

## **Body Armor Grant Request**

### **a. Description of the Issue**

The purpose of this request is to support a new broad scale Body Armer Policy and Implementation Program (BA PPE) for the Faulkner County Sheriff's Office Reserve Unit (FCS0RU) located in Faulkner County Arkansas. The Faulkner County Sheriff's Office Reserve Unit will implement a planned and phased approach to achieve effective policy and deployment of body armor. The department is submitting a request to fund 22 body armer and carriers. The total request for this project is \$22,160.75

The FCSO is a full-service law enforcement agency with 22 sworn officers who provide 24-hour Call Out Support for police service, search and rescue, and security for community events to 126,007 citizens covering 647 square miles. Faulkner County was formed on April 12, 1873. The county seat is Conway. The landscape of the county is rolling hills and farmland. Its proximity to Little Rock and to major transportation routes makes it attractive for industry such as light manufacturing. Population growth of the county is at its highest. Three institutions of higher learning are in Conway: Hendrix College, Central Baptist College, and the University of Central Arkansas. Conway is also home to the Arkansas Educational Television Network. The FCSO provides basic law enforcement services as well as functions typical of many sheriff's offices such as animal control, civil process, bailiffs, school resource officer and a jail. The demographic breakdown of Faulkner County is as follows: 79.9% white, 12.2% Black, 4.2% Hispanic, .7% American Indian / Alaska Native, 1.3% Asian, .1% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 3.57% Other and 2.2% two or more races. The median household income is \$52,827 with a poverty rate of 14.4%.

Matrix on Agency Personnel

FCSO is unable to properly fund the FCSORU with any PPE of any kind due to budget restraints. The FCSO is funded largely by property and sales taxes with a small part of the budget funded by fees for service and drug forfeiture. The Sheriff's Office manages to budget and stay within our means to maintain current operations, but we are unable to plan or address any major projects due to lack of funding. Our annual budgets/income have increased over the last 3 to 5 years primarily due to the increase in Sales Tax revenue to our County and being awarded grant funding. Although we have been able to increase our budgets in some of our funding areas, we have been asked to cut our budgets for several years now in our departments that are funded out of the County General Fund (property taxes). We are unable to purchase or enhance equipment, renovate deteriorating buildings, or take any proactive approach to the future of our department due to the lack of funding. Some of the projects that are needed include the following: purchasing additional and updated vehicles for our fleet; updating law enforcement equipment for patrol vehicles, updating IT equipment and software to meet standards for audits and courts; less than lethal platforms.

By implementing a BA program, the FCSORU hopes to develop a safer environment for the Deputies volunteering to protect our community. According to the National Institute for Justice Study-Firearms are one of the most dangerous threats faced by law enforcement officers in the United States. During the past three decades, ballistic-resistant soft body

armor has saved the lives of more than 3,000 police officers. Body armor is critical safety equipment that law enforcement and corrections officers need for personal protection.

NIJ establishes and updates voluntary minimum performance standards for body armor, conducts testing against these standards to ensure that body armor complies with the standards, and sponsors research to improve body armor.

**b. Project Design and Implementation**

The Faulkner County Sheriff's Office will develop, implement, and evaluate a body armor policy and program that will become a sustainable part of agency operations. The goals of this program are to increase improve officer safety, increase successful prosecutions, improve training, and decrease officer injury. This will be accomplished by achieving each of the following objectives through a phased approach and a deliberate process for each objective. There are performance measures tied to each objective.

**Phase One**

***Objective 1 – Outfit all reserve officers with new body armor and carrier***

The reserve department has held a series of community meetings, facilitated by the command staff \*\*community stakeholders' meetings / police & communities together. The team has introduced the plans of the FCSORU to implement a BA project in the community, gauge the acceptance of the project to the community and will solicit information on the public's expectations. The public has been informed of some of the key factors to be considered when formulating policy such as officer safety and officer appearance. The information will also be shared on social media. It is vital that the public recognize this as the department's commitment to transparency.

Next, the FCSORU will meet with other community stakeholders like the District Attorney, the City and Attorneys, local government, the local ACLU chapter, local clergy, and other relevant agencies, to introduce the project. The facilitators will discuss how the body armor will be purchased and rolled out to the officers. For the project to be successful it will be vital to discuss with the groups the importance of the project to public safety, the desired outcome to increase officer and public safety.

Finally, the FCSORU will study the model policies and best practices of other agencies who have previously instituted BA projects. The department will use this information to as a guide to write their policy and procedure for the implementation of the project.

The performance measures for this goal will be:

- A narrative that details any concerns and suggestions learned
- An outline of the policy review points.
- The number and types of groups interacted with, whether the contact was formal or informal, what information was conveyed to the group, and the mode of communication will also be documented.

### ***Objective Two – Develop Department BWC Policy and Procedure***

First, all officers, supervisors and board members will be trained on the policy and procedure for its use. The training will include scenarios designed to demonstrate when officers are required to wear body armor. The department will identify and train on the proper care, maintenance and cleaning of the BA.

The performance measures for this goal will be:

- Number of officers trained.

- Completed training records that include the method and mode of the training, who received the training, the topics covered such as when to wear body armor and how to maintain.
- Records of the attendance of the team of the BA Conference and regional information exchange meeting

## **Phase Two**

### ***Objective Four – Procurement and Deployment***

The FCSORU will complete the procurement process for the BAs, and any other funded equipment, training, and services in a manner compliant with federal and local procurement guidelines. The department will research and assess available BA and Carriers (3) BA vendors. This process is part of the city’s rules and regulations for soliciting a contract from a vendor. The BA that best meets the needs of the department, officers, and community, along with best price will be selected.

Once purchased, the BA will be deployed to all officers. A second “hands-on” training with the BA will be completed with issuance.

The performance measure for this goal will be:

- A within-budget purchase of BA, Carriers, and patches.
- Issuance Records
- Training Records
- Call records / any notes or guidance received from TTA provider.

### **c. Capabilities and Competencies**

The FCSORU has demonstrated the capability necessary to implement a successful BA program. The department has established policies and procedures in place that provide a

framework for agency operations. The policies and procedures are compliant with state requirements. The FCSORU has successfully deployed and managed other projects such as a radio upgrade, The department has also successfully managed other grants such as BWC,

The Sheriff will be responsible for the overall BA Project. The grant reporting and administrative tasks will be managed by Command Staff Implementation will be managed by Commander Harper?

Commander Harper is a business owner and veteran Law enforcement officer with years of experience in policy development and implementation.

LT. Yelich is a medical professional and veteran Law enforcement officer with years of experience in policy development and implementation.

Brian Tyner is the Faulkner County Sheriff's Department Reserve Secretary. Brian is a business owner and veteran Law enforcement officer that has years of experience in handling and maintaining the total budget of a business and the Reserve Unit

The FCSORU is committed to maintaining the BA project into the future. Once the grant period ends, the department pledges to continued use of the body armor well as associated upkeep, maintenance, and training