

## **Proposal Narrative**

### **Description of the Issue**

Under the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) FY24 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program, the Richmond Police Department (RPD), Richmond, Virginia is seeking \$95,517.00 to implement a multi-layered approach to violent crime reduction in the City of Richmond. The purpose of this project is to leverage modern technological advancements, continue creating sustainable partnerships by increasing engagement with local organizations, and facilitate the growth of the Department's staff with leadership and development training to further enhance RPD's capacity to combat violent crime. Primary activities include partnering with the Richmond Adult Drug Treatment Court to provide overtime and program surveillance to support the court and its participants, investing in leadership training and development for the Department's staff (both civilian and sworn), replacing worn and expired body armor for the FMT and Narcotics units, and procuring a mobile security tower that can be used for city events, marathons, and festivals. Continuing to explore these intersections supports RPD in helping make Richmond a safer city through community policing and engagement, and upholds the Department's core values of employee health, wellness, and morale; rebuilding trust and legitimacy; public safety through community engagement; innovation through technology; and community policing through strategic planning and evidence-based research.

Richmond, the capital city of the state of Virginia, spanning approximately 60 square miles, is the fifth largest city in the state of Virginia by area and population.<sup>1</sup> Richmond, Virginia was founded in 1737 and incorporated as an independent city in 1782.<sup>2</sup> According to the latest U.S.

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<sup>1</sup> [Virginia Cities by Population \(2024\) \(virginia-demographics.com\)](https://www.virginia-demographics.com/)

<sup>2</sup> [HISTORY OF THE CITY OF RICHMOND, VIRGINIA \(rva.gov\)](https://www.rva.gov/history/)

Census, Richmond currently has a population of 229,395. The most recent population of the Richmond Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) reaches 1,341,227.<sup>3</sup> Richmond has a median household income averaging \$58,988.00 with a poverty rate that exceeds 21% (more than double the rate in the state of Virginia: 10.6%).<sup>4</sup> The racial/ethnic demographics of Richmond are 44.6% White, 44% Black, 7.6% Hispanic, 2.3% Asian, and 1.5% Other.<sup>5</sup>

Under the leadership of Chief Richard G. Edwards, RPD deploys nearly 600 sworn personnel and 97 civilian personnel who all work to make Richmond a safer city through community policing and engagement. However, the Department has an authorized strength of 755 officers and 126.7 civilians. Despite the vacancies, RPD has still managed to respond to over 200,000 calls for service in 2023 alone. Needless to say, the frequency of calls for service largely impacts the Department and its workload in its ongoing efforts to serve and protect the public.

With a crime rate of 38 per one thousand residents, Richmond has one of the highest crime rates in America compared to all communities of all sizes – with a total crime index of six, meaning that Richmond is safer than only six percent of all U.S. cities.<sup>6</sup> While violent crime overall was down from 2021 to 2023, but only by a mere seven percent, property crime in Richmond was up 33% for the same period. This translates to a 27% increase in all major crime in Richmond over the last three years. Although homicide over the last three years was down 27%, rape was up over 43%. Aggravated assaults declined by five percent and robbery for the most recent year-over-year analysis was unchanged.

<b>Richmond Violent Crime 2021-2023</b>			
	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
Homicide	90	59	65

<sup>3</sup> [Richmond, VA Metro Area - Profile data - Census Reporter](#)

<sup>4</sup> [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Richmond city, Virginia; Virginia; United States](#)

<sup>5</sup> [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Richmond city, Virginia; Virginia; United States](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Richmond, VA Crime Rates and Statistics - NeighborhoodScout](#)

Rape	44	52	63
Robbery	338	295	295
Ag Assault	631	688	598
<b>Total Violent</b>	<b>1,103</b>	<b>1,094</b>	<b>1,021</b>
<b>Total Property</b>	<b>7,176</b>	<b>8,744</b>	<b>9,537</b>
<b>Total Major Crimes</b>	<b>8,279</b>	<b>9,838</b>	<b>10,558</b>

The Richmond Police Department is seeking funding to address violent crime and is committed to improving its ability to protect city residents and visitors from lawbreaking and misconduct. The comprehensive funding requested allows the Department to extend services to both internal and external constituents and addresses high priority needs. The objectives of this proposal are to: (1) Strengthen police relations in communities by further developing a sustainable relationship with the Richmond Adult Drug Treatment Court; (2) Educate staff with opportunities for leadership development; (3) Keep officers safe by updating department issued equipment; and to (4) Keep citizens safe by investing in technologies that increase public safety and monitor potential security threats.

### **1. Richmond Adult Drug Treatment Court (RADTC)**

Richmond Adult Drug Treatment Court (RADTC) utilizes the post-adjudication structure to provide non-violent, chemically dependent, felony offenders (including drug offenses and drug related property crimes) or first-time offenders with substance use problems an alternative to incarceration. RADTC regularly serves between 70-80 individuals who stand trial on drug-related offenses through the Circuit Court. Participant demographics include ages from 18-65; 59% male; 40% female; 1% transgender; 25% White; and 75% African American. While voluntary in nature, the program includes regular court appearances and treatment plans such as drug testing, counseling, recovery group meetings, and 12-step meetings (Narcotics or Alcoholics Anonymous).

Goals include obtaining a drug-free lifestyle, maintaining a law-abiding lifestyle, enhancing employment skills through vocational training and/or job placement services, increasing involvement in the recovery community, identifying the warning signs of relapse and engage in relapse prevention planning, and identifying specific treatment needs and developing a treatment plan designed to work towards recovery.<sup>7</sup>

RPD proposes to use grant funding to help reduce the gap in staffing within the Richmond Adult Drug Treatment Court program. Police Officers will work overtime as Surveillance Officers monitoring participants assigned to the drug court program by making unscheduled visits to participants' homes, employment sites, and other locations where they may be found. Home visits are made to assess their living situation and the people participants are associating with. Officers 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 all while building a rapport with participants and their supporting family/friends, encouraging a criminal-free lifestyle. Studies have shown that the association 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. In addition, continuing to partner with the drug court increases the credibility of law enforcement in communities and shows that officers play an integral part in the success of the overall program.

## **2. Leadership Training & Development**

“The leadership gap – the space between their current state and the level of leadership required for exceptional results, is a call to action. It represents untapped potential, waiting to be harnessed through insight, development, and strategic action.”<sup>8</sup> To address the Department’s

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<sup>7</sup> [Richmond Adult Drug Court About Us | Richmond \(rva.gov\)](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Leadership Gaps and How to Bridge Them | Business Explained \(business-explained.com\)](#)

leadership gap, RPD 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 continuous training to broaden the instruction of education, leadership, and development. RPD leadership staff are responsible for, but are not limited to, making decisions, supervision, delegation, developing teams, strategic & fiscal planning, and demonstrating transactional and transformational leadership daily. Furthering leadership development equips those in supervisory roles with the skills needed to encourage systemic change and see beyond the surface in addition to remaining competitive and resilient in spaces of discontinuity and in times where turnover rates and hiring challenges are at an all-time high.

RPD requests funding for sworn and non-sworn middle/senior management to attend training opportunities, workshops, and conferences. Annual training is offered locally, regionally, and nationally by law enforcement agencies and professionals well-versed in law enforcement and associated topics. The Department also request to host knowledgeable professionals internally to facilitate trainings that would benefit RPD staff. Training topics include but are not limited to communication skills, conflict management, stress management, mental health, workplace inclusion and diversity, adapting to human behaviors, community engagement and trust-building, leadership accountability, teamwork, employee performance and conduct, change management, ethical and moral behaviors, and overall leadership concepts. Investing in the growth of officers and civilian staff will aid the Department in staying on the forefront of policing.

### **3. Body Armor**

It is the policy of the Richmond Police Department to provide sworn officers and designated civilian personnel with the proper apparel and equipment required in the performance

of law enforcement functions. Per General Order 3-3, detectives shall wear their ballistic vests on all pre-planned arrests of felony suspects, planned raids, execution of any non-administrative search warrants, and any other situation where it is deemed necessary and will not compromise the mission. Body armor is typically worn in the following situations: (a) High-risk entries; (b) Special response team operations; (c) Pre-planned arrests of felony suspects; (d) Serving any non-administrative search warrant; (e.) Any pre-planned police activity which by its nature would indicate an element of danger; and, (f) When mandated by a supervisor due to special circumstances.

The Special Investigations Division covers crimes involving gangs, narcotics trafficking, prostitution, illegal gambling, and the sales and distribution of illegal alcohol and pornography. The Narcotics detectives work with the precincts and community to address drug complaints and subsequently identify groups of individuals who are involved in violent activity and have a propensity for violence. Maintaining quality relationships with precinct Focus Mission Teams (FMT's) is critical as FMT units gain intelligence and have contacts with gangs or violent neighborhood groups daily. The FMT's are responsible for supporting precinct operations via campaigns that address street-level drug activity in geographical areas determined by Precinct Commanders.

In adherence to the CALEA 17.5.2 standard of compliance, the Department shall issue body armor to all sworn personnel and shall replace body armor that is worn or damaged. Therefore, RPD plans to address equipment gaps by requesting funding to replace worn and expired body armor (ex. carriers and plates) for the Narcotics and FMT's. The need for officer safety remains critical nationwide. According to the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), most body

armor in the U.S. has a five-year life span and only when properly taken care of. Using expired body armor compromises officer safety and increases the likelihood of the vests being penetrated.

### **3. Mobile Security Tower**

Technology is woven into every fiber of a police department and takes the form of hardware, software, communications systems, intelligence centers, and equipment. Technology systems can create the infrastructure for actionable intelligence, enhance officer safety, support efficient operations, and manage risk. Effectively using technology in such a way that advances specific agency goals requires the skill of subject matter experts that can identify the needs of the department. The mission of the Capital City Intelligence Center (CCIC) is to provide RPD with the ability to capitalize on a comprehensive and expanding range of technologies for efficient and effective policing. Law enforcement equipment and technology solutions will respond to events within predictable and specific time constraints. The data will inform crime and assist the Department with identifying strategies to reduce violence within the Richmond community – all tools that will allow officers to respond to calls for service more efficiently, more deliberately, with improved operational intelligence, and with a proactive emphasis on officer, citizen, and community safety.

Mobile video surveillance camera towers are an effective means to deter crime and monitor security threats. The ability to capture live video from within its field of view will aid the Richmond Police Department in identifying criminals almost anywhere. The City of Richmond is known for its large-scale, family friendly outdoor events during the summer and fall months which can draw tens of thousands of visitors and spectators to the area. Having a mobile tower at events such as festivals and marathons will allow the Department to monitor activity from high vantage points and keep communities safe. Because the towers can be easily moved, it also offers the option

to place them in select hotspots to gain real time surveillance from great distances without placing officers near the crime.

As the Department continues to build and sustain relationships within the communities where we work, learn, play, and worship, RPD also recognizes the importance of leveraging modern technologies to disrupt patterns and mitigate violent crime. Studies have shown that enhanced security measures like mobile towers have reduced crime by 30% and deterred up to 70% of potential threats. Therefore, RPD requests funding for a mobile video surveillance camera tower that can aid the Department in providing improved surveillance, offers rapid deployment, creates a deterrent effect, and enhances data collection making them a valuable asset to law enforcement personnel.

### **Project Design and Implementation**

RPD's strategic planning process is guided by the department's mission, vision, focus areas, and CALEA in addition to the City of Richmond's Budget and Finance Department. The City of Richmond participates in a budget planning season that includes various budget meetings with city departments. City departments submit their budget priorities, and items are considered based on the need and justification. Local citizens and stakeholders can participate in the planning process by sharing their concerns during city government meetings, completing online surveys, and communicating directly with City Council members.

Both 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, and the Attorney General's Office participate and contribute to the strategic planning



process by prioritizing a shared vision to make Richmond safer. Richmond’s strategic goals outlined in its PSP Strategic Plan are to reduce gun violence by implementing data-driven strategies focused on locations where the majority of gun violence occurs in the city and identifying and addressing root causes of violent crime; establish and sustain strong partnerships and collaboration mechanisms between RPD, community stakeholders, and other governmental entities related to violent crime reduction efforts; establish and improve communications to share information with community members and stakeholders to foster a mutual understanding of gun violence challenges and possible solutions to those challenges in order to build trust; and, increase Richmond community stakeholders’ active role in violent crime reduction efforts through community-based initiatives.

### **Capabilities and Competencies**

Under the leadership of Chief of Police Richard G. Edwards, RPD is very well positioned to successfully implement the *FY 2024 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant*. RPD’s unique positioning to implement the project stems not only from its history of successful implementation of federal grants, but from its current practices and involvement with the community. Just recently, RPD successfully implemented *Operation Safe Summer* which resulted in a 12% reduction in the number of individuals shot between April and June 2024. This demonstrates RPD’s understanding of the full cycle of communication which includes meaningful and impactful engagement with community stakeholders. In addition, as a PSP site, RPD has taken steps to developing additional strategies to modernize departmental operations.

RPD will be the fiscal agent for the JAG grant as with prior awards. The Department’s new Grants Coordinator will complete all quarterly reports and ensure the programmatic and fiscal compliance of all grant activities required by the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) are carried

out successfully. The Grants Coordinator has 19 years of grants management experience and is coming from the state level of government having previously worked for the VA Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS). They have completed the Department of Justice/Office of Justice Programs Financial Management Training and has experience with the Performance Measurement Tool (PMT) software and managing the oversight of prior Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance grants for DCJS. 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 Grants Management team which will report program activity directly to the RPD Grants Coordinator.

### **Plan for Collecting the Data Required for This Solicitation's Performance Measures**

While this project is a multi-layered approach, the RPD Grants Coordinator will track grant activities and report the statuses of the goals and objectives monthly to the Deputy Chief of Business Administration, Mr. Albert Stokes. This includes any challenges or barriers to project implementation through grant closeout. The Grants Coordinator is familiar with the Just Grants platform, understands the performance data reporting requirements, and will gather data monthly to prepare for quarterly and semi-annual submissions. Data collected and reported for this project will include: (1) documentation of progress/completion of each project activity monthly to include whether the activity was completed within the stated timeframe; (2) documentation of budget expenditures in compliance with final approved budget awarded and grant guidelines; (3) documentation of training and technical assistance needed or received. The RPD Grants Coordinator will track overall progress towards reaching the project goal and objectives by monitoring all activities and performance metrics in addition to a monthly review of project related policies, procedures, and processes.