

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL MEETING
PUBLIC HEARING
JUNE 18, 2026**

The City of Pharr's Community Development Council held a public hearing on Thursday June 18, 2026, and the following is the record of attendance:

MEMBERS PRESENT: Olga Cardoza
Victor Alvarez
Lucio Gaitan
Marco Gonzalez

MEMBERS ABSENT: Sabrina Garcia
Norma Trevino
Frank Santana

STAFF PRESENT: Napoleon D. Coca, Grants Director
Sandra Regalado, Assistant Director of Grants
Veronica Guerrero, CDBG Manager
Kimberly Hernandez, Administrative Assistant

ITEM 1. CALL TO ORDER

A) ROLL CALL AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE EXCUSING OF ANY ABSENT MEMBER.

Chairwoman Olga Cardoza called the meeting to order at 6:11 p.m. Roll call established a quorum.

Board Member Lucio Gaitan moved to excuse the absent members. Board Member Victor Alvarez seconded the motion and when put to a vote, the motion carried unanimously.

ITEM 2. PUBLIC HEARING

A) NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY FOR 2026 ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

Chairwoman Olga Cardoza introduced the item.

There being no comments from the public, Chairwomen Olga Cardoza closed the Public Hearing.

ITEM 3. ADMINISTRATIVE:

A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR JUNE 4, 2026, MEETING

Chairwoman Olga Cardoza introduced the item.

Board Member Victor Alvarez moved to approve the minutes as presented. Board Member Marco Gonzalez seconded the motion, and when put to a vote, it carried unanimously.

B. PRESENTATION OF APPLICATIONS FROM PROSPECTIVE SUBRECIPIENTS AND SET RECOMMENDED FUNDING AMOUNTS

Mr. Napoleon Coca Grants Director extended a thank you to each agency for the work that they do and allowed Ms. Veronica Guerrero CDBG Manager to list the agencies and their respected funding amounts. They were as follows:

1. The Possible Dream Foundation: \$10,000.00
2. Team Mario: \$5,000.00
3. Food Bank of RGV: \$10,000.00
4. Make a Wish Foundation: \$3,000.00
5. CAMP University: \$5,000.00
6. Ave Frontera: \$8,000.00
7. Comfort House: \$5,000.00
8. To Give International (Creative Art Studio): \$8,000.00
9. Area Agency on Aging: \$20,000.00
10. LRGVDC- Aging and Disability Resource Center: \$3,000.00
11. Valley Metro: \$55,148.90
12. Children's Advocacy Center: \$10,000.00
13. Women Together: \$6,500.00
14. CASA de Hidalgo: \$3,000.00
15. Amigos Del Valle: \$20,000.00
16. Silver Ribbon: \$3,000.00

The meeting proceeded with agency presentations. Ms. Veronica Guerrero CDBG Manager noted that all agencies had been contacted in advance to ensure there were no scheduling conflicts and invited each organization to present individually. The first presenter was the Possible Dream Foundation.

A representative of the Possible Dream Foundation introduced herself as Ms. Cuellar, Superintendent of the organization. She thanked the board for the opportunity to present, noting that this was the foundation's first year of operation.

She reported that the organization currently serves more than 545 students within the 9 months of operation, with approximately 70 students residing within the City of Pharr. She explained that the foundation's primary mission is to support students throughout South Texas by helping those who have left school return to complete their high school education and earn a diploma. In addition to earning a diploma, students are encouraged to obtain an industry-based certification to improve their employment opportunities.

She explained that all services provided by the foundation are free of charge, including tuition, childcare, and transportation. The organization also assists students with career readiness by providing resume development, interview preparation, professional dress guidance, and other workforce readiness skills to help students become confident job applicants and productive members of the community.

Ms. Cuellar noted that many students balance school, employment, and family responsibilities while also overcoming personal challenges or past trauma. The foundation remains flexible in meeting students' individual needs and is committed to removing barriers that may prevent them from achieving their educational and career goals.

The second agency was Team Mario. The Program Director introduced Project SOAR, which was developed to address the need for critical services and interventions for children and young adults with autism. She mentioned that 1 in 31 children are diagnosed with autism.

The program also features a Career Exploration Program designed to teach vocational skills through real-world experiences. Participants can practice more than 1,000 different skills across five career areas, allowing them to explore their interests while gaining valuable work experience. Through this training, staff help participants identify their strengths, interests, and potential career paths.

Many individuals enter the program unsure of where to begin, and their families often feel uncertain about how to best support their transition into adulthood. Project SOAR is designed to provide guidance for both participants and their families by creating a clear vision for the future. Through individualized career exploration, vocational assessments, and skill development, participants are empowered to discover their abilities and build confidence as they prepare for the next phase of their lives.

The Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley celebrated its 40th year of providing food assistance to families throughout the region. Mr. Omar Rodriguez, Director of Grants, shared this milestone and emphasized the organization's continued commitment to addressing food insecurity.

The funding request was for \$20,500, which was designated entirely to support the food distribution program. While the funds were not used to purchase food directly, they covered the shared costs associated with storing, transporting, handling, and distributing

food, including warehouse maintenance, data management, and food pickup and delivery. These operational costs averaged approximately \$0.19 per pound, making this an exceptionally cost-effective way to provide nutritious food to those in need.

The funding supported free monthly food distributions for individuals residing at Park View Village Apartments, a low-income housing community.

Food distributed through the program included USDA shelf-stable items such as canned vegetables, tomato sauce, spaghetti sauce, pasta, rice, whole grains, and other nutritious staples. When available, recipients also received fresh fruits and vegetables.

Over the 12-month grant period, the program distributed approximately 108,000 pounds of food, equivalent to 90,000 meals. Each participating household received an average of 45 pounds of food per month. This assistance resulted in an estimated annual savings of \$1,125 per household, allowing families to redirect those savings toward other essential needs such as housing, utilities, transportation, and healthcare.

The CEO for Make a Wish Foundation mentioned that they will be using funding for two wishes for children with critical illnesses. She informed the board members that the wishes vary from child to child. She explained the process of how the children decide what their wish is. She emphasized the importance of these wishes and the impact they have on each child.

Camp University shared that they help adults that have graduated from high school that have different disabilities. She shared that CAMP stands for can achieve maximum potential. Camp had five students from the City of Pharr. They hold different activities like lemonade stands to learn different aspects of business. Executive Director Pam Voss invited board members to tour the facility.

Ave Frontera was represented by Virginia Santana. She mentioned that they hold meetings with the family members in the agency every 15 days on important topics. They collaborate with UTRVG, STC, and Valley Grande Institute. A young lady accompanied Ms. Santana to showcase that Ave Frontera helps with opportunities to serve the community. She explained that Ave Frontera provides access to educational resources. She mentioned that AI was an area they were beginning to explore.

Silver Ribbon Miss. Ochoa introduced herself. She mentioned that the mission is to provide advocacy to prevent elderly abuse. The organization was formed in 1996 by APS workers. In 2002 Silver Ribbon became a nonprofit. They help with utility assistance, rent assistance, or medical equipment. Miss. Ochoa mentioned that there is a lot of need for the elderly, especially with the economy.

Miss. Ochoa allowed her employee Lucy to share a few words. Lucy shared that Miss. Ochoa had confidence in her and gave her the opportunity to work for her.

Children's Advocacy representative Ms. Ochoa shared that they provide forensic interviewing for children who have been abused physically, sexually, or have witnessed a violent crime. There are advocates that help families with the next steps. They also offer therapy, and partner with law enforcement agencies. Once they are helped through Children's Advocacy, they are allowed to receive therapy at any time it is needed. They work on putting perpetrators away and Ms. Ochoa said that is the best part of her job. She believes they are in the business of hope, healing, and justice. Last year alone they helped 183 children from Pharr. She shared CDBG funds equal to 11% of their funding.

Women Together shared that they have 48 years in service. The only shelter for domestic violence, and sexual survivors in the county. She shared that they work closely with law enforcement, hospitals, and schools. Last year the shelter had 143 citizens of Pharr. These individuals also look for counseling, and these services can be for the person or the family.

CASA was represented by Grants Manager Stephanie. CASA stands for Court Appointed Special Advocates. The organization serves children who have experienced abuse or neglect and are involved in the child welfare system. CASA volunteers complete 30 hours of training over three weekends before being sworn in and appointed by a judge. Once appointed, they are granted access to the child's case information and work alongside the court to advocate for the child's best interests throughout the case.

In addition to advocacy services, CASA provides school supplies to children each year and will be hosting its annual school supply drive on August 17. The organization also holds a Christmas party to help children experience a sense of normalcy and celebration during the holiday season.

During this fiscal year, CASA has served 231 children in Hidalgo County, including 10 children from the City of Pharr.

CASA respectfully requested \$3,000 from the City of Pharr to help support advocacy services provided to children in the community. These funds will help cover staff time required to support each child, including attending meetings, maintaining communication with CPS caseworkers, attorneys, caregivers, and placements, reviewing case updates, and ensuring each child's needs and best interests are consistently presented before the court.

The City's support would allow CASA to continue providing stable, consistent advocacy for children in Pharr during some of the most difficult and uncertain times in their lives. CASA expressed its gratitude for the City of Pharr's consideration and continued investment in the well-being of the community's children.

C. RECOMMENDATION TO APPROVE PROSPECTIVE SUBRECIPIENTS AND SET RECOMMENDED FUNDING AMOUNTS

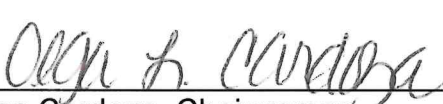
Chairwoman Olga Cardoza introduced the item.

Board Member Lucio Gaitan **moved** to approve prospective subrecipients and set recommended funding amounts. Board Member Victor Alvarez seconded the motion, and when put to a vote, it carried unanimously.

ITEM 4. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no other business to come before the board, Board Member Victor Alvarez **moved** to adjourn. Board Member Frank Santana seconded the motion and when put to a vote, the motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

 8/3/26

Olga Cardoza, Chairwoman

**STATE OF TEXAS
COUNTY OF HIDALGO
CITY OF PHARR**

ON THIS THE 18th DAY OF JUNE 2026 the Community Development Council Board of the City of Pharr, Texas, convened in a **Regular Called Meeting** at the Commissioner's Room located at 118 S. Cage Blvd, 2nd Floor, Pharr, Texas. The meeting being open to the public notice of the said meeting, giving the date, place, subject hereof, having been posted in accordance with Chapter 551. Texas Government Code (Open Meeting Act) and there being a present quorum, I, **KIMBERLY HERNANDEZ, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT** of the City of Pharr, Texas, certify that this is a true and correct copy of the minutes.

ATTEST:



KIMBERLY HERNANDEZ
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

APPROVED: 8/3/26