

Body Worn Camera Program/Detention Bureau

Project Abstract

Briefly summarize the proposed project. The abstract should summarize information in the other project narrative boxes below, and should be understandable by a lay person.

Collin County asks for \$100,000 under the Office of the Governor's Criminal Justice Grant Program, FY2023, to outfit approximately 50 detention officers in the Collin County Detention Facility with body-worn cameras and to procure the related equipment and data-storage services. Along with keeping up with evolving standards and expectations regarding BWCs, the Sheriff's Office believes that equipping certain detention officers with BWCs is consistent with direct-supervision philosophy.

The County's purpose here is consistent with the grant program's goals to promote public safety and improve the criminal-justice system. Eligible grant activities include corrections. The County and Sheriff's Office meet eligibility requirements, including those for cybersecurity training, disposition reporting, and UCR reporting. The Sheriff's Office and county jail comply with immigration-detainer requests under Article 2.251, Code of Criminal Procedure. Also, BWCs are not standard department issue in the county jail and, thus, BWCs don't fall in the grant's prohibitions. In fact, DOJ announced BWC funding in a July 7, 2021 press release. <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-provide-funding-body-worn-cameras-small-rural-and-tribal-law-enforcement>.

The County is separately applying for funds to outfit 10 deputy sheriffs in the Sheriff's Office with compatible BWCs under the OOG's Body-Worn Camera Grant Program, FY2022.

Problem Statement

Describe the nature and scope of the underlying problem the proposed project will address. Include aspects of the problem relevant to the project's approach and activities.

In 2015, the 84th Legislature accepted BWCs' efficacy in passing SB 158 (2015). The Senate Research Center's analysis for SB 158 stated, "[V]ideo evidence has proven to protect both citizens and police." As discussed below, BWC use is spreading to corrections and county jails as well. Collin County detention officers processed over 1,100 persons per month into the county jail in calendar year 2021, and the county jail's average daily population was 947 in 2021. In other words, dozens of detention officers process thousands of persons into the county jail per year and supervise and care for thousands of inmates per year in Housing—and none of them have BWCs. According to the Legislature's thinking, the nature and size of the problem is clear.

Although the CCDF has a camera system—and the County is currently updating it to a digital system with greater coverage—the detention officers, including those on the detention-response team, in Admissions and Release, and in Housing, are not equipped with BWCs. The CCDF has 330 authorized detention-officer positions, including supervisors. More specifically, the long-run challenge is to outfit 200 or so officers with BWCs and for the County to acquire the necessary support equipment and storage services. This project or grant application is to help equip the first 50 officers.

Supporting Data

Provide supporting data for the Problem Statement. Data should be relevant to the project and its target group. For example, do not use statewide data for a local problem or national data for a statewide problem.

Assuming the efficacy of BWCs in improving interactions and accountability, the lack of BWCs for detention officers and staff in the CCDF is a significant issue or shortfall. Collin County detention officers in Admissions and Release processed, and officers in Housing supervised, thousands of inmates in calendar years 2019, 2020, and 2021:

	2019	2020	2021
Persons Booked	18,989	12,563	13,854
Persons Released	19,026	12,652	13,860
Average Daily Population	1,065	930	947 * 1,106 beds in the main jail

Detention officers with extra training in crisis intervention and de-escalation are members of the detention-response team. This team responds to critical incidents, including those involving persons in mental-health or substance-abuse crisis and interactions involving a higher risk for the necessity for the use of force. These team members also do not have BWCs.

Although the facility's camera system records visual images in most areas, the system does not record sound and the cameras are not positioned between persons the way a BWC would be.

Project Approach & Activities

Describe the methodologies, approaches, and activities to be employed by the project. This should logically tie back to the Problem Statement.

Overall, the County will study and compare its BWC needs on the law-enforcement side of the Sheriff's Office and in the county jail. The County will select the system, equipment, and data-storage services to meet these needs. With this grant application, the County seeks \$100,000 to study and equip 50 detention officers with BWCs. At this stage, the Sheriff's Office plans to test some BWCs with the detention-response team, some in Admissions and Release, and some in Housing to help assess future spending and deployment priorities.

As noted, officers in the CCDF do not currently have BWCs. The Sheriff's Office uses about 10 BWCs in its law-enforcement operations (as opposed to corrections). In the traffic unit, for example, deputy sheriffs use BWCs that are synchronized with the motorcycle-mounted camera system. The BWCs continuously record on a 60-second loop (unsaved) and will start recording (saved) in response to certain sensed events, such as the deputy getting off a bike and the bike's camera starting, or a traffic incident, such as a collision, that jostles the BWC. The deputy will also start the BWC to record traffic stops or other interactions in accordance with office policy. A BWC is assigned to specific deputies, and only a few persons in a separate part of the Sheriff's Office have the administrative rights to re-assign a BWC. Traffic deputies upload their BWC recordings to cloud-based storage at the end of every shift.

Because the county jail will use BWCs on a broader scale, they will confer with the vendor (in July 2019, Motorola acquired WatchGuard, Inc.) to develop similar capabilities on a larger scale. Jail supervisors are currently conferring with other county jails on BWC use and policies. They plan to devise a policy that both complies with Subchapter N, Chapter 1701, Occupations Code, and is appropriate for the corrections context.

Capacity & Capabilities

Describe the applicant organization's background as well as any organizational and staff capabilities and qualifications necessary to carry out this project using the approaches and activities provided above, including any essential collaborative partnerships.

Roughly speaking, the Sheriff's Office consists of (1) law-enforcement functions and (2) the county jail. LE functions include patrol, criminal investigation, mental-health deputies, and prisoner transport. The county jail includes admission or intake functions, including processing arrested persons and providing them with magistration and bail services (37 TAC 265.1, 265.4(a)(15), 265.9) and housing services for those who are not released on bail. Officers in the county jail processed over 1,100 arrested persons per month in calendar year 2021. The main jail has 1,106 beds, and its ADP was 947 in 2021. Jail supervisors are currently revising the composition and role of the detention-response team. Their plans include equipping at least some of its officers or leaders with BWCs.

The Sheriff's Office has used BWCs in limited areas such as traffic enforcement, child-crime investigations, and mental-health deputies. One sergeant in criminal investigations is a BWC instructor. The Office plans to extend its use of BWCs to some inmate transports, especially the transport of women, and to more areas of criminal investigation. As mentioned, the County is applying for a grant for these purposes under the OOG's Body-Worn Camera Grant Program, FY2022. In short, the Sheriff's Office has limited BWC capability related to its provision of law-enforcement services, and it is pursuing measured extensions of that capability.

Here, the Sheriff's Office is applying for additional funds to equip 50 detention officers in the county jail with BWCs. The county jail will test the use of BWCs in Admissions and Release and in Housing.

The Sheriff and senior staff are also researching appropriate policies for use of BWCs in corrections, consistent with Section 1701.655, Texas Occupations Code.

Performance Management

Describe how the applicant organization will measure success for this project. Describe the overall goals, objectives, and strategies for this project and how the organization will collect, track, and maintain the relevant data needed to determine if the project is achieving these standards throughout the grant period.

The Sheriff's goal for this project is to equip 50 detention officers with BWCs and the related equipment and data-storage services consistent with SB 158 and to test their efficacy in the county jail. The Sheriff's Office will measure success of this project by studying and acquiring a BWC system and data-storage services for the county jail alone or a system and services that are integrated with other parts of the Sheriff's Office or the County.

As a key objective, the Sheriff's Office will measure the success of this BWC project by assessing whether BWCs in Admissions and Release and in Housing maintain positive interactions between officers and arrested persons, affect the numbers or nature of issues or complaints, contribute to the assessment or resolution of issues or complaints, and help improve operations and training in these areas.

Target Group

Describe or list the agencies, individuals, or other groups to whom you expect to provide services, including any relevant data.

The County's project will serve (1) persons incarcerated in the Housing section of the county jail, (2) persons, including pretrial detainees, in the Admissions area of the county jail (many bond out and never reach Housing), and (3) detention officers and, possibly, a few other staff who work in the county jail.

Evidence-Based Practices

Describe the research or evidence that led the applicant to select the methods, approach, and activities described above. Where possible, cite specific research, evidence, or published best/promising practices model used as the basis for the project's design. If the project approach and activities described above are not based on existing evidence, the applicant must describe why they believe the method to be promising.

Government officials and the public have increasingly accepted BWC technology. The 84th Texas Legislature adopted Subchapter N, Chapter 1701, Occupations Code, to establish a BWC-grant program and address issues such as BWC policies and training. See SB 158, 84th Leg., R.S. ch. 1134, § 1 (2015). The OOG annually publishes a Funding Announcement: Body-Worn Camera Grant Program, FY2020–22. Although policymakers initially envisioned BWCs for patrol and other peace officers who make traffic stops, BWCs are spreading to corrections and even community supervision. See, e.g., Timothy Smith, Nat'l Inst. Of Corrections, *The Technology Advantage: Using Shoulder Mounted Cameras within a Detention Facility* (2013),

https://bja.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh186/files/bwc/pdfs/2870-sacdc-body-cameras-article_275cd995.pdf;

American Probation & Parole Ass'n, *Body-Worn Cameras in Community Supervision* (Apr. 7, 2020),

<https://www.appa-net.org/eweb/docs/APPA/stances/ip-BWCCS.pdf>. In the 87th Legislature's regular session in 2021, a representative introduced HB 1639, which would have required BWCs in the state prison system and in county jails. Although HB 1639 didn't emerge from House Corrections, it suggests the future of BWC policy.