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# Strengthening Law Enforcement and Community Relations Grant Request for Proposal Frequently Asked Questions

## 1. What is the Strengthening Law Enforcement and Community Relations Grant (Strengthening Grant)?

The Budget Act of 2015 allocates \$6,000,000 to the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) to administer a new grant program titled *"The Strengthening Law Enforcement and Community Relations Grant."* The Budget Act, in pertinent part, provides:

The Board of State and Community Corrections shall provide grants to local law enforcement for programs and initiatives intended to strengthen the relationship between law enforcement and the communities they serve, including, but not limited to, providing training for front-line peace officers on issues such as implicit bias; funding for research to examine how local policing services currently are being delivered; assessing the state of law enforcement-community relations; comparing the status quo with the best practices in the policing profession; and receiving recommendations for moving forward, including the identification of policing models and operational options to improve policing; problem-oriented policing initiatives such as Operation Ceasefire; restorative justice programs that address the needs of victims, offenders, and the community; behavioral health training and any one-time costs associated with implementing, expanding, and maintaining a program designed to capture peace officer interactions with individuals in the community.

## 2. Who is eligible to apply for the Strengthening Grant?

Eligible Applicants are limited to:

- Municipal police departments in partnership with the communities they serve;
- County sheriff's departments in partnership with the communities they serve;
- Cities that contract for law enforcement services in partnership with the communities they serve.

## 3. For how much money can an agency apply?

Applicants are encouraged to request only the amount of funds needed to support proposals.

- The maximum allowable grant amount for an individual application is **up to \$600,000**.
- The maximum allowable grant amount for a joint application is **up to \$850,000**.

**4. The Request for Proposals includes reference to tenets from the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing. What is that?**

The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing was created to strengthen community policing and trust among law enforcement officers and the communities they serve. The task force included a cross section of law enforcement, academia, civil rights organizations and non-profit organizations, with support from the U.S. Department of Justice, among many others.

The task force conducted hearings, reviewed research and made recommendations to the President. Data and information gathered from this process are captured in the *Final Report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing*. The report can be viewed in its entirety at:

[http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/taskforce/TaskForce\\_FinalReport.pdf](http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/taskforce/TaskForce_FinalReport.pdf).

**5. How does the *Final Report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing* impact the Strengthening Grant?**

The Strengthening Grant Request for Proposals (RFP) is built on the principles outlined in the report. The President's report captures key themes under six "Pillars." These Pillars include: 1) Building Trust and Legitimacy, 2) Policy and Oversight, 3) Technology and Social Media, 4) Community Policing and Crime Reduction, 5) Training and Education and 6) Officer Wellness and Safety.

All proposals for the Strengthening Grant must address some aspect of Pillar One (Building Trust and Legitimacy). In addition to Pillar One, Applicants must identify at least one other Pillar the project will address. There is no limit on the number of Pillars a proposal may address.

Information on each Pillar can be found in the President's report at [http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/taskforce/TaskForce\\_FinalReport.pdf](http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/taskforce/TaskForce_FinalReport.pdf).

**6. Who is considered a Lead Agency in the Strengthening Grant?**

For the purposes of this RFP, the applicant (municipal police departments, county sheriff's departments, and cities that contract for law enforcement services) is the Lead Agency.

**7. When should a Lead Agency and Community Partners begin collaborating?**

Lead Agencies are required to engage community partners as early as possible in the identification of the needs facing the community, the development of a plan for how to best address those needs and the selection of activities or strategies to implement that plan.

**8. What is the definition of “community partner” for the purpose of meeting the 30 percent pass through requirement?**

Community partners could include community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, non-profits, service providers, advocacy groups and/or justice-involved individuals and their families. Each Lead Agency will be responsible for determining which and how many community partners are included in the grant proposal, but should be able to articulate why they selected the partners in relation to the make-up and culture of the community and the need(s) that will be addressed (see pages 7-8 of the RFP).

While Lead Agencies are encouraged to partner with a variety of organizations, agencies and entities on the planning and implementation of its grant project, for purposes of meeting the required 30 percent pass through, a community partner is considered a non-public, non-governmental entity.

**9. Will the Strengthening Grant cover the cost of purchasing body cameras (and storage equipment associated with the cameras), training the officers and developing programs to monitor?**

The Budget Act of 2015 (see Question 1) names a variety of programs and initiatives that could be funded. For example “... any one-time costs associated with implementing, expanding, and maintaining a program designed to capture peace officer interactions with individuals in the community” (see page 3 of the RFP).

The cost of purchasing body cameras, training the officers and developing programs to monitor could therefore be allowable activities under this grant program, as long as an Applicant can establish a link between those activities and one or more of the Pillars described in the report issued by the President’s Task Force on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing. Page 5 of the RFP states:

*“All proposals (whether individual or joint) must address some aspect of Pillar One (Building Trust and Legitimacy). In addition to Pillar One, Applicants must identify at least one other Pillar the project will address. There is no limit on the number of Pillars a proposal may address. In the proposal, Applicants must be able to show a link between proposed activities or strategies and the Pillars...”*

In proposing an activity or strategy to be funded, Applicants also must address all of the bulleted items listed under “Project Description” beginning on page 17 of the RFP.

**10. Can funding be used for eligible expenses for some of the things needed by the Fontana Reentry Support Team program (e.g., steel-toed shoes, forklift certifications, GED classes and tests, eyeglasses necessary to go back to work, bus passes to go to job interview)?**

Recognizing that the different needs facing California's communities require unique approaches, this RFP purposely does not name or provide specific examples of activities to be funded, nor does it list eligible or ineligible activities. Applicants are free to propose activities or strategies they believe will address an identified need or problem that will consequently strengthen relations between law enforcement and the communities they serve. The RFP encourages creativity and innovation. Regardless of what types of activities are proposed, however, Applicants must establish a link between those proposed activities or strategies and one or more of the Pillars described in the report issued by the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing. Page 5 of the RFP states:

*"All proposals (whether individual or joint) must address some aspect of Pillar One (Building Trust and Legitimacy). In addition to Pillar One, Applicants must identify at least one other Pillar the project will address. There is no limit on the number of Pillars a proposal may address. In the proposal, Applicants must be able to show a link between proposed activities or strategies and the Pillars..."*

**11. Can the Strengthening Grant be used for staffing and or programs related to homeless issues?**

Please view the responses to questions 9 and 10.

**12. The RFP does not provide examples of eligible activities or programs that this grant will fund. What types of programs, approaches or activities will it fund (e.g., Neighborhood Watch Program, School Resource Officers, etc.)?**

Please view the responses to questions 9 and 10.

**13. Overall, we are curious as to what you are specifically looking to fund. Many cities are looking for payment for police overtime or other monetary items.**

Please view the responses to questions 9 and 10. The RFP does not prohibit a Lead Agency from requesting overtime. However, the amount of grant funds requested should be reasonable and appropriate given the proposed project's design and scope (see pages 21-22 of the RFP).

**14. Lead Agency would like to hire a full-time, non-sworn Community Service Officer (CSO) to build relationships with the businesses and residents within its city. The proposal will likely request salary and benefits for the CSO; is overtime for the CSO allowable?**

Please view the responses to questions 9 and 10. The RFP does not prohibit a Lead Agency from requesting overtime. However, the amount of grant funds requested should be reasonable and appropriate given the proposed project's design and scope (see pages 21-22 of the RFP).

**15. Can community partners, for which each grant will have to set aside 30 percent of funding, provide services to several grantees at the same time? As you know, there are several large law enforcement agencies in the Southern California region. The nonprofit group that I work with would like to partner with more than one and seeks clarity on this question.**

There is nothing in the RFP that prohibits a community partner from working with more than one Lead Agency.

**16. Can my community college apply for funds as the lead applicant? They are first responders and police in the community that surrounds the college area.**

Lead Agencies for this RFP are limited to municipal police departments, county sheriff's departments, and cities that contract for law enforcement services. The community college could explore collaborating with a Lead Agency, as community engagement and partnerships are central themes to the grant (see page 7 of the RFP).

**17. I am a County Housing Authority that contracts law enforcement services directly for my communities. Would our agency be eligible to apply for this grant as the Lead Agency?**

Please view the response to question 16. The County Housing Authority could explore collaborating with a Lead Agency, as community engagement and partnerships are central themes to the grant (see page 7 of the RFP).

**18. Can a city submit two different projects? Law enforcement would be the lead agencies in both projects.**

The intent of this RFP is to receive one application per eligible agency. The city could consider submitting one comprehensive proposal that encompasses both projects. Please note all applications must address Pillar One (Building Trust and Legitimacy) plus one additional Pillar (see page 5 of the RFP).

**19. Will the California Gang Reduction, Intervention and Prevention (CalGRIP) grant be available this year or is the new policing grant (Strengthening Grant) in its place?**

The Strengthening Grant is not replacing the CalGRIP Grant. With the latest round of CalGRIP grants, the BSCC moved to a three-year cycle. The current grant is in Year Two of this cycle, which began January 1, 2015 and runs through December 31, 2017. Subject to appropriation, we expect to issue a new CalGRIP RFP in 2017 for a January 1, 2018 start date.

**20. Was this Strengthening grant available last year? If so, what type of activities did it fund?**

The Strengthening Grant is new grant program created by the Budget Act of 2015. It was not available last year.

**21. Can the Strengthening Grant be used as match for another grant?**

No, the Strengthening Grant is not intended for use as match for another grant.

**22. If a Lead Agency plans to contract out data collection activities where should it be reflected on the Budget?**

Data collection activities should be recorded under the “Data Collection/Evaluation” category (see pages 20-22 of the RFP).

**23. Will the Strengthening Grant fund projects by geographic region or size (e.g. small, medium and large cities/counties)?**

No. The Executive Steering Committee that developed this RFP collectively agreed to fund the highest rated proposals irrespective of geographic location and/or size.

**24. Is the intent of this grant to fund agencies that are beginning to strengthening the relationship between law enforcement and the community or agencies that have been working on this issue for some time, i.e., is the Strengthening Grant for new projects or existing projects?**

The Strengthening Grant is intended to fund collaborative law enforcement-community approaches that aim to improve, strengthen, establish or reestablish positive meaningful relationships between law enforcement and the communities they serve (see page 4 of the RFP). These efforts could be new or ongoing.

**25. Can funds from the Strengthening Grant be used towards any structural modifications (minor or major) in the development of neighborhood-building elements surrounding a new community-based Sheriff’s Office substation (i.e. Basketball court, outdoor fitness equipment, event plaza/stage …)?”**

Structural modifications are not allowable per the BSCC’s new Grant Administration Guide, which states: “Real property, including land, land improvements, structures and their attachments, and structural improvements and alterations are not allowable expenditures unless specifically authorized in the terms of the program” (*BSCC Grant Administration Guide, January 2016 – draft version, page 26*).

**26. How/what will be used to gauge community need? Are there certain data elements (e.g., crime statistics, etc.) all applicants need to use?**

Please refer to page 17 of the RFP. Applicants will be scored on how well they address in their Proposal Narrative all of the items listed under the “Project Need” section (as listed below). Note that the second bullet asks Applicants to use “local quantitative and/or qualitative data to support the description.” There are no standardized data elements that are required; rather, the data that an Applicant

chooses to include should be specific to its local jurisdiction and make sense in the context of describing the identified need.

**“Address the following in narrative form:**

- *Describe the demographics of your community and how they impact the state of law enforcement/community relations.*
- *Describe recurring issues of concern between local law enforcement and the communities they serve (e.g., racial and ethnic disparities, police behavior, closed communication, etc.). Use local quantitative and/or qualitative data to support the description. If applicable, describe past efforts to address these issues and whether or not they were successful.*
- *Describe the process by which you ensured community input in identifying the need for this grant.*
- *If applicable, describe any needs, challenges and/or tensions with protected classes (to include race, color, ethnicity, national origin, age, religion, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, or mental or physical disability) or vulnerable populations in your community.”*

**27. If a sheriff’s department partners with a probation department to submit an application, is the probation department considered a lead agency?**

No. The RFP identifies Lead Agencies as municipal police departments, county sheriff’s departments, and cities that contract for law enforcement services (see page 4 of the RFP).

**28. Can a division within the city help manage and staff the grant project in partnership with the police? Would it be considered a subcontract?**

There is nothing that prohibits a Lead Agency from delegating a portion of the grants management and staffing duties to a partner agency through a subcontract agreement. Note that the Lead Agency ultimately retains all responsibility for grant compliance.

**29. If the police partner with the sheriffs’ department, would it be considered a joint application?**

Yes, a joint proposal is defined as two or more eligible Applicants (e.g. municipal police departments, county sheriff’s departments, etc.) submitting a proposal, where one is designated as the Lead Agency for contracting purposes (see page 6 of the RFP).

**30. If an applicant is not approved for the first round of funding, will they need to reapply to receive additional funds in FY 2016-17 (if they are approved) or will the original application be used again?**

The Governor’s Proposed Budget for FY 2016-17 includes an additional \$6,000,000 for the Strengthening Grant. If the funding is included in the final 2016-17 budget,

the BSCC will fund additional grants beginning in 2016. Additional grants will be funded from those candidates remaining on the rank-ordered list that the BSCC approves in connection with this RFP. There will not be a new RFP issued for FY 2016-17 funds and therefore, no need to re-apply (see page 6 of the RFP).

**31. What is included in the 30 page Proposal Narrative?**

The Proposal Narrative includes the Project Need, Project Description, Community Engagement and Project Evaluation sections. The narrative must be double-spaced and cannot exceed 30 pages in length. It is at the discretion of the Applicant to determine how to use the total page limit in addressing each section (see pages 17-19 of the RFP).

**32. If an agency would like to donate in-kind services, where should this be reflected on the budget?**

Match (cash and/or in-kind) should be recorded in the Budget Table and in the Budget Narrative (see pages 20-22 of the RFP).

**33. If a Lead Agency plans to collaborate with multiple community partners, how many of the community partners must receive the 30 percent pass through?**

Lead Agencies must pass through a minimum of 30 percent of the total grant award to one or more of the community partners identified in the proposal (see page 4 of the RFP). Lead Agencies have the discretion to determine which and how many of the community partners receive which portion of the 30 percent pass through.

**34. Did the Executive Steering Committee consider setting aside money for disadvantaged communities?**

The Executive Steering Committee considered several options for allocating grant funds. Ultimately the committee agreed to design a statewide competitive process and fund the highest rated proposals.

**35. Is a unified school district considered a governmental agency?**

Yes, a unified school district is considered to be a governmental agency. Therefore, a Lead Agency may include a school district as a community partner for purposes of collaboration, but may not include them when calculating the 30 percent pass through to community partners (see response to question 8).

**36. The City of Los Angeles has multiple police bureaus, can the Los Angeles Police Department submit multiple applications to the grant?**

Eligible Applicants are limited to municipal police departments, sheriff's departments, or cities that contract for police services. Eligible Applicants may submit only one application, either an individual application or as part of a joint application. In this



example, it is the Los Angeles Police Department—and not the individual police bureaus—that would be the Eligible Applicant.

**37. If an applicant overestimates its financial need in its application, will the applicant be penalized and/or have an opportunity to revise its application?**

At the time proposals are scored, there will be no way to determine whether or not an applicant has overestimated its need. Typically, that would not come to light until well after an award has been made and a grantee has been operating for a while. If and when this situation occurred, BSCC staff would work with the grantee toward a mutually acceptable resolution.

**38. What happens if a grantee is unable to spend all of the money awarded to them?**

The BSCC will work diligently to assist awarded projects in the timely expenditure of grant funds. In those instances where awarded projects are still unable to expend all grant funds, the money would revert to the State General Fund.

**39. A police department would like to apply for the Strengthening Grant to provide training on community policing. Where can the department find more information on community policing and trainers?**

Because this is a competitive RFP, the BSCC is unable to endorse specific trainers or recommend specific training curricula. The U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, may be a helpful starting point in finding information on community policing.

**40. Does an agency need to submit original signatures on all Letters of Agreement or will PDFs or other digitally signed letters be acceptable?**

The RFP does not prohibit the use of digital signatures. If possible, original signatures are preferred. Proposals selected for funding that include digital signatures will be required to submit original signatures prior to the start of the grant.

**41. Are current recipients of CalGRIP grant funds prohibited from applying for the Strengthening Grant?**

No, there is nothing in the RFP that prohibits a city receiving CalGRIP grant funds from applying to the Strengthening Law Enforcement and Community Relations grant.

**42. The RFP allows for an Applicant to request up to 10 percent of total grant funds to be designated as "indirect costs." But, BSCC's new draft Grant Administration Guide says that indirect costs should be limited to the "salaries and benefits" of participating personnel. Which is it? Also, if indirect costs are limited to salaries and benefits, is that just the Applicant's personnel**

**or could it cover non-profit personnel or an outside evaluator who is contracted for the project?**

This RFP allows Applicants to request up to 10 percent of the total grant funds. The RFP language always supersedes the BSCC Grant Administration Guide.

**43. In terms of budgeting, does it matter what source of funds is paid to the Community Partner in arriving at the 30 percent requirement? In other words, would the following budget be permissible?**

| <b>Budget Item</b>                   | <b>Grant Funds</b> | <b>Cash Match</b> | <b>Total</b>     |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Salary and Benefits                  | 487,500            |                   | 487,500          |
| Community Partner Contract (30% min) | 75,000             | 150,000           | 225,000          |
| Data Collection (5% min)             | 37,500             |                   | 37,500           |
| <b>Total</b>                         | <b>\$600,000</b>   | <b>\$150,000</b>  | <b>\$750,000</b> |

In the development of this RFP, the Executive Steering Committee was clear that the intent was to make sure the grant funds get down to the community level. Therefore, the sample budget above would not be acceptable. The RFP specifies that 30 percent of the total grant award must be passed through to one or more community partners (see page 4 of the RFP). In the Budget Table, the grant award is represented by the column titled, "Grant Funds." If an Applicant requests **\$600,000** in grant funds, then a minimum of **\$180,000** in grant funds must be passed through to community partners.

**44. Should the 30 percent pass through to Community Partners be calculated as 30 percent of the grant funds or as 30 percent of the total grant (i.e., grant funds plus match)?**

The 30 percent pass through to community partners should be calculated as 30 percent of the grant funds only, not of the total project. If an Applicant requests \$600,000, then \$180,000 must be passed through to one or more community partners. The required match dollars are not factored into the equation.