

**Organized Retail Theft Prevention Grant Program
Request for Proposals Instruction Packet
Frequently Asked Questions
As of June 12, 2023**

All proposed activities, strategies, or program components MUST have a link to the Organized Retail Theft Prevention Grant Program as described in the authorizing legislation and the Request for Proposals for this Grant.

Acronyms:

- BSCC = Board of State and Community Corrections
- LPA = Lead Public Agency
- ORT = Organized Retail Theft Grant Program
- PPA = Program Purpose Area
- RFP = Request for Proposals

ELIGIBILITY TO APPLY

1. The proposal instruction packet states that applications must be submitted by the City Council, Board of Supervisors, or the Chief County Administrative Officer. However, the eligible applicants are listed as Sheriff Departments, Probation Departments, and Police Departments.

Who should be listed as the applicant?

The County Sheriff's Department's name, the County Probation Department's name, or the City Police Department's name should be listed in the "Name of Applicant" space.

2. Are District Attorney's Offices eligible to apply for the ORT Prevention Grant Program or is it limited to the ORT Vertical Prosecution Grant?

Per Senate Bill 154, eligible applicants for this grant are California police departments, sheriff departments, and probation departments.

LETTER OF INTENT TO APPLY

3. Is the Letter of Intent to Apply required?

No.

4. Our department submitted a Letter of Intent to Apply but erroneously listed the Vertical Prosecution Grant Program. However, the letter was meant to be for this ORT Prevention Grant Program. Should we send a corrected letter?

You can, but it is not required. These letters are non-binding and are used to aid the BSCC for planning evaluation purposes.

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5. **A Letter of Intent was submitted yesterday advising that the City Police Department intends to apply. Should the Letter of Intent be amended to state the city council will be submitting the grant for the Police Department?**

No, it is not required. These letters are non-binding and are used to aid the BSCC for planning evaluation purposes.

COLLABORATION

6. **Does this grant require a collaborative partner?**

No.

7. **What constitutes a multi-agency collaborative proposal? For example, three (3) separate law enforcement agencies want to collaborate on a single scope of work. Would each agency submit duplicate applications?**

No. The collaborative partnering agencies would submit one (1) multi-agency proposal and list one (1) of the three (3) law enforcement agencies as the LPA. The other three (3) agencies would be identified as multi-agency partners within the application.

8. **Would a collaborative proposal that you are a part of preclude you from submitting an additional application for just your organization?**

Yes. Per page 4 of the RFP, eligible applicants may not submit more than one (1) proposal for *funding consideration*.

9. **Would collaborative proposals be for only this retail theft grant? For example, if our District Attorney's Office is applying for the ORT Vertical Prosecution Grant and our agency is applying for this grant, would that be considered a collaborative grant?**

No. The ORT Vertical Prosecution Grant solicitation is a separate grant application.

10. **Can the Sheriff's Office submit the grant application, listing themselves as the LPA, and include numerous other police departments as collaborative partnerships (however, not requesting the additional funding for each police department) in a single application proposal (and not as multiple-agency proposal).**

Yes.

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11. Is there a requirement that outside agencies participate in the grant project?

No.

GRANT FUNDING/ELIGIBLE COSTS

Project Scope

12. What is the difference between the Medium and Large Scope funding categories?

The difference between categories is the amount of funding an eligible applicant can apply for based on their need and scope of work to complete their project with grant funds. The maximum an eligible applicant may apply for is up to \$6,125,000 in the Medium Scope category OR up to \$15,650,000 in the Large Scope category.

13. The funding amounts are different between medium and large scope projects. What are the other criteria to place agencies or collaborations in one or the other? For instance, other grants deal with population, problem statistics, or other tangible criteria.

The decision to apply under the Medium or Large Scope category speaks more to the amount of funding the eligible applicant has determined necessary to complete the work plan. The only other criteria are listed under the Rating Factors, which is the same for all eligible applicants no matter which category the applicant applies. For collaborative proposals, it is up to the eligible applicant(s) to describe the overall need. There are no pre-determined factors that must be addressed for collaborative proposals other than the Rating Factors in the RFP Instruction Packet.

14. Is there a competitive difference when applying between the large scope versus medium scope categories?

This will depend on the number of eligible applications submitted for each scope category.

15. If an applicant wants to address multiple PPAs, can they submit multiple proposals covering a different PPA with each proposal?

No. Eligible applicants may not submit more than one (1) proposal for funding consideration (refer to page 4 in the RFP).

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16. Can multiple PPAs be addressed in the same proposal?

Yes. Applications must address a minimum of one (1) of the listed PPAs (refer to page 5 of the RFP).

Salaries and Benefits

17. Are salaries ok under the grant?

Yes. However, the grant funding cannot be used to supplant funds used for existing staff fulfilling their regular job duties.

18. Can we request in the budget additional grant accounting/management personnel or must this cost be included in the Indirect Costs?

Yes. However, the grant funding cannot be used to supplant funds used for existing staff for their regular job duties. In addition, salaries and benefits may only be reimbursed for actual time worked on grant activities (i.e., no percentage-based reimbursements). If these positions are working less than 100% on the ORT Grant, functional timesheets will need to be provided for actual/direct costs. The applicant may want to consider the staff's duties to the grant and whether it should be included in their indirect costs instead of direct costs.

19. Can staff be hired to administer the grant (i.e., administrative, information technology, and finance staff)?

Yes.

20. Can the city prosecutor's time be included in the budget under personnel?

Potentially. The applicant would need to provide assurances that this cost would not be a supplantation issue or part of an Indirect Cost Rate.

21. Can Civilian Staff be hired with this grant?

Yes.

22. Can we hire officers for retail theft on this grant?

Yes.

23. Is the hiring of new officers permitted or just overtime?

The hiring of new officers is allowable as well as accrued overtime.

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24. Can overtime expenses include specialty pay and incentives, or only overtime off the individual's base salary?

Yes. However, any specialty pay, incentive, and/or overtime pay must be for work directly related to grant activities.

25. Are there any grant retention requirements for sworn/civilian positions hired under the grant beyond the three (3) years?

No.

26. If we are requesting multiple of the same positions (i.e., detectives), can we put them on the same line item in the budget table?

Yes. However, the number of positions must be noted and if there are differing pay rates.

Funded Activities

27. Are vehicles an eligible expense?

Yes.

28. We are looking to use grant funds to purchase a surveillance vehicle that may take over a year to complete with necessary customizations. Will this be allowed?

Yes. However, the expenditures for the vehicle and customizations must be incurred during the service period of the grant (October 1, 2023 to December 31, 2026) in order to be reimbursed with grant funds.

29. Can vehicles be purchased if they will be used as "bait?"

Yes.

30. Can the applicant request funding for an expansion of an existing technology?

Yes. However, the grant funding cannot be used to supplant funds used for the existing technology. In addition, the applicant must provide their policies on Surveillance Technology (refer to page 9 of the RFP).

31. Can funds be used to purchase a new Records Management System/Database?

Yes. The applicant must demonstrate the nexus of this type of purchase with combating organized retail theft.

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32. Can we use funds to purchase surveillance software for use in our jails to monitor inmate phone calls as an investigative tool for patrol to use to obtain leads to help prevent and deter theft?

Yes. However, the applicant must provide their policies on Surveillance Technology (refer to page 9 of the RFP).

33. Can a Sheriff's Office purchase cameras (that they would own, operate, and install) but would be placed within businesses identified as having high theft rates to deter and detect?

Yes.

34. Does equipment have to stay under the purview of the agency that made the purchase, or can the equipment be purchased and implemented then become the responsibility of the organization that uses it?

The BSCC requires that the grantee maintain accountability for the equipment during the term of the grant. However, it does not require the equipment remain in the grantee's physical custody.

35. What type of forensic tools can be covered by this grant?

The list provided on page 11 of the RFP is non-exhaustive. The applicant must provide a justification for how any grant purchase is integral to mitigating organized retail theft in their jurisdiction and what the nexus is to the PPAs (refer to pages 5-7 of the RFP).

36. If we purchase equipment and/or technology, can we claim the costs for training all staff on how to use the newly purchased equipment and/or technology?

Yes, if those staff are working directly on activities, strategies, and/or grant program components.

37. Do applicants have to include specific products in their application, or can they apply generally with a proposed project description and activities and then use the funds within those parameters of the grant as described in the eligible funding activities?

If project specifics are unknown, the application should provide the reader with a clear sense of how the funds will be used and what items or activities need to be

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funded to reach their goals and objectives, in both the narrative and in the budget sections.

38. Can our proposal address “on-line retail” issues to run package theft operations?

Yes.

39. If we are hiring for positions for this grant, are we allowed to purchase all the equipment necessary for them to do their grant-related roles/responsibilities?

Yes.

40. Can grant funding be used for the creation of a new task force?

Yes.

41. If a Sheriff’s Department is providing police services to a city through a contract, can the City apply in addition to the County Sheriff’s Department?

No. The City is not an eligible applicant. However, the Sheriff’s Department can apply and collaborate with the city(ies) it has contracts with for police/law enforcement services.

42. If a business being burglarized/robbed is not a retailer but produces products as a distributor to retailers, can a police department use grant funds to mitigate this type of theft?

Yes. However, there must be a clear nexus that organized thefts are occurring with the intent to sell the stolen products or finance another act of theft (refer to PPA 1 description on page 5 of the RFP).

43. Can grant funding pay for recurring services/expenses over the 3-year grant period? For example, GPS tracking services.

Yes.

GRANT BUDGET

44. How often can agencies request reimbursement?

For government entities, quarterly invoicing is the model.

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45. Is there any other audit requirement guideline that needs to be met other than the language in the solicitation?

No.

46. If an application is approved for funding, is it funded for all three (3) years or is the funding dispersed separately for each year of the grant?

The awardee will be contracted for the full three (3) years of the grant. Funding is dispersed on a reimbursement schedule in the grant agreement. Please note that funding for the full three (3) years is dependent on the appropriations in the fiscal year 2023-2024 and fiscal year 2024-2025 State Budget Acts.

47. Can our application pay for staff expenses in Salaries & Benefits or just overtime?

The Salaries & Benefits line item within the proposed budget table/narrative should be used for staff's regular payroll costs (both salaries and benefits) and any overtime accrued for grant activities. Any "other staff expenses" should be provided under the Services & Supplies line item or the "Other" line item.

48. Can my agency submit a proposal as a LPA for a collaborative application and include items for my agency specifically?

Yes.

49. Are there specific limits on utilizing the monies for technology and/or equipment?

All technology or equipment purchases must be an allowable expense under the BSCC Grant Guide and California law.

50. Can grant funds be used to purchase software licenses beyond the grant performance period?

No. The grant will only reimburse for expenses, items, and activities within the grant service period.

51. Can we request funds in advance for start-up costs?

No. Grant funds are paid in arrears/reimbursement based on actual expenditures only.

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52. The grant close-out date is June 1, 2027. Does this mean that expenses incurred for the project should be until December 31, 2026?

Yes. The grant project service expenditures would end December 31, 2026 but can be submitted for reimbursements until June 1, 2027. However, expenses for the period of January 1, 2027 through June 1, 2027 may only be reimbursed for the costs of the Local Evaluation Report and the final Financial Audit.

53. When proposing the project's need for the purchase of equipment, are invoices or actual cost breakdown required from the vendor that is selling the equipment?

For the application, an estimated amount for the purchase of each piece of equipment requested is acceptable. However, if awarded, the project will be required to provide actual cost breakdowns for expenditure reimbursements.

54. What is the maximum indirect cost allowed?

If the LPA has a federally negotiated indirect cost rate, that agency may use that rate up to 20% of the total grant award (20% of direct costs). If the LPA does NOT have a federally negotiated indirect cost rate, those agencies may only claim up to 10% of the total grant award (10% of direct costs). For multi-agency proposals, the indirect cost rate would be dependent on each of the agency's federally negotiated indirect cost rate or the maximum 10% of their direct costs, whichever is applicable.

55. Can budgeted items be moved to support other line items if they aren't used before the end of the grant? If so, how?

Yes. The BSCC will discuss the mechanism for budget modifications during a mandatory Grantee Orientation (to occur post-contract start date).

56. Will this be a one-time funding opportunity or will there be subsequent RFPs?

Currently, this is a one-time funding opportunity.

57. Does our budget have to include the \$75,000 for evaluation efforts if we can provide all the required data and evaluation requirements for less?

Yes. Please refer to page 12 of the RFP.

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DATA AND EVALUATION

58. What type of crime level data do we need? Our retail thefts are very low per capita compared to surrounding jurisdictions.

There is no specific requirement for the type of data to be included. The RFP (page 4) specifies: “Data demonstrating the nature and scale of the specific crime problem, which the applicant proposes to address using grant funds.”

59. What level of reporting do you require to show demonstrated success in reducing retail theft?

Each grantee will be asked to provide a definition of “success” for their project. In addition, the project will be required to submit Quarterly Progress Reports (designed by the BSCC Research Unit) as well as develop a Local Evaluation Plan. More information on these requirements will be provided during the mandatory Grantee Orientation.

60. If we are awarded funds and our proposal does not prove effective in significantly reducing retail theft, must we return the grant funding?

No.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

61. Is it one (1) Local Impact Letter for the application or one (1) Local Impact letter from each agency?

The LPA is required to submit a Local Impact Letter. See Appendix E on page 37 for more information. As addressed in the Bidders’ Conference, each partnering agency must have a Local Impact Letter, as applicable.

62. Due to the large quantity of retailers in our area, is it required to obtain a Local Impact Letter from only those major retail stores or do we need to go to all our retail stores potentially impacted?

No. Page 9 and Attachment E of the RFP provides the language for the Local Impact Letters. The intent is for the applicant to be mindful of the potential impacts to all types of retailers in the area.

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63. Is there a sample Local Impact Letter?

No. However, Appendix E of the RFP outlines, at a minimum, the acknowledgements to be addressed for each agency identified as a collaborative partner.

64. Is the Racial Bias Policy required with application?

Yes.

65. Does the BSCC want to see plans to limit racial bias within the Project Description in addition to uploading the policy?

The requirement is to upload the agency's policy(ies) limiting racial bias. Providing this information within the application narrative is at the discretion of the applicant.

66. The forms required for upload state "Blue Ink Only." Will the BSCC also accept forms that provide e-signatures?

Yes.

OPTIONAL DOCUMENTS

67. Does the grant program require a Council or Board Resolution to be submitted with the grant application?

No. However, a Resolution must be submitted to complete the contracting process and allow for reimbursements to occur.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

68. Can the Senior Grants Analyst submit the application on behalf of the City Administrator?

Yes, individuals from the city/county or LPA may input the information and submit the application. However, please note that the application contains an acknowledgment. That is, the application must be acknowledged by the person(s) with the vested authority to enter into an agreement on behalf of the City. Toward this end, the BSCC Submittable Application will ask for the address, email, phone number, and name and title of the Authorized Officer. By completing this information, the application informs the BSCC that their Authorized Officer has read and understood the acknowledgment.

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69. Do we submit multiple budgets if we do not have enough rows provided an area within the budget table? Or do we add multiple items in one row?

No, do not submit multiple budgets. If you need to combine multiple items on a single row, try to combine “like” items or provide a higher-level description that provides a few examples of those items to be purchased. You should be able to click the ALT and Enter keys simultaneously to expand the cells to provide additional line space.

70. The excel document is locked so we were unable to add more cells to an area of the budget. Can I get this fixed?

No. The form must be consistent for all applicants. Please refer to the above question/answer.

71. Confirm that the budget table and narrative do NOT need to be broken down by each year?

Correct. The budget table and corresponding narrative must incorporate the total amount of the grant funds requested for the entire grant period.

72. Is there a document to work offline and then cut and paste info into document?

No. You may log in to the BSCC Submittable Application portal, review the instructions for the narrative sections and character limits (refer to page 21 of the RFP), and draft your responses accordingly outside of the online application. Applicants may start and stop their application but must select “Save Draft” at the bottom of the application before existing. Only applications received through the BSCC Submittable Application portal will be considered.

GENERAL RFP QUESTIONS

73. Who can we contact for application errors?

Please email the ORT inbox for all inquiries at: ORT@bscc.ca.gov

74. Will this grant be extended after the 3-year period?

No.

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75. On page 5 of the RFP instruction packet, the following is stated, “Applicants may implement new activities, strategies, or programs, OR expand existing activities, strategies, or programs (without supplanting funds – refer to the supplanting definition in the General Grant Requirements).” Can a proposal include both new and expanded existing activities?

Yes.

76. With the funding date of ORT beginning October 1, 2023, when will applicants know if their grant is approved and what fund amount is?

The tentative timetable for pre-grant activities is located on page 19 of the RFP. Notices are tentatively set for September 15, 2023. Funding amounts are typically for the amount requested by the applicant. However, there may be a partial award made to an applicant if the full amount available for this RFP (\$242,250,000) is reached.

77. Our agency has one (1) detective assigned to ORT already up and running for the past three (3) years to address our ongoing ORT problem. Since the program is already implemented, how soon is funding available?

If the application for the project is recommended for funding through the BSCC competitive process, contracts would tentatively begin October 1, 2023. However, the grant funding cannot be used to supplant funding already budgeted for the same activities as outlined in the application nor can it be used for costs prior to the contract start date.

78. Can our application fund a non-governmental organization with headquarters outside the state of California?

Yes. However, the agency/organization must have a location in California and be in active status with the California Secretary of State.

79. Will the state consider grants awards for a lesser amount than originally proposed?

Funding amounts are typically for the amount requested by the applicant. However, there may be a partial award made to an applicant if the amount available for this RFP (\$242,250,000) almost exhausted and your application is next on the funding list.

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80. Is there an appeals process for proposals not funded?

No.

81. If there are issues during the Technical Review stage, will the proposal be kicked back for correction or disqualified immediately?

Proposals are not returned to the applicant for any updates, corrections, or edits. Disqualifications will be assessed per application.

82. What information is requested in the narrative part of the budget?

Please review pages 20 through 24 of the RFP, which outlines the Proposal Narrative Instructions and Rating Factors.

83. Without a population or scope requirements, what prevents the smallest city/agency from writing the best proposal and getting funded past their capacity?

Applications are rated based on the Rating Factors and the Rating Criteria provided on page 21 through page 25 of the RFP. The Scoring Panel will consider the information provided within the application based on those Rating Factors and Rating Criteria.

84. Where is the "Proposal Summary" in the instruction packet? Will the online portal match the requirements in the instructions?

The Proposal Summary is not detailed in the instruction packet. The Proposal Summary is in Section III: Program Information within the BSCC Submittable Application portal and is capped at 670 characters (includes punctuation, numbers, spacing, and text). This is a non-rated, brief overview of your program and will be posted to the BSCC's website for informational purposes.

85. Is there a designated section within the application where we can submit visuals, such as diagrams, charts, or photographs?

No. Per page 20 in the RFP, under Proposal Narrative Instructions, "please do not include website links, charts, tables, or graphs."

86. Is an applicant allowed to include letters of support from individuals or entities that will benefit from project implementation?

No. If an applicant submits documents outside of those listed as applicable in the RFP (refer to page 9 and page 23), those documents will not be considered part of your application.