

## **Stafford County Sheriff's Office JAG Grant Proposal FY2023-Project Narrative**

### **Applicant Jurisdictional Background:**

The Stafford County Sheriff's Office is a full-service local law enforcement agency providing service to approximately 165,000 residents and thousands of annual visitors to Stafford County, Virginia. The Department provides service through 343 dedicated employees, 254 being sworn deputy sheriffs. The Department conducts multiple activities to prevent crimes, engages in community policing efforts and activities, and strives for close, positive relationships with community members and organizations. The Department answers over 150,000 calls for service from the community annually.

### **Program Overview:**

The Stafford County Sheriff's Office employs a Special Weapons and Tactics Team (SWAT). This team is a part-time team, comprised of full-time deputy sheriff's, and activated when needed. The Stafford County Sheriff's Office SWAT Team is mission capable for barricaded subjects, high risk search and arrest warrants, and hostage rescue incidents. The Stafford County Sheriff's Office SWAT Team conducts monthly training on a myriad of topics including officer rescue, room clearing, and advanced firearms training.

The Stafford County Sheriff's Office SWAT Team utilizes a variety of tools that assist with overall safety to citizens and the team when conducting missions. One of the tools requested through this grant is a mini swat robot. The mini swat robot is a controller operated throwable micro-robot platform that would enable Stafford SWAT Operators to obtain instantaneous video and audio reconnaissance within indoor or outdoor environments. The mini swat robot is designed to withstand repeated drops of up to 30 feet onto concrete and can be thrown into hazardous situations in order to allow operators to quickly make informed decisions without putting lives at risk. This mini robot is designed to be able to crawl over a variety of terrain, clearing obstacles up to 2" tall.

The cost of the Mini Swat Robot is \$21,795.00.

The Stafford County Sheriff's Office has identified key areas of specific focus through its Strategic Planning Process. The Strategic Planning Process involves approximately 65 employees with input from the remaining employees. During that process, employees discuss and identify key areas within the agency that need to be refined and improved. Over the past few years, the strategic planning group alongside the Sheriff has identified traffic safety as the number one priority of this agency. Our crash numbers along with fatalities have increased to numbers never seen in this county. We have identified speed as a leading contributing factor to our increasing crash and fatality rate.

Stafford County is the third largest growing county in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Several main arteries run through Stafford County such as Route 1, Route 17, and I-95. The Stafford County Sheriff's Office has a Traffic Safety Unit that is charged with the control of traffic movement, enforcement of traffic laws and the reduction of traffic collisions through directed enforcement.

The Traffic Safety Unit provides specific support and problem-solving tactics, provides educational and awareness programs, provides corridor enforcement programs, commercial motor vehicle enforcement, traffic incident management, crash investigation, and support. The Traffic Safety Unit is responsible for solving the more complex traffic issues facing the county. In 2022, there were 5,483 crashes with 14 of them being a fatality. Thus far in 2023, there have been 2,791 crashes with 8 fatalities. The Traffic Safety Unit is primarily responsible for crash investigations and funds from this grant would support the purchase of upgraded equipment that would retrieve event data recorder (EDR) data from the diagnostic link of many vehicles that would assist with crash investigations.

The cost of the event data recorder is \$4,040.00.

The Field Operations Division continues to seek additional tools to allow it to safely deescalate and handle situations involving individuals suffering from mental illness and drug addiction, as well as other citizens whom its personnel come in contact with during the course of their duties.

In 2022, the Field Operations Division spent nearly 6,000 hours supervising individuals taken into custody for mental health evaluations, some of whom were experiencing significant psychiatric symptoms which resulted in them being violent. Due to significant delays in these individuals being admitted to appropriate private and state psychiatric facilities for treatment, the Sheriff's Office was forced to maintain custody of a large number of these individuals in the Emergency Department of the hospital, which is an unsecure facility open to the general public, for multiple days at a time. Currently, deputies only have temporary restraint devices in the form of handcuffs, rip hobbles, and shackles to restrain individuals in custody awaiting mental health treatment to ensure they do not hurt themselves or others. These devices are uncomfortable to the individuals in custody and can cause minor injuries when individuals in an alternate mental state fight against these restraints. In an effort to increase the comfort and safety of individuals being held for mental health evaluations, the Field Operations Division is seeking padded leather restraints which will allow these individuals to be secured more comfortably and safely while at the same time protecting members of the public utilizing the Emergency Department, Emergency Department Staff, and deputies.

In addition, the Sheriff's Office currently lacks a suitable method, outside of handcuffs, rip hobbles, and leg shackles, to transport highly aggressive individuals, such as those suffering from severe mental illness or drug addiction, in a safe manner. The Sheriff's Office has seen demonstrations of "The Wrap" system which is used by other Virginia jurisdictions to secure

individuals who are violent, such as those in an altered mental state due to drug use or mental illness. This system offers advantages when compared to traditional restraints as it fully restrains the individual's entire body while ensuring their airway remains safely open, that they can be transported easily, and that they are unable to hurt themselves or others. Funds from this grant would purchase three of these systems so it can equip its Mental Health Unit and both of its patrol shifts with one of these devices.

Currently, deputies are equipped with a number of tools, including Tasers and OC, which can be used to safely end dangerous situations with minimal injury to citizens, deputies, and the individuals whom they are deployed against. Unfortunately, these options require deputies to get within close proximity to the involved individual. This proximity decreases the time deputies have to make decisions and makes it more likely that an individual armed will place themselves in a situation where deadly force must be used to end the threat they create. Over the past several years, the Sheriff's Office has worked diligently to train additional deputies in the use of shotgun deployed less lethal projectiles to allow for additional options to deescalate situations with individuals armed with certain weapons and bridge the gap between tools carried on deputy's persons and deadly force. The current shotguns used to deliver these rounds are not equipped with a lighting system. In low light conditions, this makes it more difficult for deputies to accurately target appropriate points on the individual intended to reduce the likelihood of significant injury in the event of a deployment and to see the individual and the area around them to make appropriate decisions regarding the potential use of force. Funds from this grant would be used to purchase lighting systems for the less lethal shotguns that are currently deployed.

Funds from this grant would be utilized to purchase less lethal tools and restraints.

The cost of the less lethal tools and restraints is \$12,316.84.

The Stafford County Sheriff's Office offers the Project Lifesaver program to citizens with Alzheimer's or other cognitive disorders. The program assists in locating wandering persons with these disorders. Participants of the program wear a personalized wrist band that emits a constant locating signal. Each wrist band has a unique radio frequency enabling the search team to positively locate and identify the missing person. The Stafford County Sheriff's Office employees use a mobile locator tracking system to locate the individuals. The Stafford County Sheriff's Office has 95 clients that participant in this program. Funds from this grant would be used to purchase wristbands, transmitters, batteries, and receivers.

The cost of project lifesaver equipment is \$6500.00.

Total cost of all projects = \$44,651.84

**Program Goals and Objectives: (Swat Robot)**

1. Purchase and deploy new Swat Robot tool for use by the Stafford Sheriff's Office SWAT team.

**Implementation Schedule**

<u>Month (Post Award)</u>	<u>Action</u>
I	Secure final purchase authorization and cost.
II	Order product to achieve goals.
III	Receive product and install new product.
IV	Utilize new product.

**Program Goals and Objectives: (Event Data Recorder)**

2. Provide crash data equipment to the Traffic Safety Unit.

**Implementation Schedule (Event Data Recorder)**

<u>Month (Post Award)</u>	<u>Action</u>
I	Secure final purchase authorization and cost.
II	Order product to achieve goals.
III	Receive equipment and distribute to appropriate division.
IV	Confirm equipment assignment and success of deployment.

**Program Goals and Objectives: (Less Lethal Tools and Restraints)**

3. Provide less lethal tools and restraints to the Field Operations Division.

**Implementation Schedule (Less Lethal Tools and Restraints)**

<u>Month (Post Award)</u>	<u>Action</u>
I	Secure final purchase authorization and cost.
II	Order product to achieve goals.
III	Receive equipment and distribute to appropriate division.
IV	Confirm equipment assignment and success of deployment.

**Program Goals and Objectives: (Project Lifesaver Equipment)**

4. Provide project lifesaver equipment to the crime prevention unit.

**Implementation Schedule (Project Lifesaver Equipment)**

<u>Month (Post Award)</u>	<u>Action</u>
I	Secure final purchase authorization and cost.
II	Order product to achieve goals.
III	Receive equipment and distribute to appropriate division.
IV	Confirm equipment assignment and success of deployment.

**Metrics:**

Appropriate data for each of the goals will be documented during the grant period. This information will include, but not be limited to, cost, brand of product, model number of product and location of deployment through serial numbers on each item. Collection of that data will be through existing systems in purchasing, budget, finance, and personnel in the agency. The program manager will verify data collection during the grant period.