

Project Narrative

1. School Safety Planning Efforts

As discussed in greater detail in the sections below, this project will improve the quality and flow of information that is used by Nevada's school resource officers, its Fusion Centers, and others to assess threats to Nevada's schools. The project is part of a comprehensive plan, initiated by Attorney General Adam Paul Laxalt, to make Nevada's schools a safe and secure learning environment for students statewide. On March 14, 2018, after the high-school shooting in Parkland, Florida, Attorney General Laxalt convened a special law enforcement summit to gather Nevada officials and jointly assess the vulnerabilities of Nevada's schoolchildren. Law enforcement officials, school resource officers, educators, school administrators, and physical security experts were among the nearly 100 people who attended the summit for the purpose of discussing a range of school safety topics. Following the summit, the Attorney General's office produced a 25-page report, plus appendices, that addressed 7 major topics and numerous subtopics, and offered associated recommendations for improving the physical security of Nevada's schools and the overall safety and well-being of its student population.

Many of the report's recommendations pertain to training, communication, and coordination. Discussion at the summit revealed that Nevada's law enforcement community currently works well with educators and school administrators, and routinely participates in training exercises and drills that are specifically designed to address the potential threats posed by active assailants who target school children. In fact, Nevada's two most populous counties, Washoe County and Clark County, have school district police departments that work closely with educators and school administrators on training, communication, and threat assessment. Although Nevada's

rural counties do not have school police departments, the law enforcement officials in those counties generally have good working relationships with teachers and administrators. In some of the more densely populated regions of rural Nevada, sheriff's offices and police departments designate officers to work in the schools as school resource officers. While they are not directly employed by the rural county school districts, these officers tend to form close working relationships with educators and administrators, thus facilitating positive communications between law enforcement and schools.

Fusion Centers provide an added layer of security through their interactions with schools and law enforcement agencies. Fusion Centers are collaborative efforts of two or more agencies engaged in the collection, analysis, and dissemination of actionable intelligence information to anticipate and prevent criminal acts. Nevada has two Fusion Centers: the Southern Nevada Counter Terrorism Center for Clark County (SNCTC); and the Nevada Threat Analysis Center (NTAC) for Nevada Counties other than Clark County.

SNCTC has an agent devoted specifically to assessing threats to schools, and has further implemented a "School Violence Initiative" that aims to prevent school shootings—as well as threats such as fights—by monitoring social media 24 hours a day. Although the Nevada Threat Analysis Center does not have an officer devoted solely to assessing school-related threats, it too employs various analytical tools to assess and respond to threats against Nevada's schools. Both of the Fusion Centers benefit from the hundreds of tips received through the SafeVoice program, a partnership between the Nevada Departments of Education and Public Safety. The SafeVoice program encourages Nevada students to download and utilize a smartphone app that can be used to send anonymous tips to law enforcement. Submissions are

monitored 24/7, and allow for the early identification of behavior that, if not addressed, could become dangerous or criminal.

To further facilitate and improve the flow of information that can be used to assess threats to Nevada's school children, the Attorney General's office has specifically recommended that the State of Nevada make overdue technological upgrades and improvements to the Central Repository for Nevada Records of Criminal History (Central Repository). Housed within the Nevada Department of Public Safety, the Central Repository compiles and manages records of arrest and dispositions originating from criminal justice agencies¹ within Nevada. School resource officers, the Fusion Centers, and other law enforcement officers use the systems of the Central Repository to access criminal history information, and thereby assess whether suspects or others persons of interest may pose a threat of violence to teachers, students, administrators, or others. The Central Repository also manages the Point of Contact (POC) program on behalf of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Criminal Background Check (NICS) office. In managing the POC program, trained members of the Central Repository's staff determine whether the proposed transfer of a firearm by a federally-licensed firearms dealer to a consumer would violate state or federal law. The records housed by the Central Repository must be as current and comprehensive as possible because they serve a critical public safety function and ultimately make Nevada's schools safer when properly accessed and used for purposes of threat assessment and to keep firearms out of the hands of dangerous individuals.

Despite the important public safety function of the Central Repository, its staff currently faces the formidable challenge of collecting, processing, interpreting, compiling, and maintaining records of criminal history that are generated by hundreds of criminal justice agencies spread

¹ Criminal justice agencies as used in this application include law enforcement, prosecuting attorneys, and courts.

throughout 17 discrete jurisdictions. Because Nevada's criminal justice agencies do not employ a common system for formatting, uploading and/or transmitting records to the Central Repository, much of the work of the staff at the Central Repository involves manual data entry, visual inspection and interpretation of records, and constant person-to-person communication with staff from offices of law enforcement, prosecuting attorneys, and courts. The Central Repository is comprehensive and reliable, and because it supplements NICS as a means of determining eligibility for firearm transfers, it provides Nevada with screening capabilities that are superior to those of the many states that do not participate in the FBI's POC program.

However, the current process of compiling and maintaining records of criminal history is labor intensive and would benefit significantly from technological upgrades. These would include, most importantly, a single data transmission system with which the Central Repository could seamlessly interface when processing electronic records from designated local points of contact within Nevada's criminal justice network. Criminal justice functions and responsibilities in Nevada are dispersed among numerous agencies and courts at both the county and municipal level and are funded through a variety of sources. That the system is highly decentralized presents financial and organizational challenges for those who must collect and manage records at the state level in a way that facilitates information sharing with those who need it, such as school resource officers. Technology offers a means to establish a more cohesive partnership between all of the participating state and local agencies and units of local government, thereby improving the availability of information to those who would be working to keep our children safe.

In consultation with the Department of Public Safety (DPS) and the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), the Office of the Attorney General is applying for the SVPP grant in order

to engage a technical consultant for the purpose of proposing technological solutions to current systems that impede or complicate the process of exchanging data in real time. Utilizing its expertise in the field of information technology and criminal justice information systems, the consultant would provide product information, technical specifications, and cost estimates for the acquisition and implementation of a system or systems that will automate and expedite the transfer and exchange of criminal history information. Since it will identify and evaluate available products and technology, probable costs, and technical challenges, a consulting contract of this nature is the critical first step in a larger project to upgrade the systems through which criminal justice agencies exchange criminal history data and share it with the Central Repository. The resulting information from the consulting contract will be presented to the Nevada Legislature, preferably during the 2019 legislative session as time permits, so that legislators can design a cost-effective plan to effect the needed changes to the current systems.

2. Funding Request and Integration

The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) seeks funding not to exceed \$375,000 for the purpose of hiring a technical consultant to propose technological solutions to current systems that impede and complicate the exchange of data in real time. Utilizing its expertise in the field of information technology and criminal justice information systems, the consultant would provide product information, technical specifications, and cost estimates for the acquisition and implementation of data exchange systems, as well as for training the state and local employees who will operate and maintain the systems. Consistent with past practices and approvals, settlement monies administered by the Office of the Attorney General will supply the required matching funds. With the cooperation and assistance of the Department of Public Safety (DPS) and the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), the OAG will, through the normal bidding

process, engage a technical consultant to advise the State of Nevada on how to upgrade the systems through which criminal justice agencies exchange criminal history information data and share it with the Central Repository.

Using these systems, the Central Repository compiles and manages records of arrest and disposition originating from criminal justice agencies within Nevada. The Central Repository relies upon these records to perform background checks on the transfer of firearms, and to respond to queries by law enforcement officers regarding the criminal history of suspects and others. However, the current systems are in need of technological updates. Such technology improvements will allow for the transfer of information between criminal justice agencies and the Central Repository without cumbersome and labor intensive data entry.

In furtherance of its mission to conduct background checks and support law enforcement investigations and field operations, the Central Repository collects criminal justice information from criminal justice agencies in 17 different county jurisdictions. These jurisdictions do not employ a common system for interfacing with the Central Repository's systems. In 2011, DPS and AOC engaged MTG Management Consultants, LLC (MTG) to offer recommendations on how to improve the transmission of criminal history information between criminal justice agencies and the Central Repository. MTG's study and its resulting report were dedicated in large part to improving business processes in order to achieve greater efficiencies. As a result of the study, the State of Nevada incorporated certain of its recommendations using the Multi-County Integrated Justice Information System (MC-IJIS). To build upon the 2011 study and address deficiencies in MC-IJIS, the OAG seeks funding for a second contract to provide recommendations for automating business processes and exchanging criminal history information in real time using the latest technology.

Currently, the AOC operates and maintains MC-IJIS for the purpose of transmitting to DPS and DMV the records that are generated by many of the *courts* throughout the state. In the 2011 report, MTG recommended that a similar solution be expanded and used by criminal justice agencies statewide. Attached as “Appendix A” is an excerpt from the report where MTG discussed the various models that were then available to connect Nevada’s criminal justice agencies to the Central Repository. At page 27, MTG recommended that Nevada “take advantage of solutions that are already in place and implement a regionalized integration model.” With this recommendation in mind, a consultant could evaluate whether an expansion of MC-IJIS is still the best solution or if technology has improved enough to offer a better alternative. The work that MTG originally proposed in 2011 was costly and impractical given the prevailing economic conditions and revenue projections. In 2018, the State of Nevada is in a much better position to evaluate the projected costs of new technology and compare them with the costs, burdens and risks associated with the cumbersome manual processes that are currently in place.

In summary, this project represents the initial phase of a larger project to ensure that the Central Repository has the most current and accurate information available when it performs background checks and provides criminal history information to the Fusion Centers, school resource officers, and other persons who are authorized to access criminal history information. The improvements will ultimately improve the quality and flow of information that is used to assess threats to Nevada’s schools.

3. Management and Implementation Plan

The OAG will award and manage a consulting contract with a highly-qualified firm having expertise in the fields of management processes, information technology, and criminal justice

information systems. Contingent upon its receipt of grant funding, the OAG will award the consulting contract as soon as practicable and will hold the consultant to a strict timeline with the goal of presenting recommendations and cost estimates to the Nevada Legislature during the 2019 legislative session.

4. Sustainability Plan

Because the grant and matching funds will be spent over a relatively short period of time in furtherance of a well-defined, short-term objective, sustainability will not be an issue. As noted above, the OAG will manage the consulting contract (as described above). The contract will build upon the work that was performed in 2011 by MTG Management Consultants, LLC, and the OAG will hold the contractor to strict performance timelines and benchmarks with the goal of providing recommendations and cost estimates to the Nevada Legislature during the 2019 legislative session. The objective is to produce a template that can be used to modernize and automate the systems through which criminal justice agencies exchange criminal history information and share it with the Central Repository so that information needed by school resource officers is more complete and available in real time.