

2009 Edward Byrne Memorial JAG Grant Narrative, Attachment 1

The Mooresville Police Department requests \$37,157 to utilize in the implementation of an in-car camera program. While this program will not directly create jobs, it can contribute to their preservation by providing an objective witness to officer-citizen interactions. In effect, jobs can be preserved by offering evidence that would otherwise not be available arising from citizen complaints. The preservation of jobs is further enhanced by generating revenue for our chosen vendor, Digital Ally. This will create an opportunity for them to continue building their company by increasing sales, etc. While this falls in line with the purpose(s) of the recovery act, it is not the greatest impact. The greatest impact of the implementation of an in-car camera program is in the area of crime control.

The requested funds will basically be used toward program start-up. The ultimate goal of the program will be to equip at least forty-five (45) police cruisers with Digital Ally DVM-500 model in-car cameras. The total cost of this program will range from \$231,294 to \$251,699 depending upon between forty-three (43) and forty-seven (47) vehicles ultimately being outfitted. The program will begin with outfitting fifteen (15) vehicles in FY 2009-2010 and the requested funds will provide a portion of the approximate \$88,544 which will be necessary to complete this.

The goal of the program will be to outfit the forty-five (45) cruisers with the cameras. The measurable performance objectives attached to this goal are as follows:

- 1) Equip fifteen (15) patrol vehicles with in-car cameras during FY 2009-2010
- 2) Equip fifteen (15) patrol vehicles with in-car cameras during FY 2010-2011
- 3) Equip fifteen (15) patrol vehicles with in-car cameras during FY 2011-2012

There is initial start-up cost with the program that can contribute to activities that can begin expeditiously. The installation of software (\$1295), installation of access points (two at \$8000 combined), wireless upgrades (\$500), and wireless software installation for uploads (\$1495) must occur for the program to initiate. The Mooresville Police Department will utilize the Town of Mooresville's Finance Department for the drawdown of all funds resulting from this grant as it is within their scope of responsibility to administer grant funding once the funds are allocated by the Federal government.

Needs Statement:

The implementation of an in-car camera program will yield several benefits for the Mooresville Police Department and the citizens it serves. A 2003 joint study by the IACP and COPS resulted in numerous benefits to starting or enhancing an in-car camera program. One of the most notable is that citizen complaints can either be dismissed or handled at the supervisory level as all parties can be afforded the opportunity to view video from a traffic or investigatory stop. This allows for documentation of officer and citizen behavior.

The in-car camera also may contribute to an individual officer's perception of his or her personal safety. The cameras are useful for self-critique and for training. The cameras are valuable tools for field training new officers in that they can view their positive and negative behaviors in a

controlled environment with critique from a training officer. The study showed that (33%) of surveyed officers felt an increase in their level of safety.

In-car cameras can be helpful in deescalating potentially dangerous situations. Nearly half of surveyed officers reported that citizens became less aggressive when they learned they were being videotaped. The cameras can also exonerate officers who have complaints lodged against them. This increases job satisfaction and creates a sense of personal as well as professional security. Officers that do not have to worry about frivolous complaints were found to be more likely to engage in increased traffic enforcement. This is a direct benefit in the area of crime control. The cameras are also beneficial in the instances where there are conduct issues on the part of the officer. This enables more expedient internal review of complaints when investigators are able to review the stop in question.

Establishing an in-car camera program can be particularly helpful when defending use of lawsuits stemming from high liability areas including use of force and pursuits. Attorneys representing agencies saddled with defending these lawsuits are in support of camera programs. In most instances, the cameras are able to show that an accused officer's actions were lawful and within departmental guidelines. The cameras serve to decrease the amount of time spent in investigation and litigation of circumstances surrounding high-liability incidents.

Community perception is also an important factor when considering implementation of an in-car camera program. The joint study determined that (94%) of those surveyed supported the use of in-car cameras. It is notable that (51%) of those surveyed remarked that their behavior would likely change if they were aware they were being recorded and (48%) remarked that they would be less likely to file complaints against officers if they knew the contact was recorded. The single greatest finding was that citizens support and actually expect that police cruisers are equipped with in-car cameras.

There is a benefit associated with in-car cameras concerning criminal prosecution. The IACP partnered with the National District Attorney's Association and the American Prosecutors Research Institute in conducting a survey of prosecutors. Of those surveyed, (91%) used video evidence captured from in-car cameras in court and (58%) reported that their overall court time was reduced. Overall (93%) of surveyed prosecutors rated the use of in-car cameras as either successful or highly successful. They found the video particularly useful in the prosecution of traffic and narcotics cases, vehicular pursuits, assaults on officers, and domestic cases. As previously noted, value was found regarding defending civil litigation against law enforcement agencies.

Finally, in-car cameras are an invaluable tool for ensuring accountability, integrity, and professionalism. The cameras provide an unbiased witness to officer actions. Officers surveyed responded that they were more likely to be mindful of their conduct and would strive to remain professional while they are being videotaped. Therefore, the cameras provide the benefits of modified citizen and officer behavior while providing for an objective view by police administrators.

The Mooresville Police Department is committed to the highest level of professionalism in our interactions with the public. The organization is totally committed to making the Town of

Mooresville a safe place to live and work. It is the position of the agency that implementing an in-car camera program will be as beneficial for the department, officers, and citizens as study participants indicated in the joint IACP/COPS study.