

Program Narrative: Category V: Enhancing Forensic and Crime Scene Investigations
Statement of the Problem:

The Arlington Texas Police Department is requesting funds through the Edward Byrne Competitive Grant, Category V to enhance our Crime Scene Investigation and Crime Lab Units (Crime Scene Unit) in order to meet current and future demand for services. Additional staff and equipment will improve our responsiveness to victims, suspects and to our partners in criminal justice and will support highway interdiction efforts related to the U.S. Southern border.

While the Arlington Police Department (APD) remains committed to Community Policing, declining revenues have forced the city to make difficult choices shifting resources from forensic support services such as crime scene investigation and forensics, to maintaining a positive police presence in high crime areas. As a result, APD is experiencing a significant backlog and time lag in processing scenes and evidence, particularly latent fingerprints cards and marijuana testing. In 2006, the Crime Scene Unit was directed to respond to violent crime and high profile cases only, leaving patrol officers to process crime scenes for all other crimes. In 2007, a total of 311 cases were backlogged. In 2008, the number of backlogged cases grew to 670. We are currently entering fingerprints into AFIS from February 2008, over a year lag time.

In Texas, a defendant charged with a felony drug offense must be indicted within 90 days from the commencement of his/her detention or the defendant must be released from custody (Art.17.151 Code of Criminal Procedure). In 2006, APD's capacity for marijuana testing was exceeded and 1,343 samples of marijuana were outsourced in order to meet the 90-day requirement. In 2007, 650 samples were outsourced and in 2008, 962 samples were outsourced.

Budget cuts, backlogs, and a consistently high volume of calls for service (on-scene) have also increased turn-around time, which has negatively impacted police investigations. Crime Scene Investigators were called out to 631 scenes in 2008 and 637 scenes in 2007. There

are currently 222 cases with incomplete crime scene reports. Latent print comparison requests from detectives require a six-month turn-around time.

In order to present scientific results on evidence in a Texas criminal court, the evidence must be processed in an accredited forensic laboratory (Section 411.0205, Government Code). Evidence tested by an un-accredited crime laboratory is generally inadmissible in court (Art. 38.35, Code of Criminal Procedure). APD's Crime Lab was accredited in February 2006 by the American Society of Crime Lab Directors (ASCLD). Staff time to achieve and maintain accreditation, verify forensic results, and maintain chain of custody of evidence has negatively affected the backlog and timeliness for Crime Scene and Crime Lab Services.

Arlington, Texas is a growing city of 369,000 residents located in the large urban center of the Dallas and Fort Worth Metroplex. Three Interstate Highways and one State Highway crisscross the city, including a major commercial vehicle corridor from the Mexican border. According to the North Texas HIDTA (High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area), the Dallas and Fort Worth Metroplex is a national-level transportation and drug distribution center.

The April 2, 2009 murder of 13-year-old Elizabeth Villa of Arlington highlights the importance of timely forensic support services to the overall functioning of the criminal justice system. Prints lifted from the victim's bedroom window were successfully matched to a Class "C" misdemeanor offense on file and the suspect was located and arrested. The killer may never have been identified had his prints been waiting in a backlog pile to be entered into AFIS.

Program Design and Implementation:

The mission of the APD Crime Scene Unit is to support criminal investigations with the timely and professional collection, documentation, preservation, analysis, interpretation, and reporting of forensic evidence. Proposed funding will enhance the

capabilities of the Crime Scene Unit to support APD's expanded highway interdiction efforts related to the U.S. Southern border and reduce the significant backlog of forensic evidence and crime scene reports. The Department's proposal includes hiring one new Crime Lab Evidence Coordinator, three new Crime Scene Investigators, purchasing an automated fingerprint identification system (AFIS) and hiring a new Fingerprint Technician (AFIS operator).

Current Structure: The Crime Scene Unit is a 24/7 operation staffed with 10 Crime Scene Investigators (CSI's) and one full-time Fingerprint Technician organized under a full-time, sworn police sergeant. Under the current structure CSI's on all three shifts are required to both respond to active crime scenes and to perform lab functions, contributing to the backlog. All CSI's are subject to call back when the Crime Scene Unit must respond to multiple crime scenes. The full-time sergeant assigned to the Crime Scene Unit has responsibility for all administrative functions. CSU personnel certified as Latent Print Examiners are members of the International Association for Identification and the Texas State Division of the International Association for Identification. Both of these professional associations provide forensic training to keep their members current on new technology and case law in the forensic field. CSU personnel maintain a variety of certifications that enhance the flexibility of the Unit.

Implementation: With the addition of grant funded personnel, CSU duties will be differentiated, assigning CSI's to process crime scenes while others are assigned to the lab to process evidence and enter fingerprints. CSI's qualified as Latent Print Examiners will be assigned to work with full-time Fingerprint Technicians to verify prints and clear the backlog. Separating crime lab and crime scene functions will increase accountability and ultimately the responsiveness of the Crime Scene Unit. APD officers newly trained as commercial motor vehicle inspectors and

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working in cooperation with the El Paso Intelligence Center to enhance highway drug interdiction will place an additional burden on the Crime Scene Unit to process vehicles, identify prints, and test marijuana samples. One certified Marijuana Analyst will be assigned per shift.

The following table outlines the current and proposed CSU services and certifications.

Crime Scene Unit Support Services and Number of Professional Certifications		
Lab Service	Current Certifications or Disciplines	Proposed Certifications with Grant
Evidence collection, vehicle processing, crime scene diagrams, video/photo documentation, courtroom testimony as an expert witness to further the prosecution of offenders, other evidentiary duties	10 certified Crime Scene Investigators	13 certified Crime Scene Investigators
Marijuana sample testing	2 certified Marijuana Analysts	3 certified Marijuana Analysts
Development of latent prints and entry in AFIS	1 full-time Fingerprint Technician	2 full-time Fingerprint Technicians
Comparisons to rolled latent prints and “tenprints” to known persons previously arrested through the AFIS; fingerprint verifications and eliminations	3 certified Latent Print Examiners	5 certified Latent Print Examiners
Comparison of projectiles and cartridge casings found at a scene to submitted firearms	None certified	1 certified Firearms/Casings Mark Analyst
Surveillance video enhancement –sound and images	1 certified Forensic Video Analyst	1 certified Forensic Video Analyst

The proposed Crime Lab Evidence Coordinator will report to the Lieutenant over the Criminal Support Division and will supervise all Lab operations and on-scene protocols, and function as a quality assurance manager. She/he will complete a needs assessment within the first 12 months of the grant award to identify service gaps in local crime labs services and leading to collaborative partnerships with smaller, local jurisdictions, especially those enclosed within Arlington City limits. The Lab Evidence Coordinator will be responsible for maintaining ASCLD and Texas DPS lab certification and will work with the police sergeant supervisor of the

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Crime Scene Unit to evaluate program outcomes and impact and to develop plans for continuous improvement.

Specific goals, objectives and performance measures related to the proposed program are included in the following table.

<u>Goals</u>	<u>Objectives</u>	<u>Performance Measures (Category)</u>	<u>Collection Method</u>
Preserving Jobs	Maintain and fund One Lab Evidence Coordinator, three Crime Scene Investigators, and one Fingerprint Technician after grant expiration	Retain five civilian positions (Recovery Act)	Document approval to maintain the unit through City Council agenda and vote
Creating Jobs	Hire one Lab Evidence Coordinator, three Crime Scene Investigators, and one Fingerprint Technician with Recovery Act funding	Five new positions (Recovery Act; CDFA #16.808) hired within 60 days	Document hiring dates
Promote Economic Recovery	Purchase local and/or American products and utilize local service providers (when practical)	1. Amount of grant funding utilized to purchase American products or those from local distributors 2. Number of local training programs attended; dollars spent	1. Purchase orders related to the proposed equipment 2. Documentation of local training programs attended by grant funded personnel
Promote Economic Recovery	Increase in volume of crime scene and forensic services	1. Number of on-scene investigations 2. Number of CSI staff hours	1. Records Management System 2. Kronos Payroll System
Promote Economic Recovery	Establish partnerships for services with smaller police departments in jurisdictions enclosed by the Arlington City Limits, enabling information sharing and database enrichment	1. Complete Needs Assessment of local crime labs to identify service gaps. 1. Number of crime scene cases accepted from Pantego, Dalworthington Gardens, and Univ TX Arlington 2. Number of MOU's with outside jurisdictions	1. Needs Assessment Report 2. Records Management System 3. MOU's on file
Reduce Violent Crime	Improve Crime Lab response time	1. Percent of latent print requests completed in 72 hours 2. Percent of cartridges entered into IBIS in 5	Records Management System

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		working days 3. Percent of marijuana samples tested in 10 working days	
Reduce Violent Crime	Reduce case backlog	1. Reduction in number of marijuana samples outsourced for testing. 2. Reduction in backlog of fingerprint entry 3. Reduction in backlog of case reports	1. Comparison of cases outsourced to previous years through Records Management System 2. Comparison of number of fingerprint entries and cases backlogged (RMS) before and after initiation of the grant.
Reduce Violent Crime	Increase case closure rate	Improvement in case closure rate by 20%	Comparison of case closure rates before and after initiation of grant

Capabilities/Competencies:

APD will fill the five newly created civilian positions within 60 days of the award receipt and cut purchase orders within 15 days for proposed equipment. Civilian personnel hired as Crime Scene Investigators will have Bachelor’s Degrees in Criminal Justice or a related field and one year crime scene experience. They will be highly motivated to improve the Lab’s services and have demonstrated the ability to perform self-initiated activity related to lab operations. The Crime Lab Evidence Coordinator will have a Bachelor’s Degree and at least three years of crime scene experience. The Lab Coordinator will be performance driven and able to establish effective lab protocols to address the significant backlog of cases and reports within the quality standards required to maintain ASCLAD and Texas DPS accreditation. The Crime Lab Evidence Coordinator will be knowledgeable regarding state law and the submission of forensic evidence and able to translate the rules of evidence into Lab operations and on-scene protocols. Once selected, the CSI’s will complete a 500 hour field training cycle. All current and proposed

CSU staff are expected to maintain professional certifications through continuing education in advanced schools and workshops. See attached job descriptions.

The Arlington Police Department will ensure that financial and programmatic fidelity is continuously maintained following OJP Financial Guidelines. As the recipient of numerous grant awards, including Project Safe Neighborhood and the U.S. Department of Justice's Edward Byrne Memorial Competitive Grant Program, the department is well versed in grants management and has extensive experience in managing funds related to hiring personnel and appropriating equipment. The Police Fiscal Services Unit is staffed by a manager and two staff accountants who have managed LLEBG/JAG grants dating back to 1999. The City Auditor's Office, with oversight responsibility for all City departments, uses Government Auditing Standards to assure high quality internal audits. To maintain the integrity of grant funds, separate account funds are created for each new grant awarded to the Department. Payroll codes are identified for each account fund in the City's automated payroll system. Equipment purchases are entered into Property Control inventory systems. Monthly and quarterly Activity Reports that track expenditures are generated for each account fund and are provided to program managers.

Impact/Outcomes, Evaluation, Sustainment, and Plan for the Collection of Data

The primary impact of adding four Crime Scene Investigators and a lab evidence coordinator/quality manager will be alleviation of backlogs in processing evidence and entering fingerprints, resulting in more timely resolution of criminal cases. Accurate, timely intelligence is critical to solving cases, and ultimately to protecting the public. When cases are solved quickly and suspects apprehended and charged, victims of crimes feel that justice is being done on their behalf. In the instance of habitual offenders, future criminal victimizations are avoided.

City management and elected officials have reviewed the pending application proposal and consent to maintaining the program beyond the life of the grant. The City of Arlington certifies that we are willing and have the capacity to participate in an evaluation to be managed by the National Institute of Justice. We are able to meet the quarterly financial and programmatic reporting as stipulated in the grant announcement. Arlington Police supervisors have participated as fellows for the Police Foundation and other national police research organizations, indicating the department's propensity for managing performance measures and attention to research methodology.

The program's effectiveness will be demonstrated through the increased number of on-scene investigations, reduction and ultimately the elimination of the backlog in processing evidence and entering fingerprints, improved turn-around time for investigator requests, and in the number of new partnerships with smaller police departments in jurisdictions enclosed by Arlington City limits. Specific data related to performance measures such as the number of on-scene investigations, staff hours, cases from outside agencies, percent of latent prints/ cartridges/ and marijuana samples tested will be obtained from APD's Records Management System. Evaluation of the program's success will be conducted by the Crime Lab Evidence Coordinator, who will be responsible for reporting this data to supervisors and analyzing outcomes, making recommendations for improvements, and assurance of compliance with grant objectives. As a result of grant funding, The Crime Scene Unit expects to reduce forensic backlog by 50 percent and increase case closure rates by 20 percent in the first 12 months of the grant period. Creating jobs specifically to improve the responsiveness of Crime Scene Investigators, the timeliness of lab results, and the tracking of forensic evidence will benefit all criminal justice partners in Arlington and Tarrant County.