



Laura Hinojosa

Hidalgo County District Clerk



PROMOTING TRANSPARENCY AND OPEN GOVERNMENT

Launched six years ago, the district clerk office is hosting its 6th Annual Open House on April 10th in observance of National County Government Month, an initiative spearheaded by the National Association of County Organizations (NACo) to help raise public awareness and understanding about the roles and responsibilities of county government.

“Six years ago we had no idea National County Government Month existed. As a new clerk, I was simply trying to create new ways of promoting transparency and open government,” said Laura Hinojosa. “The date we selected coincidentally fell during the April celebration and we’ve been hosting our open house on this month ever since.”

The open house traditionally consists of a meet-and-greet with the elected official and office staff. Tours are also provided with an overview of office services and developments. Last year, the office showcased 19th century minute books and court documents that were being shipped for restoration and preservation.

In addition to the annual open house, the district clerk office helps promote transparency

through its official website, which is updated consistently.

The use of social media was implemented in 2011 to help disseminate information on office projects and initiatives and help garner public trust. Additionally, the elected official manages a twitter account which mirrors the information communicated through the office Facebook page. The office also relies on traditional forms of communication which consist of press releases, a quarterly newsletter, and articles shared through local and state publications.

“We appreciate the opportunity to showcase the progress we’ve made at the district clerk office, in addition to promoting our public services. We look forward to continuing to foster open government, providing exemplary public service, and fulfilling our role as good stewards of public resources,” said Laura Hinojosa.





**Laura Hinojosa
Hidalgo County District Clerk**

cordially invites you to the

**6th Annual
District Clerk Office Open House**

Thursday, April 10, 2014

1:00pm – 3:00pm

Hidalgo County Courthouse
100 N. Closner, 1st Floor
Edinburg, Texas 78539

Tours will be provided and light refreshments served.
For additional information contact Ricardo at 956.289.7809.



Updated E-filing Standards



The Texas Supreme Court approved on March 21, 2014, new technology standards which provide uniform codes for e-filing throughout the State. The proposed changes stem from the confusion filers were encountering with the filing codes which differ from county to county. According to the Judicial Committee on Information Technology (JCIT), the standard e-filing codes will now consist of “broad case categories” broken down into “case types.”

The updated standards also now provide specific reasons for a court clerk to “reject” an e-filing. The reason a clerk may “reject” a document or “return for corrections” includes but is not limited to the following:

- There were insufficient fees.
- The credit card was declined.
- The document was addressed to the wrong clerk.
- The document included incorrect or incomplete information.
- The document was formatted incorrectly.
- Multiple documents were combined in one PDF.
- The document was illegible or unreadable.
- Sensitive data like a Social Security number wasn't redacted as necessary.

The JCIT anticipates the changes, taking effect 60 days after the signed order, will make e-filing easier as filers will be working with more uniform case/ filing types across the State.

To view the full Texas Lawyer article by Angela Morris, logon to: <http://www.texaslawyer.com>
- *Texas Supreme Court makes electronic filing*

“It was clear there was some confusion about when the clerk has the ability or what is required for rejection,” said Rebecca Simmons, former Justice on the Fourth Court of Appeals. “I think filers will be happy.”

DPS Site Visit



The Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) created by the Texas Legislature, is a comprehensive system that includes relevant data for criminal justice agencies responsible for the arrest, prosecution, adjudication and correction of criminal offenders. It further provide usable data to support the analyses of criminal justice policy makers and planner. The district clerk office is one of the agencies responsible for reporting to the DPS criminal and juvenile justice numerical offense codes associated to criminal offenses for inclusion in the computerized criminal history.

On March 18th, Rhonda Daniels, Field Representative, CJIS/JJIS Crime Records Service with Texas Department of Public Safety, visited the district clerk office to conduct a training with district clerk staff regarding CJIS requirements and court disposition codes. She also spent some of her time conducting hands-on-training which consisted of disposing of cases and incorporating sample scenarios.

The district clerk office appreciates the collaborative effort and the opportunity to work closely with DPS to ensure accurate and efficient reporting practices.

Criminal Odyssey



In 2009 the IT Department convened a meeting to update clerks and court coordinators on the Odyssey Civil Case Management transition, otherwise know as Phase I. Over the course of six months, the county worked closely with project managers to ensure a successful transition with a long-term goal of fully incorporating a true integrated justice system.

Four years later, the Odyssey Criminal Case component, or Phase II, is in progress with a completion date of May 2015. A fully

integrated justice system means advanced comprehensive functionality with ease-of-use. The county currently utilizes two separate systems, both products of Tyler Technologies. Ableterm, the dated version of Odyssey, is currently used to access criminal case data. The district clerk office anticipates improved workflow and maximized efficiency once all case data has been consolidated and merged into Odyssey.

Contact Information

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Office Hours

Monday—Friday
7:30am—5:30pm



Please visit our website! Whether verifying fees, responding to your jury summons, or accessing case and passport information, you will find all the information you need here:

www.co.hidalgo.tx.us/districtclerk

We also encourage your honest assessment of our services as we continue to evolve and improve through your valuable input. Email your comments to: districtclerk@co.hidalgo.tx.us

Child Support Customers & Attorneys



Section 158.106(d) of the Texas Family Code was amended to require the use of the federal Income Withholding for Support (IWO) form for an order or judicial writ of income withholding for child support, or when requesting voluntary withholding. Employers may reject an order for child support withholding if this form is not used. It is available on the Texas Attorney General website:

<https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/cs/forms/forms.shtml>

Passport Day in the USA

The Hidalgo County District Clerk Office invites you to

Passpor Day in the USA



Friday, April 25, 2014
8am - 5pm

Do you need a passport? Need to renew your old one?? Join us at the Hidalgo County Courthouse for Passport Day in the USA! This is an event specifically dedicated to promoting our passport services. Our passport processing hours have been extended and there is no appointment required.

Please visit our website to access the passport application, required documentation, applicable fees and other passport related information:

www.co.hidalgo.tx.us/districtclerk