



Laura Hinojosa

Hidalgo

District Clerk

Courts & Justice Solution Going Live!



District clerk staff has been working steadfastly as Hidalgo County prepares to go live on the civil component of Odyssey, a judicial management software, product of Tyler Technologies.

Odyssey, initially purchased by the county in 2008, was first utilized for child support cases in 2009 and will kick-off its entire civil component on April 2, 2012. The criminal component, which culminates the full transition into the new software, is expected in 2014.



The overdue product is an upgrade from its predecessor *Ableterm* which was first implemented in the mid 1980s. In its initial stage, Odyssey has proven to be user friendly and will expectantly help to organize and integrate a document management system that is both secure and efficient.



Capabilities of Odyssey include the ability to better track cases from filing through disposition, automatically creating court-generated documents, utilizing integrated calendaring and scheduling, automatically downloading court session to third-party calendaring systems, in addition to configuring table-driven financial assessments and integrated cashiering for a variety of financial transactions. The software will also aid in tracking bonds, warrant and protective order statuses, and generate appeal records from imaged documents.

The district clerk office has worked diligently to ensure business processes, data conversion and other

Courts & Justice Solution contd.

defects are identified from the onset to reduce “post go-live issues” and other risks prior to the system’s implementation. The District Clerk office most recently partnered with the county’s IT Project Team, TylerTechnology’s Executive Team, Texas Conference of Urban Counties, and other Elected Officials and Department Heads to help form the Odyssey Governance Board. The purpose of the board is to help improve communications between the project teams and further discuss project plans, progress and risks. The Governance Board will also approve project plans and budgets, provide direction/resolution when conflicts are encountered, assist the project team with encouraging department participation, and hold IT and Tyler Technologies accountable.

Effective Monday, April 2nd, the public may experience longer wait times than usual. Please know this is a temporary inconvenience while we transition into Odyssey. The district clerk office is committed to working with all stakeholders to ensure a smooth transition and will make every effort to ensure the public’s needs are met. Nonetheless, we appreciate your patience and apologize in advance for any delays. Log on to www.texas.gov/efiling to learn more about eFiling, the fast and easy court filing solution.

Judicial Records Search



Judicial Records Search is an online database made available to the public by the County of Hidalgo to access and inspect county and district court records online. Effective April 2, 2012, Judicial Search access for civil cases ONLY will be disabled as a result of the implementation of Odyssey, the new judicial software. Odyssey’s online records search component **Public Access** is forthcoming and will be publicized upon implementation. In the interim, any civil case documents or record searches will have to be requested by phone, email or in person. We apologize for any inconvenience.

National County Government Month



National County Government Month (NCGM) is celebrated each April by the nation’s counties to raise public awareness and understanding about the roles and responsibilities of county government. The 2012 theme is "Healthy Counties, Healthy Families."

This year the district clerk office will host its annual open house scheduled for Thursday, April 19th. The district clerk office will also be promoting courthouse tours to schools, community organizations, and other local businesses the entire month of April.

Since 1991, the National Association of Counties (NACO) has encouraged counties across the country to actively promote county government programs and services. To learn more about National County Government

Month log on to www.naco.org. Use the hashtag #NCGM on Twitter to follow along with the counties celebrating National County Government Month.

Voter Registration



Pictured left to right: Yanira Hernandez, Monica Valdez, Omar Escamilla, Sandra Garza, Alfonso Fuentes, Melinda De La Garza, Andrea Guajardo

The Hidalgo County Elections Department deputized district clerk staff in February to serve as Deputy Registrars. As such, constituents can officially register to vote at the District Clerk Office without having to be redirected to the Elections Office across the street.

“We are proud to be able to provide voter registration services for individuals visiting the courthouse, while contributing to the overall voter registration efforts in Hidalgo County,” said Laura Hinojosa, Hidalgo County District Clerk. “We look forward to providing this service during this year’s election process and beyond.”

The Elections Office conducted a training for district clerk staff to become familiar with the instructions and guidelines required to perform the duties of a Volunteer Deputy Registrar. *The Advocacy Alliance Center of Texas* (AACT), a non-profit organization established to cultivate voter empowerment, was also on hand to provide education on the importance of voting and the electoral process.

“I encourage the citizens of Hidalgo County to register and then vote. Voting is pertinent, as this gives our county a strong voice. Do not hesitate to contact my office with any questions or concerns,” said Yvonne Ramon, Hidalgo County Elections Administrator.

For more information regarding how to become a Volunteer Voter Registrar and other voter information, log on to www.co.hidalgo.tx.us/elections.

Cash Bonds



The district clerk office is once again preparing to escheat cash bonds that have been unclaimed. Our analysis shows these bonds do not have a signed court order to allow the monies to be withdrawn.

We encourage you to contact our office at 956.318.2200 extension 6245/6246 to help identify the cash bonds, which will allow our office to disperse them to their rightful owners. We appreciate your attention to this matter.

4th Annual Open House



The public is invited to attend the Hidalgo County District Clerk Office’s Fourth Annual Open House scheduled for Thursday, April 19, 2012 from 1pm to 3pm. The annual event is held in observance of National County Government Month celebrated each April to raise public awareness and understanding about the district clerk office’s role and responsibilities in county government. Please save the date!

Data Gathering Form


ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
 GREG ABBOTT
STATE ATTORNEY GENERAL

To: State Case Registry
 Fax: 877-924-6872

From: _____
 Phone: _____
 Date: _____

DATA GATHERING FORM

This form is used for data gathering by counties that do not have TXCSES Web Portal access. Please indicate if the data on this sheet is a new or modified order. The completed information should be sent to the State Case Registry/County Contact Team by fax or mail. TXCSDU P.O. Box 659490, San Antonio, TX 78265

County Name: _____ New or Modified Order (Please circle)

Payments Payable to: County _____ SDU _____

Court Number: _____ Cause Number: _____
(Court where case was established)

Start Date: _____ Domestic Violence (DV) _____
(Date original order signed by Judge) (Please write "Y" for each individual that is a victim of domestic violence)

Custodial Parent: _____ Drivers License No. _____
 Custodial Parent SSN: _____ / _____ / _____ DV _____ Date of Birth _____ Sex: M F

Custodial Parent: _____ Address _____
 City _____ Zip _____

Non-Custodial Parent Name: _____ Drivers License No. _____
 Non-Custodial Parent SSN: _____ / _____ / _____ DV _____ Date of Birth _____ Sex: M F

Non-Custodial Parent: _____ Address _____
 City _____ Zip _____

Employer Name: _____ (if available)
 Employer FEIN: _____ Employer Phone: _____

Employer Address: _____ Address _____
 City _____ Zip _____

Post Office Box 12017, Austin, Texas 78711-2017 Tel: (512) 460-4000 1-800-252-8014 WEB: www.oag.state.tx.us

Attorneys are encouraged to complete the data gathering form when submitting court ordered payments. Once received at the district clerk office, the data will be entered on TXCSES Web (Texas Child Support Enforcement System), and will create an immediate account for child support payment from the non-custodial parent.

By utilizing this form, the amount of time it takes for child support payments to be sent to the custodial parents is greatly reduced. A copy of the form can be downloaded from the district clerk web page at www.co.hidalgo.tx.us/districtclerk. The Data Gathering Form can be found in the *Forms* section of the website.

Save the Date!

District Clerk Office
Family Rummage Sale
Saturday, July 14, 2012
8am—12pm



Blues for Bucks



Pictured left to Right: Olivia Meza, Jayney Ramon, Claudia Rodriguez, Victor Sanchez, Vanessa Gonzalez, Sandra Gomez

The Palmer Drug Abuse Program (PDAP) has been randomly selected as recipient of the Hidalgo County District Clerk's Office *Blues for Bucks Workplace Fundraising Campaign* to benefit local charitable organizations. PDAP is a fellowship of young people and parents who share their experience, love and understanding that they may solve their common problems and help others recover from the effects of mind-changing chemicals. PDAP is non-sectarian and the primary requirement for membership is the desire to live a chemical free life. Their primary purpose is to carry their love and understanding to others and to practice the principles of love and honesty in their daily lives. PDAP relies on community support and contributions to sustain their services to families in our region.

The district clerk office kicked off their charitable efforts in 2008 as part of the American Heart Association's Go Red for Women campaign. The program, which allows department staff to wear jeans every Friday in exchange for a \$5 donation, has since then expanded their efforts through the creation of a "charitable organizations list" of which staff randomly selects a recipient every six months. Over the past four years the district clerk office has collected over \$24,000 which has gone to local charitable organizations throughout Hidalgo County.

Contact Information

Laura Hinojosa

Hidalgo County District Clerk

PO Box 87

Edinburg, Texas 78540

p: 956.318.2200

f: 956.318.2251

e: districtclerk@co.hidalgo.tx.us

Office Hours

Monday—Friday

7:30am—5:30pm



We encourage your honest assessment of our services as we continue to evolve and improve through your valuable input. Our team of outstanding and hardworking individuals is ready to assist you as it is our priority to provide exemplary service while preserving and maintaining the records of the Hidalgo County Judicial System. Please contact our office if you have any questions or require additional information.

Email your comments to districtclerk@co.hidalgo.tx.us or visit www.co.hidalgo.tx.us/districtclerk for more info.

Hinojosa Serves as Panelist at COMPA

The Rio Grande Valley hosted the 41st Annual Conference of the National Conference of Minority Public Administrators. COMPA, a national section of the American Society for Public Administration, is the oldest professional organization dedicated to promoting and advancing public administration service, learning and academic training in the United States among “people of color” — practitioners, professors and college and university students.

Hinojosa, among other distinguished guests, served on a Plenary Panel focusing on legislative issues. Hinojosa talked to the audience about her experience serving as Hidalgo County District Clerk and about her role serving as Legislative Committee Chair for the *County & District Clerk Association of Texas*. Hinojosa also had the opportunity to share her experience as a minority and female elected official in the Rio Grande Valley, in addition to her experience in volunteerism and giving back to the community.

HCDCO Welcomes New Addition to Admin Team



Pictured left to Right: Stephanie Palacios, Aida Villarreal, Mayra Rangel, Ricardo Contreras, Nilda VanHook, Adriana Garcia

After much anticipation, the Hidalgo County District Clerk Office welcomes a new member to its administrative team: Mrs. Mayra Rangel. Rangel was selected to fill the Accountant IV position from a pool of experienced and qualified applicants. Rangel has a Bachelors in Business Administration & Accounting and Masters Degree of Science in Accounting from the *University of Texas-Pan American* (UTPA). She previously served as a Lecturer at the UTPA College of Business and brings with her a wealth of experience as an Accountant and Account Executive in the private sector, in addition to her many years of experience in the banking industry.