

**2024 EDWARD BYRNE MEMORIAL JUSTICE ASSISTANCE GRANT
APPLICATION**

AGENCY: Fort Lauderdale Police Department

AGENCY CONTACT PERSON: Dayna Bhaggan

PROJECT TITLE: Fort Lauderdale Police Upgraded Operational and Investigative Equipment

GOALS, OBJECTIVES & DELIVERABLES: The Fort Lauderdale Police Department intends to utilize its allotment of FY 2024 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program funding to reduce and/or eliminate operational gaps related to human trafficking, background and criminal investigations, as well as replacement of marine unit equipment.

GOALS: To reduce crime and improve public safety

OBJECTIVES:

1. To improve the ability to capture evidence.
2. To improve marine law enforcement response.
3. To improve the efficiency of polygraph examinations.

PROGRAM NARRATIVE:

Project #1 Human Trafficking Investigation Equipment

Description of the Issue: The Fort Lauderdale Police Department's Endangered Persons Unit (EPU) investigates crimes and incidents involving our city's most vulnerable population, individuals often exploited because of their age, disability, or circumstance, e.g. investigations involving missing persons, violent crimes against children, internet crimes against children and human trafficking. Access to technology is imperative to conduct these types of investigations as it has proven to be the most frequent means for human traffickers to identify, stalk and traffic victims. In one sense, it permits detectives to operate in the primary medium that the trafficker uses. Traffickers utilize social media to track victims, distribute images and arrange 'meetings' where victims are forced to perform sex acts. Since the EPU was only launched two years ago, its detectives do not possess investigative tools beyond what a typical investigator would possess. This leaves the EPU detectives at a disadvantage since they do not have specific hardware or software at their disposal to tackle the difficult work of tracking traffickers and victims online.

Project Design and Implementation: Currently, EPU detectives rely on assistance from federal partners and access a free online law enforcement database to track the web activity of traffickers, as it relates to the posting of sexual services on social media. Reliance on external entities to perform internet investigations, when they can find the time, is not in the best interest of the victims who are under constant threat of physical and psychological assault. The project's goal is the identification of subjects that are targeting individuals online for the purposes of labor and/or sex

trafficking; investigation and arrest of said subjects; and referral of trafficking victims to needed services. The requested grant funding will be used for software that can identify and track the online activity of the subjects, two laptops to investigate and communicate with subjects and victims, and for covert audio/video recording equipment to gather evidence during undercover operations. Without access to the requested equipment, commencement or follow up of trafficking investigations will continue to be impacted by the willingness and availability of other agencies to permit EPU detectives to use their equipment.

Capabilities and Competencies: The requested software and hardware items have already been vetted and are familiar to the EPU detectives, which will reduce the time needed to learn how to implement the products. Acquisition of the items will be responsibility of the EPU Sergeant, in coordination with City Procurement and Information Systems Departments.

Plan for Collecting the Data: The EPU Sergeant will be responsible for case management associated with the investigations and securing funding to sustain the annual software subscription beyond the life of this grant. Information Systems Department will maintain the laptop.

Project #2 Police Vessel Sponson Replacement

Description of the Issue: The Fort Lauderdale Police Department's Marine Unit is responsible for providing law enforcement coverage for Fort Lauderdale's beach, intercostal waterway and expansive network of canals. The City serves as primary host to a variety of aquatic related business and activities. These include marinas, waterfront establishments, charter cruises, and boat manufacturing, repair and storage facilities. The City also serves as host to the Fort Lauderdale Air Show, the Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show, the Tortuga Festival and the Winterfest Boat Parade. As a result of the plethora of marine businesses and recreational activities occurring within our uniquely situated municipality, the City of Fort Lauderdale regards marine law enforcement patrols as highly essential to ensuring the safety of our navigational waterways and to maintaining overall public safety within our jurisdiction.

When performing rescues, making citizen contacts or conducting investigations, the police boats must be able to maintain a steady float. A sponson is a feature on any watercraft that extends from the hull or other part of the vessel to aid in stability while floating, or to act as a securing point for other equipment. Unfortunately, the sponson on Marine Boat #14 needs to be secured to the vessel with rope to prevent it from fall apart and is in severe need of repair, jeopardizing the ability of the marine officer to perform his duties.

Project Design and Implementation: Grant funding will be utilized to acquire one sponson to replace the one installed on Marine Boat #14, thereby increasing officer safety, decreasing potential damage to private property and increasing the efficiency of marine law enforcement.

Capabilities and Competencies: Acquisition of the sponson will be responsibility of the Marine Unit Sergeant, in coordination with City Procurement.

Plan for Collecting the Data: The marine officer assigned to Boat #14 will be responsible for maintenance of the vessel and sponson.

Project #3 Polygraph Examination Equipment

Description of the Issue: The polygraph examination is a valuable investigative aid as used in conjunction with, but not as a substitute for, a thorough investigation. The polygraph may be employed, consistent with this policy, to verify, corroborate or refute statements; obtain additional investigative leads; narrow or focus criminal investigations; serve to screen candidates for positions with this or other criminal justice agencies; serve to screen civil service positions with the City as prescribed, among other authorized purposes. The polygraph is an instrument that records certain physiological changes in a person undergoing questioning to obtain truth or deception. It also simultaneously records a minimum of respiratory, conductivity, and cardiovascular activity. The department's Polygraph Examiners are currently utilizing equipment that is approximately 10-13 years old. In fact, the manufacturer has ended production of said equipment and will stop servicing it soon, thereby leaving no options for repair. In an industry where the polygraph is used for forensic, employment, and evidentiary purposes, improved quality and reliability is essential.

Project Design and Implementation: The department's Polygraph Examiners are currently using equipment that is out of warranty and no longer serviceable. This equipment is integral in their ability to conduct over 300 examinations annually. Grant funding will be utilized to acquire new equipment that includes three data acquisition systems (hardware and software), the associated physiological components and 2 laptops. The new equipment will possess current technological advancements with improved operational efficiency and search capabilities. Without the requested equipment, both criminal and background investigations would be severely impacted for this department.

Capabilities and Competencies: Acquisition of the polygraph testing equipment will be the responsibility of the Polygraph Examiners, in coordination with City Procurement and Information Systems Departments.

Plan for Collecting the Data: The Polygraph Examiners will be responsible for maintenance of the testing equipment and Information Systems will be responsible for the laptops.