

## **PROPOSAL NARRATIVE**

### ***Background***

Pinellas County is comprised of 24 municipalities where law enforcement services are provided by PCSO and 10 municipal police departments. The Pinellas County Sheriff's Office (PCSO) is the county's largest law enforcement agency and serves the unincorporated areas of the county as well as 13 cities that have contracted with it for primary law enforcement services. Additionally, PCSO is responsible for the operation of the Pinellas County Jail, the only correctional facility in the county and ranked the 28th largest jail system in the United States.

The County of Pinellas (County) and the City of St. Petersburg, Florida (City) are units of local government that are eligible to apply for a joint allocation of \$200,925.00 from the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program (CFDA #16.738) grant funds. The Director of the Bureau of Justice Assistance has certified the County and City as "disparate jurisdictions." Such designation occurs when a municipality is allocated one-and-one-half times (150 percent) more than the county, while the county bears more than fifty percent of the costs associated with incarceration that arise from Crimes Against Persons reported by the geographically constituent units. In the case of Pinellas, the County bears 100 percent of the costs of incarceration. As a result of the disparate certification the County and the City are required to submit a joint application for the aggregate of JAG funds and to mutually agree upon the applicant/fiscal agent. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed and executed by all parties is required as evidence of such an agreement and is to be submitted along with the application. All parties have agreed that the County will serve as the applicant agent, and that PCSO will be the implementing and reporting agency and the fiscal agent. As evidenced by the executed MOU, the parties have agreed to evenly share the total allocation.

**PINELLAS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE (PCSO)**

***Description of the Issue***

Following the tragic collapse of the 13-story condominium in Surfside, FL in June 2021, a Field Director of Life Safety Code Surveyors at the Joint Commission, who was onsite at the Emergency Department, described the scene as quite chaotic when victims appeared without identification and family members congregated to search for loved ones. Family members expected answers from staff who were also handling unconscious patients. Natural and human-caused disasters are unfortunate realities in the State of Florida. These traumatic events result not only with loss of life and/or property, but they leave survivors with feelings of anxiety, fearfulness, and confusion. During these desperate times family members and friends are also frantically trying to locate loved ones and are sometimes left fearing the unknown.

In June 2022, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis signed into law Florida House Bill 1421, requiring Florida schools to have a family reunification plan in place to reunite students with guardians after a school emergency. The plan needed to include enhanced collaboration protocols with first responders and local governments that utilize student information to help increase reunification accuracy and speed. In Pinellas County, the public school district utilizes Ident-A-Kid, a reunification software used in conjunction with student IDs; however, private schools currently do not have any such software.

Although many Florida cities and towns have taken the necessary steps to improve the family reunification plan for students and guardians after a school emergency, many communities still lack a reunification plan for catastrophic or emergency events that happen outside of a school setting.

***Project Design and Implementation***

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PCSO's Threat Management Division is developing the Pinellas County Reunification Taskforce (Taskforce) to be deployed during any catastrophic or emergency event in Pinellas County, which will include participating private schools. The goal of the Taskforce is to reunite persons efficiently with family and friends. To be efficient, PCSO will need to incorporate a reunification software program.

Raptor Technologies (Raptor), a developer of integrated suite of school safety software, provides an advanced reunification solution for Florida schools in compliance with the 2022 statewide school safety mandates. Its software program is currently being used in 20 Florida school districts and it aligns with the goal of the Taskforce for efficient reunification. The software enables schools to reunite families four times faster than traditional processes, giving the schools the power to manage reunification in one easy-to-use application that works on multiple devices.

The name of PCSO's proposed project is the *Pinellas County Reunification Software Project*. The proposal is to utilize funding toward the purchasing of the Raptor Reunification base software and unlimited licenses for use by the members of the Taskforce. PCSO has asked Raptor to create a unique software program that has never been previously developed – one that is needed for reunification efforts outside of schools. The software program available to law enforcement and school districts is used in conjunction with school rosters and predetermined parent/guardian information. The software enables Taskforce members to collect personally identifiable information from individuals affected by any catastrophic or emergency event occurring outside of a school, when they enter a designated "Reunification Center." This new process would streamline and expedite reunification efforts, replacing the pen-and-paper method currently used.

Additionally, Raptor's software automatically creates summary reports with a detailed history of the entire reunification process for better after-incident debriefs. Raptor's

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implementation experts will work closely with the Taskforce to build a customizable program and to train end-users. The annual cost of the proprietary software covers web-based and phone application access to all personnel assigned to the Taskforce.

### ***Capabilities and Competencies***

PCSO, under the leadership of Sheriff Bob Gualtieri, who serves as the Commission Chair for the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Commission, created a Threat Assessment Section in March 2021 to identify, assess and manage persons of concern and remove them from the pathway of violence. In February 2023, the section within the Criminal Investigations Division was changed and the new Threat Management Division (TMD) was created. The division commander, Captain Jose Camacho, has been with PCSO for 24 years. The two sections within TMD are commanded by Lieutenant Michael Gattarello, Jr. and Lieutenant John Luckett, both having a combined 28 years of law enforcement experience working for PCSO.

One section of the TMD includes a unit that focuses on physical site assessments for schools, businesses, and critical infrastructure throughout the county. This section manages annual active assailant/mass casualty response drills and directs active assailant response drills and training for private schools. The Threat Management Section collaborates with the Pinellas County Schools and the State Attorney's Office, as well as PCSO's Mental Health Unit and Child Protective Services, allowing for regular sharing of information and collaboration on beneficial interventions with the goal of stopping individuals from committing acts of violence.

The agency has a long and prolific history of managing grants including multiple JAG Local grants totaling more than \$527,719 (JAG 2020, JAG 2021, JAG 2022). The Grants Administration staff and Fiscal Affairs Bureau's grant accountants meet regularly to ensure that objectives are being met and that spending is in accordance with grantor regulations.

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### ***Plan for Collecting Data Required for Performance Measures***

PCSO acknowledges the performance measurement data requirements of the JAG program. As such, it will submit quarterly data and progress performance reports related to the agency's JAG funded activities as required through the BJA Performance Measurement Tool. Additionally, the following measurables will be tracked and reported:

#### ***Taskforce Implementation***

Implement a newly developed Pinellas County Reunification Taskforce comprised of 100 law enforcement personnel, both civilian and certified who will be trained on the use of the new reunification software. PCSO will provide the Standard Operation Procedures (SOP) outlining the duties and roles of the newly developed Reunification Taskforce. A roster of Taskforce members will be compiled.

#### ***Training***

Raptor Technologies will assign a trainer who will act in the "train-the-trainer" capacity and teach a few selected members of the Taskforce how to navigate their integrated software. Those members will then train all other members of the Taskforce. Training will include software training, and tabletop and scenario-based exercises. PCSO will report quarterly the number of personnel trained including program outlines, sign-in sheets, and evaluations.

#### ***Tracked Success***

TMD will provide case-by-case information on the success of implementing the Raptor Reunification Software in real-life and/or training scenarios such as the Annual Pinellas County Active Assailant Mass Casualty Exercise.

## **ST. PETERSBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT (SPPD)**

### ***Background***

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The mission of the St. Petersburg Police Department (SPPD) is to deliver professional police services, to protect and ensure the safety of the community, to enforce laws and preserve the peace, and to protect the rights of all citizens. SPPD is dedicated to a Community Policing philosophy, this requires a high level of trust and partnership with the community and allows identification and resolution of quality-of-life issues in the City of St. Petersburg. SPPD maintains accreditation through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA) and the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation, Inc. (CFA).

The City of St. Petersburg, Florida has a population of 261,256 (2022 United States Census/Estimate). SPPD protects the citizens of the fifth largest city in Florida. The City is currently divided into three geographic districts, each commanded by a Major.

### ***Description of the Issue***

SPPD continues several law enforcement initiatives that date back to the early history of the Local Law Enforcement Block Grant (LLEBG). These programs continue to be effective in promoting community partnerships and enhancing the agency's community policing strategies.

Prior to the JAG Program and throughout the history of the earlier LLEBG, the City began utilizing federal funding to implement and then maintain many crime prevention and law enforcement community policing initiatives. Whether through community policing initiatives, a commitment to targeted enforcement and prevention, deploying law enforcement services consistently, or through long term commitment, such as maintaining programs that began through the LLEBG funding, SPPD has seen a decrease in the overall violent crime rate in its City. However, property-related crime, specifically auto-thefts have increased from prior years. Stolen firearms and crimes committed with firearms have also steadily increased.

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Of the 274 firearms stolen in 2022, nearly 70% were taken from vehicles. Through the dedicated work of SPPD Officers, 111 were recovered. The great majority of these crimes are solved, and perpetrators arrested, but it is important to deploy strategies to address gun violence and keep our neighborhoods safe. To date, in calendar year 2023, 149 guns have been stolen, therefore, the City is on track to yield similar numbers for stolen firearms. Additionally, there is a need for overtime funds to be used for recruitment, community engagement activities, and specialized investigations (such as cold case).

### ***Project Design and Implementation***

To provide an opportunity to contribute to a decrease in violent crime, SPPD will remain proactive in its public safety mission and will continue to utilize JAG funds to support these crime reducing initiatives that address specific crime-related issues throughout the City. SPPD public safety strategy and community policing efforts consume significant resources. To reduce crime and to effectively resolve issues that affect the quality of life in City neighborhoods, JAG-funded dollars will be used to support targeted enforcement activities, crime prevention programs, and community partnerships. Law enforcement will continue to find innovative ways to stop the flow of crime in communities. If this problem is not continually addressed through investigations, arrests, and prosecution, the number of major crimes and narcotic use may rise.

#### ***Part 1: Targeted Enforcement Activities, Recruitment and Other Needs***

The Neighborhood Safety Initiative: This initiative is part of SPPD's community policing strategy utilizing department resources to reduce crime and resolve issues that affect the quality of life in City neighborhoods. JAG funds will be used to enable overtime to continue and enhance these efforts. The overtime dollars will be used to supplement enforcement and prevention initiatives citywide.

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With the additional overtime dollars, SPPD can task officers to concentrate on specific issues at designated points throughout the city. These efforts are buoyed by the use of the FLOCK camera systems strategically placed around the City. SPPD shares information with counterparts in adjacent jurisdictions to identify commonalities of offenses and offenders.

Investing additional officer resources will strengthen SPPD's multi-tiered problem-solving strategies which address persistent crime patterns. Police commanders will make discretionary assessments to authorize the additional overtime initiatives that will effectively authorize officers to devote more work hours to crime related issues. As part of SPPD's community policing effort, officers will continue to engage and encourage residents to report all crime instances that occur in their neighborhoods.

Enhanced Recruiting Efforts: SPPD is actively working to increase the number of sworn police officers and fill vacancies due to higher-than-normal attrition. An innovative and virtual approach is utilized to ensure maximized staffing levels for sworn strength. The Department sends the Lieutenant who oversees recruiting and several supplemental recruiters to attend more recruiting events both locally and across the State of Florida. In June of 2023, Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody visited SPPD headquarters to announce that Pinellas County is the area with the newest law enforcement officers coming from out of state. SPPD is the top police department in the state for recruiting out of state candidates: <https://www.myfloridalegal.com/newsrelease/attorney-general-moody-continues-sunshine-salute-series-honoring-new-leos-out-state>).

Other Needs: Cold Case Homicide Investigations present new challenges as they relate to traditional homicide investigations. These funds will also be used for overtime for investigations of those complicated cases, case preparation, and presentation to the State Attorney's Office.



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Cold Case investigations require flexibility to conduct surveillance, search warrants, jail interviews, and travel.

The Police Athletic League liaison officers assist the organization with programs and engage children in at-risk neighborhoods in relationship building, educational assistance, and gang prevention initiatives.

Rental vehicles for special investigations: SPPD utilize a variety of unmarked vehicles for special investigations. This resource enhances the effectiveness of special investigations by creating the ability for police vehicles to remain anonymous to the criminal element being investigated. SPPD only uses JAG grant funds for rental vehicles that are in line with the JAG definition of a “patrol cruiser” which is defined as “a vehicle used in the ordinary course by police forces in the United States for law enforcement activities such as patrolling, temporarily detaining and transporting individual prisoners. Examples include sedans and sport utility vehicles (SUVs).” SPPD will use these vehicles for surveillance purposes only and will ensure that rental vehicles will not be one of the “unallowable” JAG vehicles.

### *Part 2: Crime Prevention Programs and Community Engagement Activities:*

Volunteer programs: SPPD has always maintained a very strong volunteer workforce. Our volunteers are typically assigned to work responsibilities including the Volunteer Road Patrol, Disabled Parking Enforcement Patrol, Citizen based patrols, and a Volunteer Police Academy. The annual volunteer awards luncheon is the highlight for recognizing the time and talents of our Administrative Volunteers. SPPD also recognizes volunteers’ birthdays with a card from our agency. In 2022, volunteer hours increased from the prior year, resulting in 3,980 hours of service which has an estimated in-kind value of \$119,201 (based on the national average of \$29.95 dollars per volunteer hour).

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Community Resource Centers: SPPD supports the establishment and operation of three community resource centers in the interests of promoting and maintaining closer contact with citizens. These centers increase law enforcement's visibility and access at the neighborhood level. SPPD supports three affiliate Resource Centers that are in targeted areas of the city (Bartlett Park, Disston and Midtown). These centers have served as hubs for information exchange between SPPD and the citizens, as well as provide field access to police systems for officers working in the center's location.

Copier/Printer Support: Funds are used to support crime prevention and education programs with a specialized copier used to produce materials for dissemination to the community and training materials for department-initiated community-based training programs. The copier/printer is utilized to print posters used as visual displays for crime prevention presentations, police press conferences, and community events. The support would be used for the purchase of specialized paper, ink, and foam board required for this printer.

### ***Plan for Collecting Data Required for Performance Measures***

SPPD will submit quarterly data and reports related to the agency's JAG-funded activities as required and will track monthly data and report project performance to the extent of the funder's guidelines for quarterly reports or more frequently if needed. Additional data collection will be completed by our Analytics Unit, comprised of intelligence analysts tasked with translating data into timely actionable insights in support of ongoing strategic, tactical, operational and planning initiatives.