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- Juan J. Cruz
- Sonya M. Garcia
- Ricardo Benavides, III
- Lisa M. Paul
- Mario Perez, Jr.
- Valeria Reyes
- Jose L. Benavides, III
- Michelle K. Bartley
- Andrew Borrego
- Stephanie M. Brosig

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT

FOR: Contract Administrator
Webb County Purchasing Agent's Office
1110 Washington Street, Suite 101
Laredo, Texas 78045

RE: RFQ 2024-007
Labor and Employment Law Legal Services for Webb County

DATE: January 23, 2024

DOCUMENT / NOTES: Original Response and 4 copies

RECEIVED BY:

Juan Guerrero
I hereby acknowledge receipt of the original of this correspondence on the date indicated below. I have signed my signature on a copy of this correspondence to indicate my receipt of the original.

PRINT NAME:

JG

DATE:

1/23/24

TIME:

2:33pm

THIS FORM MUST BE INCLUDED WITH RFQ PACKAGE; PLEASE CHECK OFF EACH ITEM INCLUDED WITH RFQ PACKAGE AND SIGN BELOW TO COMPLETE SUBMITTAL OF EACH REQUIRED ITEM.

“Labor and Employment Law Legal Services for Webb County”

- Statement of Qualifications
- References Form
- Conflict of Interest Form (CIQ)
- Certification regarding Debarment (Form H2048)
- Certification regarding Federal lobbying (Form 2049)
- Purchasing Code of Ethics Affidavit
- House Bill 89 Form
- Senate Bill 252 Form
- Proof of No Delinquent Tax Owed to Webb County



Signature of Person Completing this Package

1/23/24
Date

RESPONSE TO



**Request for Qualifications
RFQ 2024-007**

**Legal Services for
Labor and Employment Law**

Partners:

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jcruz@jca-law.com

SONYA M. GARCIA
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lpaul@jca-law.com

Associates:

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mbartley@jca-law.com

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aborrego@jca-law.com

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sbrosig@jca-law.com

MELISSA GONZALES
mgonzales@jca-law.com

Address:

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Suite 202
Laredo, Texas 78041
Phone: (956) 717-1300
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SAN ANTONIO
367 Everest Ave.
Unit 103
San Antonio, Texas 78209

3.3 Transmittal Letter

The name of the law firm submitting this response to the Request for Qualifications for Labor and Employment Law Legal Services for Webb County (RFQ 2024-007) is as follows:

J. Cruz & Associates, LLC
216 West Village Blvd., Suite 202
Laredo, Texas 78041
Tel: (956) 717-1300
Fax: (956) 717-0539
E-mail: jcruz@jca-law.com
Website: www.jca-law.com

The authorized representative of the law firm is Juan J. Cruz, who is the owner of said firm. Mr. Cruz has authority to bind the law firm of J. Cruz & Associates, LLC ("Firm") in all respects and his signature below verifies the same.

J. Cruz & Associates, LLC is honored to submit its response with a goal of providing effective consultation, advice, and opinions on legal issues. Our Firm is well equipped to meet and exceed the needs of Webb County. J. Cruz & Associates, LLC has read the specifications set forth in the Request for Qualifications for Labor and Employment Law Legal Services and agrees to abide by all instructions provided by Webb County. This statement of Qualifications is valid for ninety (90) days from the submission deadline.



Juan J. Cruz, Managing Member
J. Cruz & Associates, LLC

3.4 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

J. Cruz & Associates, LLC (“Firm”) was founded and is based in Laredo, Texas. On June 1, 2023, the Firm celebrated its 10-year anniversary. From its modest beginnings in Laredo, Texas, the Firm has grown to serve employers in every corner of the state, from the panhandle to the gulf coast, from small counties to the largest state administrative agencies, with satellite offices in San Antonio and Corpus Christi. Thankful for its success, the Firm and founder Juan J. Cruz, do not forget their roots in, and their indebtedness to, the community of Webb County. Although the Firm has grown over the years and is expected to grow even further in the coming years, Mr. Cruz will ensure that Webb County remains the Principal Home Office of the Firm.

The Firm intends to offer comprehensive labor and employment legal services to Webb County. The Firm will keep Webb County updated on developments in equal employment opportunity laws and regulations, assist with wage and hour misclassification issues, provide guidance on retaliation claims, and assist with any whistleblower claim. In addition, one of the vestiges of the covid pandemic is remote work requests as a form of accommodation under the American With Disabilities Act. The Firm will ensure that any request for accommodation under the ADA meets the required elements and is addressed legally to prevent a claim. Further, nuances of the FMLA in connection with the ADA tend to arise when handling employee requests for accommodation. The Firm is well equipped

to provide guidance to Webb County on intricate regulations of the FMLA.

The Firm will provide guidance on a myriad of issues that may be posed by the approximate 1,800 employees of the County. Currently, the Firm serves as general counsel to 29 government entities that have a combined workforce of over 21,000 employees. The Firm’s clients are statewide. As such, Webb County will have the benefit of keeping up with employment trends that are occurring all over the state regarding employment issues. Moreover, the Firm has drafted many policies, administrative procedures, and employee handbooks. Webb County will receive the benefit of obtaining employment policies, administrative procedures, and form employment handbooks to readily enact for the betterment of the organizational structure of the County.

Regarding sexual harassment investigations, the Firm regularly provides training on this topic to both management and non-management employees. For instance, at the Webb County Appraisal District, last year, the Firm provided a one-hour training for management personnel and another separate one-hour training for non-management personnel. Legal guidance can also be provided to administrators on investigation of a sexual harassment claim, which will follow establish policy and procedure that, if necessary, can be updated by the Firm.

The Firm will commit to providing legal training, either via zoom or in person, as the County may need on a wide variety of employment law issues. The following is a non-exhaustive list of legal trainings that the Firm can provide to Webb County Management:

- Update on the Fair Labor Standards Act;
- Recent Update on the Pump Act and the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act;
- Title VII Religious Accommodations After *Groff v. DeJoy*;
- Social Media Censorship;
- Preferred Pronouns vs. Religious Freedom;
- Discrimination in the Workplace.

The Firm is well and uniquely constituted to serve Webb County better than any other law firm. Most of the Firm's attorneys are citizens of and reside in Webb County. Our attorneys call Webb County home, they are familiar with the issues Webb County faces (and are eager to assist in any manner they can), are proud of the progress Webb County has accomplished and look with hope to the successes that are to come. The Firm proudly serves as external counsel for Jim Hogg County, Zapata County, Brooks County, Duval County, and Zavala County, for whom it has handled labor and employment law matters with great ability. The Firm is also proud to provide legal services to the following government entities in Webb County: Border Region Behavioral Health Center, Webb County Appraisal District, Workforce Solutions South Texas, the Webb County-City of Laredo Webb Regional Mobility Authority, and Laredo Independent School District. In addition to Webb County, the

Firm provides public finance legal services to Laredo College, City of Laredo, and Laredo I.S.D. We believe the experience of successfully serving governmental entities, specifically in the context of South Texas and labor and employment law, will be of unequal benefit to Webb County.

Moreover, most of the Firm's clients are government entities in Texas, such as county governments. Together, our clients employ a workforce numbering in the thousands. Often, the Firm's clients are the largest employers in their respective counties. Given such a large workforce, the Firm provides guidance to its governmental entities regarding employment and labor issues day in and day out. The Firm specializes in the handling of a variety of labor and employment legal issues, such as drafting and negotiating employment contracts, preventing and investigating workplace harassment and other internal employee grievances and complaints, and a myriad of other issues. Our attorneys also routinely defend governmental entities in court and have received favorable rulings at all court levels, trial, appellate, and the Texas Supreme Court, and in administrative proceedings and investigations. No other Laredo-based law firm in existence has at least 12 attorneys who all specialize in working on labor and employment law issues for governmental entities, including county governments. Other Laredo-based firms may devote only a fraction of their overall practice to representing governmental entities, and even if they do so, they often do not have the depth of experience in labor and employment law which is shared by the Firm's attorneys.

The Firm boasts that many of its governmental entity clients have been clients of the Firm for many years and will remain as such for the foreseeable future. The Firm's success is largely rooted in its ability for quick turnaround without sacrifice of quality—its attorneys are virtually available at all hours, being only a text, email, teleconference, or phone call away—and for the open, personable, and transparent approach to providing legal services. The Firm cultivates strong relationships with its clients and prioritizes their satisfaction. As a result, it is hardly surprising the large number of acquaintances and friendships it is fortunate to count among its clients, their officers, employees, and constituents. The Firm's success may also be attributed to its ways of delivering services in a strategic and cost-effective manner. This is made possible by the varied experience of the Firm's attorneys and the Firm's manner of recruiting only those attorneys with a demonstrated knack for honesty, versatility, and efficiency.

Our Firm understands the duties and responsibilities owed to the community of Webb County. Collectively, our attorneys annually dedicate many hours to serve on volunteer organizations and unpaid civil organization appointments in the Webb County area, such as the City of Laredo Civil Service Commission, the Laredo Animal Protective Society, Border Olympics, among others. Indeed, most of our attorneys currently serve or have served on a local non-profit Board of Directors. Our attorneys also dedicate pro bono hours to assisting the startup of different causes and non-profit organizations. The Firm joins the mission of nonprofits that work hard to make our community of Laredo,

Webb County a better place to live and work. In addition, the Firm is a strong financial supporter of many charitable organizations and events that benefit the Webb County community.

In sum, our attorneys have the years of combined experience in labor and employment law to provide the best legal representation for Webb County. From commencement of the employment relationship to the termination of it, our Firm has extensive experience dealing with every facet of the employer-employee relationship. Importantly, virtually all this experience has been gained from representing governmental entities. We are grateful to be taken into consideration by Webb County to provide employment and labor legal services and stand well prepared to deliver high-caliber representation.

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	• Purchasing Code of Ethics Affidavit	
	• House Bill 89 Form	
	• Senate Bill 252 Form	
	• Proof of No Delinquent Tax Owed to Webb County	

3.6 PROFESSIONAL LEGAL SERVICES FOR GOVERNMENT ENTITIES

J. Cruz & Associates, LLC (“Firm”) is a law firm founded in Webb County. The Firm celebrated its 10-year anniversary on June 1, 2023. The Firm has provided the services requested by Webb County’s RFQ since its inception, although Mr. Cruz and many of the attorneys, especially the Partners of the Firm, have worked with government entities for over twenty-five years.

Our Firm specializes in providing high-caliber legal services to government entities, such as school districts and counties. Collectively, the Firm’s clients have a workforce totaling in the thousands. We believe that our experience in enabling our clients to mitigate the legal liability that comes naturally with such large workforces will be of great benefit to the County. The Firm has provided guidance to clients on issues ranging from the creation of job descriptions to the termination of employment to the post-termination appeals that follow. As a result, the Firm has insight into each stage of the employment relationship between a government entity and its employees. The Firm also has first-hand knowledge of the nuances of reductions in personnel via program changes and financial exigency. The Firm is also knowledgeable about state and federal wage and hour issues, employee evaluation instruments, and grievances. Our attorneys regularly present and lecture on a variety of personnel-related topics at in-service trainings and statewide conferences, including sexual harassment in the workplace, proper documentation, and the constitutional rights of employees, further demonstrating the practical and theoretical interest of our attorney’s into

labor and employment law.

The Firm also regularly represents its clients before state and federal administrative agencies, such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Department of Labor, OSHA, and the Texas Workforce Commission. We pride ourselves on collaborating with our clients on preparing a thorough position statement in response to an administrative investigation. We will work with Webb County to ensure that the County’s legal position is well stated to any administrative tribunal to prevent further investigation or litigation against the County.

In representing large and small government entities, the Firm’s attorneys have developed keen experience in handling a large array of employment law matters, including but not limited to, FMLA, ADA, Texas Labor Code, Grievances, Employment Discrimination, Title IX, Whistleblower Complaints, Fair Labor Standards Act, Equal Pay Act, and Wrongful Termination. For instance, the Firm recently assisted a government entity in creating, training employees on, and enforcing its Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (“PWFA”) policy. Additionally, the Firm has collaborated with clients to conduct a reduction in force and drafted employment contracts and severance/resignation agreements with global releases.

Presently, the Firm serves as general counsel, with specific emphasis on guidance on employment laws to counties, school districts, appraisal districts, and other political subdivisions across Texas.

Like Webb County, the government

entities that the Firm is proud to call its clients employ a large number of employees that make up most of the entity's budget. As a result, most legal issues arise due to employee complaints. The firm takes pride in strategically assisting department heads to adequately respond to an employment claim and prevent litigation to the extent possible.

If litigation is filed against the County, our Firm is more than capable of zealously representing the County in a state or federal court proceeding. For example, our Firm is currently handling a Texas Whistleblower Act lawsuit that is on appeal to the Texas Supreme Court as a result of a successful ruling obtained by our Firm before the 8th Court of Appeals in favor of the government entity we represent. Our Firm has handled this particular claim since the former employee filed an employment grievance to obtain her job back and we continue to defend the employer's interest in state court through the appellate process. The Firm has experienced attorneys that can handle matters at lower administrative levels through the court and appellate process writing thorough legal briefs as may become necessary.

a. Name and address of business entity submitting the proposal;

The name of the law firm submitting this response to the Request for Qualifications for Labor and Employment Law Legal Services for Webb County (RFQ 2024-007) is:

J. Cruz & Associates, LLC
216 West Village Blvd., Suite 202
Laredo, Texas 78041
Tel: (956) 717-1300
Fax: (956) 717-0539
E-mail: jcruz@jca-law.com
Website: www-jca-law.com

b. Type of business entity (i.e., corporation, partnership);

J. Cruz & Associates, LLC is a Texas Limited Liability Company.

c. Place of incorporation, if applicable;

216 West Village Blvd., Suite 202
Laredo, Texas 78041
Tel: (956) 717-1300
Fax: (956) 717-0539

d. Name and location of major offices and other facilities that relate to the Offeror's performance under the terms of this RFQ;

- **Laredo**
J. Cruz & Associates, LLC
Village Plaza
216 West Village Blvd., Suite 202
Laredo, Texas 78041
Tel: (956) 717-1300
- **San Antonio**
J. Cruz & Associates, LLC
One International Center
100 N.E. Loop 410, Suite 1070
San Antonio TX 78216
Tel: (210) 465-7440
- **Corpus Christi**
J. Cruz & Associates, LLC
Staples Executive Center
4466 South Staples St.

e. Name, address, business and fax number of the Offeror's principal contact person regarding all contractual matters relating to this RFQ;

- **Principal Contact:**

Juan J. Cruz
216 West Village Blvd., Suite 202
Laredo, Texas 78041
Tel: (956) 717-1300
Fax: (956) 717-0539
E-mail: jcruz@jca-law.com

f. Full name and business address for each member, partner, and employee of the Offeror (and any sub-offerors) who will perform services on this project; and

- **Laredo Office:**

216 W. Village Blvd., Suite 202, Laredo, Texas 78041

- Juan J. Cruz, Partner
- Sonya M. Garcia, Partner
- Lisa M. Paul, Partner
- Jose Luis "Joe" Benavides, III, Associate
- Ricardo Benavides, III, Associate
- Mario G. Perez, Associate
- Valeria Reyes, Associate
- Alma Fernandez, Legal Assistant
- Maritza Garcia, Legal Assistant
- Humberto Gonzalez, File Clerk
- Olinda Romero, Receptionist

- **San Antonio Office:**

100 N.E. Loop 410, Suite 1070, San Antonio TX 78216

- Tony Resendez, Associate (February 2024)
- Michelle K. Bartley, of Counsel
- Andrew Borrego, of Counsel
- Stephanie M. Brosig, of Counsel

- **Corpus Christi Office:**

4466 South Staples St., Corpus Christi, Texas 78411

- Melissa Franco de Gonzales, of Counsel

- g. A statement regarding the financial stability of the Offeror, including the ability of the Offeror to perform the functions required by this RFQ and to provide those services represented by the Offeror in its response.

J. Cruz & Associates, LLC is a financially stable entity since its inception with the ability to perform the functions required in this RFQ and services represented in its response. If requested by Webb County, the Firm can provide additional information regarding financial stability.

3.7 PERSONNEL QUALIFICATIONS

The Firm's Partners and Associate Attorneys are graduates of top law schools and are intimately familiar with federal and state laws affecting government entities, as they routinely deal on a day-to-day basis with all facets of governmental entity legal issues.

All attorneys of the Firm are in good standing with the State Bar of Texas.

Firm Partners:

- Juan J. Cruz
- Sonya M. Garcia
- Lisa M. Paul

Associate Attorneys:

- Jose L. "Joe" Benavides, III
- Ricardo Benavides, III
- Mario G. Perez, Jr.
- Tony Resendez (February 2024)
- Valeria Reyes

Of Counsel

- Michelle K. Bartley
- Stephanie M. Brosig
- Andrew Borrego
- Melissa Franco de Gonzales

The Firm's principals and supporting attorneys combine their strong academic backgrounds with their real-world experience in diligently serving the Firm's government entity clients. All attorneys will be assigned to work with Webb County, as needed. The primary attorneys for the County on labor and employment issues will be Juan J. Cruz, Sonya M. Garcia, Valeria Reyes, and Jose L. Benavides.

Juan J. Cruz

Partner
State Bar No. 00793570
Laredo Office
(956) 717-1300
jcruz@jca-law.com

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE: 28 years

Mr. Cruz has been practicing law for twenty-eight (28) years. He has served and continues to serve as general counsel to many government entities, quasi-governmental bodies and private entities. Upon graduating from law school, Mr. Cruz lived and worked in San Antonio practicing government entity defense with a San Antonio-based law firm. Mr. Cruz was a former named partner of his prior law firm up until he decided to open his own law office on June 1, 2013.

Mr. Cruz' experience in human resources is large and varied. He has presented on employment law topics in state and national conferences attended by public officials and administrators. Mr. Cruz has defended public institutions before regulatory agencies, such as the EEOC, Department of Labor, and the Texas Workforce Commission to name a few. Daily, Mr. Cruz provides legal guidance on statutes such as the ADA, FMLA, FLSA, etc.

Mr. Cruz serves as lead counsel for all clients of the Firm. He routinely provides day-to-day advice on matters affecting government entities such as school districts, cities, counties, quasi-governmental bodies, and affiliated political subdivisions. As general counsel Mr. Cruz is familiar with all facets of the management of government entities, including handling issues related to construction, procurement, employment, public information, contracts, etc.

Mr. Cruz will be available for consultation, as required. In addition, any meetings that require the attendance of legal counsel can be easily scheduled on brief notice. Mr. Cruz routinely attends meetings with heads of local government bodies and/or public officials. Mr. Cruz will direct legal issues to the attorneys, as required by the project. However, Mr. Cruz will always be involved in the decision-making of any legal advice to the client. Mr. Cruz attends numerous government body meetings monthly. To this end, the negotiation of complex contract issues is part of the skill set that Mr. Cruz has developed during his years of servicing political entities.



AREAS OF PRACTICE

General Civil Practice
Education Law
Labor & Employment Law
Local Government

EDUCATION

J.D., University of Houston
Law Center, Houston,
Texas (1995)
B.A., University of Texas,
San Antonio, Texas (1991)

BAR ADMISSIONS

- Texas, 1995
- U.S. Supreme Court
- U.S. District Court
Southern District of Texas
- U.S. District Court
Western District of Texas
- U.S. District Court
Eastern District of Texas
- U.S. District Court
Northern District of Texas
- Texas Southern District
Bankruptcy Court

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AND MEMBERSHIPS:

- State Bar of Texas, School Law Section, Chair 2014-2015
- Texas Association of School Boards Council of School Attorneys, 2010-2011 Chair, Board of Directors
- Texas Association of Defense Counsel, Member
- State Bar of Texas School Law Section
- University of Houston Law Alumni Association, Member
- Hispanic National Bar Association, Member
- Mexican American Bar Association, Member
- Webb County Bar Association, Member
- National School Attorneys Association, Member
- Education Law Association, Member
- College of The State Bar of Texas, Member
- University of Texas School Law Conference Planning Committee (2003 – Present)
- Listed in The Bond Buyer's Municipal Marketplace

NON-PROFIT BOARDS:

- Former President of the Children's Advocacy Center Board of Directors
- Board Member of the Ruth B. Cowl Rehabilitation Board
- Former Board Member of the Boys and Girls Club Board of Directors
- Former Board Member of the Salvation Army of Laredo
- Former City of Laredo Citizens Environmental Advisory Board Member
- Former Member of the Laredo Daybreak Rotary Club
- Leadership Laredo Class Member

PAST EMPLOYMENT POSITIONS:

- J. Cruz & Associates, LLC, Owner, June 2013 - Present
- Escamilla, Poneck & Cruz, LLP, Partner, March 2011 – June 2013

Sonya M. Garcia

Partner
State Bar No. 00794229
Laredo Office
(956) 717-1300
sgarcia@jca-law.com

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE: 28 Years

Sonya M. Garcia has been practicing law for twenty-eight (28) years. Sonya practices in the area of General Civil Litigation, Labor/Employment Law, State/Federal Litigation, Trial Work, and Administrative Law. Sonya has extensive experience in handling claims before administrative tribunals, including the Texas Workforce Commission and EEOC. Sonya is well-versed in government-entity work and defense as she has devoted the majority of her legal career to working for political subdivisions. Prior to working for the firm, Sonya worked for the Nueces County Attorney's office and the Webb County Attorney's office, where she was Chief Juvenile Prosecutor but handled civil matters as well, including Webb County jail matters, TPIA compliance, statutory guidance for elected officials, drafting interlocal agreements and MOUs. Sonya is familiar with the many legal issues faced by government entities including employment matters, discrimination claims, sovereign immunity, public information, law enforcement matters and open meetings. Sonya has federal and state court experience, including trial court experience.

CLASSES/TRAININGS GIVEN:

- Mediation Pointers for Human Resources
- Discrimination Investigations (Title VII, ADA, Title IX)
- COVID 19: ADA, EEOC Guidelines
- Fair Labor Standards Act
- Equal Pay Act
- Title IX Training 2020
- Title IX Training 2023

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AND MEMBERSHIPS:

- State Bar of Texas
- Texas Association of School Boards, Council of School Attorneys
- National School Boards Association Council of School Attorneys
- Laredo-Webb County Bar Association



AREAS OF PRACTICE

Labor & Employment Law
Civil Litigation
Administrative Law

EDUCATION

J.D., University of Houston Law Center, Houston, Texas (1995)
B.A., University of Texas, Austin, Texas (1992)

BAR ADMISSIONS

Texas, 1995
U.S. District Court Southern District of Texas
U.S. District Court Western District of Texas
U.S. District Court Eastern District of Texas
U.S. District Court Northern District of Texas

PAST EMPLOYMENT POSITIONS:

- J. Cruz & Associates, LLC, Partner, June 2013 – Present
- Escamilla, Poneck & Cruz, LLP, Associate Attorney, June 2007-May 2013
- Webb County Attorney's Office, 1999 - 2007
- Nueces County Attorney's Office, 1997 - 1999

Lisa M. Paul

Partner

State Bar No. 00791679

Laredo Office

(956) 717-1300

lpaul@jca-law.com

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE: 29 YEARS

Lisa Paul has 29 years of experience as an attorney, most of it representing governmental entities. Prior to joining J. Cruz & Associates, Lisa represented the City of Laredo as the First Assistant City Attorney, focusing on contracts, open meetings, code enforcement, purchasing and ordinance drafting and serving as the Ethics Compliance Officer. Lisa has also provided legal advice to various city departments including the Airport, Utilities, Real Estate, Engineering, Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Community Development, Library, Planning and Zoning, Risk Management, and Transit. Lisa also served as legal counsel to city boards and commissions, including the Planning and Zoning Commission, Ethics Commission, Airport Advisory Board, and Municipal Civil Service Commission. Lisa has experience providing legal assistance to governmental entities in a wide range of matters including real estate transactions, drafting, and reviewing deeds, easements, contracts, policies, and resolutions. Lisa also has experience advising clients regarding open meetings and open records, real estate transactions, purchasing, and personnel matters, and land use and zoning issues. Lisa has also served as a Municipal Prosecutor for the City of Laredo. Lisa also has extensive experience reviewing agendas and materials for city council meetings and preparing legal advice for advice of items to be addressed at a city council meeting.

Lisa has worked with state, county, municipal, public-school districts and private clients in addressing a variety of employment issues including, sexual harassment, wage and overtime claims, discrimination claims, and employee grievances. Lisa has experience in representing governmental entities in a wide variety of administrative hearings, including appeals and grievances filed with the municipal civil service commission, handling public university personnel administrative hearings, and handling grievances filed by public school district employees. Lisa has represented governmental entities in numerous employment mediations.



AREAS OF PRACTICE

- Real Estate
- Contracts
- Labor & Employment Law
- Civil Litigation
- Education Law

EDUCATION

- J.D., University of Houston Law Center, Houston, Texas (1994)
- B.A., Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas (1990)

BAR ADMISSIONS

- Texas, 1994
- U.S. District Court Southern District of Texas
- U.S. District Court Western District of Texas
- U.S. District Court Eastern District of Texas
- U.S. District Court Northern District of Texas
- United States Supreme Court

Lisa has assisted clients in addressing wage issues, including those relating to the Equal Pay Act (EPA) and Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Lisa served as Texas A&M International University's Compliance Officer in her roles as the Assistant Vice President for Risk Management and Compliance. In that role, she worked with university administrators to ensure compliance with a variety of state and federal requirements, including those related to employment.

In representing governmental entities Lisa has over 10 years of experience working for universities within the Texas A&M University System. Lisa worked as an attorney in the Office of General Counsel (OGC) for the Texas A&M University System (TAMUS) providing legal counsel to university administrators on a wide range of matters, including employment and administrative matters, contracts, implementation of administrative policies and procedures.

CLASSES/SEMINARS TAUGHT:

- TASPA Winter Conference 2020
- Client Legal Training & Presentation addressing contracts, real estate purchases and sales, procurement, and labor & employment issues.
- Title IX Training 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023
- COVID 19: Preparing for the Next School Year
- Counseling in a Pandemic 2020
- Contracts Training for Administrators

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AND MEMBERSHIPS:

- State Bar of Texas
- National School Board Association, Council of School Attorneys
- Texas Association of School Boards, Council of School Attorneys
- Imaginarium of South Texas Board Member
- Laredo Philharmonic Orchestra Board Member

PAST EMPLOYMENT POSITIONS:

- J. Cruz & Associates, LLC, Associate Attorney, 2019 – 2023
- J. Cruz & Associates, LLC Partner, 2023-Present
- City of Laredo, First Assistant City Attorney, 2017-2019
- Texas A&M International University, Associate Vice President for Compliance & Risk Management 2012-2017
- Law Office of Lisa Martinez Paul 2004-2012
- Texas A&M University System, Office of General Counsel, 1997-2003
- Eleventh Court of Appeals, 1994-1997

Mario G. Perez, Jr.

Associate Attorney
State Bar No. 24110210
Laredo Office
(956) 717-1300
mperez@jca-law.com

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE: 5 YEARS

Mario was born and raised in Laredo, Texas. He was admitted to the Texas bar in 2018 and joined J. Cruz & Associates in 2020. Mario has represented governmental entities throughout the state of Texas, including state agencies, independent school districts, and municipal entities such as city and county governments, working side-by-side with elected officials, department heads, and employees. Although Mario's legal skills are versatile, Mario focuses on assisting clients with issues regarding sexual harassment claims, discrimination claims, and other labor and employment issues. Mario also dedicates a significant amount of his time to representing governmental entities, small-to-medium sized local businesses and individuals with matters related to real estate, trusts, and probate. He has represented clients successfully before the state trial courts, the state appellate courts, and the Texas Supreme Court. In his spare time, Mario enjoys spending time with his wife and dogs, playing golf and soccer, and volunteering for the Laredo Animal Protective Society.

CLASSES/SEMINARS TAUGHT:

- Update on Medical Related Leave, Texas Association of School Personnel Administrators Mini Conference
- Mental Health Issues in the Workplace, Texas Association of School Personnel Administrators West Texas Mini Conference
- Understanding Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Issues, Edgewood Independent School District Administration

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AND MEMBERSHIPS:

- State Bar of Texas
- National Employment Law Institute
- Laredo Border Olympics Board



AREAS OF PRACTICE

- Education Law
- Civil Litigation
- Real Estate

EDUCATION

- J.D., Texas Tech University School of Law, Lubbock, Texas (2018)
- B.A., Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas (2015)
- A.A., Laredo Community College (2013)

BAR ADMISSIONS

- Texas, 2018
- U.S. District Court Southern District of Texas
- U.S. District Court Western District of Texas
- U.S. District Court Eastern District of Texas
- U.S. District Court Northern District of Texas

Ricardo Benavides, III

Associate Attorney
State Bar No. 24116094
Laredo Office
(956) 717-1300
rbenavides@jca-law.com



YEARS OF EXPERIENCE: 4 Years

Rick has been practicing law for four years. Prior to joining J. Cruz & Associates, Rick served the City of Laredo as an Assistant City Attorney. As an Assistant City Attorney, Rick provided legal advice to various city departments including the Human Resources Department.

During his time at the City, Rick provided guidance to the Human Resources Department on various legal issues related to employee discipline and compliance with federal disability laws. Furthermore, Rick held the designation of department counsel, a position that entrusted him with the responsibility of representing and advocating for the department's interests before the Municipal Civil Service Commission in matters pertaining to disciplinary appeals and grievances raised by City employees.

At J. Cruz & Associates, Rick continues to assist governmental clients with personnel issues, including issues related to the provision of accommodations, leave issues, discipline, and termination.

CLASSES/SEMINARS TAUGHT:

- "The Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)", presented at the TASPAs Summer Conference, July 2021.
- "Americans with Disabilities Act Training", presented at Crystal City ISD, July 2022.
- "Pregnant and Protected: Understanding the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act and the PUMP Act", presented at the TASPAs Winter Conference, December 2023.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AND MEMBERSHIPS:

- State Bar of Texas
- Webb County Bar Association
- Texas Association of School Boards Council of School Attorneys

AREAS OF PRACTICE

- Education Law
- Special Education
- Labor & Employment Law
- Civil Litigation
- Administrative Law

EDUCATION

- J.D., St. Mary's University School of Law, San Antonio, Texas (2019)
- B.A., University of the Incarnate Word, San Antonio, Texas (2015)

BAR ADMISSIONS

- Texas, 2019
- U.S. District Court Southern District of Texas
- U.S. District Court Western District of Texas
- U.S. District Court Eastern District of Texas
- U.S. District Court Northern District of Texas

- National School Boards Association Council of School Attorneys
- National Association of Bond Lawyers
- Fellow of the Texas Bar College, Society of Legal Scholars.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND MEMBERSHIPS:

- Member of the Board of Directors at Junior Achievement of Laredo.
- Member of the City of Laredo Municipal Civil Service Commission Board, Vice-Chair

PAST EMPLOYMENT POSITIONS:

- J. Cruz & Associates, LLC, Associate Attorney, February 2021 – Present
- City of Laredo, Assistant City Attorney, December 2019 – January 2021

Valeria Reyes

Associate Attorney
State Bar No. 24110266
Laredo Office
(956) 717-1300
vreyes@jca-law.com

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE: 5 YEARS

Valeria has been licensed and practicing law for five years. Prior to joining J. Cruz & Associates, LLC, Valeria was employed with the City of Laredo as an Assistant City Attorney for three years. As an Assistant City Attorney, Valeria provided legal assistance and advice to a multitude of city departments including the Human Resources Department, Police and Fire. Additionally, Valeria represented and advocated for city departments before the Municipal Civil Service and Ethics Commissions.

Valeria advised the Human Resources Department on a variety of employment matters including navigating complex issues such as grievances, terminations, suspensions, and other employment related matters.

In her role as Assistant City Attorney, Valeria also provided legal support to the Police and Fire departments representing and advocating for these departments in arbitration hearings.

At J. Cruz & Associates, LLC, Valeria continues to assist governmental entities with employment-related issues. Valeria provides support to various human resources departments on a weekly basis on a range of employment matters, including but not limited to leave issues, accommodations, terminations, suspensions, and other disciplinary actions.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AND MEMBERSHIPS:

- State Bar of Texas
- Webb County Bar Association

PAST EMPLOYMENT POSITIONS:

- J. Cruz & Associates, LLC, Owner, March 2022 – Present
- City of Laredo City Attorney's Office, Assistant City Attorney, December 2018 – March 2022



AREAS OF PRACTICE

- Labor & Employment Law
- Administrative Law
- Civil Litigation

EDUCATION

- J.D., Loyola University Chicago School of Law, Chicago, Illinois (2015)
- B.A., Loyola University Chicago, Chicago, Illinois (2012)

BAR ADMISSIONS

- Texas, 2018
- U.S. District Court Southern District of Texas
- U.S. District Court Western District of Texas
- U.S. District Court Eastern District of Texas
- U.S. District Court Northern District of Texas

Jose L. "Joe" Benavides, III

Associate Attorney
State Bar No. 24132156
Laredo Office
(956) 717-1300
jbenavides@jca-law.com



YEARS OF EXPERIENCE: 1.5 YEARS

Mr. Benavides was licensed to practice in 2022. Joe began his legal career as a part-time law clerk at J. Cruz & Associates, LLC before becoming an attorney. Before joining the Firm, Joe worked as a Constituent Liaison and Travel Aide in the Office of Senator Judith Zaffirini. His duties included resolving constituent case issues in Senate District 21 by working with State agencies including CPS, DFPS, Health and Human Services, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Texas Department of Insurance, and Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

Joe has conducted multiple Title IX investigations, assisted a government entity in drafting and enforcing their Pregnant Workers Fairness Act policy; advised school districts on numerous employee disciplinary matters; and assisted clients with their employee policy handbooks, improvement plans, resignation agreements, and terminations. Joe also has provided training presentations on a variety of labor and employment law issues.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AND MEMBERSHIPS:

- State Bar of Texas
- Texas Bar College
- Ruthe B. Cowl Rehabilitation Center, Board Member

PAST EMPLOYMENT POSITIONS:

- J. Cruz & Associates, LLC, Law Clerk, May 2020 – May 2022
- Office of Senator Judith Zaffirini, December 2016 - May 2019
- Law Office of David Garcia, Filing Clerk, June 2016 - August 2016

AREAS OF PRACTICE:

- Civil Litigation
- Real Estate
- Labor & Employment Law
- Education Law
- Open Records

EDUCATION:

- JD, St. Mary's University School of Law, San Antonio, Texas (May 2022)
- BBA, St. Edwards University, Austin, Texas (May 2016)

BAR ADMISSIONS:

- Texas, 2022
- U.S. District Court Southern District of Texas
- U.S. District Court Western District of Texas
- U.S. District Court Eastern District of Texas
- U.S. District Court Northern District of Texas

Michelle K. Bartley

Of Counsel
Texas Bar No. 24035611
San Antonio Office
(210) 465-7440
mbartley@jca-law.com

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE: 29 Years

Michelle Bartley has over twenty-nine (29) years of broad litigation experience. Her primary areas of practice include General Civil and Commercial Litigation Matters, focusing on complex construction defect cases where she has represented school districts, hospitals, apartment complexes and other commercial businesses. She also handles matters involving contract, business, and property disputes. Prior to moving to Texas in 2002, she practiced in Washington State handling a variety of insurance defense and coverage matters, including personal injury and premises liability cases, motor vehicle and bus accidents, construction site accidents, and product liability claims. Additionally, Mrs. Bartley has served in court-appointed roles for estate administrations. She has substantial experience litigating in state and federal courts in the State of Texas on a wide array of disputes.



AREAS OF PRACTICE

- Labor & Employment
- Civil Litigation
- Contracts
- Education
- Local Government

EDUCATION

- JD., Seattle University School of Law (1994)
- BA, University of Washington (1988)

BAR ADMISSIONS

- Washington, 1994
- Texas, 2002
- U.S. Court of Appeals Ninth District
- Texas Eastern District
- Texas Northern District
- Texas Southern District/Bankruptcy
- Texas Western District
- Washington Eastern District Court
- Washington Western District Court
- Washington-All Courts State—Trial Court

Andrew **Borrego**

Of Counsel
State Bar No.
San Antonio Office
(210) 465-7440
aborrego@jca-law.com

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE: 23 YEARS

Andrew Borrego is a native of San Antonio where he grew up on the city's Westside. He is licensed to practice in Texas and New York. Andrew has been named by his Texas Peers as a Texas Rising Star in 2012-2013, a distinction given to only 2.5 percent of Texas attorneys. In addition to practicing law, Andrew served as an adjunct professor at Trinity University (2007-2012) where he taught Sports Finance, Sports Law, and Ethics in Sports and assisted the university in establishing a Sports Management minor program.

Andrew's focus is in the areas of public information requests, governance matters, real estate, negotiation of contracts, and employment law.



AREAS OF PRACTICE

- Education Law
- Business Law
- Civil Litigation
- Corporate Transactions
- Personal Injury Law
- Sports Law

EDUCATION

- JD, St. Mary's University School of Law, 2000
- BBA-Accounting, University of Texas, San Antonio, 1996

BAR ADMISSIONS

- Texas, 2000
- New York, 2008
- U. S. District Court, Western District of Texas

Stephanie M. Brosig

Of Counsel
State Bar No. 24097421
San Antonio Office
(210) 465-7440
sbrosig@jca-law.com

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE: 8 Years

A graduate of the University of Texas and Cornell University, Stephanie provides the firm with valuable insight, particularly in the fields of government entity law, general civil litigation law, and corporate law. Stephanie has previously served as one of twelve commercial attorneys for the City of San Antonio, where she handled large development agreements, authored risk analysis, and worked as lead attorney for several city government offices. Having worked as a law clerk for both the US District Court for the Southern District of Texas and Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid, she has considerable experience concerning immigration law. Stephanie has both shown an interest in and assists the law firm primarily with open records requests, contracts, leases, and employment law matters. In addition, Stephanie's practice is devoted to negotiating, reviewing, and drafting construction-related contracts.



AREAS OF PRACTICE

- Education Law
- Special Education
- General Litigation
- Open Government

EDUCATION

- JD., University of Texas at Austin (2015)
- BA, Cornell University (2011)

BAR ADMISSIONS

- Texas, 2015
- U. S. District Court Southern District of Texas

Melissa Franco de Gonzalez

Of Counsel
State Bar No. 24032194
Corpus Christi Office
(361) 333-2229
mgonzales@jca-law.com

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE: 22 Years

Melissa is a graduate of the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law in New York and received her undergraduate degree from Vassar College also in New York. Melissa works out of the Corpus Christi area. Melissa is intimately familiar with laws affecting government entities, as she is a member of the Gregory Portland ISD Board of Trustees. Melissa's work experience includes handling of claims in court before state and federal courts. Melissa works in the areas of employment defense, government contracting, public information act, civil litigation, and open meetings laws.



AREAS OF PRACTICE

- Education Law
- Special Education
- Employment Law
- Civil Litigation

EDUCATION

- JD., Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, New York, NY (2000)
- BA, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, NY (1996)

BAR ADMISSIONS

- Texas, 2001
- U. S. District Court Southern District of Texas

3.8 REFERENCES AND PROJECTS

List at minimum five (5) prior clients where your firm has provided legal services for government entities and/or private clients with a similar size/scope of work. Provide name of client, address, client direct contact person name and title, his/her email address and direct phone number. This contact person must have direct knowledge of your firm's services / performance. Provide a description of project type, public / private structure, was it new construction or renovations to existing buildings/structures/homes, list timeline of each project from inception to closeout.

Border Region Behavioral Health Center

Maria Sanchez, Executive Director
1500 Pappas Street
Laredo, Texas 78041
Phone: (956) 794 - 3000
Email: mariaa@borderregion.org

Our Firm is the general legal counsel for Border Region and/or its officers, agents, and employees, including the Board of Trustees. Our attorneys attend meetings of the Center's Board of Trustees in Zapata County on a regular basis, including consulting with the Board in closed session on a variety of real estate, personnel, and litigation-related matters. The Firm has also assisted the Center with sensitive internal investigations, including hostile work environment and harassment allegations, in addition to investigating compliance with federal and state medical regulations. Further, the Firm has drafted various policies and procedures for the Center, including but not limited to employee standards of conduct and conflicts of interest provisions. The Firm also provides continuous guidance to the Center pertaining to real property acquisitions, leasing agreements, and construction contracts. When requested, the Firm will assist the Center's insurance defense counsel in the event of litigation, including employment discrimination and whistleblower claims.

County of Jim Hogg, Texas

Juan Carlos Guerra, County Judge
Jim Hogg County Courthouse
P.O. Box 729 / E. Tilley St.
Hebbronville, TX 78361
Phone: (361) 527-3015
Email: jcguerra@co.jim-hogg.tx.us

Our Firm attends Commissioners Court Meetings, work sessions and public hearings, as requested. Our Firm monitors and advises the County on all local and state legal requirements. In addition, our Firm advises the County on matters with potential legal implications, such as policy development, policy review, personnel issues, and provides written opinions, as requested. The Firm advises the County on all administrative and public laws (open meetings,

records, elections, etc.). Our Firm also assists with negotiations and drafting of agreements/contracts, advises the County on all legal notice requirements and verification of the notices, and represents the County in any litigation and other matters, as needed.

County of Zapata

Joe Rathmell, County Judge
200 E. 7th Avenue, Ste. 115
Zapata, TX 78076
Phone: (956) 765-9920
Email: zcjo@zapatacountytexas.org

Our Firm attends Commissioners Court Meetings, work sessions and public hearings as requested, monitors, and advises the County on all local and state legal requirements. In addition, advise the County on matters with potential legal implications such as policy development, policy, review, personnel issues and provide written opinions as requested. The Firm advises the County on all administrative and public laws (open meetings, records, elections, etc.). Our Firm also assists with negotiations and drafting of agreements/contracts, advises the County on all legal notice requirements and verification of the notices, prepares legal opinions as requested, and represents the County in any Litigation and other matters as needed.

County of Zavala

Cindy Martinez- Rivera, County Judge
200 E. Uvalde Street
Crystal City, Texas 78839
Phone: 830-374-3810
Email: judge@zavalacounty.org

Our Firm assists the county with the county’s open records requests, employment regulations, drafting of ordinances, and providing legal backup assistance for the County Attorney’s Office with any pending legal matters, as requested. The Firm also reviews contracts for the County and prepares legal opinions, as requested. The Firm assists the County with labor and employment issues, including review of the County’s employment handbook.

Webb County Appraisal District

Bobby Peregoy, Chief Appraiser
3302 Clark Blvd
Laredo, Texas 78043
Phone: 956-718-4091
Email: rperegoy@webbcad.org

Our Firm is the general legal counsel for the Webb County Appraisal District. Our Firm guides the Board on the Texas Open Meetings Act, hiring of the Chief Appraiser, and responding to

requests for information. Our Firm also guides the administration on all personnel-related matters, including providing training to the staff on issues such as the PUMP Act, the Pregnancy Fairness Workers Act, and Sexual Harassment. The Firm also assists with reviewing investigations and termination of at will employees matters. Real estate acquisitions and leases are also legal matters that have been entrusted to the Firm for handling.

5. SCOPE OF SERVICES

Labor & Employment

Our Firm specializes in providing legal services on an “as needed basis” to its mostly governmental entity clients, who employ thousands of employees. Our attorneys have in excess of one hundred years of collective experience in providing legal advice on general issues concerning labor and employment law. Our attorneys, whether it be in person, via text, via zoom, or email, regularly provide practice advice to the Firm’s clients on a day-to-day basis. In addition to handling matters related to employment contracts, our Firm’s governmental defense practice provides a vigorous defense to its governmental entity clients against allegations of workplace discrimination, wrongful termination, and sexual harassment, and other matters, before the EEOC, Department of Labor, OCR, TWC, and other regulatory agencies. Our attorneys are also expert legal researchers and our Firm maintains (at no additional cost to clients) subscriptions to online legal research service databases which allow the Firm to produce high-quality research, if the client’s need arises. In addition, our attorneys are familiar with collective bargaining agreements and regularly attend legal conferences whose lecturers include leading collective bargaining attorneys in the country.

We approach employment matters with an eye to being proactive, efficient, and extremely detailed. We pride ourselves with working on eliminating legal liability at its root, thereby preventing the expense of

our clients’ valuable time and resources. While our attorneys are trained to prioritize the efficient resolution or settlement of disputes, they also do not hesitate to, and are capable of, putting on a vigorous defense of our clients and seeking an ultimate resolution of disputes in favor of the Firm’s clients in state and/or federal court.

Our Firm prides itself on providing services in a cost-effective manner. Most of the Firm’s clients are governmental entities. Our attorneys recognize that the Firm’s legal fees are ultimately paid by taxpayers, among which the Firm’s own attorneys are included. As such, our Firm’s entire constitution is geared towards providing legal services of the highest caliber at a cost that respects the sacrifice and contribution of the community and taxpayers. Indeed, there are many ways that our Firm works with its clients to reduce legal costs. First, our Firm provides legal training on an as needed basis to employees at all levels (administrators, supervisors, front line, etc.), providing practical advice to clients that allows clients to spot legal issues and be proactive before such legal issues reach a critical (and expensive) level. Our training also provides ready-to-use tools (such as forms, checklists, “cheat sheets,” and other resources) that employees may utilize for routine matters without having to call an attorney for assistance. We have conducted staff training in different areas, such as handling grievances, employee electronic communications, employee discipline, public information act compliance, crucial conferences, etc. Our

Firm believes strongly that having a knowledgeable workforce helps curb adverse claims and litigation, thereby ultimately reducing the need to incur legal fees.

Second, our Firm clearly communicates with clients to allow them to understand upfront the pros and cons of taking a specific course of action, the legal fees associated with the course of action, and the probabilities that the course of action will result in a favorable outcome to our client. This allows our clients to stay in the driver's seat regarding their legal expenses. It also enables our clients to make better decisions for taxpayers. Third, our team of attorneys understand that usually it is not necessary to reinvent the proverbial wheel and that a cost-effective or previously-discovered solution is sometimes available for the client. To this end, our Firm fosters a culture of knowledge sharing within the firm. Our attorneys are trained to always share relevant precedent, research, forms, and insight, reducing the need for duplicative work on similar issues. The Firm has an extensive legal research and bank that has saved the Firm's clients an incalculable amount of fees.

In addition, the Firm also maintains a form letter bank, from which form letters may be provided, as needed, to department administrators. Administrators may then tailor these forms to fit the specific facts at hand. Importantly, department administrators will be counseled on how to use these form letters for common situations (e.g., reassignment, possible termination, suspension with pay) that may arise at a later time, further reducing the need for the County to incur legal fees.

The Firm has provided guidance to clients on issues ranging from creating job descriptions to the termination of employment, and the post-termination appeals that follow. As a result, the Firm has insight into each area of the employment relationship between a government entity and its employees. The Firm also has first-hand knowledge of the nuances of reductions in personnel via program changes and financial exigency. The Firm is also knowledgeable with regards to wage and hour issues, employee evaluation instruments, and grievances. In representing large and small political subdivisions, the Firm's attorneys have developed keen experience in handling a large array of employment law matters, including but not limited to, FMLA, ADA, Texas Labor Code, Grievances, Employment Discrimination, Whistleblower Complaints, and Wrongful Termination.

While our attorneys are trained to reduce legal liability in order to prevent litigation, the Firm's attorneys have decades of experience litigating cases ranging from peace bonds against employees in Justice of the Peace courts to appeals before the Texas Supreme Court. This is in addition to the dozens of cases litigated before administrative tribunals that the Firm has been involved in, ranging from termination appeals to other disputes. The Firm's most recent major accomplishment was in the case of *Clint I.S.D. v. Marquez*, a Texas Supreme Court case that set state precedent regarding the exhaustion of remedies prior to filing a lawsuit in the state court. The Firm worked tirelessly and collaboratively to overturn the 8th Court of Appeals' ruling against the school district and was victorious against one of the state's largest firms. Our attorneys have

defended government entities against claims before state and federal courts, such as claims arising from the Pregnancy Discrimination Act, the ADA, Title VII, Section 1983, Harassment, Family Medical Leave Act, Fair Labor Standards Act, Texas Whistleblower Act, among other employment laws.

6. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No material arrangements, relationships, associations, employment, or other contacts that may cause a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest if the Firm acts as litigation counsel to Webb County or any of its departments, offices, or divisions.

In accordance with the State Bar Rules, if a conflict exists at the onset of litigation, our Firm will immediately disclose such conflict to the Client. If our Firm has been working with a high-level official that is accused of misconduct, our Firm will, most likely, advise Webb County to seek third-party attorney to protect the integrity of the case or investigation. If the County sues another client of the Firm, we will immediately disclose such conflict so that both clients can obtain separate counsel.

6.1 CONFIDENTIAL/PROPRIETARY INFORMATION

The statements provided in this response do not contain material subject to confidential/proprietary information.

OTHER INFORMATION

• SERVICES & SERVICE PLAN

Services

J. Cruz & Associates, LLC is primarily a government entity defense-based company that provides legal advice to its clients daily. The Firm is proud to serve many government entities, including the Texas Education Agency Division of Governance as External Counsel with a current contract that was awarded by the Agency initially on September 1, 2020, and extended through August 31, 2024. The Firm's government clients require that the Firm's attorneys be knowledgeable and intricately familiar with federal and state regulations and agencies. The Firm has provided oral and written legal interpretations to its clientele on different sections of the state and federal statutes and interpretive guidance issues by regulatory agencies. Without question, the Firm can research, analyze, and interpret any federal or state regulations, as would be required by Webb County.

In its experience providing legal services, the Firm has assisted in providing legal assistance to government bodies including reviewing agendas and supporting materials for public meetings, attendance at government body meetings, including any additional finance meetings or committee meetings as requested by the client. The Firm has also assisted in reviewing and drafting agreements, leases, resolutions, or contracts for various government entities, as well as providing

legal advice to public officials regarding operations, open meetings, public information requests, real estate and personnel matters.

Regarding the familiarity with the County and its needs, Mr. Cruz and all of the attorneys that are employed with the Firm will attend required meetings (as requested), as has been the current practice with government entity clients the Firm is privileged to serve, where the Firm's attorneys attend monthly board meetings, special called meetings and provide training, as required.

All attorneys in the Laredo, San Antonio and Corpus Christi offices will ensure that the County's legal needs are met. However, via technology, the Firm's offices are well equipped to work together from different areas of our State to deal with any legal issue. The attorneys of J. Cruz and Associates, LLC represent large, medium, and small-size government bodies. As such, any legal issues that the County encounters will be, to a certain extent, routine given the similarity of client needs. In addition, the Firm personnel are very familiar with the clientele the County serves because we serve government clients located in the same geographical area.

The Firm has different controls in place to ensure any client of the Firm receives adequate, timely, and efficient attention to its legal needs. When a call, text, or email

comes in from a client, the main attorney, usually a partner, answers the legal issues within the same day, as required. If the legal issue is involved and another attorney needs to be involved, the lead attorney will familiarize the associate attorney with the project and follow up with the client to make sure he/she knows the matter is being addressed.

The Firm has established internal conflicts check procedures to ensure there is no conflict to represent the interests of the County in any matter. If a conflict arises, the Firm informs the client immediately as required by the State Bar rules. The Firm has an employee handbook that details all the professional requirements that all employees must meet daily. Regarding billing, the Firm uses the CORE billing system. This system captures all time and expenses on an hourly/daily basis. At the end of each month, Mr. Cruz reviews all time entries to ensure they are in line with the District's expectations and billing requirements. The Firm's legal bill is sent monthly to the designated entity representative for review and payment.

All attorneys of the Firm are mandated to comply with the required State Bar of Texas Continuing Education Legal Requirements. Each attorney that attends a statewide or national conference needs to submit their request to the managing partner who ensures that the legal training is in line with the client's needs. All attorneys of the Firm are required to attend the statewide legal conferences on employment law topics. The Firm is the only law firm in the Laredo, Texas area that has attended the National Employment Law Institute for the past three (3) years. The Firm invests time and resources to

ensure that all attorneys are up to date on the latest developments in employment law across the United States. It is important to underscore that the attorneys of the Firm receive advanced legal training and provide presentations to employment lawyers across the State. As such, the County of Webb will receive legal advice from learned professionals in their field.

Effective Strategies

Without question, what sets J. Cruz & Associates, LLC apart from its counterparts is that the Firm works alongside government officials and administrators in a conscientious manner with courtesy, respect, and efficiency. We pride ourselves on giving information (forms, letters, training) to administrators to enable them to learn and apply on a daily basis without having to resort to calling a lawyer, thereby cutting down on their legal expenses. The Firm truly believes that while it is important to be available, it is also equally important to educate its clientele so that calls to an attorney are made only, as needed, and required by the client. In addition, Mr. Cruz has instilled on the Firm's staff that their job is to handle things quickly and provide an answer on a very timely basis so that there is no interruption of operational services of Webb County.

Our attorneys attend public meetings on a regular basis, including consulting with the government officials in closed session on a variety of real estate, personnel, and litigation-related matters. The Firm has also assisted government entities with sensitive internal investigations, including hostile work environment and harassment

allegations, in addition to investigating compliance with federal and state regulations. Further, the Firm has drafted various policies and procedures, including but not limited to, employee standards of conduct and conflicts of interest provisions. The Firm also provides continuous guidance pertaining to real property acquisitions, leasing agreements, and construction contracts. When requested, the Firm assists insurance defense counsel in the event litigation arises.

Communication Plan

We wholeheartedly agree that clear and constant communication is necessary to maintain an effective professional working relationship with our clients. We pride ourselves on being a boutique government entity defense law firm that knows our clients – regardless of size – by name. Our Firm believes that no matter the size of the client, every single one of our clients should be treated as if they are the only client of our law firm. We are accessible seven days per week. Webb County County Judge, County Commissioners, and Administrators will have access to an attorney, beginning with Mr. Cruz, at any time, either through text, phone call, or email. The reason why the Firm has maintained some of its clients for a very long time is due to being open and honest with the client about their case. Our Firm does not give advice to the majority or minority of a public body. We treat everyone equally and provide advice in accordance with the standards expected by the client. If a case is in litigation, we will provide an initial report and budget, plus

routine status reports, in either an oral or written manner, as required.

All Firm attorneys will be fully available to Webb County during normal business hours and, after hours, on cell phone, via phone call, or text communication. Further, the Firm routinely receives reviews, and responds to daily e-mail communication from every client. The attorneys work as a team, and, together, will contribute to ensure that all legal issues that arise at Webb County are handled fully and adequately. Each individual working on a project will see that the goal is met and will cease all work on the project at the request of Webb County or when the issue is resolved.

Juan J. Cruz will be the assigned lead counsel. Mr. Cruz prides himself on being available via Zoom, text, phone call, or e-mail in an instantaneous matter. Due to the proximity between the County and the Firm's principal office, Mr. Cruz or any of the attorneys of the Firm may be available for an important in-person meeting, as required by the client.

The Firm has all forms of communication apps available to it, including but not limited to:

- Zoom Meeting;
- Google Meets;
- Go To Meetings;
- Skype; and
- Microsoft Teams.

When large documents need to be shared, the Firm can use Dropbox or Google Drive. Further, the Firm's attorneys and staff use Microsoft Outlook daily. The District will receive the Firm's office number, 1-800

number, and the attorney's personal cell phones to call, as needed, after hours.

As a Firm, we have a reputation for effectively and tenaciously representing our clients' interests. We pride ourselves in that each client will have the benefit of one hundred plus years of joined experience. Our litigation philosophy is simple: listen first, understand our clients' business and legal objectives next, and then aggressively, efficiently, and effectively present and defend our clients' interests. We have a strong history of zealous courtroom advocacy on behalf of our clients at any level. However, we are also mindful that oftentimes our clients are best served by resolving a matter before it reaches the courtroom. The members of our litigation team are skilled negotiators who have successfully employed creative strategies to resolve matters at mediation, arbitration, and via administrative proceedings. We believe that creativity, judgment, sensitivity, and experience are the keys to our success in finding winning outcomes, and we deliver.

Reduction of Legal Expenses

The Firm provides a wide array of trainings, with particular emphasis on employment law claims and defenses. Our training provides our clients with pertinent knowledge and, more importantly, avenues on how to prevent legal risks for their entities, thus saving valuable time and finances. Our Firm will attend required meetings, where the Firm's attorneys attend monthly meetings, special called meetings, and provide legal training.

Our skilled lawyers keep up to date through training, counseling, and presentations to public entities. We pride ourselves on providing information (forms, letters, training) to public entity representatives to enable them to learn and apply on a daily basis without having to resort to calling a lawyer, thereby cutting down on their legal expenses.

Our Firm will deliver training, as the County requests. The trainings can be for a full hour, ½ hour or full days, as requested.

The Firm truly believes that while it is important to be available, it is also equally important to educate its clientele so that calls to an attorney are made only, as needed, and required by the client.

Special Trainings and Workshops

Every attorney at our law firm is well-versed in employment law. The Firm requires that attorneys are up to date regarding nation and state-wide legal issues affecting government bodies. On a yearly basis, the Firm's attorneys attend continuing education in employment law. In addition, the Firm's attorneys are frequent speakers at statewide conferences, and Mr. Cruz is a well-known speaker at national and statewide legal conferences. Given that most of the attorneys of the Firm grew up in South Texas and continue to make it their home, the Firm's attorneys are intricately familiar with the way South Texas operates and the clientele we serve. Moreover, most of the attorneys are fluent in Spanish, which may assist the County in case of a bilingual issue that arises where an attorney must read or

speak to a particular person in their native language.

The Firm has a vast array of legal training that it provides to its clientele and at statewide legal conferences. Please be advised that this is not an exhaustive list, as the Firm has provided extensive legal training to its clients in-person and via Zoom.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of legal trainings the Firm can provide to Webb County:

- » Beware of Vendors Bearing Gifts
- » Effective Governance
- » Leave Issues Affecting the Workplace
- » Mediation Pointers for Human Resources.
- » Preventing Law: Avoiding Employment Claims and Lawsuits
- » Reduction in Force
- » Role of Internal Auditor
- » Social Media Issues
- » Termination of Employees
- » The Nuts and Bolts of the Texas Open Meetings Act
- » Understanding the EEOC
- » Using Basic Parliamentary Procedure
- » Wrongful Discharge
- » Employment Issues Affecting Employers due to Covid-19
- » Immigration Issues in the Workplace
- » Off-Duty Conduct Affecting the Workplace
- » Sexual Harassment in the Workplace
- » Complying with the Fair Labors Standards Act

- » Employment Law Case Update
- » Family Medical Leave Act
- » Americans with Disabilities Act
- » Hot Topics in Employment Law Seminar
- » FLSA Overtime Legal Issues
- » Latest Legal News on Pandemic-Related Claims
- » Employee Free Speech Rights
- » Documentation/Investigation in Employment Settings

* Others are available upon request.

- **Insurance Requirements**

J. Cruz & Associates, LLC acknowledges that it has read and understands the insurance requirements for this proposal as stipulated under Section 1.34 (Insurance). J. Cruz & Associates, LLC also understands that evidence of required insurance must be submitted within five (5) working days following notification of award of its offer.

- **Equal Employment Opportunity**

The Firm is an equal employment opportunity employer and provides equal employment and advancement opportunities to all individuals based on merit, qualifications and abilities. The Firm embraces diversity in the workplace and does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic protected by law. Employees may raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal.

- **Forms**

See next page.

References Form

Please list at minimum five (5) local governmental entities where similar scope of services were provided.

THIS FORM MUST BE RETURNED WITH YOUR OFFER.

REFERENCE ONE

Government/Company Name: Border Region Behavioral Health Center

Address: 1500 Pappas Street, Laredo, Texas 78041

Contact Person and Title: Maria Sanchez, Executive Director

Phone: (956) 794-3000 Fax: _____

Email Address: mariaa@borderregion.org Contract Period: 2013 - Present

Description of Professional Services Provided: _____

See page 27 for description of professional services.

REFERENCE TWO

Government/Company Name: Jim Hogg County, Texas

Address: Jim Hogg County Courthouse, E. Tilley St., Bebbroville, Texas 78361

Contact Person and Title: Hon. Juan Carlos Guerra, County Judge

Phone: (361) 527-3015 Fax: _____

Email Address: jcguerra@co.jim-hogg.tx.us Contract Period: 2013 - Present

Description of Professional Services Provided: _____

See page 27 for description of professional services.

REFERENCE THREE

Government/Company Name: County of Zapata, Texas

Address: 200 E. 7th Avenue, Suite 115, Zapata, Texas 78076

Contact Person and Title: Hon. Joe Rathmell, County Judge

Phone: (956) 765-9920 Fax: _____

Email Address: zcjo@zapatacountytx.org Contract Period: 2013 - Present

Description of Professional Services Provided: _____

See page 28 for description of professional services.

REFERENCE Four

Government/Company Name: County of Zavala, Texas

Address: 200 E. Uvalde Street, Crystal City, Texas 78839

Contact Person and Title: Hon. Cindy Martinez-Rivera, County Judge

Phone: (830) 374-3810 Fax: _____

Email Address: judge@zavalacounty.org Contract Period: February 2022 - Present

Description of Professional Services Provided: _____

See page 28 for description of professional services.

REFERENCE Five

Government/Company Name: **Webb County Appraisal District**

Address: **3302 Clark Blvd., Laredo, Texas 78043**

Contact Person and Title: **Robert Peregoy, Chief Appraiser**

Phone: **(956) 718-4091** Fax: _____

Email Address: **rperegoy@webbcad.org** Contract Period: **2013 - Present**

Description of Professional Services Provided: _____

See page 28 for description of professional services.

- ****Additional pages are permitted if more space is required****

Space intentionally left Blank

CERTIFICATE OF INTERESTED PARTIES

FORM 1295

1 of 1

Complete Nos. 1 - 4 and 6 if there are interested parties.
Complete Nos. 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6 if there are no interested parties.

OFFICE USE ONLY CERTIFICATION OF FILING

Certificate Number:
2024-1112401

Date Filed:
01/16/2024

Date Acknowledged:

1 Name of business entity filing form, and the city, state and country of the business entity's place of business.

J. Cruz & Associates, LLC
Laredo, TX United States

2 Name of governmental entity or state agency that is a party to the contract for which the form is being filed.

Webb County

3 Provide the identification number used by the governmental entity or state agency to track or identify the contract, and provide a description of the services, goods, or other property to be provided under the contract.

RFQ 2024-007
Request for Qualifications for Labor and Employment Law Legal Services for Webb County

4	Name of Interested Party	City, State, Country (place of business)	Nature of interest (check applicable)	
			Controlling	Intermediary

5 Check only if there is NO Interested Party.

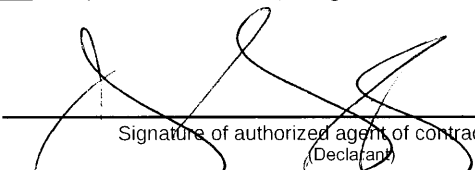
6 UNSWORN DECLARATION

My name is Juan J. Cruz, and my date of birth is 07/03/1970.

My address is 216 W. Village Blvd., Ste. 202 Laredo Tx 78041 USA.
(street) (city) (state) (zip code) (country)

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed in Webb County, State of Texas, on the 23 day of January 2024.
(month) (year)



 Signature of authorized agent of contracting business entity
(Declarant)

CONFLICT OF INTEREST QUESTIONNAIRE

FORM CIQ

For vendor doing business with local governmental entity

This questionnaire reflects changes made to the law by H.B. 23, 84th Leg., Regular Session.

This questionnaire is being filed in accordance with Chapter 176, Local Government Code, by a vendor who has a business relationship as defined by Section 176.001(1-a) with a local governmental entity and the vendor meets requirements under Section 176.006(a).

By law this questionnaire must be filed with the records administrator of the local governmental entity not later than the 7th business day after the date the vendor becomes aware of facts that require the statement to be filed. See Section 176.006(a-1), Local Government Code.

A vendor commits an offense if the vendor knowingly violates Section 176.006, Local Government Code. An offense under this section is a misdemeanor.

OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Received

1 Name of vendor who has a business relationship with local governmental entity.

J. Cruz & Associates, LLC

2 Check this box if you are filing an update to a previously filed questionnaire. (The law requires that you file an updated completed questionnaire with the appropriate filing authority not later than the 7th business day after the date on which you became aware that the originally filed questionnaire was incomplete or inaccurate.)

3 Name of local government officer about whom the information is being disclosed.

N/A

Name of Officer

4 Describe each employment or other business relationship with the local government officer, or a family member of the officer, as described by Section 176.003(a)(2)(A). Also describe any family relationship with the local government officer. Complete subparts A and B for each employment or business relationship described. Attach additional pages to this Form CIQ as necessary.

A. Is the local government officer or a family member of the officer receiving or likely to receive taxable income, other than investment income, from the vendor?


Yes No

B. Is the vendor receiving or likely to receive taxable income, other than investment income, from or at the direction of the local government officer or a family member of the officer AND the taxable income is not received from the local governmental entity?

Yes No

5 Describe each employment or business relationship that the vendor named in Section 1 maintains with a corporation or other business entity with respect to which the local government officer serves as an officer or director, or holds an ownership interest of one percent or more.

6 Check this box if the vendor has given the local government officer or a family member of the officer one or more gifts as described in Section 176.003(a)(2)(B), excluding gifts described in Section 176.003(a-1).

7 
Signature of vendor doing business with the governmental entity

1-23-24
Date

CERTIFICATION
REGARDING DEBARMENT, SUSPENSION, INELIGIBILITY AND VOLUNTARY
EXCLUSION FOR COVERED CONTRACTS

PART A.

Federal Executive Orders 12549 and 12689 require the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) to screen each covered potential contractor to determine whether each has a right to obtain a contract in accordance with federal regulations on debarment, suspension, ineligibility, and voluntary exclusion. Each covered contractor must also screen each of its covered subcontractors.

In this certification "contractor" refers to both contractor and subcontractor; "contract" refers to both contract and subcontract.

By signing and submitting this certification the potential contractor accepts the following terms:

1. The certification herein below is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this contract was entered into. If it is later determined that the potential contractor knowingly rendered an erroneous certification, in addition to other remedies available to the federal government, the Department of Health and Human Services, United States Department of Agriculture or other federal department or agency, or the TDA may pursue available remedies, including suspension and/or debarment.
2. The potential contractor will provide immediate written notice to the person to which this certification is submitted if at any time the potential contractor learns that the certification was erroneous when submitted or has become erroneous by reason of changed circumstances.
3. The words "covered contract", "debarred", "suspended", "ineligible", "participant", "person", "principal", "proposal", and "voluntarily excluded", as used in this certification have meanings based upon materials in the Definitions and Coverage sections of federal rules implementing Executive Order 12549. Usage is as defined in the attachment.
4. The potential contractor agrees by submitting this certification that, should the proposed covered contract be entered into, it will not knowingly enter into any subcontract with a person who is debarred, suspended, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this covered transaction, unless authorized by the Department of Health and Human Services, United States Department of Agriculture or other federal department or agency, and/or the TDA, as applicable.

Do you have or do you anticipate having subcontractors under this proposed contract?

Yes

No

5. The potential contractor further agrees by submitting this certification that it will include this certification titled "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility, and Voluntary Exclusion for Covered Contracts" without modification, in all covered subcontracts and in solicitations for all covered subcontracts.
6. A contractor may rely upon a certification of a potential subcontractor that it is not debarred, suspended, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from the covered contract, unless it knows that the certification is erroneous. A contractor must, at a minimum, obtain certifications from its covered subcontractors upon each subcontract's initiation and upon each renewal.
7. Nothing contained in all the foregoing will be construed to require establishment of a system of records in order to render in good faith the certification required by this certification document. The knowledge and information of a contractor is not required to exceed that which is normally possessed by a prudent person in the ordinary course of business dealings.
8. Except for contracts authorized under paragraph 4 of these terms, if a contractor in a covered contract knowingly enters into a covered subcontract with a person who is suspended, debarred, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction, in addition to other remedies available to the federal government, Department of Health and Human Services, United States Department of Agriculture, or other federal department or agency, as applicable, and/or the TDA may pursue available remedies, including suspension and/or debarment.

PART B. CERTIFICATION REGARDING DEBARMENT, SUSPENSION, INELIGIBILITY AND VOLUNTARY EXCLUSION FOR COVERED CONTRACTS

Indicate in the appropriate box which statement applies to the covered potential contractor:

- The potential contractor certifies, by submission of this certification, that neither it nor its principals is presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this contract by any federal department or agency or by the State of Texas.
- The potential contractor is unable to certify to one or more of the terms in this certification. In this instance, the potential contractor must attach an explanation for each of the above terms to which he is unable to make certification. Attach the explanation(s) to this certification.

Name of Contractor	Vendor ID No. or Social Security No.	Program No.
J. Cruz & Associates, LLC	46-2631407	RFQ 2024-007

Signature of Authorized Representative

Juan J. Cruz, Partner / Owner

1-23-24

Date

Printed/Typed Name and Title of Authorized Representative

CERTIFICATION REGARDING FEDERAL LOBBYING
(Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements)

PART A. PREAMBLE

Federal legislation, Section 319 of Public Law 101-121 generally prohibits entities from using federally appropriated funds to lobby the executive or legislative branches of the federal government. Section 319 specifically requires disclosure of certain lobbying activities. A federal government-wide rule, "New Restrictions on Lobbying", published in the Federal Register, February 26, 1990, requires certification and disclosure in specific instances.

PART B. CERTIFICATION

This certification applies only to the instant federal action for which the certification is being obtained and 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 into 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 \$100,000 for each such failure.

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

1. No federally 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 any 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, or the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.
2. If any funds other than federally 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 these federally funded contract, subcontract, subgrant, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying", in accordance with its instructions. (If needed, contact the Texas Department of Agriculture to obtain a copy of Standard Form-LLL.)

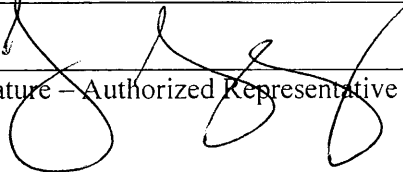
3. The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all covered subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all covered subrecipients will certify and disclose accordingly.

Do you have or do you anticipate having covered subawards under this transaction?

- Yes
- No

Name of Contractor/Potential Contractor	Vendor ID No. or Social Security No.	Program No.
J. Cruz & Associates, LLC	46-2631407	RFQ 2024-007

Name of Authorized Representative	Title
Juan J. Cruz	Partner / Owner


Signature - Authorized Representative

1-23-24
Date

**WEBB COUNTY PURCHASING DEPT.
QUALIFIED PARTICIPATING VENDOR CODE OF ETHICS
AFFIDAVIT FORM**

STATE OF TEXAS *

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS:

COUNTY OF WEBB *

BEFORE ME the undersigned Notary Public, appeared Juan J. Cruz, the herein-named "Affiant", who is a resident of Webb County, State of Texas, and upon his/her respective oath, either individually and/or behalf of their respective company/entity, do hereby state that I have personal knowledge of the following facts, statements, matters, and/or other matters set forth herein are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

I personally, and/or in my respective authority/capacity on behalf of my company/entity do hereby confirm that I have reviewed and agree to fully comply with all the terms, duties, ethical policy obligations and/or conditions as required to be a qualified participating vendor with Webb County, Texas as set forth in the Webb County Purchasing Code of Ethics Policy posted at the following address: <http://www.webbcountytx.gov/PurchasingAgent/PurchasingEthicsPolicy.pdf>

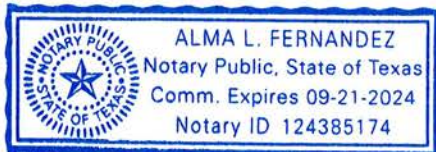
I personally, and/or in my respective authority/capacity on behalf of my company/entity do hereby further acknowledge, agree and understand that as a participating vendor with Webb County, Texas on any active solicitation/proposal/qualification that I and/or my company/entity failure to comply with the Code of Ethics policy may result in my and/or my company/entity disqualification, debarment or make void my contract awarded to me, my company/entity by Webb County. I agree to communicate with the Purchasing Agent or his designees should I have questions or concerns regarding this policy to ensure full compliance by contacting the Webb County Purchasing Dept. via telephone at (956) 523-4125 or e-mail to the Webb County Purchasing Agent to joel@webbcountytx.gov.

Executed and dated this 23 day of January, 2024.

Signature of Affiant

Juan J. Cruz / J. Cruz & Associates, LLC
Printed Name of Affiant/Company/Entity

SWORN to and subscribed before me, this 23 day of January, 2024



Signature of Notary Public

NOTARY PUBLIC, STATE OF TEXAS

Offeror: Complete & Return this Form with Response Submission.

House Bill 89 Verification

I, Juan J. Cruz, the undersigned representative of (company or business name) J. Cruz & Associates, LLC (heretofore referred to as company) being an adult over the age of eighteen (18) years of age, after being duly sworn by the undersigned notary, do hereby depose and verify under oath that the company named above, under the provisions of Subtitle F, Title 10, Government Code Chapter 2270:

1. Does not boycott Israel currently; and
2. Will not boycott Israel during the term of the contract.

Pursuant to Section 2270.001, Texas Government Code:

1. "Boycott Israel" means refusing to deal with, terminating business activities with, or otherwise taking any action that is intended to penalize, inflict economic harm on, or limit commercial relations specifically with Israel, or with a person or entity doing business in Israel or in an Israeli-controlled territory, but does not include an action made ordinary business purposes; and

2. "Company" means a for-profit sole proprietorship, organization, association, corporation, partnership, joint venture, limited partnership, limited liability partnership, or an limited liability company, including a wholly owned subsidiary, majority-owned subsidiary, parent company or affiliate of those entities or business association that exist to make a profit.

Juan J. Cruz
Signature of Company Representative

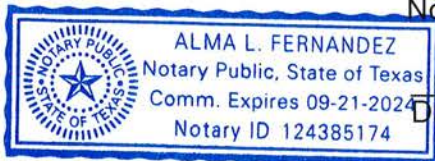
1/23/24
Date

On this 23 day of January, 2024, personally appeared

Juan J. Cruz, the above named person, who after by me being duly sworn, did swear and confirm that the above is true and correct.

Notary Seal

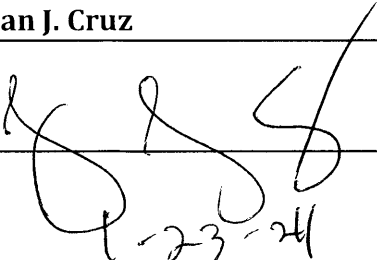
Alma L. Fernandez
Notary Signature



1/23/2024
Date

**Offeror: Complete & Return this Form with Response Submission.
Senate Bill 252 Certification**

SB 252 CHAPTER 2252 CERTIFICATION I, Juan J. Cruz, the undersigned representative of J. Cruz & Associates, LLC (Company or business name) being an adult over the age of eighteen (18) years of age, pursuant to Texas Government Code, Chapter 2252, Section 2252.152 and Section 2252.153, certify that the company named above is not listed on the website of the Comptroller of the State of Texas concerning the listing of companies that are identified under Section 806.051, Section 807.051 or Section 2253.153. I further certify that should the above-named company enter into a contract that is on said listing of companies on the website of the Comptroller of the State of Texas which do business with Iran, Sudan or any Foreign Terrorist Organization, I will immediately notify Mr. Jose Angel Lopez III, Webb County Purchasing Agent at (956) 523-4125 or via email at joel@webbcountytx.gov

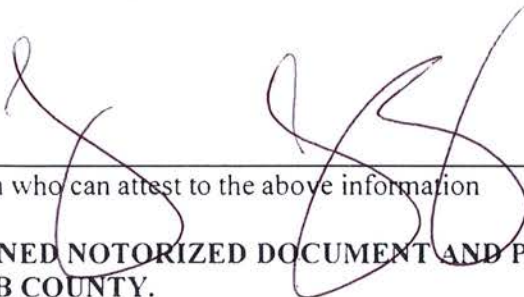
Juan J. Cruz Name of Company Representative (Print)
 Signature of Company Representative
1-23-24 Date

PROOF OF NO DELINQUENT TAXES OWED TO WEBB COUNTY

Name Juan J. Cruz owes no delinquent property taxes to Webb County.

J. Cruz & Associates, LLC owes no property taxes as a business in Webb County.
(Business Name)

Juan J. Cruz owes no property taxes as a resident of Webb County.
(Business Owner)



Person who can attest to the above information

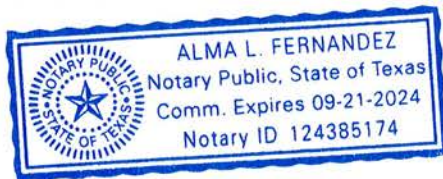
*** SIGNED NOTORIZED DOCUMENT AND PROOF OF NO DELINQUENT TAXES TO WEBB COUNTY.**

The State of Texas
County of Webb

Before me, a Notary Public, on this day personally appeared Juan J. Cruz, know to me (or proved to me on the oath of _____) to be the person whose name is subscribed to the forgoing instrument and acknowledged to me that he executed the same for the purpose and consideration therein expressed.

Given under my hand and seal of office this 23 day of January, 2024

Notary Public, State of Texas





(Print name of Notary Public here)

My commission expires the 21 day of September 2024