

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Background

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 \$182,043 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 of the City’s Part 1 violent crimes. In the case of Pinellas, the County bears 100 percent of the costs of incarceration.

As a result of the disparate certification, in order to be awarded JAG funds, 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 the Pinellas County Sheriff’s Office (PCSO) will be the implementing and reporting agency and the fiscal agent. As evidenced by the executed MOU included with this application, the parties have agreed to evenly share the total allocation.

Pinellas County, located on Florida’s West Coast, bordered by the Gulf of Mexico and Tampa Bay, has a total land area of approximately 282 square miles, making it the second smallest county in the state. With a population estimate of 964,490, Pinellas is the most densely populated county in Florida having an estimated 3,420 persons per square mile (July 2021, U.S. Census Bureau). As a popular tourist destination, Pinellas County plays host to more than 15 million

visitors annually.

Pinellas County is comprised of 24 municipalities where law enforcement services are provided by the PCSO and 10 municipal police departments. The 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 the PCSO for primary law enforcement services. The PCSO has the additional responsibility of operating the Pinellas County Jail, the only correctional facility in the county and ranked the 28th largest jail system in the United States.

PINELLAS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE (PCSO)

Description of the Issue

Many law enforcement agencies in the United States are struggling with critical staffing shortages in 2022. Not only is there a need to fill several law enforcement positions but there is a need to fill emergency call-takers and Public Safety Telecommunicators (PST), which are dispatchers. The call-taker/PST staffing shortage is evident in the Tampa Bay area. The Pinellas County Safety and Emergency Services – Communications Center (Regional 911), operates as the single primary public safety answering point for all 911 calls originating in the county. Regional 911 is authorized to employ 128 call-takers and PSTs but currently, there are 38 vacancies that they are having difficulty filling.

Regional 911 averages roughly 45,000 emergency 911 calls per month and an estimated 16,000 of those calls are for law enforcement (PCSO and other agencies) services. Additionally, Regional 911 is required to answer 90% of 911 calls within 10 seconds or less; however, mainly due to staffing issues, they are not meeting this benchmark. According to Regional 911, the current average time it takes from receipt of a 911 call until a law enforcement officer is dispatched is 2

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minutes and 24 seconds (2:24). This does not take into consideration the time it takes the first deputy/officer to arrive on scene. Currently, Regional 911 answers all emergency calls and if a call involves the PCSO, they enter the information into their Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system and it is routed to PCSO via a CAD2CAD software interface. The information is received by the PCSO's PST who dispatches either a deputy from PCSO or an officer from one of the five agencies with whom PCSO shares a CAD system and provides dispatch service.

While 911 call-takers are proficient in their ability to obtain information from callers, and to summarize and input that information into the CAD system, the potential for human error exists. Errors can be made by the call-taker while inputting information or key information might be omitted. Errors can also be made by the caller based on their level of emotion and ability to cooperate. With Regional 911 being shorthanded and staff working extensive hours, fatigue could also be a factor leading to human error.

Pinellas County is pursuing additional tools to provide deputies/officers that could assist in mitigating human errors while improving response times for emergency calls, especially while dealing with staffing shortages.

Project Design and Implementation

The vision of the PCSO is to achieve new levels of national recognition as a leader in public safety through successful partnerships, innovative technology, and community respect. The PCSO partnered with HigherGround, Inc. to launch an innovative technology with the Live911 software. To ensure successful coordination, the agency engaged stakeholders during the planning process, including Regional 911, Business-Technology Services (BTS) for Pinellas County, Carousel Industries (Vesta phone services provider for Regional 911), the PCSO's Information Technology

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Bureau, and the Polk County Sheriff's Office (who has been using Live911 since March 2021).

The Live911 software program provides the ability for first responders in the field as well as support personnel such as shift commanders, incident commanders and communication centers, to monitor the location and audio of incoming emergency 911 calls. The intent is to provide first responders with the most immediate and complete information about an ongoing emergency incident. Higherground partnered with RapidSOS, developers of a data platform that integrates with emergency response centers, to determine the GPS location and map view of incoming calls. This integration allows Live911 to provide first responders with the precise location and any profile information associated with the caller and gives dispatchers an overview of their law enforcement officers' locations in relation to the 911 call.

The name of the PCSO's proposed project is the *Pinellas County Live911 Project*. The proposal is to utilize funding toward the purchasing of the Live911 base software and 160 concurrent licenses to be used as an additional, optional tool for law enforcement officers. The licenses will be shared with nine partnering agencies: Clearwater PD, Largo PD, Pinellas Park PD, Tarpon Springs PD, Belleair PD, Treasure Island PD, Gulfport PD, Kenneth City PD, and Indian Shores PD. The implementation of the Live911 software program is considered by the PCSO to be part of their overall "PRIME" initiative. PRIME, or the Pinellas Regional Information Management Enterprise, is a new organization that will keep deputies/officers and citizens safer by facilitating easy and efficient information sharing. PRIME will manage a new countywide CAD and Records Management System (RMS) used by Pinellas County law enforcement, Regional 911, Fire and EMS and will also facilitate record sharing. Every agency will be able to access the same database of police reports throughout the county.

When an emergency 911 call comes in, Live911 allows the call to be heard by

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deputies/officers in the field who can see the location of the caller on the laptop screen map and can move in the direction of the incident, giving them a head start and allowing them to develop a response plan while driving to the location. Additionally, while listening to the interaction between the caller and the call-taker, deputies/officers hear answers to questions, firsthand descriptions, emotional tones and background noise at the scene that could aid in the assessment of the situation.

There are some tangible benefits the Live911 program offers law enforcement personnel.

Decreased Response Time

Other than being able to access call audio in real-time, deputies/officers will immediately receive situational updates, see location changes of the caller, and replay live audio, if needed, which could lead to a decrease in response time.

The PCSO monitors and records all levels of calls made to Regional 911, and prioritizes the level of calls for service under four categories:

1. Armed Emergency: calls with a weapon involved (e.g., armed robbery, shooting – in progress, and armed robbery – in progress)
2. High: used for immediate dispatch (e.g., assault/battery – in progress, burglary – in progress, robbery – in progress)
3. Medium: used for non-emergency or non-life-threatening situations, in which time is important but not critical (e.g., alarm, disorderly conduct, suspicious person)
4. Low: used for miscellaneous requests for service in which time is not important (e.g., animal call, noise, trespass).

Based on the PCSO's "Call Hold and Response Time Analysis 1st Quarter 2022" report, results show that there were 20,046 priority calls for service. Considering only the Armed Emergency and High priority calls, the average call hold times (time elapsed from the time the call

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is answered until the time the call is assigned to a deputy/officer) for an Armed Emergency priority call, was 2 minutes and 10 seconds (2:10), and the average response time (time elapsed from the time the call was first assigned to the deputy/officer until the time the first deputy/officer arrived on scene) was 4 minutes and 10 seconds (4:10). A combined time of 6 minutes and 20 seconds (6:20). The call hold time for a High priority call was 2 minutes and 22 seconds (2:22) and the average response time, was 5 minutes and 7 seconds (5:07), for a combined time of 7 minutes and 27 seconds (7:27). As mentioned earlier, Regional 911 states that the current average time it takes from receipt of a 911 call until a law enforcement officer is dispatched is 2 minutes and 24 seconds (2:24). Based on this data, the response time is double that of the call hold time; however, the PCSO believes response times will decrease with Live911 as deputies/officers will have access to a call prior to being dispatched by a PST.

Situational Awareness

Live911 can also increase situational awareness. Sometimes a caller may give details that are not included in the CAD notes (e.g., location, specific information, names, etc.). Deputies/Officers could improve de-escalation techniques by having additional key information and can listen to the tone and inflection of the caller's voice to assess the proper response needed. Also, RapidSOS GPS location details can be seen on the map for the wireless caller's location throughout the call. The phone number, address, call start time and duration of the call are also displayed on the screen. As caller location updates, the program will update on the map with red dots and lines to indicate history and movement. Lastly, location awareness will be improved through the use of geofencing capabilities. The deputy/officer can preset a geofence boundary, to hear livestreaming calls within their designated area and filter calls outside of the area, with the only exception being landline calls or calls that cannot be geolocated such as Voice over Internet

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Protocol (VoIP).

In addition to the potential reduced response time and increased situational awareness for law enforcement officers, there are added benefits Live911 offers for other entities involved with 911 emergency calls. Shift Commanders will have instant awareness of hot spots and will be able to direct resources appropriately. Communication centers will be able to augment their communication with field units and enhance the quality of response. Citizens will benefit from deputies/officers arriving on scene faster and being better equipped with information to handle the emergency situation.

Capabilities and Competencies

The PCSO has developed a robust collaboration with other Pinellas County law enforcement agencies regarding law enforcement efforts and public safety. As the county's largest law enforcement agency, the PCSO serves the unincorporated areas of the county as well as 13 cities that have contracted with the PCSO for primary law enforcement services. The 13 cities include Belleair Beach, Belleair Bluffs, Belleair Shore, Dunedin, Indian Rocks Beach, Madeira Beach, North Redington Beach, Oldsmar, Redington Beach, Safety Harbor, Seminole, South Pasadena and St. Pete Beach.

In addition to the PCSO's capabilities as a law enforcement agency, the agency has a long and prolific history of managing grants from federal agencies such as the U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the U.S. Department of Justice. In fact, the PCSO currently manages multiple JAG Local grants totaling more than \$345,000 (JAG 2020 and JAG 2021). Secondly, the Grants Administration staff and Fiscal Affairs Bureau's grants staff meet regularly to ensure that objectives are being met and that

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spending is in accordance with grantor regulations. Lastly, the agency's audits, including grant-specific programmatic and financial audits, are consistently exemplary.

The Live911 Software will be maintained by the PCSO's Information Technology Bureau, IT Infrastructure & Operations Manager James Ladig. James received a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science from the University of South Florida's College of Engineering. He is the Information Technology Manager and has 20 years of experience working with network and systems development and implementation. Additionally, James holds certificates in A+, Network+, Security+ and ITIL Foundations. The PCSO Communications Division will provide oversight for the Live911 program under the leadership of Captain Brian Browne. Captain Browne has been with the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office since October 2015 and brings over 28 years of law enforcement experience. He is a former Deputy Chief of Police and has over 23 years of senior management and executive level command/leadership experience. Captain Browne holds a Bachelor of Arts degrees from USF and a graduate certificate in Executive Leadership from UVA. He is a graduate of the 238th Session of the FBI National Academy, the Florida Police Chiefs' Future Law Enforcement Executives Seminar, and the FDLE's Advanced Leadership Course. He has worked in all areas of law enforcement including administration, investigations, and operations. Captain Browne serves as commander of the Communications and Records Divisions within the Support Services Bureau.

Goals

The goal of the Pinellas County Live911 Project is to equip law enforcement officers with an additional tool to receive emergency calls firsthand and in real-time. This will allow officers to assess the urgency of a 911 call by providing a quicker response time, arriving on scene faster with more accurate information and ultimately saving lives.

Objectives

Officer Usage

PCSO's Information Technology Bureau (ITB) and the Communications Division will collaborate on the implementation of 160 software licenses to be used concurrently by 560 PCSO patrol deputies on their vehicles laptops as well as officers from nine other law enforcement agencies. ITB will track the number of patrol users who were logged into the Live911 system during their shift.

Faster Response Time

By providing an additional tool for deputies to arrive on a scene faster, the PCSO Communications Division will be able to obtain data through CAD, showing reduced response times in four categories:

1. Armed Emergency Calls
2. High Calls
3. Medium Calls
4. Low Calls

Success Stories

The Live911 program will allow an officer to arrive on scene, armed with important information to quickly and successfully respond to the situation. Officers will be encouraged to share success stories while using the Live911 software. These stories will be disseminated within the agency and to the community through various media outlets.

Deliverables

The 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

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agency's JAG-funded activities as required by BJA through the BJA Performance Measurement Tool (PMT).

Additionally, the following measurable will be tracked and reported quarterly:

Number of Patrol Users of Live911:

The PCSO will require the ITB to submit quarterly reports, containing a record of how many users were logged in to the Live911 system during their shift. The PCSO will be able to ascertain the number of officers utilizing the system and determine if additional licenses will need to be purchased based on usage.

Response Time:

Quarterly reporting on response times will be provided by the PCSO Strategic Planning Division reflecting the time it takes from the time the call is first received until the first deputy/officer arrives on scene. This will be reported by calls identified as Armed Emergency, High, Medium, and Low priorities.

Tracked Success:

The PCSO Communications Division will provide case-by-case information on the events individually reported as a success by Live911 users.

ST. PETERSBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT

Background

The City of St. Petersburg, the fifth most populous city in Florida, has a population of 258,201 (U.S. Census, Quick Facts – July 2021) and is protected by the St. Petersburg Police Department (SPPD). The City is currently divided into three geographic districts, each commanded by a Major. St. Petersburg is a vibrant city of sunshine with a thriving arts

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community and a scenic downtown waterfront. This project will serve all members of the community regardless of age, gender, nationality, sexuality, income level or geographic area within the City.

The mission of the 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. The 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.

The SPPD has three tenets: Loyalty, Integrity, and Honor. The SPPD upholds these values in interactions with all citizens. The agency maintains accreditation through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA) and the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation, Inc. (CFA) and has long been a leader in innovative approaches to law enforcement and is committed to remaining a Department that is able to adapt to an ever-changing society.

Description of the Issue

The 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

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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. Long term, however, there has been a rise in homicide rates nationally that coincided with the COVID pandemic, according to the National Commission on COVID-19 and Criminal Justice.

In 2021, the City of St. Petersburg experienced record high gun-related murders, a 120% increase, as reported in the Uniform Crime Report (FDLE Uniform Crime Reports). It was the highest in a decade. Furthermore, from 2020 to 2021, the total number of homicides with a firearm increased by 200%. There is an interconnection with gangs, drugs, stolen guns and homicide. Of the 285 firearms stolen in the City in 2021, over half were taken from vehicles. The number of firearms reported stolen from 2020 to 2021 represented a 43% increase. Although the majority of these crimes have been solved and perpetrators arrested, it is important to consider ongoing strategies to address gun violence and keep our neighborhoods safe.

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. The 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.

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Law enforcement will continue to find innovative ways to stop the flow of drugs and 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.

Goals

To ensure the downward trend in violent crime continues, the SPPD must remain proactive in its public safety mission and will continue to utilize JAG funds to support crime-reducing initiatives that address specific crime-related issues throughout the City. Their public safety strategy and community policing efforts consume significant resources. The SPPD will continue reducing crime and effectively resolve issues that affect the quality of life in city neighborhoods and support targeted enforcement activities, crime prevention programs, and community partnerships, as well as to focus additional resources on crime prevention and law enforcement initiatives.

Objectives

Part 1: Targeted Enforcement Initiatives

The Neighborhood Safety Initiative: This initiative is part of the 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 initiatives citywide. With the additional overtime dollars, the SPPD can task officers to concentrate on specific issues at designated points throughout the city. Investing additional officer resources will strengthen the SPPD's multitiered problem-solving strategies which address persistent issues like drugs, prostitution, burglaries and other related crime. Police commanders will make discretionary assessments to authorize the additional overtime

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initiatives that will effectively authorize officers to devote more work hours to crime-related issues. As part of the 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: The SPPD is actively working to increase the number of sworn police officers, in addition to filling a number of vacancies, due to higher than normal attrition. As a result of COVID-19, many in-person recruitment activities were curtailed last year and much more work needs to be done. Therefore, an innovative and virtual approach is utilized to ensure maximized staffing levels for sworn strength. The SPPD remains committed to the department's community policing initiatives such as Park, Walk & Talk and Coffee with a Cop. The agency will have the lieutenant, who oversees recruiting and supplemental recruiters, attend more recruiting events, both locally and across the State of Florida.

Rental Vehicles for Special Investigations: The SPPD utilizes 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. The 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)." The SPPD will use these vehicles for surveillance purposes only and will ensure that rental vehicles will not be one of the "unallowable" JAG vehicles, i.e., pick-up trucks, passenger vans, command centers, unmanned aircraft systems, or aerial vehicles.

Part 2: Crime Prevention Programs and Community Engagement Activities

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Volunteer programs: The 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. Funding will be used to pay for supplies for citizens who will be participating in the Volunteer Programs and the Crime Prevention Citizen's Police Academy, to include uniforms, training materials, certificates and t-shirts.

Community Resource Centers: The SPPD supports three affiliate Resource Centers that are in targeted areas of the city (Bartlett Park, Disston Heights and Midtown). These centers have served as hubs for information exchange between the SPPD and the citizens, as well as provide field access to police systems for officers working in the area of the center's location. During COVID-19 these centers were not fully operational but will return to being staffed with volunteers and utilized as a gathering place where community-based groups and law enforcement can come together for information sharing and strategic planning. Funding will be used for various office supplies, internet access for the public, and to cover the costs of the electricity for all three locations.

Copier/Printer Support: To support Crime Prevention education programs with a specialized copier to be used to produce educational materials for dissemination to the community and training materials for department-initiated community-based training programs.