

**2025 EDWARD BYRNE MEMORIAL JUSTICE ASSISTANCE GRANT
APPLICATION**

AGENCY: Fort Lauderdale Police Department

AGENCY CONTACT PERSON: Dayna Bhaggan

PROJECT TITLE: Fort Lauderdale Police Operational Support Equipment

GOALS, OBJECTIVES & DELIVERABLES: The Fort Lauderdale Police Department intends to utilize its allotment of FY 2025 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program funding to reduce and/or eliminate operational gaps related to old and unreliable equipment utilized by the Police Bicycle Platoon and Bomb Unit.

GOALS: To reduce crime and improve public safety

OBJECTIVES:

1. To improve the ability to provide policing services in untraditional landscapes.
2. To improve the efficiency of response to incidents involving explosive devices.

PROGRAM NARRATIVE:

Project #1 Police Bomb Suit

Description of the Issue: The Fort Lauderdale Police Department Bomb Unit provides law enforcement services, to include IED (improved explosive device) prevention, response and supporting recovery capabilities. This project seeks to address vulnerabilities as outlined by alerts from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Southeast Florida Fusion Center (SEFFC) related to soft target attacks involving explosive devices, specifically at mass gatherings e.g. polling places, sporting events and concerts.

Project Design and Implementation: This project will utilize funding to acquire a bomb suit to be deployed when responding to a critical incident involving a suspected or confirmed explosive devices, incendiary devices, explosive chemicals, pyrotechnics and unstable ammunition/ordnance, thereby reducing the threats to public safety. The Bomb Unit is FBI-accredited and comprised of personnel who are HAZMAT certified by FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency). The Bomb Unit has developed emergency response plans for bomb threats, actual explosive devices, and bombing scenes. They also provide protection support for dignitary visits and special events. Through their continuous training, the Bomb Unit maintains proficiency with specialized bomb disposal tools and equipment as well as participation in CBRNE (Chemical, Biological, Radiological ,Nuclear and Explosive) related training programs.

Acquiring the new bomb suit is force multiplier for the region in terms of an efficient and robust response to a suspected or actual explosive device. Intelligence obtained has warned about the increasing threats posed by terrorists and anarchists/protestors that seek to disrupt economic operations and spread fear amongst the local community to create public chaos. Vehicle ramming in conjunction with the use of improvised explosive devices is an appealing tactic for violent extremist attackers. Targets include pedestrians, law enforcement and crowded public venues, e.g festivals. This is concerning since the City of Fort Lauderdale hosts many large-scale events annually. Intelligence also states that polling places are particularly attractive locations to attackers. The City has 44 polling sites and the Supervisor of Elections main headquarters is located here.

The requested bomb suit contains a fan system that circulates air throughout the suit (essential in South Florida), the helmet has an improved design allowing for a larger face shield, and the ability to hear ambient noise in the surroundings has increased. These features increase the safety and wellbeing of the technician while performing a highly dangerous task.

Capabilities and Competencies: Acquisition of the bomb suit will be responsibility of the Bomb Unit Sergeant, in coordination with City Procurement.

Plan for Collecting the Data: The Bomb Unit Sergeant will be responsible for maintenance of the suit.

Project #2 Police Bicycle Platoon Bikes

Description of the Issue: The Fort Lauderdale Police Department's Bike Platoon was formed to provide a more efficient means to deliver policing services during special events, civil unrest (such as protests and marches) and specialized patrol operations within the city. A bicycle unit can benefit in each of these facets of policing due to ease of mobility through crowds of people, utilizing the bicycle as a mobile barrier and stealthy approaches. Bicycles provide an aspect of policing that cannot otherwise be duplicated. A bicycle can quickly move through crowds of people, traffic and other areas such as stairs and grassy, off-road type of terrain. Additionally, bicycles can approach a subject or area without being detected such as via police vehicle. The department's Bike Platoon is deployed at all large-scale events, such as Tortuga Music Festival, Parades, Spring Break, Memorial Day Weekend, the July 4th Celebration, and during protests. These events attract tens of thousands of people and concentrate them in various locations of the City, typically the beach and downtown, resulting in the inability of public safety personnel to utilize motorized vehicles for safety reasons.

Project Design and Implementation: The Platoon's fleet of bicycles is currently overdue for replacement. Due to our proximity to the beach, the salty conditions result in our bicycles requiring replacement more frequently than other inland areas. Over the years, we have determined the lifecycle of our bicycles to be approximately 5 years. All of the bicycles have exceeded this life cycle and need to be replaced to ensure the ability of officers to respond when needed and to reduce the risk of harm to the officers while using unreliable equipment. Grant funding will be utilized to acquire twenty-one tactical bicycles sponson to replace the old bicycles.

Capabilities and Competencies: Acquisition of the platoon bicycles will be responsibility of the Bike Platoon Sergeant, in coordination with City Procurement.

Plan for Collecting the Data: The Platoon Team members are each responsible for the maintenance of their bikes.