

**CITY OF EL PASO, TEXAS
AGENDA ITEM
DEPARTMENT HEAD'S SUMMARY FORM**

AGENDA DATE: 01/30/24

PUBLIC HEARING DATE:

CONTACT PERSON(S) NAME AND PHONE NUMBER: Executive Assistant Chief Silva 915-212-4306

DISTRICT(S) AFFECTED: All

STRATEGIC GOAL: 2-Set the Standard for a Safe and Secure City

SUBGOAL: 2.1-Maintain standing as one of the nation's top safest cities.

SUBJECT:

The El Paso City Council authorizes the submission to the Office of the Governor of the State of Texas, Criminal Justice Division, grant application number 4365503, for the City of El Paso Police Department project identified as "Body Worn Camera Grant Program FY2025" to provide financial assistance to the City of El Paso. Requesting \$609,580.78, which requires a cash match by the City of \$203,193.59 for a total project amount of \$812,774.37. Grant period will be September 1, 2024-August 31, 2025.

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION:

The El Paso Police Department will utilize the funds from this grant opportunity to continue to support the Departments Body Worn Camera program which outfitted every patrol and traffic officer with Body Worn Cameras.

PRIOR COUNCIL ACTION:

The grant application for FY24 Body Worn Camera was approved by city council on 1/31/2023.

AMOUNT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:

NA

HAVE ALL AFFECTED DEPARTMENTS BEEN NOTIFIED? ☒ YES ☐ NO

PRIMARY DEPARTMENT: Police

SECONDARY DEPARTMENT: IT

*****REQUIRED AUTHORIZATION*****

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Chief Peter F. Pacillas



(If Department Head Summary Form Is Initiated by Purchasing, client department should sign also)

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the City of El Paso (the “City”) is eligible to apply for grants through the Criminal Justice Division of the Office of the Governor of the State of Texas (“CJD”); and

WHEREAS, the El Paso City Council seeks to receive grant funding through the CJD grant/application number 4365503 for the El Paso Police Department project identified as “Body Worn Camera Grant Program FY2025”; and

WHEREAS, the El Paso City Council designated the City Manager or his designee as the City’s authorized official.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EL PASO:

1. **THAT**, the El Paso City Council authorizes the submission to the Office of the Governor of the State of Texas, Criminal Justice Division, grant application number 4365503, for the City of El Paso Police Department project identified as “Body Worn Camera Grant Program FY2025” to provide financial assistance to the City of El Paso.
2. **THAT**, the City of El Paso shall provide all matching funds for said grant, if applicable;
3. **THAT**, the City Manager or designee is authorized to apply for, accept, reject, alter, and/or terminate said grant; and
4. **THAT**, the City Council agrees that in the event of loss or misuse of said grant funds, the City of El Paso will return all funds for said grant to the State of Texas Office of the Governor, Criminal Justice Division.
5. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT**, the City Manager or designee is authorized to sign any related paperwork, including but not limited to, the actual grant contract, the authorization of budget transfers, and/or revisions to the operation plan, as well as any grant amendments, corrections, or extensions of the grant agreement which increase, decrease, or de-obligate program funds, provided that no additional City funds are required.

(Signatures begin on Following Page)

APPROVED this _____ day of _____ 2024.


CITY OF EL PASO

Oscar Leaser
Mayor

ATTEST:


Laura D. Prine
City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



Eric Gutierrez
Senior Assistant City Attorney

APPROVED AS TO CONTENT:



Peter F. Pacillas
Chief of Police

Project Abstract:

The El Paso Police Department (EPPD) will utilize the Body-Worn Camera Grant Program to continue funding the lease agreement for the Body-Worn Cameras and accessories leased in 2022 for its patrol and traffic officers. The cameras and accessories leased with this grant allow for patrol and traffic officers full access to Body-Worn Cameras. Providing Body-Worn Cameras and accessories to all patrol and traffic officers will ensure that all officers in the field can record and capture digital video evidence of citizen and officer interactions.

Problem Statement:

The El Paso Police Department serves the City of El Paso which was incorporated in 1873. El Paso is the 22nd largest city in the United States and the 6th largest city in Texas. It is the largest metropolitan city on the U.S.-Mexico border, and spans over 255 square miles with a population just under 700,000. El Paso is bordered by the City of Juarez, Mexico, and the State of New Mexico. The City of El Paso's population is approximately 81% Hispanic, 12% White, 4% Black or African American and 3% other race, according to the 2020 US Census. The City of El Paso receives a large number of people visiting and working in our city daily. The EPPD is the largest local law enforcement agency in the area and consists of 1,112 sworn law enforcement employees. These officers are distributed throughout the city in five regional command centers, soon to be a sixth opening in April 2024 that handle the patrol functions of that particular area. The El Paso Police Department initially leased 738 body-worn cameras and accessories. However, all officers of the department are called upon to assist in patrol or traffic related functions. The El Paso PD is requesting additional assistance in funding to continue to fund the existing cameras and assist with the purchase of 500 additional cameras, licenses, and essential equipment such as mounts, and docking stations. This will ensure that every sworn officer will have access to a BWC and associated license.

As stated in the original application the EPPD recognizes that the use of Body-Worn Cameras help improve the quality of service to the citizens of El Paso. The use of Body-Worn Cameras increases public safety and operational efficiency. Outfitting all patrol and traffic with Body-Worn Cameras provides quality digital evidence to assist with the prosecution of offenses. Additionally, the use of Body-Worn Cameras provide the following benefits; they are important crime-related evidence to assist in the prosecution of offenders. The use of Body-Worn Cameras allows for evidence and events to be captured and saved digitally to assist in the prosecution of offenses. Body-Worn Cameras provide for another means of documentation of an incident to corroborate an officer's testimony. Body-Worn Cameras can increase transparency and accountability of law enforcement to the communities they serve by providing a digital record of officers' interactions with the public available for review. This can improve public relations, confidence, and police legitimacy in the community. Lastly, Body-Worn Cameras can assist in the resolution of complaints against police officers. If officer's interactions are recorded, this allows the department quick review and objective analysis of an incident in question that either may substantiate or unfound a complaint of misconduct. Funding from this grant will continue the lease of body-worn cameras and accessories for the El Paso Police Department.

Supporting Data:

In 2023 the El Paso Police Department responded to over 173,000 calls for service. There were over 94,000 officer initiated calls for service. Over 34,000 NIBRS Group A crimes were reported in 2023. The

El Paso Police Department made over 14,000 arrests in 2023 and anticipates similar numbers of activity in future years. During the year of 2023, with the deployment of the body-worn camera program, the El Paso Police Department captured over 393,000 videos from the newly acquired body-worn cameras.

Project Approach & Activities:

One of the City of El Paso's goals is setting the standard for a safe and secure city, and its mission is to deliver exceptional services to support a high quality of life and place for our community. The funding from this grant will allow the El Paso Police Department to continue the deployment and use of Body-Worn Cameras and accessories. EPPD's objective is to provide a Body-Worn Camera to every officer working in patrol and traffic functions. The Body-Worn Cameras are issued to all patrol and traffic sections and those units responding directly to public calls for assistance. In the last year, since the initial deployment of the BWCs the department has learned that every officer needs a license and a camera to fully perform their duties. Since all sworn personnel are subject to working field assignments, all sworn personnel need a BWC and its associated license. The body-worn cameras increase the amount of officer, citizen interactions and recorded to document incidents. In addition, they increase the amount and quality of digital evidence available for prosecutions of offenses and officer testimony. Increasing accountability of officers and the public's confidence that officers are delivering exceptional services to citizens. Supervisors, Internal Affairs, and appropriate investigative sections will have direct access to view videos as necessary for quality control purposes and to ensure that events recorded are properly categorized by incident type and case number, submitted as evidence and stored for appropriate retention periods. Additionally, body-Worn Camera video will be available to the District Attorney, County Attorney, and Municipal Court for prosecution and open records request to the public, media, and other interested parties.

Capacity & Capabilities:

The El Paso Police Department employs 1,112 commissioned police officers. Starting in January 2023, the EPPD began its phased deployment of BWC to all patrol officers at each of the 5 regional commands, the traffic division, and units that frequently engage in calls for service with the public such as the Metro Unit, Gang Unit, and Crisis Intervention Team. The EPPD completed this phase of distribution of BWC in June of 2023. The EPPD also upgraded and integrated our current in-car video systems to seamlessly pair with the deployed BWC. The EPPD is experienced in managing digital video recording system software, distributing videos and evidence as necessary to the District Attorney, County Attorney, State prosecutors, municipal court, and the public via open records requests.

Performance Management:

The goal of the El Paso Police Department with funding from this grant is to deploy additional Body-Worn Cameras and accessories to every sworn employee. Success would be measured by 100% deployment of officers in the field utilizing Body-Worn Cameras and accessories. The EPPD would track the Body-Worn Cameras through line supervisors conducting equipment inspections at shift briefings. Additionally, supervisors would have direct access to downloaded evidentiary digital evidence while approving offense reports. Supervisors will also have access to videos to conduct monthly audits of the camera's use and review of complaints. EPPD Digital Video Recording Systems staff will manage the administration of the digital evidence software of Body-Worn Camera videos. Additionally the DVRS unit oversees the entire camera program for the department. We handle all video related open records

requests from the public and government entities and follow state law on the release and retention of records. We conduct monthly audits of videos to ensure proper categorization for accurate retention purposes.

Target Group:

The target group for this requested funding is the citizens and visitors to the City of El Paso that the EPPD serves daily. The cameras purchased will be used by the EPPD in patrol operations and units regularly assigned to conduct traffic enforcement while keeping El Paso a safe and secure city. El Paso has a population of over 680,000 residents and is bordered by the city of Juarez, Mexico, and the State of New Mexico.

Evidence-Based Practices:

The El Paso Police Department Digital Video Recording Systems unit will ensure continued use of the existing deployed Body-Worn Cameras and further deployment to all sworn personnel. The EPPD has currently deployed these cameras to each of its 5 regional commands. The EPPD has successfully used past experience with a limited amount of BWC and integrated in-car systems to successfully deploy the new systems and BWC on a much larger scale during the year of 2023. In 2023 the EPPD has recorded over 393,000 Body-Worn Camera videos and handled over 2,900 requests for video from prosecutors, outside agencies, and open records requests.