



Meet the Candidates For City of Rio Hondo General Election May 3, 2025

Juan Garza Commissioner Place 1

I am a lifelong resident of Rio Hondo and a professional with a strong background in higher education, workforce training, and grant management. Experience leading large initiatives and strategies that support and foster partnerships that impact growth. Skilled in securing federal, state, and private funding, and ensuring compliance with grant requirements that support economic impact through collaborative efforts. I am a graduate of Rio Hondo High School, The University of Texas at Brownsville, and Texas State University. I hold a Master's in Education and have extensive experience working with both regional and national stakeholders. Outside of my professional career, I have served as a member of the Rio Hondo Economic Development Corporation (EDC), I have served as the Cub Scout leader for Pack 1554 for area youth, and have participated in the Texas Municipal League and am currently serving in the Economic Development Advisory Committee for the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC), where I contribute to local economic initiatives and community development.

Diana Jean Bustamante-Zavala Candidate for Place 3

I'm Diana Jean Bustamante-Zavala, a graduate of Rio Hondo High School, Class of 1995. I'm the proud daughter of Ray and Rose Marie Bustamante. I'm the oldest of 4 siblings, Rumaldo Bustamante, Debbie Jean Bustamante, and Dolores Renee Bustamante. I also have a niece, my sister's daughter Desiree and a nephew, my brother's son, Xander. In December 1999, I graduated from Texas A&M University- Kingsville with a Bachelor degree in Psychology. While working in student housing, I continued graduate school and earned a Master's degree in Counseling and Guidance in 2001. I've worked as a Counselor since 2002, where I started my career at The University of Brownsville- Texas Southmost College. I strongly believe that everyone has special unique talents and abilities, for a purpose, gifted to them to do what they were created to do.

I earned my School Counseling Certification and today serve as the GEAR UP Facilitator of Rio Hondo ISD, where I'm "leading with a servant's heart". GEAR UP's mission is to promote college and career readiness in students, because the impact of a college education can change the entire trajectory of a person's life— impacting the student, family, and community as a whole. #GEARUPWORKS!

A strong believer in Leadership, Community Service, Professional Development, and Networking, I was an active member of the Jaycees- Junior Chamber of Commerce for over 16 years, serving the communities of Brownsville and Harlingen. As a Jaycee, I actively chaired event community service projects, but I'm most proud of opening the RGV Jaycees Chapter and the collaborative work done with the City of Harlingen. I chaired the Christmas Parade Downtown Jackson Street in Harlingen— our signature event for 10 years. Our committee, promoted the circulation of commerce for the Downtown District, promoting tourism and gaining chapter revenue to continue community service events, professional development, donations, and scholarships. Staying true to our motto, "Service to humanity is the best work of life".

As an active member of the St. Helen's Catholic Church, I have led a women's Bible Study, taught spiritual formation and lector. As both a member of the Rio Hondo School District and St. Helen's, I have fostered community service opportunities for students to participate in the Fall Carnival- Kermes, to build their resume skills- items employers or college applications committees look fondly on.

Blessed to be on the Advisory Committee with my father, Ray Bustamante, I was involved in the design and implementation of the Rio Hondo City Park, that so many of our residents and community are able to enjoy today.

I've had the opportunity to grow academically and professionally, demonstrated my commitment to community service, leadership, fiscal responsibilities and the circulation of commerce in surrounding communities and look forward to the opportunity to bring these talents and skills to our community and you, our City of Rio Hondo, Texas.