

Local JAG FY21 Proposal Narrative

City of North Las Vegas Police Department

(a) Description of the Issue

The City of North Las Vegas is proposing to use FY21 Local JAG funding to support projects led by the North Las Vegas Police Department (NLVPD) to prevent crime and increase the department's de-escalation training capacity. The North Las Vegas Police Department services and enforces an estimated population of nearly 250,000 within a 101 square mile radius, responding to more than 325,000 calls for service annually. The Department has five commands divided into 16 divisions, and currently employs a force of 342 police officers and 110 civilians. Since 2000, the cumulative growth rate of North Las Vegas has been 99%, almost doubling the growth rate of the next fastest city in the Las Vegas Valley. The lone minority-majority municipality in Southern Nevada, an estimated 62% of the City of North Las Vegas (CNLV) population is non-White, with a high influence of African American and Latino populations. More than 15% of North Las Vegas residents live below the federal poverty level and only 17% of residents over the age of 25 hold a bachelor's degree or higher. The mission of the NLVPD is to encourage and engage the community to work in tandem to provide a safe, secure, and enjoyable community. This is accomplished by protecting lives and property; maintaining social order by enforcing federal, state, and local laws; working in a collaborative effort with the community to identify problems and disorder; and involving the community in the search for solutions.

The projects proposed for FY21 JAG funding are as follows:

- **Volunteers in Police Services (ViPS) Expansion**

- **De-Escalation Training Capacity Building**

Volunteers in Police Services (ViPS) Expansion

The Volunteers in Police Services (ViPS) Citizen's Patrol Program consists of civilian volunteers trained to support police functions of the North Las Vegas Police Department. The primary objective of the ViPS Citizen's Patrol Program is to prevent crime by mere presence and to identify public hazards. Citizen's Patrol members act as the eyes and ears of the Police Department by identifying suspicious activities, crimes in progress, or dangerous circumstances. Citizen's Patrol members do not take action themselves, but notify the proper authorities for handling of a situation. ViPS duties include business safety checks, property checks, business safety checks, park safety checks, and graffiti abatement. In its current form, the NLVPD ViPS program consists of 20 citizen volunteers. The program is currently managed by Lt. Michael Booker in the XXX division, but lacks the staffing structure and personnel necessary to increase the program's effectiveness in recruiting and retaining high quality volunteers.

JAG funding will be utilized to hire a new ViPS Volunteer Program Coordinator to directly oversee the expansion and enhancement of the ViPS program over the next year. Duties the ViPS Coordinator will be responsible for include: supervising, planning, organizing, and maintaining the day-to day activities of the NLVPD Volunteers in Police Service Program (ViPS); setting goals, objectives, and work standards for the program; assigning volunteers to work units within the Department; developing and implementing training programs; maintaining outreach with various community organizations to maximize community relations; and maintaining records and preparing reports regarding the program; plan and implement activities, awards, and other recognition of volunteers. Funding will also be used for supplies for new and existing ViPS volunteers, including uniforms, communications equipment, and items to support

patrol. This expansion of the ViPS program will not only help deter and prosecute various types of crime (including violent crime), it will also support the NLVPD’s community policing platform by engaging community members and building trust and positive working relationships.

Timeline:

Post, hire, and onboard for the new ViPS Volunteer Coordinator Position	October 2021 – February 2022
Begin active recruitment of new ViPS volunteers.	February 2022 - Ongoing
Train new ViPS volunteers and assign patrols	April 2022 - Ongoing

De-escalation Training Capacity Building

FY21 JAG funding will also be utilized to build de-escalation training capacity within the NLVPD. Prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, the city’s 8% unemployment rate was almost double the national average; as a result of closures and social distancing measures, the City's rate hit over 30% at the end of May, the highest in the nation. These economic indicators directly relate to increases in calls for service in these hardest hit communities, which, in turn, increases the need for a police force sufficiently trained in de-escalation techniques. In 2020, the NLVPD implemented a de-escalation component to its internal training in response to controversial use of police force incidents across the nation. The current module - a 30-minute video - is too brief and incomprehensive to be effective.

The NLVPD will increase available resources for effective de-escalation training by purchasing a set of virtual reality headsets that will create the foundation for ongoing de-escalation instruction. The availability of the VR equipment will enhance de-escalation training for NLVPD officers by providing a cutting edge and flexible way to train and assess officer proficiency. VR provides a more immersive, true-to-life training environment that has been proven to increase learning retention, reduce costs, and eliminate human error. It also provides

real-time data and analytics on training efficacy. The VR hardware acquired with JAG support will be fundamental in increasing NLVPD’s de-escalation capacity and enhancing the safety and outcomes for both police officers and the members of the community they come in contact with in the line of duty.

Timeline:

Complete procurement steps for VR equipment	October – December 2021
Order equipment, receive equipment, and inventory equipment.	January 2022
Train NLVPD Training Division staff on software and develop curriculum for NLVPD officers.	January – April 2022
Begin utilizing VR equipment for NLVPD de-escalation training	May 2022

(b) Project Design and Implementation –

Volunteers in Police Services (ViPS) Expansion

A robust and engaged ViPS volunteer roster has been a strategic goal of the NLVPD since the program was first initiated in 2017. The benefits of a high-quality citizen patrol program are numerous. First, it builds rapport between the police and the community by providing opportunities for residents to support police work and gain inside understanding of the issues and challenges facing the department. Strong community relations – and the increased trust that goes along with them – is a critical element of effective policing. ViPS engages the public directly helping protect the neighborhoods in which they live, providing an enhanced sense of responsibility. It also builds on a central theme of Community Oriented Policing, namely that no single agency can solve complex social problems alone and close cooperation between police and community members leads to increased success in protecting and serving

those communities. Next, citizen patrol programs expand surveillance and monitoring capacity across the jurisdiction. Budgetary and staffing restrictions make it impossible for sworn police to both respond to all calls and perform necessary deterrent patrols simultaneously. The creation of a dedicated and capable citizen patrol expands the reach of deterrent activity and helps stop criminal activity from slipping through the cracks. ViPS volunteers are able to stop crime before it happens by providing a presence that otherwise would be missing, while also aiding in stopping/mitigating the effects of crimes in progress by making reports and serving as good witnesses. Having a dedicated pool of volunteers is also useful during large-scale emergencies or catastrophic events when additional support is needed. Lastly, cultivation of a strong citizen patrol program makes good fiscal sense. The COVID pandemic has altered the global economic landscape and the NLVPD can expect to feel these effects on their already strained budget for the foreseeable future. ViPS achieves a variety of benefits at a very low cost by utilizing volunteer labor. It is a financially responsible approach to increasing neighborhood safety and reducing crime that also benefits from increased community connection.

The ViPS expansion component of the project will result in a full time coordinator, who will work to set goal metrics for the following objectives:

- Recruit and deploy a minimum of “X” new ViPS volunteers from a wide-range of age, ethnic, and geographic demographics within 12 months of the ViPS Volunteer Coordinator being hired.
- Increase total ViPS volunteer hours contributed to X per month
- Maintain ViPS retention rate of X% after the first year of volunteer service.

De-escalation Training Capacity Building

The focus of JAG funds on de-escalation capacity building is part of a larger, region-wide commitment to developing robust, evidence-based de-escalation curriculum for police officers and other law enforcement personnel. The NLVPD Training Division has submitted a proposal under the DOJ's *Community Policing Development (CPD) De-Escalation Training Solicitation* to support a series of regional train-the-trainer events to create a network of evidence-based de-escalation trainers across 53 Southern Nevada law enforcement agencies. The JAG component of acquiring a virtual reality training platform will supplement this larger regional plan and help us achieve the goal of a robust and impactful de-escalation curriculum for NLVPD officers. A bill passed by the Nevada Legislature in 2020 requires each law enforcement agency in the state to examine their specific policies and procedures concerning use of force and force options, and tailor their training program to include techniques for de-escalation. Building on this initial step, the newly passed State Senate Bill 212 requires a peace officer to “use de-escalation techniques and alternatives to the use of force whenever possible or to an extent that is appropriate and consistent with the training of the peace officer.” These legislative mandates will ultimately help close the gap in de-escalation preparedness in Nevada, but do not come with the resources required to achieve their goals. JAG funding will provide the resources necessary to effectively respond to the will of the legislature and, by extension, the citizenry.

The De-escalation Training Capacity Building component of the project will work toward the following objectives:

- Acquisition of a new, virtual reality (VR) de-escalation training simulator.

- Development of a curriculum to be used in conjunction with the VR equipment to train NLVPD officers.
- A 100% de-escalation training completion rate for NLVPD officers and other required staff within one year of deployment of the equipment and developed curriculum.

(b) Capabilities and Competencies

Volunteers in Police Services (ViPS) Expansion

The NLVPD is working closely with its partners to ensure the expansion of the ViPS program meets or exceeds its desired objectives. First, NLVPD is interviewing current ViPS volunteers to identify current program needs and identify strategies for meeting those needs. This data from active volunteers will be used to shape the future of the program and drive much of the new Volunteer Coordinator's work. Additionally, NLVPD is working closely with its neighboring jurisdiction, the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (Metro), to strategize ViPS expansion. Metro has a mature and successful citizen patrol program, and have been working closely with NLVPD staff to share the elements of their program that drive that success. The ViPS program will look to incorporate some of the elements from the Metro program, while ensuring the resulting program is still designed for/responsive to the unique needs of the North Las Vegas community. Lt. Booker will continue to oversee the ViPS program and its implementation to provide continuity and historical institutional knowledge For the program.

De-escalation Training Capacity Building

While a robust de-escalation training program within the NLVPD will be the first of its kind, the NLVPD Training Division has successfully implemented various training initiatives in

support of officer safety and community wellbeing. In 2019, the NLVPD Training Division delivered a total of 34 trainings on topics such as defensive tactics, firearms training, opioid/narcotics training, women's safety, and body worn camera training. In 2020, COVID significantly impacted the training schedule, but the Division still delivered 11 trainings, including an advanced academy for corrections officers, defensive tactics, less lethal instruction, computer voice stress analyzer, and street crimes. Twenty-nine trainings have been delivered thus far in 2021, covering topics such as developing a culture of leadership, trauma management, the Mexican drug cartel, interview and interrogation in narcotics cases, and training instructor development. The Division is working closely with training representatives from 53 sister agencies within the Southern Nevada area on an overarching de-escalation training strategy, which is supported by the acquisition of the requested VR technology. The Division will also work closely with the selected vendor to ensure effective training is provided for NLVPD staff so that the equipment's benefit can be maximized.

(d) Plan for Collecting the Data Required for this Solicitation's Performance Measures –

North Las Vegas staff will be responsible for collecting data and reporting to BJA the progress for each of the proposed projects. This data will be submitted on required reports throughout the grant term. Expenses will be tracked separately for each of the proposed projects. The City has received JAG funding previously and is familiar with the data and reporting requirements.