

Proposal Narrative

Description of the Issue

The City of Lowell is the 5th largest city in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, with approximately 115,500 residents. Lowell is a very diverse community; it has been estimated that nearly one-third of residents have emigrated from a variety of countries including Cambodia, Brazil, Portugal, and several African nations. The Lowell Police Department (LPD) consists of 223 sworn full-time police officers (as of 3/31/26) who are responsible for patrolling 14.5 square miles. Additionally, 103 full and part-time civilian staff members support operations in various capacities including: dispatch, records management, community outreach, grant and fiscal management, research and development, crime analysis, and management information systems.

Since the mid-1990's, the LPD has been considered a leader in community policing. In fact, the LPD was previously part of the Advancing 21st Century Policing Initiative, which was a small cohort of law enforcement agencies from across the nation that have made significant strides in implementing the recommendations of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing. Civilian staff members have been integral in allowing the department to implement evidence-based, problem-oriented policing strategies, by allowing the department to deploy more sworn officers in patrol and investigative services. Over the years, these civilian staff members have become instrumental members of this organization, with departmental expertise that assists the LPD in achieving its overall goal of making Lowell the safest city possible for those who live, work, and visit the city. The LPD currently maintains numerous critical civilian staff members completely with state and federal grant funding. Since 2008, the City of Lowell, like many cities nationwide, has been struggling financially. The City is also currently facing several required increases in the budget that make it difficult to provide additional funding to civilian

personnel. This includes increases in pension assessments, personnel costs, as well as “Cherry Sheet” assessments. Additionally, the City of Lowell is in the process of building a new high school. The construction project was originally estimated to cost approximately \$343M; however, due to complications and rising material costs, the project is now projected to cost about \$400M. As a result of these increases as well as required increases in the LPD’s budget, there is limited room for civilian personnel in the department’s budget.

Project Design and Implementation

This grant funding will primarily be used to support the partial salaries of three civilian employees, one from the Crime Analysis and Intelligence Unit and two from the Research and Development Unit.

The LPD’s Crime Analyst in the Crime Analysis and Intelligence Unit reviews, collates, analyzes, and disseminates key information in support of the LPD’s operational, administrative, and investigative efforts. The Analyst will provide bulletins and crime-related updates to command staff members on a regular basis. She will also create crime bulletins related to repeat offenders, active investigations, and officer safety information and disseminate them throughout the department. The Crime Analyst is essential to the LPD’s overall mission as her work assists the department to effectively deploy officers to hot spot locations and ensures that the LPD is implementing data-driven approaches to proactively prevent crime.

The Research Analyst and Program Manager in the Research and Development Unit work on all the LPD’s grant-funded programs. During the grant performance period, the Research Analyst will collect and analyze data to ensure that all evidence-based programs are meeting stated goals and objectives. She will also be responsible for analyzing the criminal

justice and evidence-based programs within the department and researching other evidence-based programs that could be implemented in the future. The Program Manager will dedicate approximately 5% of her time to tracking and analyzing data to be used in programmatic reports, completing BJA reports, submitting required documentation and responding to requests from BJA. The Program Manager will also communicate with internal partners and external organizations related to the FY 2025 JAG grant program.

In addition to retaining civilian staff members, a portion of funding will be utilized for travel to training opportunities. The LPD feels it is important to support professional development throughout its staff, as this will lead to better equipped, more productive employees. For FY 2025, the department will send three Crime Analysts to a conference hosted by the Massachusetts Association of Crime Analysts (MACA). The Crime Analysts attending this event will have the opportunity to attend breakout sessions, network events, and exhibitor showcases. This training will greatly benefit the Crime Analysts by assisting them in developing vital skills for their positions.

Due to a limited budget, a small portion of funds will also be used to purchase a translation service, necessary office supplies for civilians and sworn officers, and Canva. The translation service will be used by officers when communicating with individuals who speak English as their second language. As mentioned, Lowell is a diverse community, and it is estimated that approximately 43% of individuals over the age of five speak a language other than English at home.¹ The translation service will allow the department to address potential language barriers when communicating with residents or visitors who do not speak English or speak

¹ U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). QuickFacts Lowell city, Massachusetts.
<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/lowellcitymassachusetts>

English as a second language. Additionally, the department will purchase office supplies including toner, pens, paper, and folders. The supplies will be used by sworn officers and civilian personnel in the department. Lastly, the department will use funding to cover its Canva subscription. Canva is a graphic design tool that is utilized by the department to create newsletters, flyers for community events, and social media posts. Grant funds will only be used to cover the subscription cost during the grant performance period.

Capabilities and Competencies

The LPD has a long history of grant management, crime and research analysis, and data tracking. The department has received over \$15M in federal grant funding since 2007. Additionally, the LPD's Public Safety Research and Planning Director, who oversees all grant related projects, has been with the department for about 18 years. She will supervise the Research Analyst, who will be responsible for collecting data on grant programs, as well as the Program Manager, who will be responsible for analyzing performance data and submitting the grant reports. The data collected will include information on community involvement, supplies, training and conferences, and overall amount of funds used.