



IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

COUNTY OPERATIONS

Contact:

Desiree I. Gonzalez, 915-487-0270

dgonzalez@epcounty.com

Laura E. Gallegos, Ed. D., 915-283-9645

l.gallegos@epcounty.com

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El Paso County Requests Funding from State for Operation Lone Star Program

EL PASO, TX — On Monday, July 22nd, after careful consideration, the El Paso County Commissioners Court unanimously voted to apply for the state's Operation Lone Star (OLS) grant funding from the State of Texas, which will help offset the increased costs of jail operations and court administration that El Paso County has endured. Along with the OLS grant, an application will be submitted to the Texas Indigent Defense Commission (TIDC) for funding to cover the expenses of defense costs for cases related to OLS.

OLS is a joint operation that deploys the Texas National Guard and the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) to the southern border intended to counter a rise in migrant activities, illegal drug trafficking and human smuggling. As a result, El Paso has seen an increase of smuggling arrests by Texas DPS, and the cost of removing these individuals from the community and detaining them in the County jail has cost more than \$8 million this fiscal year alone.

The impact of these OLS arrests has burdened jail and court operations and has created significant costs. Additionally, the County's revenue has reduced substantially (\$18.5 million less to be seen in FY25 when compared to FY22 revenue numbers), due to the County's inability to provide jail beds to the federal government, through a contract which currently exists to house federal detainees. Most recent numbers indicate the County is housing approximately 300 OLS detainees each day in our local jails. By law, the County Sheriff must accept all inmates with state charges.

As part of the OLS and TIDC grant application process, the County Judge has issued the required Disaster Declaration describing the financial and operational impacts OLS has had on County operations. The Declaration is required as part of the County's grant applications to receive OLS funding and is set to be further discussed by the Commissioners Court at their next regular scheduled meeting on Monday, July 29, 2024.

The signed Disaster Declaration can be viewed on the El Paso County's website, www.epcounty.com.

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500 E. SAN ANTONIO, ROOM 311, EL PASO, TEXAS 79901-2427, PHONE: (915) 546-2014
FAX: (915) 543-3885, EMAIL: communicationsoffice@epcounty.com