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- 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

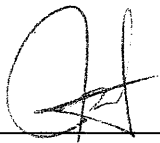
### ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT

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

**RE:** RFQ 2024-006  
Legal Services for Preparation of Public Contracts, Agreements and  
Related Services for Webb County

**DATE:** January 23, 2024

**DOCUMENT / NOTES:** Original Response and 4 copies

**RECEIVED BY:**   
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:** Juan Guerrero

**DATE:** 1/23/24 **TIME:** 2:33 pm

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.

“Legal Services for Preparation of Public Contracts, Agreements and Related 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

1/23/2024  
Date

**RESPONSE TO**



**Request for Qualifications  
RFQ 2024-006**

**Legal Services for Preparation of Public  
Contracts, Agreements and Related Services**

*Partners:*

**JUAN J. CRUZ**

jcruz@jca-law.com

**SONYA M. GARCIA**

sgarcia@jca-law.com

**LISA M. PAUL**

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**VALERIA REYES**

vreyes@jca-law.com

*Of Counsel:*

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mbartley@jca-law.com

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aborrego@jca-law.com

**STEPHANIE M. BROSIG**

sbrosig@jca-law.com

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mgonzales@jca-law.com

*Address:*

**LAREDO**

216 West Village Blvd.

Suite 202

Laredo, Texas 78041

Phone: (956) 717-1300

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**SAN ANTONIO**

367 Everest Ave.

Unit 103

San Antonio, Texas 78209

Phone: (210) 465-7440

**CORPUS CHRISTI**

4466 South Staples St.

Corpus Christi, Texas

78411

Phone: (361) 333-2229

### 3.3 TRANSMITTAL LETTER

The name of the law firm submitting this response to the Request for Qualifications for Legal Services for Preparation of Public Contracts, Agreements and Related Services for Webb County (RFQ 2024-006) 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 Legal Services for Preparation of Public Contracts, Agreements and Related 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”) is a law firm founded in Webb County. The Firm celebrated its 10-year anniversary on June 1, 2023. Without question, the Firm shares its success with the community of Webb County where Mr. Cruz and others that work at the Firm were reared. The Firm’s Principal Office is in Webb County with satellite offices in San Antonio and Corpus Christi. Although the Firm has grown over the years and may experience more growth in the coming years, Mr. Cruz intends to ensure that Webb County remains the Principal Home Office of the Firm.

The Firm serves as general counsel to many government entities in Texas. The Firm’s success is due in large part to meeting client needs through a team of experienced and dedicated attorneys and staff. We are fortunate to have worked with the same entities for many years. We do this by providing excellent client service, and by providing effective and efficient legal services by a team of committed lawyers working harmoniously with public officials and administrators. The Firm’s general counsel practice is robust. The Firm’s attorneys work via text, email, or phone call with public officials and administrators on a daily basis. The experience in government entity defense and general counsel that the lawyers of the Firm bring to Webb County is immense and varied. This experience brings a great benefit to Webb County in terms of legal cost savings, efficient strategy, and effective analysis of legal issues and claims.

The Firm has served as external counsel for Jim Hogg County, Zapata County, Brooks County, Duval County and Zavala County.

The Firm works with County Judges, Commissioners, and Administrators, as needed, on County-specific legal issues where external counsel assistance is requested. The Firm also boasts a robust statewide school district practice where the Firm serves as general counsel working daily with administrators and board members on contracts, real estate, and human resources legal matters.

What sets the Firm apart from other law firms is its ability to have a generous group of lawyers with varied experience in representing public entities that are available to Webb County. No other law firm in Laredo currently exists that has a group of 11 lawyers who have extensive experience working with public entities daily. While others may devote a fraction of their legal practice to public entity defense, the Firm specializes in providing legal advice and effective legal representation to public entities and has a body of work, lawyers, and clients to prove as much.

The commitment that the Firm has to the citizens of Webb County is reflected in the support that the Firm and its attorneys provide to different causes and non-profits. Most of the attorneys at the Firm currently serve or have served on a local non-profit Board of Directors. The Firm supports the mission of non-profits that work hard to make our community of Laredo, Webb County a better place to live and work. The Firm’s attorneys devote many pro bono work and community service hours to local causes as a form of gratitude to the citizens of Webb County that have supported the Firm for many years. In addition, the Firm

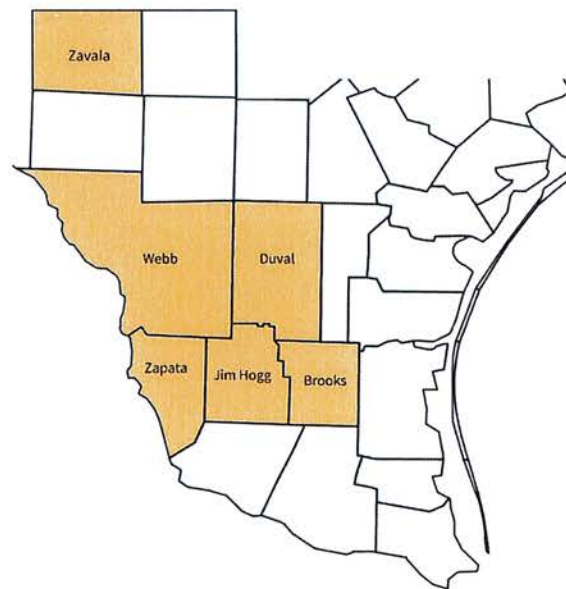
has been a strong financial supporter of many charitable organizations and events that benefit the Webb County community.

It has been our sincere pleasure to work with Webb County for many years as co-bond counsel. We value the trust that the County has placed in our Firm and the relationships we have fostered with the County's leaders. Such trust is based on the professionalism, availability, and responsiveness of our legal team. If selected to work with the County to assist with legal needs, we will work diligently with County officials and personnel to meet the County's needs.

The Firm is well rooted and respected in Webb County. The Firm's attorneys and staff members are taxpayers of our community. When handling a legal issue for a client from our County, the Firm provides legal services from the lens of ensuring that the taxpayers' interests are carefully considered and protected. The Firm is 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. The Firm has assisted many governmental entities by drafting and reviewing complicated contracts, memorandums of understanding, leases, and real estate agreements.

The Firm is committed to treating Webb County as its primary client. At J. Cruz & Associates, we are dedicated advocates for

the success and prosperity of our local government entities. Our comprehensive legal services, coupled with our vast experience in advising governmental entities, position us as the ideal ally for Webb County's legal needs. If approved to work with Webb County, we are confident that our team is capable of meeting and exceeding the scope of services that Webb County requires.



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

## 3.6 LEGAL SERVICES AND EXPERIENCE

The Firm is uniquely qualified to represent Webb County. Juan J. Cruz has served as lead general counsel to political subdivisions located all over the state, including in the Counties of Webb, Brooks, Duval, Jim Hogg, Zapata and Zavala. In addition, the Firm serves as co-bond counsel to Webb County. Mr. Cruz and his team of associates are very familiar with the many facets that take place regarding day-to-day operations of an entity like Webb County.

Our mission is to provide our clients with efficient and first-rate legal services through our attorneys' substantial knowledge and expertise as general counsel for political subdivisions, large and small, across the state. The Firm has four former city attorneys, Ricardo Benavides, Stephanie Brosig, Lisa Paul, and Valeria Reyes who have handled a wide variety of issues affecting a home rule municipality like Webb County. Our Firm is backed by over one hundred years of joint experience and a reputation for effectively and tenaciously pursuing our clients' interests. Without question, the Firm can research, analyze and interpret any federal or state regulations, as would be required by Webb County.

As former assistant city attorneys, Lisa Paul, Valeria Reyes, Ricardo Benavides, and Stephanie Brosig have handled a wide variety of legal issues affecting a home rule municipality like Webb County. These attorneys have knowledge of the substantive state laws applicable to local governments and can assist Webb County in civil litigation matters to seek injunctive relief for the abatement of public nuisances

and the enforcement of building, health, fire, and zoning codes.

The Firm's attorneys have experience handling issues related to land uses, zoning, platting, conditional use licenses, regulations, building code requirements, traffic, liquor licenses, utilities, environmental law, condemnation, economic development, and housing. Our attorneys have assisted governmental clients in addressing matters related to the procurement of goods and services, bonds, and public finance.

### Specialized Legal Services Competence

As a Firm, we have a reputation for effectively and tenaciously representing our client's interests. Mr. Cruz and his team of associates are very familiar with the many facets of the day-to-day operations of government entities similar to Webb County. Our team of attorneys boasts a wealth of experience, particularly in representing and advising governmental bodies, including counties. This extensive background of experience equips our team with invaluable insights essential for navigating the complexities of running a County.

Our Firm is exceptionally qualified to provide Webb County with legal support for general governance issues. Our attorneys have experience in drafting resolutions, orders, proclamations, and other essential instruments vital for governing bodies to fulfill their responsibilities. Moreover, in our commitment to serving government



entities, our attorneys are well-prepared to address the legal needs of governing entities, with experience and expertise in providing legal memorandum opinions upon request.

Similarly, our attorneys are always readily available to attend Webb County Commissioner's Court Meetings, work sessions, and public hearings upon request.

Regarding support for the county with legal matters related to contracts, our attorneys are equally exceptional. They possess a comprehensive understanding of the Texas Professional Service Procurement Act and are experienced in assisting clients in navigating its procedures and drafting professional service agreements. Furthermore, our attorneys bring a wealth of expertise to the table when it comes to reviewing and drafting various types of public contracts, including Interlocal Contracts, MOUs, construction contracts, development agreements, as well as contracts for the dedication of right-of-ways, public utilities, improvements, and easements.

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 administrative proceedings. We believe

that creativity, judgment, sensitivity and experience are the keys to our success in finding winning outcomes, and we deliver.

## Capability

At J. Cruz & Associates, our commitment to accessibility, responsiveness, and the highest quality legal services sets us apart. We understand that clients require timely and dependable legal support of the utmost caliber. Our attorneys are fully accessible during regular business hours, and even after hours, they are just a phone call or text message away, ensuring that Webb County's needs are promptly met.

Additionally, teamwork is at the core of our values. Our attorneys collaborate seamlessly to provide comprehensive legal support to our clients. When legal issues arise, every member of our team is dedicated to resolving them fully and effectively. Furthermore, we prioritize prompt responses to emails and other forms of communication, ensuring that we remain informed about any developments or concerns that may arise. This proactive approach enables us to provide timely and high-quality legal support to Webb County. Each individual working on a project will ensure that the goal is met and will cease all work at the request of Webb County or when the issue is resolved, always putting Webb County's interests first.

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 Preparation of Public Contracts, Agreements and Related Services for Webb County (RFQ 2024-006) 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](mailto:jcruz@jca-law.com)  
Website: [www-jca-law.com](http://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.

Corpus Christi, Texas 78411  
Phone: (361) 333-2229

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

- 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 with the ability to perform the functions required in this RFQ and services represented in its response.

### 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.

Mr. Juan J. Cruz will be the proposed lead attorney assigned to Webb County.

#### 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. *However*

*the Primary Attorneys will be Juan J. Cruz, Lisa M. Paul, Ricardo Benavides, and Mario G. Perez, Jr.*

# Juan J. Cruz

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

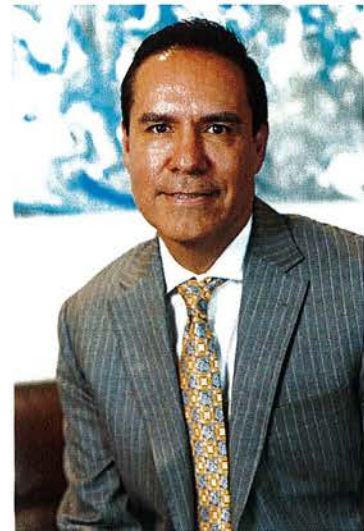
## **YEARS OF EXPERIENCE:** 28 years

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 has extensive experience in drafting, negotiating, and presenting different types of contracts and memorandums of understanding between government entities and third parties. In addition, Mr. Cruz' general counsel experience includes handling of public information requests, issuing oral and written legal opinions on pressing legal issues to governmental bodies, handling of contract disputes, preparation and presenting of ordinances and resolutions.

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

# Lisa M. Paul

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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 provided legal counsel to various governmental entities in a variety of real estate matters and transactions including the purchase, sale, and donation of real property and buildings owned by governmental entities. While serving as the First Assistant City Attorney for the City of Laredo was tasked with drafting and reviewing a variety of real estate documents, including property deeds, drainage, utility and road easements. Lisa served as the primary attorney for the Airport and drafted and reviewed various leases. While working with the Utility and Engineering departments, Lisa was tasked with addressing various issues related to property easements and related



## **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



disputes. Lisa also provided legal counsel to the Real Estate department where she worked on several condemnation matters.

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:**

- TASP 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

#### **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

# Valeria Reyes

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

## **YEARS OF EXPERIENCE:** 5 YEARS

Valeria has been licensed and practicing law for five years and has devoted a substantial portion of her legal practice to representing governmental entities, governing boards, and commissions.

Prior to joining J. Cruz & Associates, LLC, Valeria was employed with the City of Laredo as an Assistant City Attorney for three years. In her prior employment with the City of Laredo, Valeria served as a Municipal Court Prosecutor for one year representing the City and the State of Texas in prosecuting class C misdemeanors ranging from traffic offenses to violations of city ordinances. Additionally, Valeria spent two years working as an Assistant City Attorney where she provided legal counsel to diverse city departments. In her role as Assistant City Attorney, Valeria advised departments such as Building, Code Enforcement, Airport, Public Works, Engineering, Utilities, Bridge, Economic Development, Tax, Purchasing, Parks and Recreation, Animal Care, Human Resources, Health, Police and Fire.

As an Assistant City Attorney, Valeria was directly involved in the procurement process, providing assistance from the inception of contracts. Valeria provided assistance to the Purchasing Department by contributing to the review and revision of policies and procedures and ensuring adherence to the Texas Professional Services Procurement Act.

In her role as legal counsel to the Building, Utilities, and Engineering Departments, she assisted in reviewing and drafting contracts, including assisting in the preparation of construction contracts.



## **AREAS OF PRACTICE**

- Contracts
- Administrative Law
- Open Records

## **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

As legal counsel for the Airport, Valeria assisted in drafting, reviewing, and negotiating numerous easements, deeds, leases, and contracts with a variety of parties including private businesses and the Federal government.

Throughout her tenure at the City of Laredo Valeria drafted numerous ordinances and resolutions, including playing an active role in drafting emergency orders and resolutions in her role as legal counsel for the Health Department during the pandemic. In her capacity as legal counsel for a multitude of city departments, Valeria gained valuable experience in filing and handling lawsuits. Specifically, she was involved in seeking injunctive relief for the abatement of public nuisances and enforcing building, fire, and zoning codes.

At J. Cruz & Associates, LLC, Valeria continues to assist clients in drafting contracts, resolutions, and ordinances. Furthermore, she has expanded her responsibilities to include assisting clients with Public Information requests, ensuring compliance with the Texas Public Information Act.

**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

## Ricardo Benavides, III

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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 Building, Engineering, Code Enforcement, Human Resources, Environmental, Planning and Zoning, Fleet Management, Community Development, Information Services & Telecommunications, Library, Transit, and the Health Department.

In Rick's representation of the Building, Engineering, Planning and Zoning, Community Development Departments, Rick gained valuable experience drafting development agreements, which included dedication of utilities, improvements, and easements and negotiating with developers on behalf of the City.

In his capacity within the Community Development department, Rick played a pivotal role in acquiring, selling, and leasing various City properties. He successfully drafted and negotiated a significant lease deal between the City of Laredo and the United States Postal Service, securing long-term leases for City property.

In his capacity with Transit ("El Metro"), Rick gained experience drafting and negotiating building lease agreements. Additionally, Rick also gained experience drafting and negotiating land and airspace lease agreements between the City and fortune 500 telecommunication companies.

Rick also authored several first-of-a-kind ordinances, including an ordinance requiring the installation of diaper changing stations in all city-owned buildings. He also



### **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

created the temporary parklet program to allow local businesses to use public spaces for the commercial operation of restaurants and bars.

At J. Cruz & Associates, Rick continued to assist clients in drafting contracts, resolutions, and ordinances. He has extensive experience in drafting and reviewing contracts between governmental entities and service providers, consultants, lessees, and property developers.

**PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AND MEMBERSHIPS:**

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

# Jose L. "Joe" Benavides, III

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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 advised multiple private clients from business formation to dissolution. Whether it be creating the partnership agreement of a tequila supplier, to structuring the buy-out of a client's share in their healthcare provider company, Joe prides himself on representing all his clients with the highest degree of professionalism and legal insight.

Despite his short tenure at J. Cruz and Associates, Joe has gained significant experience in drafting, reviewing, and negotiating contracts between government entities and armed security companies, cloud software providers, insurance companies, and interlocal agreements with fellow government entities.

## **PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AND MEMBERSHIPS:**

- State Bar of Texas
- Webb County Bar Association
- Fellow of the Texas Barr, Society of Legal Scholars
- Ruthe B. Cowl Rehabilitation Center, Board Member



## **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

**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



## Michelle K. Bartley

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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

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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

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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**

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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  
Tel: (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 Border Region'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.

During our representation we are often called upon to provide legal memorandum opinions to both the Executive Director and the Board of Trustees. These opinions encompass a diverse array of topics, including personnel issues, policies and procedures, Board-related affairs, contract disputes, and procurement processes.

In addition, our firm has taken on the responsibility of drafting and negotiating various contracts on behalf of Border Region. These contracts include professional service agreements with architects and engineers, interlocal agreements with surrounding counties and governmental entities, construction contracts, and lease agreements.

Furthermore, we have played a crucial role in assisting Border Region with property acquisitions. Further, our Firm has experience working with government entities in the purchase and sale of real property across different counties, including Bexar, Brooks, Hays, Jim Hogg, Starr, Webb, and Zapata County. Our Firm has also managed the procurement of essential services such as construction, architecture, engineering, and other professional services required for many of these projects.

Our involvement extends to handling sensitive internal investigations for Border Region, which includes addressing allegations of a hostile work environment and harassment, as well as ensuring compliance with federal and state medical regulations. We have also crafted various policies and procedures for Border Region, including standards of conduct for employees and provisions related to conflicts of interest. When necessary, we offer support to the Center's insurance defense counsel in litigation cases, such as those involving employment discrimination and whistleblower claims.

**Jim Hogg County, Texas**

Hon. Juan Carlos Guerra, County Judge  
Jim Hogg County Courthouse, E. Tilley Street, Hebbronville, Texas 78361  
Tel: (361) 527-3015  
Email: jcguerra@co.jim-hogg.tx.us

Our Firm attends Commissioner's Court Meetings, work sessions, and public hearings, as requested. We also monitor and advise the County on all local and state legal requirements. In addition, the Firm advises the County on matters with potential legal implications such as policy development, 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, prepare legal opinions, as requested, and represent the County in any litigation and other matters, as needed.

**Webb County Appraisal District**

Robert Peregoy, Chief Appraiser  
3302 Clark Blvd., Laredo, Texas 78043  
Tel: (956) 718-4091  
Email: rperegoy@webbcad.org

As general legal counsel our Firm provides the Board of Directors and Chief Appraiser on wide-ranging special district legal matters including: Employment law and labor relations; Financing, including municipal bonds that support special districts; Prepare and/or review all ordinances, resolutions, contracts, joint powers agreements, and other agreements and contracts entered into by the District as requested by the Chief Appraiser, including contracts for cloud software license agreements, armed security task force, property imagery services, and more. Enforce District ordinances and regulations through administrative and judicial actions as requested by the Chief Appraiser. Research and submit legal opinions on special district or other legal matters as requested by the Board of Directors or the Chief Appraiser. Coordinate and manage the services and costs of outside special counsel if assigned. Attend monthly Board meetings unless excused by the Board President or the Chief Appraiser, and attend additional Board special meetings, committee meetings, and community meetings as appropriate. Promptly return all calls and emails from the Board of Directors and from District staff.

**Workforce Solutions for South Texas**

Rogelio Treviño, Executive Director  
1406 Jacaman Rd., Ste. A, Laredo, Texas 78041  
Tel: (956) 722-3973  
Email: rogelio.trevino@southtexasworkforce.org

Our Firm is the general legal counsel for South Texas Workforce Development Board. Our attorneys attend meetings of the Board of Directors, including consulting with the Board in closed session on any real estate, personnel, and litigation-related matters. The Firm has also assisted 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, 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 will assist in the insurance defense counsel in the event of litigation, including employment discrimination and whistleblower claims.

**Zapata County, Texas**

Hon. Joe Rathmell, County Judge

Zapata County Courthouse, 200 E. 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Ste. 115, Zapata, Texas 78076

Tel: (956) 765-9920

Email: [zcjo@zapatacountytexas.org](mailto:zcjo@zapatacountytexas.org)

Our Firm attends Commissioner's Court Meetings, work sessions, and public hearings, as requested. We also monitor and advise the County on all local and state legal requirements. In addition, the Firm advises the County on matters with potential legal implications such as policy development, 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, prepare legal opinions, as requested, and represent the County in any litigation and other matters, as needed.

## 5. SCOPE OF SERVICES

### 1. Public Contracts, Interlocal Cooperation Contracts, and MOUs

For nearly a decade, the Firm has been a trusted advisor to clients on diverse contractual issues, aiming to prevent litigation and minimize expenses. The Firm's attorneys provide contract review and drafting services with an eye toward minimizing or eliminating contractual disputes before they arise. The Firm has extensive experience and expertise in reviewing and drafting a variety of Contracts, Memorandum of Understandings ("MOU") and Interlocal Cooperation Contracts for its clients.

It is important for any client to understand the risks before entering into a contract or MOU. An effective review of this type of transactional work reduces the possibility of litigation given that a breach of contract is a major cause of action at both the state and federal court level. Further, the law mandates an award of attorney's fees to a party who prevails on a breach of contract claim in state court, or pursuant to the contract or MOU itself. It is not uncommon for otherwise very careful people to glance over a contract and just sign it without really knowing what it obligates them or the other party to do.

Having stated the above, our Firm, depending on the complexity of the agreement, has a one-day turnaround time on any agreement submitted for review by a client. This will include a thorough review of the agreement regardless of its complexity.

When presented with a contract or MOU, one must remember that these agreements, unless drafted by our Firm, are a starting point to negotiate the contract terms and conditions. The understanding is that both parties want to enter into a contractual relationship. Not only do we identify the parties to the agreement, but we also make sure that our client understands all the terms and conditions of the contract to determine whether it accurately reflects the agreement of the parties. Some of the standard issues with most—if not all—agreements that parties tend to overlook are the following:

*Automatic Renewal Clauses.* Does the party have to give notice to renew the contract/MOU and are there penalties if notice is not given to renew the agreement? Is the renewal on the same terms as the original agreement? Are there price increases associated with contract renewals? Our Firm counsels clients on adding options to renew on favorable terms to them. Otherwise, we would include the ability for our client to terminate the agreement based on "convenience" at anytime during the contract term.

*Allocation of Risk.* With each contract/MOU review, we determine how the contractual risk is allocated between the parties. Risk is typically borne by the party in the best position to prevent loss. However, there may be reasons for a different risk allocation between the parties. Thus, we typically check the insurance requirements and whether the client can obtain the required insurance requirements within the client's budget.



Harmless and Indemnification Provisions. We review all hold harmless and indemnifications provisions. When a client agrees to hold someone harmless, they are agreeing to not hold them responsible for liability that may arise out of the transaction. When a client indemnifies another party, they are agreeing to protect the other party from liability or loss that may arise out of the transaction. We usually will try to negotiate these provisions out of the contract/MOU. Governmental entities, such as municipalities, cannot indemnify and hold other parties contractually harmless. If the other party is unwilling to leave out the provision because it is critical for them to have it in agreement, we try to limit the indemnification as much as possible to limit a client's exposure by including contract language, such as "Only to the extent the Texas Constitution and laws of the State of Texas allows the County of Webb to indemnify (other named party to the agreement), the County will indemnify and hold harmless said other party."

Incorporated Documents. A great number of agreements incorporate other documents by reference. We always read the incorporated document because our client should never assume to know what it contains.

Events of Default. Our Firm reviews and determines what acts constitute events of default and whether the client is able to enter into and perform under the contract without causing a default. We also consider what should be included as events of default by the other party.

Remedies Provisions. Our Firm reviews all remedy provisions and determines the worst that can happen to the client if they default under the contract. We also review and

determine what types of remedies you need to be aware about in the event of a default by the other party.

Causes for Termination. Our Firm reviews all causes for termination of a contract/MOU. Our Firm considers ways to terminate the contract/MOU if it is not working to the client's benefit.

Dates and Deadlines. Our Firm checks dates and deadlines in each and every agreement for important events and anything required to be done by the client or the other party.

Warranties and Representations. Our Firm reviews and understands warranties and representations given by our client under the contract/MOU as well as the other party representations and their warranties. We counsel our clients not to give any representation if they do not know the representation is true or if the other party is in a better position to know what facts are being represented.

Limitation on Liability. Almost all contracts submitted for review by our client have Limitation on Liability clauses which limit the other party's liability under the contract. We usually recommend these clauses be deleted from the contract.

The foregoing is a limited list of general provisions we consider when reviewing a contract on our client's behalf. The type of transaction that is the basis of the contract, as well as the relative bargaining positions of the parties, will dictate the actual terms and conditions of the contract/MOU. Our Firm takes the time to thoroughly review and negotiate the terms and conditions of the contract/MOU before it gets executed by our client.

## **2. Resolutions, Orders, Proclamations, and Other Official Board Instruments**

Given our vast experience representing governmental entities and governing boards, our attorneys have extensive experience in drafting resolutions, orders, proclamations, and other critical instruments vital for governing bodies to fulfill their responsibilities.

Our attorneys possess an in-depth understanding of the Local Government Code and other relevant statutes that govern local governmental board authority. They are skilled at identifying situations that require resolutions, orders, or other instruments, ensuring the smooth authorization of board actions. Our attorneys work closely with essential governmental personnel to provide valuable guidance, contributing to the seamless and efficient operation of governing boards.

## **3. Assist in the Preparation of Professional Services Agreements**

Our attorneys possess a comprehensive understanding of the Texas Professional Services Procurement Act and have extensive experience assisting clients navigate the professional service procurement process. With years of experience as legal counsel to various governmental entities, our attorneys are well-versed in the common issues and concerns that arise during the procurement process and can provide valuable guidance to ensure the County's success throughout the process.

In addition to our ability to provide guidance during the procurement process, our attorneys are also experienced in drafting professional service contracts for a wide variety of services, including architectural and engineering services. Recognizing the time sensitivity often associated with such agreements, our attorneys are skilled at reaching swift resolutions even in the face of challenging or contentious terms.

## **4. Assist in the Preparation of Construction Contracts**

Our legal team is well-versed in the complexities of construction contracts, ensuring compliance with local regulations and mitigating potential disputes. Our firm has a proven track record of assisting government clients in procuring and contracting construction services and enforcing these contracts against contractors.

Recognizing the substantial financial implications and potential losses associated with construction contracts, our attorneys are fully aware of their critical importance. Drawing from experience gained over the years, our firm has pinpointed essential terms of contract, often treated as boilerplate by construction firms, that necessitate thorough review before approving any construction contract. These include terms related to dispute resolution, indemnity, consequences for schedule delays, force majeure, and limitations on damages.

Disputes can arise at any time in the construction process. Regardless of the type of problem or dispute, we have the experience and resources to assist. We will help you analyze and investigate the

problem and find efficient and effective solutions to resolve it. If the problem cannot be resolved without legal proceedings, our attorneys have significant experience in handling complex construction disputes in litigation and arbitration. We have the experience and ability to manage the increasingly large volume of electronic information typically involved in a large construction dispute, and the advocacy skills to effectively use and present it.

Dispute Resolution Legal Services Include:

- Contract and Payment Disputes
- Construction and Design Defects
- Bond and Lien Claims
- Mechanic's and Materialmen's Liens
- Change Orders and Extra Work Claims
- Delay, Acceleration and Lost Productivity Claims
- Completion and Warranty Issues
- Liquidated Damages Issues
- Construction Accident and Tort Claims
- Environmental Issues
- Intellectual Property Disputes
- Construction Insurance Issues
- Contract Termination Issues
- Sovereign Immunity Issues related to Governmental Entities

## **5. Assist in the Preparation of Legal Agreements for Acceptance of Dedication of Right-of-Way, Public Utility, and Easements**

Our attorneys have a wealth of experience working closely with municipal planning departments throughout the entire development process, from the initial

planning stages to completion. The Firm also has a well-established track record of seamlessly working with municipalities and land developers to craft robust development agreements. These agreements are meticulously drafted to facilitate development while ensuring strict compliance with local land use, zoning, parkland, utility, drainage, and other regulatory requirements. Our team's expertise includes addressing critical infrastructure needs for the land, encompassing streets and roads, easements, and drainage systems, as well as water, wastewater, and other utility systems.

In addition to utilizing development agreements to enforce compliance with local regulations, our practice involves ensuring that crucial terms related to fees, dedications, exactions, improvements, easements, utilities, and other essential elements are clearly outlined in the agreement. This proactive approach establishes the parties' obligations early in the development process, providing clarity and structure to the entire project.

Alternatively, where a development agreement cannot be secured at the onset of development, our attorneys are also experienced in drafting agreements specific to the dedication of land, utility dedications, temporary/perpetual easements, and parkland dedications. Recognizing that development projects may face challenges such as timeline deviations and funding delays, our attorneys are experienced in navigating these complexities. We work closely with municipalities and developers to determine creative solutions that ensure legal compliance while safeguarding the municipality's interests and ensuring the

development remains beneficial to the community.

We take pride in our proven track record of drafting legal agreements for the acceptance of the dedication of roadway right-of-way, public utilities, and drainage easements. Our team is committed to delivering comprehensive and tailored solutions to meet each development's unique requirements.

## **6. Assist with Legal Documentation for Contemplated Litigation**

Our law firm has a proven track record of providing comprehensive legal support to government entities, including attending board meetings and Commissioner's Court Meetings on a regular basis. Our attorneys are well-equipped to address the legal needs of government entities and are available to attend Webb County Commissioner's Court Meetings, work sessions, and public hearings upon request.

Regarding closed sessions during public entity meetings, our attorneys have extensive experience in consulting with governmental body in closed session to address various legal matters, including but not limited to real estate, personnel, and litigation-related issues. As part of our standard practice, we prepare closed session packets that include all pertinent documents related to the discussions. Additionally, we provide a legal memorandum outlining our legal opinion and offer the government body various options and recommendations when appropriate. We understand the importance of confidentiality in executive sessions and are committed to providing the necessary

legal expertise for any contemplated litigation discussed during these sessions.

## **7. Prepare and Review Legal Memorandums, Orders, Resolutions, Contracts, and Other Documents**

In our provision of legal services, the Firm has actively supported governmental entities by undertaking tasks such as reviewing meeting agendas and materials, attending public entity meetings, and participating in additional finance or committee meetings upon request. Our support also extends to reviewing and drafting agreements, leases, resolutions, and contracts for governmental entities. Additionally, we provide legal advice through the issuance of legal memorandum to the governing body and administration on a spectrum of matters, including operations, open meetings, public information requests, real estate, and personnel matters.

Our attorneys have extensive experience in drafting resolutions, orders, proclamations, and other critical instruments vital for governing bodies to fulfill their responsibilities. Our Firm also has extensive experience drafting resolutions for other governmental entity clients, including various Texas counties, regional mobility authority, and school districts from all over the State of Texas.

When requested, our Firm is also equipped to engage in contract review. We have a team of attorneys who specialize in proactively identifying and addressing potential disputes before they escalate, with expertise in reviewing and drafting construction, employment, and vendor contracts.

Our Firm has developed a standardized contract for the purchase of goods/services of a nominal amount (\$50,000.00 or less), designed for effortless use by the finance and purchasing departments. Our Firm has also developed standard addendums to the AIA contracts that are used for construction projects. Further, our Firm has also developed standard contracts for engineers and other trades that are involved in construction/remodeling projects.

The Firm has provided guidance to clients on many different types of contractual issues in an effort to avoid litigation and keep expenses low. The Firm's attorneys provide contract review services and drafting services with an eye toward minimizing or eliminating contractual disputes before they arise. Specifically, the Firm has experience in reviewing and drafting construction, employment, and vendor contracts. The Firm has also drafted a variety of MOUs for its clients, involving agreements with local law enforcement entities and governmental agencies.

Our Firm is also experienced in delivering meticulous and legally sound memoranda that address various legal issues. Whether it involves policy development, comprehensive reviews of contracts, or intricate personnel matters, our experienced attorneys are skilled at providing strategic and informed guidance. We understand the importance of clarity and accuracy in legal documentation, and our commitment to excellence ensures that our legal memoranda meet the highest standards.

## **8. Reviewing and Drafting Resolutions, Contracts, Agreements, Deeds, and Easements**

The expertise of our attorneys goes beyond mere drafting skills. They actively engage in collaborative efforts with public officers and department heads to formulate these essential documents. This collaborative approach ensures a comprehensive and effective representation of the governing body's responsibilities.

When requested, our Firm is equipped to engage in contract review. Demonstrating a commitment to avoiding litigation and minimizing expenses, our attorneys specialize in contract review services. We proactively identify and address potential disputes before they escalate, with expertise in reviewing and drafting construction, employment, and vendor contracts.

The Firm handles a variety of real estate matters, either selling or buying a piece of property, securing easements, settling title commitment issues, drafting earnest money contracts and AIA contract addendums. The Firm own set of contract addendums for virtually every construction contract promulgated by the AIA, ensures that the client's interests are well protected.

Our attorneys bring a specialized skill set to the forefront when it comes to drafting deeds and easement agreements on behalf of counties. With extensive experience in handling the intricate details of county governance, our attorneys are proficient in addressing the technical legal issues common in such transactions. We understand the unique considerations involved in real estate

matters for governmental entities, ensuring that deeds are meticulously drafted to convey property rights accurately. Moreover, our expertise extends to the nuanced realm of easement agreements, where we navigate complex legal landscapes to secure rights-of-way and access for the county. This involves a keen understanding of regulatory frameworks, potential disputes, and the need for precision in language to safeguard the county's interests.

## **9. Providing Legal Opinions Upon Request**

Upon request, our Firm offers prompt and well-informed legal opinions. Our Firm is experienced in delivering meticulous and legally sound opinions and memoranda that address various legal issues. Our Firm is renowned among clients for our swift and comprehensive handling of legal inquiries. Whether it involves policy development, legal interpretation, thorough reviews of contracts, or intricate personnel matters, our team of experienced attorneys are skilled at providing strategic and informed guidance. We understand the importance of clarity and accuracy in legal documentation, and our commitment to excellence ensures that our legal memoranda meet the highest standards.

## **10. Preparing Requests for Attorney General Opinions**

Our Firm is well-equipped to prepare requests for any necessary Attorney General opinions and address any matters related to Public Information Act requests. Regarding open records, our Firm deals with public information requests on a weekly basis. We have experience filing 10 and 15-day letters

with the Texas Attorney General's Office to withhold information from public disclosure, as required. Further, we have trained public officials and administrators on the Texas Public Information Act. This training is necessary to ensure that deadlines are not missed when a request for information is submitted to the government body. We will work with the proper personnel to maintain a crucial deadline to respond to public information requests if necessary.

## **11. Coordinate with Special Counsel**

Our firm understands the importance of strategic coordination with other special counsel to manage legal matters effectively on Webb County's behalf. This commitment ensures a smooth and seamless transition in handling diverse legal issues. Recognizing the complexity and specialized expertise required, we have a proven track record of collaborative efforts with other special counsels, working towards supporting our clients' legal needs. Our team is adept at fostering cooperation, and we have a demonstrated history of successful coordination across various legal domains. This collaborative approach significantly enhances our ability to address multifaceted legal challenges, providing Webb County with comprehensive and tailored legal support. We are fully committed to working closely with other special counsel, leveraging our expertise to contribute to the effective resolution of legal matters affecting Webb County.

## **12. Ensuring Compliance of Contracts with Applicable Rules**

Our Firm takes pride in its extensive experience in ensuring that contracts are meticulously drafted and fully compliant with applicable laws, procurement procedures, and regulations. Our attorneys possess a deep understanding of the legal landscape, constantly staying abreast of evolving statutes and regulations that may impact our clients. Whether dealing with construction, employment, or vendor contracts, we go beyond the surface, conducting thorough reviews to guarantee compliance at every level. This commitment to legal compliance is particularly crucial in the context of governmental entities, where adherence to procurement procedures and regulations is paramount. We proactively identify and address potential legal pitfalls, minimizing the risk of disputes and litigation. Our specialized knowledge in this area allows us to provide contract review services with a keen eye toward minimizing contractual disputes and ensuring that our clients navigate the legal complexities with confidence and integrity.

## **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

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 is very familiar with the clientele the County serves because we serve government clients located in the same geographical are.

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 County'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. 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 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 contract and procurement 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 very 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, it is without a doubt that the Firm's attorneys are intricately familiar with the how 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 in a particular person in their native language.

### **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) 794-300 Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: mariaa@borderregion.org Contract Period: 2023 - Present

Description of Professional Services Provided: \_\_\_\_\_

See full professional description on page 26.

### REFERENCE TWO

Government/Company Name: Jim Hogg County, Texas

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

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

Phone: (361) 527-3015 Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Description of Professional Services Provided: \_\_\_\_\_

See full professional description on page 27.

**REFERENCE THREE**

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 full professional description on page 27.

**REFERENCE Four**

Government/Company Name: Workforce Solutions for South Texas

Address: 1406 Jacaman Rd., Suite A, Laredo, Texas 78041

Contact Person and Title: Rogelio Trevino, Executive Director

Phone: (956) 722-3973 Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: rogelio.trevino@southtexasworkforce.org Contract Period: 2013 - Present

Description of Professional Services Provided: \_\_\_\_\_

See full professional description on page 27.

**REFERENCE Five**

Government/Company Name: Zapata County, Texas

Address: Zapata County Courthouse, 200 E. 7th Avenue, Ste. 115, Zapata, Texas 78076

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

Phone: (956) 765-9920 Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Description of Professional Services Provided: \_\_\_\_\_

See full professional description on page 28.

- **\*\*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:  
 2024-1112404

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 2024-006  
 Request for Qualifications for Legal Services for Preparation of Public Contracts, Agreements and Related 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**  
For vendor doing business with local governmental entity

**FORM CIQ**

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?

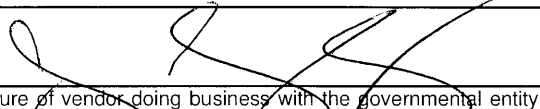
Yes  No

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 2024-008

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Authorized Representative

**Juan J. Cruz**

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.

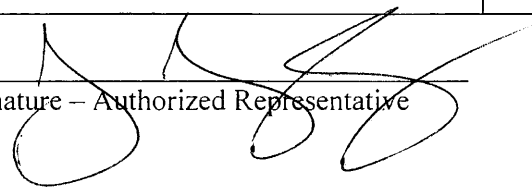
Do you have or do you anticipate having covered subawards under this transaction?

- Yes
- No

<b>Name of Contractor/Potential Contractor</b> J. Cruz & Associates, LLC	<b>Vendor ID No. or Social Security No.</b> 46-2631407	<b>Program No.</b> RFQ 2024-008
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<b>Name of Authorized Representative</b> Juan J. Cruz	<b>Title</b> Managing Member / Owner
--	---

Signature – Authorized Representative



Date

1-23-24

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

STATE OF TEXAS \*

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS:

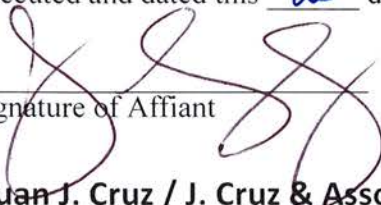
COUNTY OF WEBB \*

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](mailto:joel@webbcountytx.gov).*

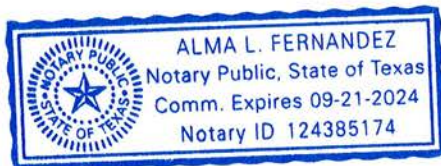
Executed and dated this 23 day of January, 2024.



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 January, 2024



  
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.

Signature of Company Representative

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

Notary Signature

Date

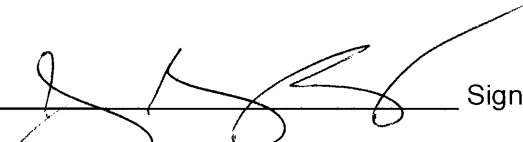
01/23/2024



**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](mailto:joel@webbcountytx.gov)

Juan J. Cruz Name of Company Representative (Print)

 Signature of Company Representative

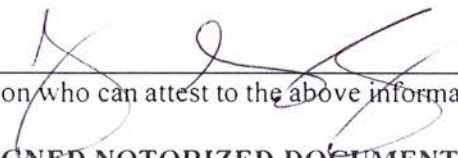
1-23-24 Date

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

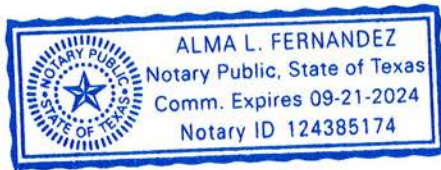
**\* SIGNED NOTORIZED DOCUMENT AND PROOF OF NO DELINQUENT TAXES TO WEBB COUNTY.**

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 9 day of September 2024