be hired for the project 2 Intake and Social Work Specialist

1 Healthcare Navigation Consultant (part-time)

5. Does your organization have a personnel policy manual?  Yes  No

CDBG 2026 Public Services Application Page 14

Does it include a procedure for filing grievances?  Yes  No

Does it include a non-discrimination clause?  Yes  No

6. Does your organization maintain a written code or standards of conduct that governs the performance of its officers, employees or agents engaged in the award and administration of contracts supported by Federal funds?

Yes  No

7. Separation of duties for financial transactions regarding this project (respond with job title):

- a. Who will approve payment of incurred expenses? Latreese Cooke
- b. Who will prepare the payment check? Latreese Cooke
- c. Who will sign checks paying project expenses? Latreese Cooke
- d. Who posts the transaction to your financial records? Natalie Hernandez CPA
- e. Who reconciles monthly bank statements? Natalie Hernandez CPA

### **ACCESSIBILITY OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

1. Are all facilities to be served by the program ADA Accessible?  Yes  No

2. Do you have a Section 504 (ADA) Self-Evaluation on file?  Yes  No

3. How will you provide services to persons with Limited English proficiency?

Interpretation assistance will be provided as needed.

### **INSURANCE, BONDING, AND WORKER'S COMPENSATION**

1. Does your organization have liability insurance coverage?  Yes  No

2. If yes, in what amount? 2,000,000

3. Does your organization pay worker's compensation in accordance with Federal and state laws?  
 Yes  No  N/A

4. Does your organization have fidelity bond coverage for principal staff members who handle the organization's accounts?  Yes  No

5. Will vehicles owned by the organization be used in conjunction with the proposed project?  
 Yes  No

6. If yes, what level of liability insurance is maintained on the vehicles?

## **V. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST (24 CFR 570.611; 24 CFR 85.36; AND 24 CFR 84.42)**

Two sets of conflict-of-interest provisions apply to activities carried out with CDBG funding. The first set, applicable to the procurement of goods and services by subrecipients (*funded applicants*), is the procurement regulation found in the *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirement for Federal Awards as codified in Title 2, Part 200 of the Code of Federal Regulations*. The second set of provisions is located at 24 CFR 570.611(a)(2).

With respect to procurement activities, the subrecipient must maintain written standards of conduct governing the performance of its employees engaged in the award and administration of contracts. At a minimum, these standards must:

1. Require that no employee, officer, or agent may participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported by federal funds if a real or apparent conflict would be involved. Such a conflict would arise when any

of the following parties has a financial or other interest in the firm selected for an award:

- An employee, officer, or agent of the subrecipient;
  - Any member of an employee's, officer's, or agent's immediate family;
  - An employee's, agent's, or officer's partner; or
  - An organization which employs or is about to employ any of the persons listed in the preceding sections.
2. Require that employees, agents, and officers of the subrecipient neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of value from contractors or parties to sub-agreements. However, subrecipients may set standards for situations in which the financial interest is not substantial, or the gift is an unsolicited item of nominal value.
  3. Provide for disciplinary actions to be applied for any violation of such standards by employees, agents, or officers of the subrecipient.

With respect to all other CDBG-assisted activities, the general standard is that no employee, agent, or officer of the subrecipient who exercises decision-making responsibility with respect to CDBG funds and activities is allowed to obtain a financial interest in or benefit from CDBG activities, or have a financial interest in any contract, subcontract, or agreement regarding those activities or in the proceeds for the activities. Specific provisions include that:

- The requirement applies to any person who is an employee, agent, consultant, officer, or elected or appointed official of the City, a designated public agency, or a subrecipient, and to their immediate family members and business partners.
- The requirement applies to such persons during their tenure and for a period of one year after leaving the grantee or subrecipient organization.
- Upon written request, exceptions may be granted by HUD on a case-by-case basis.

CDBG 2026 Public Services Application Page 16

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST QUESTIONNAIRE**

*NOTE: For the purpose of this form, a "covered person" includes any person who is an employee, agent, consultant, officer or elected or appointed official of the City of San Marcos, your organization, or any designated public agency.*

Name of Organization: Minorities for Equality in Economy, Education, Liberty and Justice.

1. Does your organization maintain a written code or standards of conduct that governs the performance of its officers, employees or agents engaged in the award and administration of contracts supported by Federal funds?

Yes  No  If "No" is checked, please explain how you will comply with this requirement:

2. Are any of your Board Members or employees that are responsible for carrying out this project or members of their immediate families or their business associates also:
- a. Employed by the City of San Marcos? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No
  - b. Members of or closely related to members of the San Marcos City Council? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No  c. Members of or closely related to an employee of the City of San Marcos? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No  d. Current beneficiaries or related to beneficiaries of the project for which funds are requested? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No
  - e. Paid providers of goods or services to the program or having other financial interest in the program or related to such individuals? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No
3. For **each** relationship described above, please answer the following questions: (attach additional page if necessary)
- a. Name of employee or official:
  - b. Is this person receiving or likely to receive taxable income from your organization?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No
  - c. Is your organization receiving or likely to receive taxable income from or at the direction of the employee or official AND the taxable income is not from the City of San Marcos?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No
  - d. Is your organization affiliated with a corporation or other business entity in which the employee or official serves as an officer or director, or holds an ownership interest of 10% or more?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No
4. Describe any other affiliation or business relationship that might cause a conflict of interest with respect to CDBG funds and activities. N/A
5. Will any of your organization's employees, officers, board members, or members of their immediate family or business partners have a financial interest in any contract, subcontract, or agreement regarding CDBG funded activities?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No . *If yes, please attach an explanation.*

## VI. APPLICANT ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS

The applicant hereby assures and certifies with respect to this project or program, by the submission of this application, that the following are true statements:

1. It possesses legal authority to apply for the grant and to finance the proposed request; that a resolution, motion or similar action has been duly adopted or passed as an official act of the applicant's governing body, authorizing the filing of the application, including all understandings and assurances contained therein, and directing and authorizing the person identified as the official representative of the applicant to act in connection with the application and to provide such additional information as may be required.
2. It will comply with the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirement for Federal Awards as codified in Title 2, Part 200 of the Code of Federal Regulations (UAR) and agrees to adhere to the accounting principles and procedures required therein, utilizing adequate internal controls and maintaining necessary source documentation for all costs incurred.
3. If it expends \$750,000 or more of federal funds in a fiscal year, it will comply with the Single Audit Act of 1984.
4. It will comply with the provisions of Executive Order 11988, relating to evaluation of flood hazards, and Executive Order 11990, relating to protection of wetlands. It will comply with the flood insurance purchase requirements of Section 102(a) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973, Public Law 93-234, 87 Stat. 975, and approved December 31, 1976. Section 102(a).
5. It will have sufficient funds available or the ability to obtain the non-federal share of the cost for construction projects. Sufficient funds will be available when construction is completed to assure effective operation and maintenance of the facility for the purposes constructed.
6. It will give the City and the Comptroller General, through any authorized representative, access to and the right to examine all records, books, papers, or documents related to the grant.
7. It will cause work on the project to be commenced within a reasonable time after receipt of notification from the City that funds have been approved and that the project will be performed to completion with reasonable diligence.
8. It will comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (P.L. 88-352) and in accordance with Title VI of that Act, no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity for which the applicant receives federal financial assistance and will immediately take any measures necessary to effectuate this agreement.

9. It will comply with the requirements of Title II and Title III of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisitions Act of 1970 (P.L. 91-646), which provides for fair and equitable treatment of persons displaced because of federal and federally-assisted programs.
10. It will comply with the provisions of the Hatch Act, which limit the political activity of employees.
11. It will comply with the minimum wage and maximum hours provisions of the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act as they apply.
12. It will insure that the facilities under its ownership, lease or supervision which shall be utilized in the accomplishment of the project are not listed on the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) list of Violating Facilities and that it will notify the city/federal grantor agency of the receipt of any communication from the Director of the EPA Office of Federal Activities indicating that a facility to be utilized in the project is under consideration for listing by the EPA.
13. It will assist the city/federal grantor agency in its compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as amended (16 U.S.C. 470), Executive Order 11593, and the Archeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 469a-1 et seq.).

CDBG 2026 Public Services Application Page 18

14. It will comply with Texas Civil Statutes, Article 5996a, by ensuring that no officer, employee, or member of the applicant's governing body or of the applicant's contractor shall vote or confirm the employment of any person related within the second degree by affinity or third degree by consanguinity to any member of the governing body or to any other officer or employee authorized to employ or supervise such person. This prohibition shall not prohibit the employment of a person who shall have been continuously employed for a period of two years prior to the election or appointment of the officer, employee, or governing body member related to such person in the prohibited degree.
15. It will ensure that all information collected, assembled or maintained by the applicant relative to this project shall be available to the public during normal business hours in compliance with Texas Civil Statutes, Article 6252-17a, unless otherwise expressly provided by law.
16. It will conduct and administer the program in conformity with the Fair Housing Act (42 USC Section 3901 et. Seq.) and that it will affirmatively further fair housing.
17. It will minimize displacement of persons because of activities assisted with CDBG funds. If displacement of residential dwellings will occur in connection with a grant-assisted project, it will follow a residential anti displacement and relocation assistance plan as specified by the City of San Marcos.
18. It certifies that it is not now, nor has it ever been, on the Federal List of Debarred Contractors.
19. It will not attempt to recover any capital costs of public improvements assisted in whole or in part with such funds by assessing any amount against properties owned and occupied by persons of LMI, including any fee charged or assessment made as a condition of obtaining access to such public improvements unless (a) such funds are used to pay the proportion of such fee or assessment that related to the capital costs of such public improvements that are financed from revenue sources other than such funds; or (b) for purposes of assessing any amount against properties owned and occupied by persons of moderate income, applicant certifies that it lacks sufficient funds under this contract to comply with the requirements of clause (a).
20. It agrees to comply with the requirements of Title 24 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 570 (the U.S. Housing and Urban Development regulations concerning Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)) including subpart J and subpart K of these regulations, except that (1) the Agency does not assume the recipient's environmental responsibilities described in 24 CFR 570.604 and (2) Agency does not assume the recipient's responsibility for initiating the review process under the provisions of 24 CFR Part 52. Agency also agrees to comply with all other applicable Federal, State, and local laws, regulations, and policies governing the funds provided. Agency further agrees to utilize funds available to supplement rather than supplant funds otherwise available. Agency shall comply with all applicable Federal laws, regulations, and requirements, which include compliance with the provisions of the HCD Act and all rules, regulations, guidelines, and circulars

promulgated by the various Federal departments, agencies, administrations, and commissions relating to the CDBG Program. The applicable laws and regulations include, but are not limited to:

- 24 CFR Part 570;
- 24 CFR Parts 84 and 85;
- The Davis-Bacon Fair Labor Standards Act;
- The Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act of 1962;
- Copeland “Anti-Kickback” Act of 1934;
- Sections 104(b) and 109 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974;
- Section 3 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968;
- Equal employment opportunity and minority business enterprise regulations established in 24 CFR part 570.904;
- Non-discrimination in employment, established by Executive Order 11246 (as amended by Executive Orders 11375 and 12086);
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards; • The Architectural Barriers Act of 1968;
- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990;
- The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended;

CDBG 2026 Public Services Application Page 19

- National Environmental Policy of 1969 (42 USC 4321 et seq.) as amended;
- Lead Based paint regulations established in 24 CFR Parts 35, 570.608, and 24 CFR 982.401; • Asbestos guidelines established in CPD Notice 90-44;
- HUD Environmental Criteria and Standards (24 CFR Part 51);
- The Energy Policy and Conservation Act (Public Law 94-163) and 24 CFR Part 39
- Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973;
- Colorado House Bill 06-1023 and 06-1043;
- Procurement Standards (2 CFR 200.322);
- Rights to Inventions Made Under a Contract or Agreement (37 CFR 401.2 (a));
- Energy Efficiency (2 CFR Part 200 Appendix II); and
- Recycling (2 CFR Part 200 Appendix II).

21. NEW SECTION: It agrees to comply with federal policy provisions contained in Appendix One, which implement the following:

- 1. Executive Order 14168 – Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government
- 2. Executive Order 14173 – Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity •
- 3. Executive Order 14182 – Enforcing the Hyde Amendment
- 4. Executive Order 14154 – Unleashing American Energy
- 5. Executive Order 14218 – Ending Taxpayer Subsidization of Open Borders
- 6. Executive Order 14205 – Establishment of the White House Faith Office
- 7. 8 U.S.C. § 1601 et seq. (PRWORA – Immigration Eligibility and Verification)
- 8. 31 U.S.C. § 3729(b)(4) (False Claims Act – Material Compliance Provision)

### **CERTIFICATIONS REGARDING LOBBYING:**

22. No federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any federal contract, the making of any federal grant, the making of any federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.
23. If any funds other than federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of

Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with this federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit standard form – “Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying”, in accordance with its instructions.

24. The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all sub-awards at all tiers (including subcontracts, sub-grants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.
25. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering this transaction imposed by Section 1352, Title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

#### **GENERAL CERTIFICATIONS:**

26. The information, exhibits, and schedules contained in this application are true and accurate statements and represent fairly the financial condition of our organization;
27. Our organization is eligible to receive federal funding and has not been placed in a debarred or otherwise ineligible status under the provisions of CFR Part 24;
28. Our organization prohibits discrimination in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; and,

CDBG 2026 Public Services Application Page 20

29. Our governing body has duly authorized submission of this document. If funded, we agree to comply with the procedures outlined in the “Playing by the Rules” handbook that will be supplied by the City of San Marcos.

#### **CITY OF SAN MARCOS FUNDING RESTRICTIONS:**

30. All CDBG funding will be spent on San Marcos residents.
31. Funding requested is not more than 50% of the total funding for the agency.
32. Funding will not be used to fund more than 20% of a full time position.
33. Agency has been in existence for at least 2 years. (This can include serving communities other than San Marcos.)

I, the duly authorized representative of the applicant organization, certify that the foregoing statements are true to the best of my knowledge and belief:

#### **CERTIFIED BY:**

Signature:

Date Signed: 03/02/26

Printed Name: Lateese Cooke

Title: Executive Director

Organization Name: MELJ Justice Center

Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with this federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit standard form – "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying", in accordance with its instructions.

24. The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all sub-awards at all tiers (including subcontracts, sub-grants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.
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CDBG 2026 Public Services Application Page 20

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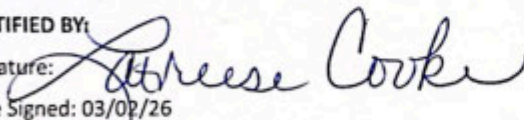
**CITY OF SAN MARCOS FUNDING RESTRICTIONS:**

30. All CDBG funding will be spent on San Marcos residents.
31. Funding requested is not more than 50% of the total funding for the agency.
32. Funding will not be used to fund more than 20% of a full time position.
33. Agency has been in existence for at least 2 years. (This can include serving communities other than San Marcos.)

I, the duly authorized representative of the applicant organization, certify that the foregoing statements are true to the best of my knowledge and belief:

**CERTIFIED BY:**

Signature:



Date Signed: 03/02/26

Printed Name: Lateese Cooke

Title: Executive Director

Organization Name: MELJ Justice Center

## **APPENDIX ONE: FEDERAL POLICY PROVISIONS**

This Appendix sets forth the Federal policy requirements that apply to the Subrecipient as a condition of participation in the CDBG Program for Program Year 2025. These provisions are incorporated into and made a material part of the Subrecipient Agreement.

### **Section 1. Prohibition on Use of Funds to Promote “Gender Ideology”**

1.1 Policy Requirement. In accordance with Executive Order (E.O.) 14168, *Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government*, the Subrecipient shall not use any CDBG funds to promote “gender ideology.”

1.2 Definitions. For purposes of this section:

- a. “Gender ideology” means any theory or policy asserting that sex is determined by subjective identity rather than biological reality, as defined in Section 2(f) of E.O. 14168 and any subsequent HUD or OMB guidance.
- b. For the purposes of this section, “Promote” means to publicly advocate, endorse, distribute, advertise, or otherwise support, through funded publications, events, or materials, the prohibited ideology.

1.3 Agency Forms and Data Collection. All forms, applications, surveys, or data-collection instruments developed or used by the Subrecipient for CDBG-funded activities that request information on an individual’s sex shall list only the options “Male” or “Female.”

- a. Such forms shall not include questions or fields requesting or recording gender identity, gender expression, or similar classifications.
- b. Existing forms containing such fields shall be modified or replaced for CDBG-funded purposes to ensure compliance with E.O. 14168.

1.4 Grantee Review. At the request of the Grantee, the Subrecipient shall provide advance copies of flyers, brochures, social-media posts, or other public materials related to CDBG-funded activities for Grantee review to ensure compliance with this provision prior to release or posting.

1.5 Consistency with Existing Civil Rights Requirements. Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit or modify the Subrecipient’s obligations under any other law protecting individuals from unlawful discrimination.

### **Section 2. Compliance with Federal Anti-Discrimination Laws and False Claims Act Provisions**

2.1 General Requirement. The Subrecipient shall comply in all respects with all applicable Federal anti discrimination laws, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.)

2.2 Material Compliance under the False Claims Act. Pursuant to E.O. 14173 and 31 U.S.C. § 3729(b)(4), the Subrecipient acknowledges that compliance with Federal civil-rights and anti- discrimination laws is material to the U.S. Government’s payment decisions under the False Claims Act.

2.3 Certification. By execution of this Agreement, the Subrecipient certifies that it does not and will not operate any program in violation of these laws and shall promptly report to the Grantee any filed or pending civil-rights complaint, investigation, or finding of non-compliance related to any CDBG-funded activity.

### **Section 3. Prohibition on Use of Funds for Elective Abortions**

3.1 Policy Requirement. Pursuant to E.O. 14182, *Enforcing the Hyde Amendment*, the Subrecipient shall not use any CDBG funds to fund or promote elective abortions.

3.2 Definition. For purposes of this section, “Promote” means to publicly advocate, endorse, distribute, advertise, or otherwise support, through funded publications, events, or materials, the performance of elective abortions.

CDBG 2026 Public Services Application Page 22

3.3 Grantee Review. At the request of the Grantee, the Subrecipient shall provide advance copies of flyers, brochures, or other outreach materials for Grantee review to ensure compliance with this provision.

### **Section 4. Environmental Considerations**

4.1 Policy Requirement. Notwithstanding any prior Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) or application materials, this Agreement shall not be governed by orders revoked by E.O. 14154, *Restoring the Rule of Law in Federal Administration*, including E.O. 14008, *Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad*.

4.2 NEPA Unchanged. Nothing in this section shall alter or exempt the Subrecipient from compliance with existing environmental-review requirements under 24 CFR Part 58 or the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 U.S.C. § 4321 et seq. If the NEPA statute or its implementing regulations—including those at 24 CFR Part 58—are amended or superseded during the term of this Agreement, this provision shall be automatically deemed amended to reflect and require compliance with such updated authority, as interpreted by HUD or other applicable Federal agencies.

### **Section 5. Immigration Status Verification and SAVE System Compliance**

5.1 Policy Requirement. To ensure implementation and compliance with Title IV of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA, 8 U.S.C. §§ 1601– 1646) and E.O. 14218, *Ending Taxpayer Subsidization of Open Borders*, the Subrecipients shall assist the Grantee in ensuring that CDBG assistance is not provided to ineligible aliens.

5.2 Subrecipient Role. Subrecipients serving as program administrators shall assist the Grantee in ensuring compliance with PWRORA. Subrecipients may collect intake information and supporting documentation. The Subrecipient shall transmit collected documentation to the Grantee for verification through the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) Program or an equivalent verification system approved by the Federal Government.

5.3 Grantee Role and Determinations. The Grantee shall perform all SAVE verifications and maintain the official verification record. Any denial decisions issued by the Grantee based on SAVE results or Federal guidance are final and binding on the Subrecipient.

5.4 Prohibitions. No Subrecipient shall use CDBG funds in a manner that, by design or effect, facilitates the subsidization or promotion of illegal immigration or shields illegal aliens from deportation, including by maintaining policies or practices that materially impede enforcement of Federal immigration laws.

### **Section 6. Equal Treatment for Faith-Based Organizations**

6.1 Policy Requirement. Faith-based organizations are eligible to participate as Subrecipients on the same basis as any other organization, consistent with E.O. 14205.

6.2 Prohibition on Religious Activities. No CDBG funds may be used for inherently religious activities such as worship, instruction, or proselytization. Any such religious activities must be separate in time or location from HUD-funded activities and voluntary for participants.

6.3 Non-Discrimination. The Subrecipient shall not, in the selection of contractors, vendors, or beneficiaries, discriminate on the basis of religious character, affiliation, or exercise.

# 1-Year Operational Budget

## MELJ Center

Please complete your organization's income and expenses for your previous, completed fiscal year.

December 1, 2024-December 31, 2025

### Income

Tuition or Fees	\$	-
Admissions, Tickets, etc.	\$	-
Interest on Investments, Endowments	\$	-
Other Earned Income: _____	\$	-
_____	\$	-
_____	\$	-
Special Event Income	\$	-
Individual Contributions	\$	15,000.00
Foundation Grants	\$	25,000.00
Corporate Sponsorships/Grants	\$	-
City and County Government Support	\$	62,000.00
State Government Support	\$	200,000.00
Federal Government Support	\$	-
Other (list): _____	\$	-
_____	\$	-
_____	\$	-
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>302,000.00</b>

### Expenses

Salary & Benefits	\$	150,000.00
Contract Services (consulting, professional)	\$	45,000.00
Occupancy (rent, utilities, maintenance)	\$	25,000.00
Training & Professional Development	\$	2,500.00
Insurance	\$	850.00
Travel	\$	6,500.00
Equipment	\$	1,500.00
Supplies	\$	550.00
Printing/Copying/Postage	\$	500.00
Fundraising	\$	1,000.00
PR/Marketing	\$	2,500.00
Evaluation	\$	5,200.00
Conferences/Conventions/Meetings	\$	2,000.00
Administration	\$	20,000.00
Other (list): _____	\$	-
_____	\$	-
_____	\$	-
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>263,100.00</b>

TOTAL NET \$ 38,900.00

## MELJ Center - 2027 Operational Budget Projection

### INCOME

Tuition or Fees	0
Admissions, Tickets, etc.	0
Interest on Investments, Endowments	0
Other Earned Income	0
Special Event Income	0
Individual Contributions	15750
Foundation Grants	25750
Corporate Sponsorships/Grants	0
City and County Government Support	63860
State Government Support	206000
Federal Government Support	0
Other	0
TOTAL INCOME	311360

### EXPENSES

Salary & Benefits	156000
Contract Services	46350
Occupancy	25750
Training & Professional Development	2575
Insurance	892.5
Travel	6695
Equipment	1000
Supplies	566.5
Printing/Copying/Postage	515
Fundraising	1200
PR/Marketing	3000
Evaluation	5356
Conferences/Meetings	2060
Administration	20600
Other	0
TOTAL EXPENSES	272560

NET	38800
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## Proposed HSAB Grant Financial Budgeting

### MELJ Center

Dispersed Fund Allocation

October 1, 2026 – September 30, 2027

**Income**

<u>Executive Director:</u> 368hrs * \$38.46/hr	\$14,155
<u>Program Interns (3 Positions):</u> 690 hrs x \$18/hr x 3 interns	\$37,260
<u>Payroll Taxes/ Fringe (10%):</u> 10% of \$51,415 staff wages	\$5,142
<u>Program Supplies And Materials:</u> Intake packets, printing, office supplies, participant documentation materials	\$6,000
<u>Facility Use / Community Space:</u> Meeting rooms, community spaces, and service delivery locations in San Marcos	\$8,000
<u>Outreach &amp; Enrollment Activities:</u> Outreach events, printed outreach materials, enrollment activities	\$10,000
<u>Program Service Technology:</u> 2 laptops (\$1,200 each) + 1 desktop workstation (\$1,500) + setup/software (\$1,100)	\$5,000
<u>Accounting / Payroll Services:</u> Payroll processing and financial bookkeeping services for program operations	\$4,000.00
<u>CPA Tax Preparation &amp; Financial Review:</u> Nonprofit tax preparation, financial compliance, reporting assistance	\$6,000.00
<u>Insurance Allocation:</u> Portion of organizational liability and operational insurance supporting program activities	\$6,000
<b>Participant Support &amp; Stabilization Services</b>	
<u>Transportation Assistance:</u> Bus passes, transportation support for employment and services	\$8,000.00
<u>Identification &amp; Document Recovery:</u> Replacement IDs, birth certificates, documentation needed for employment	\$3,000
<u>Workforce Certifications / Testing Fees:</u> Certification and training program fees	\$7,000
<u>Training &amp; Travel Costs:</u> Travel between Austin and San Marcos for staff services and required program training	\$5,443

**TOTAL NET**

**\$125,000.00**



MELJ Center  
Board of Directors  
2024-2027

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**President**

*Dr. Juliet E K Walker*  
*Round Rock, TX*

**Treasurer**

*Karen Hunyh*  
*Buda, TX*

**Secretary**

*Elyse Waugh*  
*Buda, TX*

**Members**

*Diane Beckman*  
*Austin, TX*

*Toyalisa Carr*  
*Round Rock, TX*

*Dr. Juan Perez*  
*Houston, TX*

*William Eldridge, LPC*  
*Houston, TX*

Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax

Under section 501(c), 527, or 4947(a)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code (except private foundations)

2023

Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service

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.

Open to Public Inspection

Header section A-M containing organization details: C Name of organization (Minorities for Equality in Employment, Education, Liberty and Justice), D Employer identification number (74-2994703), F Name and address of principal officer (Latreesee Cooke), I Tax-exempt status (501(c)(3)), K Form of organization (Corporation), L Year of formation (2005), M State of legal domicile (TX).

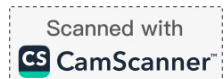
Part I Summary table with columns for Activities & Governance, Revenue, Expenses, and Net Assets or Fund Balances. Rows include mission statement, membership counts, revenue breakdown, and expense details.

Part II Signature Block. Declaration: 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.

Signature of officer: Latreesee Cooke, Executive Director. Date: 06/20/2024.

Paid Preparer Use Only section. Preparer: Natalia A. Hernandez, CPA. Date: 08/11/2024. PTIN: P00400682.

May the IRS discuss this return with the preparer shown above? See instructions. [X] Yes [ ] No



**Part III** Statement of Program Service Accomplishments

Check if Schedule O contains a response or note to any line in this Part III

- 1 Briefly describe the organization's mission:  
To provide a true opportunity for at risk youth and formerly incarcerated individuals regardless of background while helping them to re-direct, restore and reconnect as employable members of society.
- 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.

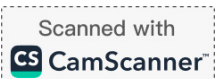
4a (Code: ) (Expenses \$ 126,456. including grants of \$ 0.) (Revenue \$ 0.)  
Assisted at risk youth and formerly incarcerated individuals to reconnect as contributing members of society.

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 126,456.



## MELJ Justice Center Non-Discrimination Policy Statement & Statement on Misconduct/Harassment:

MELJ Justice Center does not and shall not discriminate based on race, color, religion, creed, gender, gender expression, age, national origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status in any of its operations or activities. These activities include, but are not limited to, hiring and firing of staff, selection of volunteers and vendors, and provision of services. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of staff, clients, volunteers, donors, and subcontractors.

MELJ Justice Center prides itself on having a positive work environment. Absolutely no harassment of any nature will be tolerable MELJ Justice Center. We work hard to foster a caring family environment for all those who work with MELJ, and any degradation, discrimination, harassment, or misconduct of any kind will not be tolerated. If you feel that you are a victim of any of these aforementioned prohibitions, please contact the Executive Director and allow them to investigate your claim.

James C. Harrington

Attorney \_\_\_\_\_

██████████  
Austin, Texas 78723  
██████████  
██████████

March 2026

Re: Letter of Support for MELJ Center

Greetings:

As the retired founder and former executive director of the Texas Civil Rights Project, I am honored to support MELJ's community efforts.

I have long been familiar with MELF's excellent work for at-risk youth and formerly incarcerated persons, regardless of their educational and criminal backgrounds. Under the dedicated leadership of its founder and executive director, Latreese Cooke, MELJ has done outstanding work in redirecting and reconnecting such individuals as responsible and employable community members.


The MELJ Center also has played an important role in promoting women as business owners and community leaders. Mrs. Cooke's leadership role with MELJ is reflected in that other civil and nonprofit organizations have invited her into their leadership roles.

When I was still at the Texas Civil Rights Project, we honored her for MELJ's its vital work in the community. Mrs. Cooke received the recognition at our annual Texas Bill of Rights Dinner with our Congressman Henry B. Gonzalez Community Service Award for work on behalf of formerly incarcerated individuals.

On fascinating aspect of her work is Ms. Cooke using KAZI 88.7 FM, which draws listeners in conversation about justice and second chances. This is quintessential outreach and organizing.

I strongly support MELJ under Ms. Cooke's leadership and without reservation support their application.

Sincerely,





March 2, 2026

City of San Marcos

**Re: Letter of Support for Minorities for Equality in Economy, Education, Liberty, and Justice (MELJ)**

Dear Members of the Review Committee,

I am writing in my capacity as Internship Coordinator with the Texas State University School of Criminal Justice and Criminology to express our strong and longstanding support for Minorities for Equality in Economy, Education, Liberty, and Justice (MELJ) and its application for funding through the City of San Marcos.

For more than fifteen years, our School has partnered closely with MELJ in its mission to serve individuals returning to the community after incarceration. This enduring collaboration reflects a shared commitment to supporting vulnerable populations in our community while promoting public safety, accountability, and opportunity.

Throughout this partnership, our students have gained meaningful, hands-on experience working directly with justice-involved individuals through internships and service-learning placements. Under the guidance and supervision of MELJ Founder Latreese Cook and the organization's professional staff, students engage in case support, program coordination, resource navigation, and workforce readiness initiatives. These experiences not only enhance their academic learning but also cultivate empathy, cultural competency, and practical skills that prepare them to become ethical and effective criminal justice professionals.

At the same time, our students contribute tangible value to the organization's mission. By expanding program capacity and assisting in direct service delivery, they help ensure that returning citizens receive the comprehensive support necessary to secure employment, housing stability, and long-term success. This mutually beneficial partnership has strengthened both our academic program and the broader reentry services network in our region.

MELJ has played an essential role in serving and supporting some of the most vulnerable members of our community. Their evidence-based programming, individualized case management, and commitment to collaboration make them a trusted and impactful community partner. We have consistently observed their professionalism, dedication, and measurable impact over the course of our 15-year relationship.



City funding would enable the organization to expand its reach and deepen its services at a time when reentry support is critically needed. Investment in this work strengthens families, enhances workforce participation, and contributes to safer and more resilient neighborhoods.

I strongly encourage the City of San Marcos to support this application. We are proud of our long-standing partnership with Minorities for Equality in Economy, Education, Liberty, and Justice (MELJ) and confident in their continued ability to transform lives and strengthen our community.

Please feel free to contact me at [elsass@txstate.edu](mailto:elsass@txstate.edu) if additional information would be helpful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "H. Jaymi Elsass".

H. Jaymi Elsass, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of Instruction  
Internship Coordinator

March 2nd, 2026

To Whom It May Concern,

I am pleased to provide this letter of reference in strong support of MELJ Non Profit and its application for HSAB San Marcos grant funding. I have had the privilege of observing the organization's work firsthand and can confidently attest to its integrity, leadership, and meaningful impact within the community.

MELJ Non Profit has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to serving underserved populations through innovative programming, community engagement, and strategic partnerships. Their initiatives are thoughtfully designed to address real community needs, and their team consistently operates with professionalism, transparency, and accountability. What distinguishes MELJ Non Profit is not only its mission driven approach but also its measurable outcomes. The organization has successfully implemented programs that promote empowerment, education, and sustainable growth for the individuals and families it serves. Their leadership team brings both passion and operational excellence, ensuring that resources are used efficiently and effectively.

In addition to delivering high quality services, MELJ Non Profit actively collaborates with community stakeholders, strengthening networks and fostering long term solutions. Their ability to adapt to emerging challenges while maintaining focus on their core mission speaks to the strength and resilience of the organization.

Sonja Villalobos



**Griffith, Carol**

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**From:** Latreese Cooke <Latreese.Cooke@melj.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 10, 2026 12:22 PM  
**To:** Griffith, Carol; Marc Porras  
**Cc:** Escobar, Lorena  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: HSAB Application

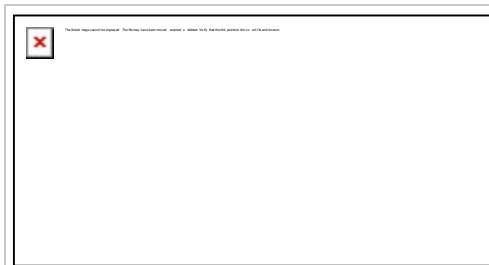


**403 E. 15<sup>th</sup> Street  
Austin, Texas 78701**

Good Morning, Carol:

Hope you are having a good week thus far. I want to clarify two of the requested items that are in the application. One is we've only had one meeting this year in January and a called meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March. Our board meets quarterly. So, can we just answer that 5 of our members were present?

**Latreese Cooke, Executive Director  
MELJ Center  
[www.melj.org](http://www.melj.org)**



[MELJ CENTER - Effecting Change & Opportunity for All](http://www.melj.org)

MELJ Center Minorities for Equality in Economy, Education, Liberty and Justice  
Effecting Change & Opportunity for All

[www.melj.org](http://www.melj.org)

**(512) 473-2525 (Office)  
(512) 394-2055 (Cell)**

**Radio Personality @KAZI 88.7FM**

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**From:** Griffith, Carol <CGriffith@sanmarcostx.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 5, 2026 8:42 PM  
**To:** Marc Porras <Marc@melj.org>

**Cc:** Latreese Cooke <Latreese.Cooke@melj.org>; Escobar, Lorena <LEscobar@sanmarcostx.gov>

**Subject:** HSAB Application

Marc,

Thank you for checking this afternoon to see if any documents were missing. Sorry it took this long to get back with you.

Will you please provide the following by 5pm Tuesday 3/10?

- Brief budget table just showing the proposed uses of the HSAB funding.  
Note: this table will be used to create your contract if you are allocated funds, so please include anything you might want to spend the funding on.
- Board of Directors Meeting Attendance for the current fiscal year
- Board of Directors membership criteria

Please contact me or Lorena (512-805-2644) if you have any questions. Thank you! Carol



**Carol Griffith**

Housing and Community Development Manager | Planning & Development Services  
630 E. Hopkins St, San Marcos, TX 78666  
512-393-8147

**Please take a moment to complete the City of San Marcos [Customer Satisfaction Survey](#).**

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## Responsibilities of Individual Board Members

Each board member is expected to

- know the organization's mission, policies, programs, and needs as well as understand its collective purpose
- faithfully read and understand the organization's financial statements and board materials in advance of meetings
- serve as active advocates and ambassadors for the organization
- fully engage in identifying and securing the financial resources and partnerships necessary for the organization to advance its mission
- leverage connections, networks, and resources to develop collective action to achieve the organization's mission
- give a meaningful personal financial donation
- help identify personal connections that can benefit the organization's fundraising and reputational standing, and influence public policy
- prepare for, attend, and conscientiously participate in board meetings
- participate fully in one or more committees or task forces
- engage in learning opportunities to better understand the community we serve
- respect the experiences of all who bring their voices and lived experiences into the boardroom and the organization

San Marcos

Community Development Block Grant

Analysis Of MELJ Program Expansion Into San Marcos:

## **Attachment Outline: Analysis of Program or Service Expansion**

**City of San Marcos CDBG (PY 2026–2027) – Public Services**

**Applicant:** Minorities for Equality in Economy, Education, Liberty, and Justice (MELJ)

**Program:** San Marcos Reentry and Youth Redirection Program

**Request:** \$125,000

**Attachment Purpose:** Explain *how* the existing program is expanding, *how many new beneficiaries* will be served, and *how that number was determined*.

## **1. Existing Program (Current Status)**

Melj currently operates with a main focus in Austin Texas supporting the reintegration of post-incarcerated citizens and at-risk youth. Our services include assistance with a variety of things such as employment/career building, rental/housing, government programs, well-being, legal matters, credentials, healthcare, and many more.

Though the Melj centered is based in Austin, we serve many clients outside the Austin area, including (but not limited to) places such as Round Rock, Pflugerville, Waco, Dripping Springs, San Marcos, and even Houston and Dallas. The influence of Melj reaches into San Marcos, as evidenced by the Human Services Board Grant Report of 2022, and having a dedicated program to the city would benefit many more citizens seeking aide than we are able to provide today.

## **2. Expansion into San Marcos (Before vs. After)**

Prior to this proposed expansion, MELJ did not operate a specific structured or dedicated service delivery model within the City of San Marcos.

In the previous full program year of 2025, approximately 10 San Marcos residents were enrolled through general program intake. However, these individuals were served within the broader Austin-based program structure rather than through a defined San Marcos allocation.

Before this expansion:

- No dedicated enrollment slots were reserved specifically for San Marcos residents
- No staff hours were allocated exclusively to San Marcos participants
- No scheduled workforce workshops were conducted within San Marcos
- No formal outreach plan targeted specifically to San Marcos residents
- No defined annual capacity target existed for San Marcos beneficiaries
- Case management meetings for San Marcos residents occurred on a limited and non-structured basis within the broader program model.
- While MELJ has previously employed staff residing in San Marcos, those positions were not assigned to deliver services specifically within San Marcos city limits.

As a result, service delivery to San Marcos residents occurred on an occasional and non-structured basis rather than through a dedicated geographic service model.

After CDBG Expansion:

- Dedicated enrollment slots for San Marcos residents.
- Assigned staff time allocated specifically to San Marcos participants.
- Structured workforce readiness workshops delivered within San Marcos.
- Ongoing case management and youth redirection services delivered within city limits.
- Addition of Healthcare Navigation Consultant support.
- Documentation of San Marcos-Hays residency and income eligibility.

With CDBG support, MELJ will transition from occasional service delivery to a structured, geographically defined San Marcos service model. The expansion establishes dedicated enrollment

capacity, reserved staffing hours, and scheduled program activities conducted within San Marcos city limits. This represents a measurable increase in service accessibility and beneficiary capacity.

The expanded model will include:

- Dedicated enrollment capacity reserved exclusively for San Marcos residents
- Weekly case management blocks conducted within San Marcos
- Monthly workforce readiness workshops hosted in community-based service locations (e.g., public libraries, partner nonprofit spaces, and approved civic facilities)
- Local healthcare navigation and referral coordination
- Recruitment and hiring of two San Marcos-based staff members
- A structured outreach plan including quarterly enrollment events and coordination with Hays County supervision networks
- Hybrid in-person services supplemented by virtual follow-up support

Hiring San Marcos-based staff and delivering services in accessible community locations will reduce transportation barriers, increase engagement and retention, and strengthen consistent local presence.

### **3. Number of New Beneficiaries**

The expansion will newly serve a projected figure goal of 40 unduplicated San Marcos residents during Program Year 2026–2027 whose household income does not exceed 80% of Area Median Income (AMI), as defined by HUD.

A participant will be considered “served” upon:

- Completion of intake and eligibility verification
- Documentation of San Marcos-Hays County residency
- Receipt of at least one core program service (case management session, workforce training participation, or healthcare navigation support)

At least 51% (minimum 21 participants) will meet HUD low-to-moderate income eligibility requirements, with documentation maintained in accordance with CDBG standards.

### **4. Basis For Beneficiaries Projection**

#### *- Staffing Capacity*

The San Marcos expansion will be supported by:

- Two San Marcos-based part-time staff members at 14 hours per week each
- Executive Director oversight and limited direct support at approximately 4 hours per week

Total weekly direct service hours:

- $14 + 14 + 4 = 32$  hours per week

Services will operate approximately 46 weeks per year.

Annual direct service capacity:

- 32 hours × 46 weeks = 1,472 direct service hours

*- Estimated Service Time per Participant*

Estimated annual service time per participant:

- Intake and eligibility verification: 1 hour
- Ongoing case management: 12 hours
- Workforce readiness training (group and individual): 8 hours
- Healthcare navigation and referral coordination: 4 hours
- Follow-up check-ins and accountability meetings: 3 hours

Total estimated service time per participant: 28 hours

*- Capacity Calculation*

- 1,472 total service hours ÷ 28 hours per participant = 52 participant capacity

To ensure service quality, scheduling flexibility, and appropriate outreach time, the program sets an enrollment target of 40 participants, which represents approximately 77% of calculated maximum capacity.

This buffer allows for:

- Variability in participant engagement
- Higher service intensity for higher-need individuals
- Administrative and coordination time not captured in direct service calculations

*- Cost Per Participant Reference*

The estimated total San Marcos program budget is approximately \$312,500.

At an amount of 40 participants:

$$\$312,500 \div 40 = \$7,812.50 \text{ per participant}$$

For comparison, the U.S. Department of Labor's Reentry Employment Opportunities grant solicitations have historically identified approximately \$8,000 per participant as a cost-per-participant benchmark for workforce-focused reentry programs (U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, FOA-ETA-18-02).

The projected per-participant cost of approximately \$7,812 remains within this commonly referenced federal benchmark while supporting individualized case management and workforce reintegration services.

Based on the requested CDBG allocation of \$125,000, the CDBG investment per participant is approximately \$3,125, with the remaining costs supported by non-City funding sources.