

**Program Narrative**  
City of Bridgeport  
Cameras and Equipment  
FY 24 Edward Byrne Memorial JAG Program

Description of the Issue

The City of Bridgeport is seeking a four-year grant of \$132,157.00 from the FY24 Edward Byrne Memorial JAG Program to fund costs associated with supporting and improving law enforcement response in Bridgeport, Connecticut. JAG funds will be used to purchase JAG approved equipment

The City of Bridgeport stands as the most populous and one of the most impoverished cities in the state, with around 23% of its residents living below the poverty line. The demographic makeup is diverse, with 42% identifying as Hispanic/Latino, 34% as Black/African American, 19% as White (non-Hispanic), 3% as Asian, and the remaining 2% falling into other categories.

Bridgeport is also identified as one of the state's most violent cities by a 2014 report from the Congressional Quarterly, utilizing FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Data, which ranked Bridgeport as having the sixth highest crime rate among 252 cities of similar size (those with populations between 100,000 and 499,000). With approximately 145,000 residents living within just 15.97 square miles, the densely populated environment means that violence and crime impact the lives of nearly every resident.

The City of Bridgeport Police Department (BPD) is committed to improving its ability to protect its residents, visitors, and its police officers. For this reason, the City is seeking funding to purchase 28 Electronic Control Devices (Tasers) to replace end of life Tasers that were issued 13 plus years ago to Patrol Officers. The manufacturer, Axon Enterprises has advised us that end of life Electronic Control Devices (Tasers) are prone to fail, electronic components wear out and do not operate as intended.

Project Design and Implementation

The City of Bridgeport's Police Departments Training Division has had a successful Taser program for the past 17 years. Officers are required to successfully complete training on the functionality of the ECD and the Departments policy on it's use prior to issuance of the ECD. Each new training officer prior to becoming a certified Bridgeport Police Officer will receive the

initial aforementioned training and upon successful completion will be issued the ECD. In addition, a mandatory annual re-certification training must be successfully completed to be authorized to carry the ECD each year.

The purchase of 28 ECD's will provide an additional tool for the officers to de-escalate dangerous situations which have the potential to escalate rapidly into a deadly physical force. The ECD has proven to subdue violent individuals, minimize the risk of physical injury to the officer and the subject and de-escalate situations that would have escalated in a violent confrontation.

The BPD will follow the City of Bridgeport procurement policies, which require that the Department undergo a formal competitive bidding process for all purchases above a \$25,000 threshold. The Department will work with the City of Bridgeport's City Attorney's Office and Purchasing Department to begin the formal bidding process upon notification of grant award.

#### Capabilities and Competencies

The Bridgeport Police Department's Training Division has a State Certified Electronic Control Device Program, a certified BPD policy as it relates to the ECD program. The Bridgeport Training Academy has certified hundreds of officers over the past 17 years, in which it has shown to be an asset in minimizing injuries to both officers and violent combative subjects. Given the extensive training provided that is required in order to be issued the ECD, the officers have the skills and knowledge to safely utilize the ECD not only to be effective but to minimize injuries and to de-escalate situations.

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

The Bridgeport Police Department (BPD) is dedicated to delivering performance measurement data and information to the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA). To ensure effective data collection and analysis, we will assign a staff member to oversee this process and evaluate program impact in alignment with BJA's accountability standards. According to department policy, following the deployment of an Electronic Control Device (ECD), officers are required to promptly notify their Supervisor, ensure medical assistance is

provided to the subject, and thoroughly document the incident. Each case will be reviewed and investigated by the Supervisor, and a copy of the Use of Force report will be submitted to the State of Connecticut Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division for their review.