Application Number: 2019-H3593-WV-DJ

City of Charleston, West Virginia

Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program

**Program Narrative**

Description of the Issues

West Virginia has been in the throes of the opioid crisis since the late 1990’s. Illegal drug use has wreaked havoc on our citizens in regard to addiction, drug sales in their neighborhoods and individuals committing crimes to support their drug habits. These issues also effect the emergency services personnel that respond to these incidents. Even though strides are being made with assistance for individuals to receive treatment option information, law enforcement is continuing to deal with the fallout of violent and property-related crimes from drug trafficking, illegal use and sale of drugs.

Resource agency personnel, emergency services and law enforcement agencies in our area have been working collaboratively to find ways to combat the abuse of illegal drugs and the crimes that occur in areas of high drug use. Being able to prevent crimes is paramount in the long-term scope of citizen safety, but also having the ability to successfully investigate and prosecute those crimes can help in the long-term success of reducing the related violent and property crimes.

The Charleston Police Department plans to utilize their funding to purchase safety equipment and upgraded bicycles for their bicycle Hybrid Unit, as well as provide funding for these officers to attend the International Police Mountain Bike Association (IPMBA) Conference in 2020. This conference will provide certification training to become police biking instructors, as well as other specialty classes. The Hybrid Unit has become instrumental in dealing with criminal vagrants utilizing the abandoned houses in areas of Charleston as drug manufacturing locations or as short-term illegal housing. The department also plans to purchase interoperable hand-held radios for members of the police department, one pole camera and overtime funds for officers to conduct zero tolerance patrols in high crime areas of the city.

The budgeted items will allow the Hybrid Unit and other department members to have the updated equipment to increase officer safety and communication measures as they work to combat the criminal element committing crimes in our City.

The Kanawha County Sheriff’s Department will be a sub-grantee under this grant award. The Memorandum of Understanding identifying the City of Charleston as the fiscal agent will be submitted with the grant application. Once the grant funds are awarded, the contract will be signed and submitted, and expenditure of the funds will commence.

The Kanawha County Sheriff’s Department will utilize their grant funds to purchase crime scene supplies that will be available to Patrol officers, as well as the evidence technicians and Detectives. These supplies will include covert audio and video devices, digital cameras with SD cards, digital voice recorders, portable hard drives and thumb drives and crime scene supplies such as robber gloves, gunshot residue (GSR) kits, drug test kits, batteries and bodily fluid testing kits. These items will allow them to more effectively investigate crimes and provide evidentiary support to assist in the full resolution of criminal cases through the court system. These items will be purchased throughout the entire grant period as needed to keep the supply readily available.

Project Design and Implementation

Kanawha County, West Virginia is the county seat for our state and has a live-in population of approximately 188,332 citizens. Charleston is home to 51,400 people according to the 2010 U.S. Census, but we can experience an estimated workday population of up to 250,000 people as we are the home to the State Capitol Complex, Yeager Airport, federal, county and state worksite offices, as well as multiple private businesses. Kanawha County is very diverse in its population as we have areas of affluence throughout the urban and rural geography interspersed with neighborhoods experiencing high crime rates, homelessness and unemployment.

The City of Charleston Administration has taken an even more aggressive stance on crime and other issues that are affecting the safety and well-being of our citizens. Town Hall meetings across the city are regularly conducted to bring city departments, local churches, citizen groups and other interested parties together to help pinpoint the specific problems that need to be addressed across the City. City and police personnel are also continuing existing relationships with groups such as RESET (clergy+police partnership), Kanawha Valley Collective and Charleston Main Streets Association help bring a focused group of individuals to the table that can address issues and work collaboratively to find solutions.

Crime prevention, addiction and the homeless population were key components discussed at these meetings. Law enforcement agencies track crime statistics and put enhanced resources in the highest crime areas within their jurisdictions. Identifying the biggest issues in our city and being able to focus its resources in those areas will provide a multi-layered approach to reducing crime and increasing the overall sense of safety in our community.

The training and equipment that will be provided with these grant funds will allow the Charleston Police and Kanawha County Sheriff’s Departments to investigate crimes and engage the citizens with a broad-based community policing approach. These grant funds will assist in filling the gap by providing training and equipment to law enforcement to increase communication capabilities, officer safety, investigative techniques and citizen accessibility that will have a multi-layered effect on the overall crime rates in and around the project area.

Capabilities and Competencies

The City of Charleston has received over $4 million in federal and state law enforcement grant funds over the last 14 years for projects ranging from the 2012 drug market intervention initiative, salary reimbursements for our Prevention Resource Officers, VOCA Crime Victims Assistant, VAWA Detectives and members of our Metropolitan Drug Enforcement Network Team. Our police department is actively involved with the Defending Childhood Initiative Handle with Care project, LEAD (Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion), Citizen’s Police Academy, National Police Athletic League, Quick Response Team (QRT) and our Youth Leadership Academy.

The Charleston Police and Kanawha County Sheriff’s Department will continue to broaden their outreach to members of the community by participating in various types of events and engagement opportunities. These collaborative efforts will continue for years-to-come as they have shown the success in getting neighborhoods involved to lower crime rates, getting services to people who need them and simply improve living in the greater Charleston area.

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

The Grant Administrator Point of Contact (POC) will work closely with the Project Director and the Financial POC to ensure the grant funds are being expended appropriately according to the goals and objectives and federal guidelines for the award. The Grant Administrator will track the progress of the grant activities with the Project Director, which will enable the gathering of performance measure data for reporting as required by the Department of Justice. Data will be collected from the tracking of equipment purchases/expenditures, distribution to the officers and its effectiveness.