

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT VEHICLE FOR NORTH TEXAS SHERIFF'S CRIMINAL INTERDICTION UNIT**

### **Description of Project/Initiative and Issues to be Addressed**

The seriousness of the drug problem in the United States can hardly be overstated. Illicit drugs, as well as the transnational and domestic criminal organizations that traffic them, represent significant threats to public health, law enforcement, and national security. According to the 2018 National Drug Threat Assessment, drug-poisoning deaths are at their highest recorded level and are the leading cause of injury death in the US, outnumbering deaths by firearms, motor vehicle crashes, suicide, and homicide. Drug sales account for billions of dollars in illicit proceeds annually and result in criminal activity affecting public safety from the large criminal organizations who manufacture and transport narcotics to the end users who commit ancillary crimes, such as robbery, theft, burglary, or even homicide, in order to finance a “fix”.

The connection between drug abuse and crime is well researched and documented. Beyond threats associated with trafficking and associated crimes – money laundering, smuggling, violence associated with competition for drug markets – criminal alliances are increasingly being formed between narcotics networks, terrorist groups, and other large criminal organizations to move operatives, weapons / materials, and even humans for slave or sex-trafficking.

Additionally, at the end user level, it is well known that individuals who use illicit drugs are more likely to commit crimes, and many offenses (e.g., assault, sexual assault, homicide, and prostitution) are committed by individuals under the influence at the time of the offense. Even if the offender is not under the influence, many commit crimes – such as burglary, robbery, and

theft – to get money to obtain drugs. Between the crimes committed because of the influence of drugs, drug-related criminal offenses, and crimes in which possession of illegal substances is the crime, the role of drugs in crime is extensive and continues to grow. In their 2010 report, the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University showed that 85% of inmates throughout the nation were substance-involved and 65% met the DSM-IV medical criteria for substance abuse or addiction. Additionally, the report noted that alcohol and drugs were involved in 78% of violent crimes and 83% of property crimes, and illicit drugs were implicated in 75% of incarcerations.

According to the annual Texas Department of Public Safety Crime in Texas Reports, the overall statewide index crime rate has decreased for the past three years. However, during the same period, arrests for drug abuse - sale and manufacturing, as well as possession - has increased. While the index crime rate for the state has decreased, it has increased each year for the Collin County Sheriff's Office (CCSO).

<b>Rate per 100,000</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
Texas Index Offense Rate	3,233.3	3,185.2	2,975.0
Texas Drug Abuse Rate	489.2	517.6	520.2
Texas Drug Sale & Manufacturing Rate	63.1	59.2	67.9
Texas Drug Possession Rate	426.3	458.3	452.2
Collin County SO Index Offense Rate	869.1	895.6	937

CCSO received an increasing number of calls for service and the number of illegal substance-related offenses investigated has increased 60% since 2015. Over the same period, CCSO has investigated 2,019 property crimes.

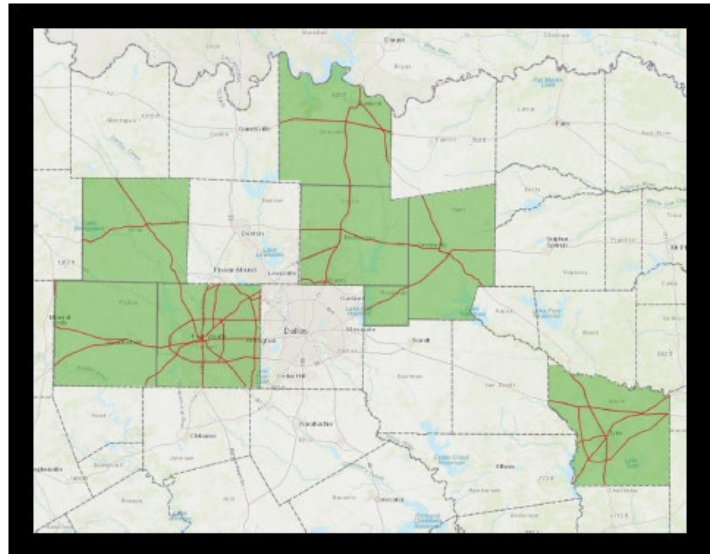
<b>Collin County Sheriff's Office</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
Calls for Service	65,536	64,721	75,587	74,958
Illegal Substance-Related Offense Investigations	205	235	353	328
Property Crime Investigations	573	522	485	439

Currently, Mexican transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) are the greatest criminal drug threat to the United States, controlling lucrative smuggling corridors across the southwest border. They continue to expand their criminal influence by engaging in business alliances with other TCOs, street and prison gangs, and money laundering organizations. Mexican TCOs export significant quantities of heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine, marijuana, and fentanyl into the US utilizing a wide array of smuggling techniques. The most common methods employed are transporting illicit drugs in concealed compartments of passenger vehicles or comingled with legitimate goods in commercial vehicles utilizing public highways. Smaller local groups and street gangs, allied with or influenced by TCOs, handle retail-level distribution to users.

With its numerous roadways, the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex and surrounding counties constitute a major distribution command-and-control center for smuggling from the Texas / Mexico border to the rest of the United States. Law enforcement in major metropolitan areas has seen a trend in trafficking organizations establishing bases of operation in suburban and rural areas along transportation routes where they feel law enforcement does not expect to find nor are accustomed to dealing with large criminal organizations. Criminal interdiction efforts have a strong opportunity to detect and fight illegal trafficking because such efforts strike at a more vulnerable point. Unlike other hidden aspects of trafficking operations, criminals utilize public highways to transport contraband and money.

In an effort to identify and interrupt trafficking operations, CCSO created the North Texas Sheriff's Criminal Interdiction Unit (NTXCIU), which operates out of the North Texas Fusion Center (NTFC), along with seven other North Texas counties (Grayson, Hunt, Parker, Rockwall,

Smith, Tarrant, and Wise). The NTXCIU is a multi-jurisdictional team of specially trained Deputies whose mission is to detect, interdict, and disrupt the flow of dangerous drugs, narcotics, contraband, and human cargo on established smuggling corridors on North Texas highways; formal operations began in December 2017.



During operations, NTXCIU Deputies have seized over \$25 million in drugs and \$1.2 million in cash, recovered two (2) abducted children and 40 stolen motor vehicles, apprehended ten (10) fugitives, and arrested 166 persons.

Contraband Seized	2017	2018				2019		Cumulative
	Nov / Dec	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2*	
Cocaine	\$ 11,400	\$ 57,000	\$ -	\$ 570,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 299,924	\$ 938,324
Fentanyl	\$ 12,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,088	\$ 15,088
Heroin	\$ -	\$ 796,005	\$ -	\$ 2,741,795	\$ 2,918,685	\$ 4,479,739	\$ 2,072	\$ 10,938,296
Marijuana	\$ 32,807	\$ 4,390,122	\$ 363,855	\$ 351,926	\$ 337,013	\$ 1,121,390	\$ 7,372	\$ 6,604,485
Methamphetamine	\$ 550,400	\$ 230,400	\$ 217,600	\$ 179,200	\$ 1,548,800	\$ 1,429,760	\$ 2,391,212	\$ 6,547,372
THC Extract	\$ -	\$ 2,764	\$ 2,764	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 27,966	\$ 9,554	\$ 43,049
Other	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 30,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 30,000
Cash	\$ 2,300	\$ 40,000	\$ 43,050	\$ 20,048	\$ 971,200	\$ 161,861	\$ 24,345	\$ 1,262,804
<b>Other</b>								
Abducted Child	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
Fugitive	-	3	1	1	1	2	2	10
Stolen Motor Vehic	-	11	5	3	1	11	9	40
<b>Arrests</b>	9	38	17	19	14	32	37	166

\*incomplete

## Project/Initiative Design and Implementation

While the NTXCIU is composed of 15 team members, only one (1) is from CCSO. This project proposes adding a new, fully equipped, and marked law enforcement vehicle with an automatic license plate reader (LPR) and ancillary interdiction kits to assist the NTXCIU in identifying

TCO gang members and stopping the transport of illicit drugs and proceeds related to their criminal enterprises. This equipment is necessary in order to increase interdiction patrols and cover additional areas of highways associated with cartels' movements of illegal narcotics from the southern border, into North Texas and beyond, and the return of illicit monies and proceeds from the North Texas region back into Mexico.

Collin County will procure the vehicle and associated equipment, which should be ready to begin interdiction patrols by September 1, 2020. Concurrently with the procurement process, CCSO will identify and train a second Deputy to serve on the NTXCIU. Interdiction training covers a range of topics including observational and interview techniques, identification of drugs / paraphernalia, recognition and detection of concealed compartments, and vehicular search techniques. Adding another unit and trained officer to the NTXCIU effectively doubles Collin County's ability to directly impact trafficking organizations' ability to move contraband – drugs, money, weapons, and human cargo – in and through North Texas and will disrupt TCO operations by limiting access to funding, reducing their assets, and raising their operational costs.

In addition to disruption effected by the immediate stop and seizure, information collected during NTXCIU activities also plays a larger role in disabling TCO operations through data collection, analysis, and dissemination of information through the NTFC. The NTFC collects data from over 200 local, state, federal, and private entities – including NTXCIU LPRs, interviews, and intel from arrestees / detainees in detention centers – to support criminal investigations by identifying repetitive behavior, associating patterns, and producing linkages to identify and target key offenders. The NTFC utilizes modern quantitative research and design methods, trends and

patterns, and statistical analysis with the goal of detecting, preventing, investigating, and responding to criminal activity. The NTFC analyzes data from disparate sources to produce and share intelligence products identifying relationships and enabling in-depth assessment of criminal groups. Disruption of trafficking can come through interjecting intelligence-led policing anywhere in the continuum from transnational gangs to users.

### **Capabilities and Competencies**

The proposed project will be overseen by the CCSO, which was established in 1846 and is a full service law enforcement agency for the citizens of Collin County and the municipalities therein. The primary law enforcement jurisdiction of the CCSO covers 499 square miles and an estimated service population of over 58,000 persons across the county's unincorporated areas. In addition, CCSO serves seven (7) municipalities without police departments – Blue Ridge, Lowry Crossing, Lucas, New Hope, Nevada, St. Paul, and Weston – and three municipal utility districts (MUDs). As a result, the total population of the CCSO service area is nearly 69,000.

The proposed emergency police vehicle and related equipment will be maintained and operated under the NTFC, which is within the CCSO. The NTFC is a US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) recognized fusion center and is comprised of CCSO personnel, along with staff from municipal police and fire departments; DHS; US Marshals Service; US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE); Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA); Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF); Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS); Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV); Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS); Texas Joint Counterdrug Task Force; and the NTXCIU, who all have space co-located within the

NTFC. The NTFC has been operational for 13 years and coordinates the gathering, analysis, and dissemination of information between partners within a 20-county region. The NTFC utilizes a variety of resources and tools to conduct threat assessments, analyze and share relevant suspicious activity reporting, respond to requests for information, and provide early warning alerts and recommended response protocols.

The NTXCIU became operational in December 2017 and functions out of the NTFC. The eight-agency initiative is the first of its kind not only in Texas, but also in the United States. The initiative currently has 15 full-time members who actively work criminal interdiction within the eight participating counties: Collin, Grayson, Hunt, Parker, Rockwall, Smith, Tarrant, and Wise. Each of the 15 Deputies that comprise the multi-agency coalition of the NTXCIU are sworn Peace Officers in the State of Texas with multiple years of experience and are specially trained to detect trafficking and apprehend offenders transporting contraband and illegal proceeds.

The NTXCIU is led by Tully Yount, a Lieutenant with the CCSO. Yount began his law enforcement career in 2002 with the Douglas County (Georgia) Sheriff's Office and received his basic law enforcement certification in 2004. To date, Yount has completed over 2,000 hours of classroom training and has been directly involved in over 200 large-scale drug and currency investigations throughout the United States with many having ties to Mexico and Europe. Yount is also a US Government Certified Staff Master Instructor for the United States Department of Transportation, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's Drug Interdiction Assistance Program (USDOT/FMCSA/DIAP) along with being a US Government Certified Staff Instructor for the United States Department of Justice's Drug Enforcement Administration, El Paso

Intelligence Center (USDOJ/DEA/EPIC). Yount oversees the day-to-day operations of the unit, provides training opportunities to other members, and collects Significant Incident Reports produced by its members, which log the activities of its members related to their interdiction activities. Yount compiles the unit's activity for reporting and record keeping and provides members with updated information that can be reported back to each member's chain of command. Yount also compiles quarterly activity reports that are provided to partnering agencies, as well as to the NTFC.

### **Impact/Outcomes - Plan for Collecting Data Required**

The goal of the proposed project is to improve public safety through disruption of criminal activities associated with TCO trafficking and distribution operations. Collin County has reviewed and agrees to report on the performance measures in Attachment B of the grant solicitation. Program success will be demonstrated by a decrease in drug and drug-related crimes and an increase in NTXCIU contraband seizures and arrests commiserate with an increase in patrols able to be conducted utilizing the new law enforcement vehicle. Information sharing will be demonstrated through intelligence products (broken out by type) requested / created and disseminated through the NTFC.

The Collin County Sheriff's Office utilizes several methods to collect, track, and maintain data. Primarily, data is collected and reported using an ICS incident-based reporting system. Numbers for types of crimes – including UCR Program data, drug-related crimes, trafficking, and sexual assaults – investigated are obtained from crime analysis within the report management system. Additionally, the NTFC utilizes the same system for tracking RFIs, intelligence products created,



and agencies and investigation for which assistance is provided, along with additional DHS tracking systems. The NTFC Director reviews and compiles services performed into quarterly executive reports for law enforcement partners and annual reports for DHS. Calls for service and data for dispatched responses performed by CCSO are entered by Support Services Division personnel into integrated computer-aided dispatch software.

NTXCIU members complete significant event forms, which are submitted on a continual basis to the lead Lieutenant – a CCSO employee – who reviews and enters the data (date, location, contraband seized, persons arrested) into an Excel spreadsheet. Summary reports are created and released to partner agencies quarterly. Data utilized to determine index crime rates are submitted to Texas DPS by each law enforcement entity and are obtained for participating counties from published annual reports (generally a year behind). CCSO staff will periodically review project performance and determine any areas for improvement.

### **Sustainment**

Equipment is a one-time purchase. Routine maintenance, repair, and annual software licenses will be paid using departmental funds. County funds will be sought for end of life replacement; however, if local funding is not available, the County may seek additional grant funds in the future for replacement.