

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY JUSTICE ASSISTANCE GRANT APPLICATION

O-BJA-2023-171790

PROJECT NARRATIVE

Introduction:

The proposed use of the funding from the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program will be to continue operations of the Santa Barbara Countywide Bomb Squad within the County of Santa Barbara by obtaining and updating equipment and providing training.

The Santa Barbara Countywide Bomb Squad is the only public safety bomb squad in Santa Barbara County and thus is responsible for responding 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to all bomb squad related calls for service and requests for assistance from any law enforcement or fire agency in Santa Barbara County. The Countywide Bomb Squad responds to suspicious packages/items, suspected bombs and/or improvised explosive devices, bomb threats, dignitary protection-protective sweeps, works as a liaison with Vandenberg Space Force Base EOD unit on the recovery of military munitions and the dissemination of information in the form of public demonstrations and/or displays. In addition, the Countywide Bomb Squad provides assistance to tactical teams with various law enforcement agencies within Santa Barbara County as well as providing technical assistance and mechanical assistance to all fire agencies within Santa Barbara County.

The Santa Barbara Countywide Bomb Squad works under the supervision and guidance of the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation), who oversees the Public Safety Bomb Technician program across the country. The FBI sets minimum standards for training and equipment and the Santa Barbara Countywide Bomb Squad must and currently meets those standards in order to maintain its certification as a Public Safety Bomb Squad in the United States.

As part of the proposed project, JAG Funds will be used to pay for the acquisition, support and maintenance/upgrades of critical equipment used by the Santa Barbara Countywide Bomb Squad while participating in, or otherwise supporting Bomb Squad operations. The Santa Barbara Sheriff's Office will administer the JAG funding and will serve as the sole point of contact for the DOJ grant administrators.

Project Identifiers:

Counter terrorism, equipment – general, hazardous material safety and terrorism preparedness.

Description of issues:

Santa Barbara County is a diverse medium-sized county, located in southern California and bordered by Ventura, San Luis Obispo and Kern Counties. Santa Barbara County has two major population centers at opposite ends of the county, the greater Santa Barbara area (south) and the Santa Maria Valley (north), along with smaller population centers within the central county area (Lompoc and Santa Ynez valleys). The City of Santa Maria is the largest and fastest growing incorporated city within Santa Barbara County, with an

estimated population just over 102,000. The Santa Barbara and Santa Maria population centers are separated by approximately 70 miles and have significant socio-economic differences. As a result of the 2008 economic downturn and its lasting effects upon government funding, Santa Barbara County law enforcement agencies have downsized significantly. In order to minimize the extent of cuts to core law enforcement services within our communities (i.e. patrol), the most severe cuts occurred within law enforcement specialty assignments and investigative units. The Santa Barbara Countywide Bomb Squad is one of those specialty units and a function of the Sheriff's Office. Due to the size of the county, it is necessary to equip two bomb squad response vehicles, one strategically placed in the north portion of the county, and one strategically placed in the south portion of the county, so that response times can be minimized and dangerous or hazardous conditions mitigated. Equipping these two response vehicles have become more challenging as local funding has become increasingly difficult to obtain. Additionally, funding would be used to equip personnel with updated safety gear and clothing to bring them into compliance with current best practices. Local JAG funding will enable the continued operation of the Santa Barbara Countywide Bomb Squad.

Project Design and Implementation:

Should JAG funding be authorized, the Santa Barbara Countywide Bomb Squad would use the funds as outlined below:

- The bomb squad currently has seven certified bomb technicians and one manager. We equip the technicians with various pieces of equipment, to include full bomb suits. The bomb suits will protect the technician while they approach an unknown

or dangerous package to complete render safe procedures. We would purchase one suit as they have a ten-year shelf life, per the manufacturer. Some of our current suits are outdated and we are obtaining bomb suits in a cyclical time frame to reduce the cost at any one time. Also, given the disparity in physical size between members of the team, suits of different sizes are also required. This grant would be used, in part, to purchase one extra-large EOD suit.

- To comply with current best-practices, flame retardant uniforms would be purchased for deployment during training and calls for service. These uniforms will provide greater protection to team members in the field and reduce the chances of serious bodily injury or death.
- A 3-D printer was previously purchased and has been useful for creating custom tools to deploy into calls for service. For example, custom attachments to the unmanned robot have been advantageous in the past. Additional material is needed to continue use of the 3-D printer and if awarded, this grant would be used to purchase those materials.
- As noted, the bomb squad has two working bomb squad vehicles to maintain coverage throughout the county. It is necessary for each vehicle to have a “pan distrupter stand” that are crucial tools for rendering a suspected device safe. This grant would be used, in part, to replace two pan disrupter stands to replace our equipment that is aging or broken.
- A major obligation of the bomb squad is to safely store explosive materials used as a counter-charge on known or suspected explosive devices. Best practices use mattanite binary explosive material which is significantly safer than traditional

high-explosives. This grant would be used, in part, to purchase additional mattanite binary explosives to replenish reserves.

- Two EOD emergency medical kits would be purchased for installation onto our two bomb squad vehicles (one each). These medical kits would have upgraded emergency first aid equipment for use by our personnel during life-threatening emergencies.
- If awarded, the remainder of the grant would be used to purchase a Remotec Andros Spartan upgraded robot arm. This purchase is estimated at approximately \$200,000 and is obviously above the award amount. As such, the remainder of the award would be held over until the next round of funding. Anticipating an award in the following fiscal year, the robot arm would be purchased at that time.

Capabilities and competencies:

The Santa Barbara Countywide Bomb Squad is the only public safety bomb squad operating in the County of Santa Barbara. The Countywide Bomb Squad is staffed by six sworn law enforcement officers from the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Office and one sworn law enforcement officer from the Santa Barbara Police Department. The Countywide Bomb Squad is managed by a Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Lieutenant and run by a Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Sergeant. The Bomb Squad Sergeant has been a member of the team for over 7 years and is designated as the spokesperson for the Countywide Bomb Squad on a national level. The Sergeant is also on an FBI Bomb Squad Task Force and has attended numerous bomb squad related trainings, exercises and conferences as a member of the Bomb Squad. The Countywide bomb squad responds to all areas within the

county to assist all law enforcement agencies who request assistance with a bomb squad or hazardous devices situation. There is no fee involved to any agency in Santa Barbara County who requests the assistance of the Countywide bomb squad.

The Countywide Bomb Squad is accredited and certified by the FBI, who oversees the Public Safety Bomb Squad Program across the United States and who runs the Hazardous Devices School in Huntsville, Alabama. This school is the only public safety bomb technician school in the United States, and it is where all Public Safety Bomb Technicians get certified.

Use of funding:

The combined FY23 Edward Byrne Memorial JAG Program funding will be utilized to continue the operation of the Santa Barbara Countywide Bomb Squad during County fiscal years 23/24 and through 24/25 (county FY is July to June). The JAG funds will be utilized to pay for the Santa Barbara Countywide Bomb Squad's acquisition of new and/or replacement equipment, upgrading / improvement of existing bomb squad equipment and training of personnel as bomb technicians.

The funding will be allocated as follows:

Fiscal Year 2023-2026 Local JAG Revenue Allocations:

- Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office \$122,375.00

- The Santa Barbara Sheriff’s Office will utilize these JAG funds to pay for the Santa Barbara Countywide Bomb Squad’s acquisition of new and/or replacement equipment and the upgrading / maintenance of existing bomb squad equipment and training for bomb squad personnel.

- **Source of funding allocation:**
 - Santa Barbara County: \$18,887
 - Santa Barbara City \$33,147
 - Santa Maria City \$49,748
 - Lompoc City \$20,593

 - TOTAL \$122,375

Data Collection and Reporting:

The Santa Barbara Sheriff’s Office will ensure that all Department of Justice required data collection and reporting will occur in a timely manner. To accomplish this, the Sheriff’s Office will assign an appropriately trained Sheriff’s manager to oversee the Local JAG project. In addition to ensuring that all required reporting is accomplished in a timely manner, the Sheriff’s manager will also insure that all JAG grant, Department of Justice and OMB grant rules are adhered to.

The assigned Santa Barbara Countywide Bomb Squad supervisor and Administrative Office Professional both have experience in collecting the information that is necessary to

accomplish the required JAG reporting. The Santa Barbara Countywide Bomb Squad will report all expenditures used to acquire, support, maintain or purchase new or replacement equipment to be used in support of the Countywide Bomb Squad. These data collection instruments can be modified to add or remove data collection points as necessary to ensure compliance with JAG Program requirements. The Countywide Bomb Squad supervisor and Administrative Office Professional will be responsible for collecting and collating the Countywide Bomb Squads generated activity data. The Countywide Bomb Squad supervisor will coordinate with the assigned Sheriff's Manager to ensure the JAG programmatic reporting is completed in a timely manner, consistent with the requirements of the JAG program and the BJA "PMT" reporting tool.

The Santa Barbara Sheriff's Office will also ensure that all Department of Justice required financial data collection and reporting will occur in a timely manner. To accomplish this, the Sheriff's Office will assign an appropriately trained Sheriff's Accountant to oversee the financial requirements of the Local JAG project. In addition to ensuring that all required financial reporting is accomplished in a timely manner, the Sheriff's Accountant will assist the Sheriff's manager in insuring that all JAG grant, Department of Justice and OMB grant rules are adhered to.