

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Project Title

The **project title** for the requests included in the FY 2023 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program is **Combining Law Enforcement Technology Solutions, Leadership Development, and Community Partnerships to Reduce Crime.**

Solicitation Category 2: **C-BJA-2023-00105-PROD**

Allocation: **\$128,576.00**

Description of the Issue

The City of Richmond (COR), incorporated in 1782, is an independent city and capital of the Commonwealth of Virginia. COR has an estimated population of 226,604 as of the latest (2021) US Census Bureau’s annual population estimates. Richmond occupies 62.5 square miles, with a population density of 3,687 people per square mile. Richmond has a median household income of \$47,250.00, with 23.2% of residents living below the federal poverty level.

The Richmond Police Department (RPD), led by Chief Richard G. Edwards and accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA), was founded in 1807. RPD is a 2021 Public Safety Partnership (PSP) Site (<https://www.nationalpublicsafetypartnership.org/>) that receives expedited, coordinated training and technical assistance (TTA) and an array of resources from the Department of Justice (DOJ) to enhance local public safety strategies. The department has an authorized strength of 755 officers and 126.5 civilians. RPD sees a decrease in personnel due to retirement, competitive opportunities in law enforcement, and new interests. The department’s overarching mission is to make Richmond a safer city through community policing and engagement. RPD has a rich

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history of working with various internal and external partners, including City of Richmond agencies, federal and state agencies, corporations, faith-based communities, non-profit organizations, community programs, projects, and colleges and universities. We aim to build and sustain relationships within the communities where we work, learn, play, and worship.

Richmond, Virginia, has a history of high crime rates. During the 1990s, the murder rate in Richmond was one of the highest in the nation. There is a direct correlation between Richmond’s high crime rate and its high poverty rate. Poverty statistics in the area are as follows:

Measure	Actual or Estimate	Analysis/Comparison
Median Household Income	\$47,250	Less than the state median of \$74,222
Population living in poverty	23.2%	More than double the state rate of 9.9%
Children (0-18) living in poverty	23.9%	Nearly double Virginia’s rate of 13.0%
Single-parent-led families	61.0%	Over double the US rate of 23%

According to cityrating.com, Richmond crime statistics report an overall downward trend in crime based on data from 19 years, with violent crime decreasing and property crime decreasing. Based on this trend, the crime rate in Richmond for 2022 is expected to be lower than in 2019. However, the city’s violent crime rate in 2019 was higher than the national violent crime rate average by 22%, and the city property crime rate in Richmond was higher than the national crime rate average by 65.86%.

In 2019, the city violent crime rate in Richmond was higher than the violent crime rate in Virginia by 122.56%, and the city property crime rate in Richmond was higher than the property crime rate in Virginia by 113.03%, an even more alarming, stark differential. In 2021, while violent crime continued to trend down in the city, homicides were up. This is an atypical trend and is cause for concern among law enforcement and the community. Violent crime comprises

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four offenses: murder and non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

Despite the declining numbers overall, Richmond’s crime rate is still significant and results in higher incidents of violent criminals incarcerated in the City of Richmond. Thus, the high crime rate places law enforcement officers in constant danger as they perform their duties to serve and protect citizens in the Richmond community.

Richmond has already seen its share of gun violence. Mayor Levar Stoney, Police Chief Gerald Smith, and other city leaders joined forces on May 13, 2021, to declare gun violence a public health crisis in Richmond, VA (NBC12, 2021). “We believe this declaration and acknowledgment will open up the avenues for more dollars to flow into Richmond to focus on this,” Stoney said. In April 2021, Richmond experienced a violent week, with eight people dying from gun violence. A young mom and three-month-old daughter were shot and killed at an apartment complex in Richmond’s Southside. The homicide rate was flat compared to April 2020: 16 versus 16 in the previous year. A Creighton Court resident, Marilyn Olds, said, “You have your parents, grandparents, and siblings too afraid to come outside in Creighton and Mosby. Nobody wants to come outside because you are shooting up the streets” (Perry, 2019). Ms. Old’s comment speaks to gun violence’s social, mental, and physical impact. If left untreated, gun violence exposure has lasting impacts on health, well-being, and development. One study found that 65% of youth indirectly exposed to community gun violence reported being extremely distressed. Most of those exposed reported negative changes to their behavior due to this violence, such as being less likely to travel outside alone, avoiding specific locations, staying home from school, and carrying guns for protection. When individuals are afraid to leave their homes and develop relationships with neighbors and peers, their physical and mental health is

impacted. As a result, youth exposed to community gun violence are more likely to be physically inactive, exhibit antisocial behaviors, act aggressively, and perform poorly in school.

Community gun violence is also linked to an increased likelihood of engaging in violent behavior. For example, a study examining 500 Black American youth living in under-resourced neighborhoods in Virginia found that direct exposure to violence was the best predictor of whether an individual would later engage in gun-related crimes.

The Richmond Police Department is seeking funding to address violent crime. The comprehensive funding requests allow the RPD to extend services to internal and external partners. The projects, programs, and equipment requests follow a shooting in Richmond's first precinct last November 2021. Starting with this case, Chief Smith initiated Operation Red Ball, a 90-day effort to identify the persons responsible for this violent crime and to increase areas of visibility in hot spots or targeted areas across the city. Since its inception, 117 guns have been seized, 23 warrants served, 130 on-view felony arrests, and 64 on-view misdemeanor arrests. While Operation Red Ball has received funding from the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice, additional resources are necessary to combat violent crime. RPD will partner with law enforcement agencies and non-profit organizations to expand our reach and impact. Due to increased violent crime, we respectfully request grant funding to coordinate our efforts with internal and external partners. Grant funding will support equipment requests, programs, projects, and services.

1. Body-Worn Cameras (BWCs): Richmond City Sheriff's Office (RCSO)

The RCSO needs to procure specific equipment to help protect the lives of its staff and the lives of inmates housed in its jail and promote safety in the community at large. Given the city-specific crime statistics, the RCSO actively seeks funding that aligns with the JAG grant's

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permissible uses, such as procuring lifesaving equipment directly related to essential law-enforcement functions and providing security for the jail. Funding is requested for body-worn cameras. This equipment aligns strongly with the Office of Justice Program’s commitment to advancing work that promotes civil rights and racial equity, increases access to justice, supports crime victims and individuals impacted by the justice system, strengthens community safety, and protects the public from crime and evolving threats, and builds trust between law enforcement and the community.

The high violent crime rates in Richmond have garnered national attention. However, the rate of violent incident occurrence at correctional facilities and among correctional employees has received far less coverage and consideration. Data collected from the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) and an occupational supplement to the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS-Work) found that correctional officers experience 254 work-related injuries per 10,000 full-time equivalent positions. This is among the highest injury rates of any occupation in the country, with approximately 40 percent of those injuries resulting from assaults and violent acts. In this comprehensive CFOI/NEISS-Work study, 113 correctional officer fatalities were cited from 1999-2008, 45 of which were committed by assaults or violent acts. Among fatal assaults and violent acts, 62 percent were due to homicides and 38 percent were due to suicides by self-inflicted gunshot wounds. Of the homicides, 65 percent were committed by inmates. The study cites an estimated 125,200 nonfatal work-related injuries of correctional officers explicitly; as noted, the majority (nearly 40%) were due to assaults and violent acts. Of note, however, is that of the nonfatal assaults and violent act injuries, more than one-third (37%) occurred while restraining an inmate or interacting with an inmate during an altercation. In short, the study found that the leading events for fatal and nonfatal work-related injuries were assaults

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and violent acts, with a large percentage of those acts related to interactions with inmates.

Although the most recent decade’s national results have not yet been published, the number of injuries to correctional officers is anticipated to continue to rise.

The need for corrections officer safety and wellness remains critical nationwide and in Richmond. From 2017-2021, the RCSO had 118 inmate assaults on corrections staff. Further, the number of inmate-on-inmate assaults during that same time frame was 434. The numbers in these categories are declining, with inmate assaults on staff dropping from 86 to 33 between 2020 and 2021 and inmate-on-inmate assaults dropping from 16 to 2 during that same period. Still, RCSO, one of the most prominent Sheriff’s offices in the Commonwealth of Virginia, maintains an acute need for equipment that will have a pointed and instantaneous impact on officer safety.

Body-worn cameras (BWCs) have become an essential topic of discussion within the law enforcement community and among the public. As a broad national conversation about policing continues to unfold in the wake of high-profile uses of force by police, BWCs are often seen as a technological “fix” that can bring more accountability, transparency, and legitimacy to the law enforcement profession. This is because BWCs are believed to have a powerful “civilizing” effect on the behavior of individuals who know they are being recorded. When police encounter a community member, it is assumed that the conduct of both the officer and community members improves when they learn that their words and actions are being recorded and can later be subject to scrutiny. According to research by the Police Executive Research Forum, BWCs reduce police use of force and complaints against officers. A randomized controlled trial found reductions in citizen complaints but a lack of change in citizens’ perceptions of police associated with BWCs. This suggests that a “civility effect” of BWCs may be limited in most public encounters.

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Though body cameras are not entirely new and used by our nation’s police departments, they are comparatively innovative for correctional officers and sworn deputies working in corrections. The positives of any video surveillance in the correction environment include **improved visual coverage of movement and activity** and **behavior accountability**. The unbiased optics of fixed video already in place within the Richmond City Sheriff’s Office at the Richmond City Justice Center location will only be enhanced with body-worn cameras on sworn deputies. As in-jail deaths such as those of Sandra Bland in Texas and Natasha McKenna in Fairfax County, Virginia, attract the same scrutiny as police-involved fatalities, a growing number of jails and corrections agencies nationwide are bringing body cameras behind bars. It is the latest bid to improve transparency in law enforcement and takes the devices into law enforcement facilities where interactions almost always happen away from the public eye. Unfortunately, we had a death by suicide at the Richmond City Sheriff’s Office in 2018, and the use of BWCs would have been instrumental in resolving the circumstances with certainty. Two hundred thirty inmates have died in Virginia jails during the five years between 2011 and 2016, of which five of these deaths occurred within our facility, the Richmond City Justice Center. The use of BWCs would have been instrumental in investigating all 230 deaths in Virginia jails during this time. It could have significantly reduced the number of legal settlements, saving the state millions of dollars. Although, in most cases, deaths in jails are due to self-inflicted harm or disturbances between inmates, the use of BWC can be instrumental in the behavior of law enforcement in the time leading to the disruption during the disturbance and afterward.

Like their police counterparts, corrections departments need body cameras to deter false claims and aggressive behavior by officers and inmates. In Prince George’s County, Maryland, 350 incidents were captured on video during the first six months the county corrections officers

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were issued the devices in 2016. The incidents were primarily disturbances between inmates that escalated and got out of control. By implementing BWCs, the RCSO anticipates the following positive impact:

- **Prevent Violence — a 2013 University of Cambridge study of law enforcement officers and respondents is less likely to use violence.** The study indicated a drop in the use of force by more than 50 percent. The use of body cameras by police departments has had an overwhelmingly positive impact of enhanced officer safety, reduced liability, and other effects on policing, which has already been proven to carry over to detention/corrections facilities
- **Accountability —** Continuously wearing body cameras would hold law enforcement officers accountable
- **Mitigate False Accusations — the devices help mitigate false accusations and avoid lengthy and costly litigation by those in the custody of detention/corrections facilities.**

As the CFOI/NEISS study illustrated, direct interactions with inmates correlate with an increased chance of work-related injuries for corrections officers and inmates. The RCSO plans to provide BWCs to the following staff:

- **Emergency Response Team:** The duty is a **tactical** team of sheriff's **deputies** on call 24 hours a day. The team was developed to quell any dangerous situations in jail. The Team is a support unit whose function is to restore order safely, quickly, and effectively. Their primary focus is cell extractions and riot control.
- **Transportation Team:** The Transportation Team must transport inmates wanted on bench warrants from local lockups. This service allows local police to remain in their jurisdictions and continue with their patrols to protect and serve their local citizens.

- **Civil Process Team**: The civil process must **serve civil warrants city-wide**. These warrants cover orders of protection, subpoenas, evictions, court-ordered property repossession, and other warrants related to civil law.

Although we can argue that BWCs can be instrumental for all deputies, we understand that issues relating to privacy can make this problematic. Such a move is very controversial in corrections facilities. We have narrowed our need to the three areas identified because of the increased danger to both the sworn deputy and the inmate/offender in these areas. For corrections officers working in an environment of heightened tension, body cameras can help by deescalating potentially violent situations, helping inmates improve their behavior, and reducing the need for the use of force. Body cameras will enhance transparency in corrections by providing an independent account of what happened. This will also help deter false claims and reduce unnecessary litigation and liability. Body camera footage will also be used to enhance training among correction officers, ensuring best practices are in place for the overall safety of inmates and officers.

2. Adult Drug Court

Richmond Adult Drug Treatment Court (RADTC) utilizes the post-adjudication structure to provide non-violent substance-abusing adults who are charged with a criminal offense in a criminal court an alternative to incarceration. If the offender completes the drug court program, often the conviction remains. Still, in some cases, the offender may have pleaded guilty to dismiss or reduce their charges upon program completion. RADTC regularly serves between 70-80 individuals who stand trial on drug-related offenses through the Circuit Court. As of August 2022, approximately 35 participants have been assigned to the program. The average number of participants was about 30 clients in 2021. There was a total of 25 graduates in 2021.

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RPD proposes to use grant funding to support the Richmond Adult Drug Treatment Court program. Police officers will work overtime as surveillance officers. The officers will monitor participants assigned to the drug court program. Officers will visit participants' homes, employment sites, and other locations where the participants may be found. They will determine compliance with court-ordered conditions of the drug court program and work with participants regarding any additional needs or concerns they may have. Studies have shown that the linkage between law enforcement and drug court has proven to be an effective strategy in assisting the participants in their efforts to become sober, law-abiding citizens of our community. Integrating law enforcement into drug court programs has proven successful in helping the drug court team gather information on the individual and knowing when a participant is engaging in behaviors or associations that are warning signs for relapse. Linkages with law enforcement have also successfully uncovered whether a participant maintains a law-abiding lifestyle or participates in community criminal activities. As a result, we propose a collaborative partnership between the RPD and the Richmond Drug Court to serve the substance-using population better and strengthen police relations in communities within the City of Richmond.

3. Training – De-escalation: Portable Shoot House

The Mobile Modular Shoot House is designed to provide realistic training in Close Quarters Combat (CQB) using simulations and other non-live fire training means to help prepare tactical teams like SWAT, Bomb Squad, and Negotiators. Adding this structure to Richmond's comprehensive de-escalation training would eliminate the need to locate a system for training. It would also provide realistic training for recruits and reduce some of the anxiety associated with encountering real-life events such as building searches, active shooter(s), and raids. RPD is requesting funding to support the Shoot House.

4. Education: Sworn & Non-Sworn Leadership Development Training

The City of Richmond Police Department continues to model Richmond’s Customer Service Imprint (CSI) by demonstrating professionalism and committed service to internal and external customers. As personnel promotes quality service, it must be coupled with continued training to broaden the scope of education, leadership, development, and training. Managers are responsible for but are not limited to, making decisions, leading and developing teams, strategic & fiscal planning, and demonstrating transactional and transformational leadership. Training must equip managers with the skills to encourage systemic change and see beyond the surface. The RPD requests funding for sworn and non-sworn middle/senior management training. Annual training is offered locally, regionally, and nationally by law enforcement agencies and professionals well-versed in law enforcement and associated topics. We also request to host knowledgeable professionals to facilitate training that would benefit the RPD and other law enforcement agencies.

5. Community-Based Programs

The Richmond Police Department cannot combat violence alone in Richmond. We need community partners. However, many of our community partners need help collaborating with law enforcement. This uncertainty comes with unfamiliar procurement practices and a minimal understanding of how to work within a different infrastructure. Therefore, RPD wants to identify four (4) non-profit organizations. The non-profit organizations will commit to a two to three-year partnership with RPD. Each organization is responsible for developing a program, project, or service to reduce violence in the community. Below are some example projects:

- Youth intervention programs
- Community pop-up events
- Services for underserved communities
- Community conversations

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Because the non-profit organizations are learning about the procurement process and may need more capacity to execute a sub-award fully, the RPD will manage the procurement process and the grant award. Organizations must partner with RPD’s Community, Youth, & Intervention Services Unit (CYIS) to execute the program, project, or service.

Project Design and Implementation

The Richmond Police Department’s strategic planning process is guided by the department’s mission, vision, focus areas, and the Commission on Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). The City of Richmond’s Budget and Finance Department also guides the strategic planning process. The City of Richmond participates in a budget planning season, including various budget meetings with city departments. City departments submit their budget priorities, and items are considered based on the need and justification. The local community can participate in planning by sharing their concerns during city government meetings, completing online surveys, and communicating directly with City Council members.

Federal and state funds close the gap to allow continuous service to our communities. The RPD utilizes crime statistics, equipment, and personnel needs to support the plan; however, other agencies and organizations such as the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), the Richmond City Sheriff’s Office (RCSO), Richmond Adult Drug Treatment Court, RPD Foundation, Attorney General’s Office, and Richmond Police Athletic League Board Members participate and contribute to the strategic planning process by prioritizing a shared vision to make Richmond safer. We also know equipment and staff needs that cannot be secured through the routine budget.

Capabilities and Competencies

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The City of Richmond Police Department will be the fiscal agent for the FY 2022 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG). The department’s Grants Manager will coordinate all quarterly/biannual reports and ensure the programmatic and fiscal compliance of all grant activities required by the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA). Each project is updated and reported through the designated Department of Justice reporting tools, including the JustGrants and Performance Measurement Tools (PMT) databases under Department of Justice (DOJ) guidelines. The Grants Manager completed the Department of Justice/Office of Justice Programs Financial Management Training Seminar and the online BJA Performance Measurement Tools Webinar Training. The Grants Manager has been fiscally responsible for BJA grants for fifteen years and knows the reporting resources and tools.

The Richmond City Sheriff’s Office (RCSO) will coordinate its use of funding within its finance, procurement, and compliance departments. The RSCO also has a grant management team responsible for reporting directly to the RPD Grants Manager. The team’s combined experience in managing grant funds is 75 years of experience in roles such as Vice President of Fund Development, Director of Development and Stewardship Management, Budget Manager, and Senior Administrator Assistant of Fund Development.

Plan for Collecting the Data Required for this Solicitation’s Performance Measures

The RPD Grants Manager understands this grant program's performance data reporting requirements and will gather data monthly to prepare for the quarterly and biannual reports.

Award Process and Timeline:

Item	Date
Receive Award Letter and Accept Grant Award	October 2022
Submit Award Letter and contents of Grant Award to Budget and Finance	November/December 2022
Award is baselined and Submitted to City of Richmond Procurement System – RAPIDS	November/December 2022
Communicate terms of the grant award, establish a Memorandum	January/February 2023

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of Understanding with Program Managers (as needed), describe quarterly reporting responsibilities, and review the budget and budget narrative.	
Begin spending grant funds	February/March 2023
Submit quarterly reports to the RPD Grant Manager	5 th of every month after the quarter (April 5, July 5, October 5, and January 5
Complete Performance Measurement Tools (PMT)	30 th of every month after the quarter (April 30, July 30, October 30, and January 30)
Complete program/project evaluations	As needed
Submit Grant Adjustments (program scope and budget modifications)	As needed
Contact Grant Liaison with questions regarding Grant's content	As needed
Final Closeout – complete the closeout process in the BJA Grant Management System (GMS) and for the City of Richmond	Three months after the final quarterly progress report