

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 1, 2011
TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL
FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER *J*
SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF A GRANT APPLICATION TO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SMART POLICING INITIATIVE

ISSUE: Consideration of a grant application to the U.S. Department of Justice to participate in the Smart Policing Initiative (The grant deadline is April 21.).

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

1. Approve the grant application (due April 21, 2011) to the U.S. Department of Justice in the amount of \$300,000, which will provide funds to the Police Department to further institutionalize the Police Department's evidence-based practices;
2. Authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents that may be required; and
3. Affirm that no City funds would be available to fund this program in FY 2012 or future years.

DISCUSSION: The U.S. Department of Justice is offering funding under the Smart Policing Initiative to assist local law enforcement agencies in developing processes and procedures to sustain and support the use of evidence-based policing. This grant request is for \$300,000 and will be expended over a two-year period (Federal FY11 and FY12). Grant funds will be used to further institutionalize the Police Department's evidence-based practices. Specifically, funds will be utilized to provide consultant assistance to incorporate an evidence-based policing philosophy as part of promotional processes. In addition, funds will be used to provide training to new recruits, field training officers, and line officers on the Department's evidence-based policing strategies. The Police Department's required partner in this endeavor is George Mason University. The Police Department will share 5-15% of the grant with George Mason University for necessary support (technical, training etc.).

BACKGROUND: The Smart Policing Initiative (SPI) seeks to build upon concept of “place-based” policing. Several longitudinal projects in the United States and the United Kingdom have demonstrated convincingly that a small number of offenders commit a disproportionate amount of crime. It is also well documented that crime reports and calls for service often cluster predominately at specific locations or narrow, easily-defined areas, and that the most convincing research indicates that “place-based” or “hotspot” policing reduces violent crime and neighborhood disorder. These persuasive findings suggest that effective policing requires a tightly focused, collaborative approach that is measurable; based on sound, detailed analysis; and includes policies and procedures for accountability.

Currently, the Alexandria Police Department relies on the evidence-based Strategic Response System (SRS), which incorporates successful approaches and best practices from other jurisdictions to meet the Police Department’s goal of using sophisticated and ongoing crime analysis data to respond proactively and effectively to new and emerging crime trends. Identified problems and strategies are tracked in order to assess ongoing effectiveness in addressing those issue(s) that have been targeted for proactive and increased response.

The consistent use of preventive and tactical tools that are rooted in a scientific knowledge base of “what works” should be promoted and integrated into daily police work. Inculcating evidence-based policies and procedures in everyday police operations is critically important to an agency’s ability to provide quality law enforcement services.

FISCAL IMPACT: No City match is required to receive grant funds. However, the City is responsible for the normal administrative costs associated with this grant. These costs include financial and reporting oversight provided by the administering agency, as well as by the Office of Management and Budget and the Finance Department. This grant was not anticipated or included in the City Manager’s Proposed General Fund Budget.

STAFF:

Earl Cook, Police Chief

Tim Dickinson, Sector Commander, Patrol Operation Bureau

Elisabeth Wheel, Division Chief, Police, Fiscal Management