

Collin County Constable SH-Bullet-Resistant Shield Grant Program

Project Abstract

Briefly summarize the proposed project.

Our law enforcement officers are the backbone of our agency, protecting our families and loved ones from danger. Without hesitation, our officers walk into the line of danger every day to serve and protect their communities.

Collin County employs 581 certified peace and detention officers who provide judicial and law enforcement services, including patrol, criminal investigations, detention, warrant and civil process service, and courtroom security throughout the county. These men and women face potentially dangerous situations on a daily basis, and as such, Collin County is requesting bullet-resistant shields. The bullet-resistant shields will provide an increased level of protection for a range of criminal and accidental threats that officers face in everyday law enforcement events, not just in the expected, high-risk situations. Wearing the bullet-resistant shields will allow officers the protection needed for themselves in order to protect others.

This funding will allow the County to equip thirteen Constables from PCT 3 with a Bullet-Resistant Shield providing them with an increased protection while on duty.

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.

Law Enforcement is a dangerous profession. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports officers in the United States experienced an on-the-job fatality rate of approximately 20 in 100,000 officers-five times higher than the overall on-the-job fatality rate of four in 100,000 workers across all U.S. industries.

A 2016 report prepared for Congress revealed that an officer shot while wearing a ballistic vest is more than three times more likely to survive an attack by a firearm than without the ballistic protection. That same report acknowledges that 29 percent of officers who were wearing vests when shot were killed, but during the period studied, only one of those deaths was due to vest failure. The others were due to shots striking the murdered officer in areas of the body not covered by the vest, or by a firearm projectile that the vest was not designed to withstand.

When a Constable sets out to do their job, they are placing themselves in an emotionally charged situation. The person or persons they meet that day may be in an unstable mental and emotional state and may become violent. This is why the importance of bullet-resistant shield is essential for all officers.

Bullet-Resistant Shield is critical safety equipment for officers' personal protection. Although there is no such thing as bulletproof armor, but the bullet-resistant shield can and will protect against many types of handgun and rifle ammunition. Firearms continue to be one of the most dangerous threats faced by law enforcement.

School/mass shootings are horrific from Virginia Tech, Sandy Hook Elementary to the most recent in Uvalde at Robbs Elementary. Innocent lives taken, leaving broken homes and broken childhoods in the wake of such a horrified incident. Deaths total over 274 with injuries over 289.

The FBI defines a mass shooting as an incident in which four or more victims, not including the suspect, are killed (ABC News, 2020).

Twenty-eight Texas officers were reported killed in duty-related accidents from gunfire to vehicular assault. In Texas, Fatality statistics for Year 2022: Total was 167, with gunfire up by 15%. There were 4,817 officers assaulted during 2019 compared to 4,553 in 2018. This represents an increase of 1.4%.

Every public service job is associated with inherent risks to the safety of employees. Knives and other edged blade objects are easy to obtain and can be used to assault. In some cases, such incidents can even result in permanent injury or even death.

Bullet-resistant shield may also be used to protect them against attacks using knives, broken bottles or even syringes. Random attacks in urban areas are particularly dangerous as assailants are volatile, strike quickly and unexpectedly and can use every object at their disposal. A broken bottle, a piece of glass or a concealed knife can all be used as a weapon because they are easy to hold, readily available and strong enough to cause significant damage to internal organs. This is where a shield (stab resistant vest) comes in. It is strong enough to stop such attacks and save lives. This way the officer is safe against both piercing and slashing attacks from a large variety of objects.

Shields protect law enforcement officers from disability and death. Firearms are one of the most dangerous threats faced by officers and leading causes of death for those feloniously killed in the line of duty. A study published in the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Hygiene found that officers who do not routinely wear a form of body armor are 3.4 times more likely to suffer a fatal injury from a torso shot than officers who routinely wear body armor. Body armor is critical safety equipment that law enforcement officers need protection. Officers wearing body armor are more confident; secure which allows them to provide the services needed for the community.

1. Body Armor Protecting Our Nations Officers, Department of Justice, National Institute, 2016.
2. U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, Ballistic Resistance, NIJ Standard-0101.06, National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center.
3. PoliceOne Website: www.joelshults.com
4. ODMP/Fallen Officers/K9s

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.

Providing bullet-resistant shields to all law enforcement officers in the United States would provide enough benefit to justify the cost, according to a new RAND Corporation study. Analyzing officer shootings over a four-year period, the study found that wearing bullet-resistant shields more than tripled the likelihood that an officer would survive a shooting to the torso and estimated that providing such equipment to all officers nationally would save at least eight lives annually.

Considering the value of the life of an officer killed by gunfire, the study concludes that the benefits of providing bullet-resistant shield to all officers would be twice as large as the cost. The findings were published online by the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Hygiene.

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) reports that between 2006-2015, firearms injured 21,539 U.S law enforcement officers and 454 succumbed to those injuries. Thirty-two percent of the officers who were feloniously killed during that period were not wearing a bullet-resistant shield. Bullet-resistant shield has been proven to save lives and help reduce injuries to officers.

In 2022, 28-law enforcement officers died in the state of Texas from injuries incurred in the line of duty. Of those killed in to 2022, 11 were killed with firearms. Total K9 line of duty deaths were two. Three of the officers within our county and three in surrounding counties in 2021.

The use of weapons of all types, particularly handguns by those with criminal intent, poses a constant threat to officers, whether they are performing a routine traffic stop, responding to a domestic quarrel, or serving arrest warrants. In 2019, Collin County Constables Precinct 3 served 12,831 and in 2020 served 8,175 (due to Covid) for the following but not limited to: Writ of Attachment for Child, Civil Subpoena, Criminal Subpoena, Juvenile Subpoena, Juvenile Summons, Warrants, Evictions, Grand Jury Subpoena, Notice of Protective Order, Restraining Order, Tax Citation, Traffic Citations, and Truant Conduct Summons, etc...

PCT 3 is surrounded by the following eight (8) school districts:

School District	Number of Schools	Number of Students
Allen ISD	24	21,634
Plano ISD	79	50,154
Lovejoy ISD	6	4,000
Dallas ISD	230	153,761
Richardson ISD	35	37,787
Wylie ISD	20	18,300
Princeton ISD	10	5818

Cities within PCT 3 Service Area: Allen, Dallas, Lucas, Plano, Fairview, St. Paul, Garland, Richardson, Princeton, Culleoka, Parker, Murphy, Wylie, Sachse, and West side of Lake Lavon.

PCT 3 might not be the first call for an active shooter but they will be equipped and prepared with the assistance of the funding for the 13 bullet-resistant shields if they are called to a school or a service area where an active shooter is present in order to prevent loss of life.

So why officers who are murdered not wearing bullet-resistant shield? According to a RAND Corporation study, discovered that 256,000 officers do not have or possessed the proper shield was due to the law enforcement agencies that are grossly underfunded, creating a critical safety issue.

Bullet-Resistant Shield is made out of fibre-reinforced plastic composites derived from ultra-high molecular weight polyethylene or aramid (similar to body armor plates in the construction). The shield, like ceramic armor, incorporate a ceramic layer on their outer surface to enable them to defeat steel-core armor-piercing bullets. The shields will feature a transparent armor window, ambidextrous handles, and spotlights for use at night. The shield unlike a vest will not transfer trauma or pain to the bearer, as they are designed to not be in direct contact with the body.

The shields save lives and that is what is important, making sure that our Constables are equipped with the right gear/tools and safe in order to save others.

Within the last month, Texas leaders have transferred over \$105 million dollars to support school safety and mental health, with \$50 million specifically designated for bullet resistant shields.

Project Approach & Activities

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

Bullet-Resistant Shields is considered critical personal protective equipment necessary for the officers. It provides an increased level of protection for a range of criminal and accidental threats that officers face in everyday events, not just in the expected, high-risk situations. Having the shields and access to bullet-resistant shield allows officers to protect themselves so they can protect others.

Constables will comply with requirements once bullet-resistant shields are issued. They will be required to do the following:

Inspection of Bullet-Resistant Shield:

- Supervisor/Precinct 3 shall be responsible for ensuring that the bullet-resistant shield is maintained as required (documentation will be maintained/kept at each Precinct).
- Annual inspections of bullet-resistant shield shall be conducted for sign of damage, abuse and wear. This may be accomplished at training.

Care, Maintenance and Replacement of Bullet-Resistant Shield:

- Constables shall routinely inspect personal bullet-resistant shield for signs of damage or wear and tear.
- Constables are responsible for the proper storage, maintenance and care of bullet-resistant shield in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Training:

- Provide training programs that emphasize bullet-resistant shield and proper use (when delivered).
- Maintain statistics on incidents where shield has or has not protected officers from harm.

Constables will also attend Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (ALERRT) within given time. Four of the thirteen Constables are certified in ALERRT (please refer to attachment for certificate).

Bullet-Resistant Shield has and will continue to save lives.

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.

The mission of the Collin County Constable is to be efficient, professional and well trained to give the best possible service to the citizens of Collin County.

The proposed program will be overseen by the Collin County Constable PCT 3, and is a full service law enforcement agency for the citizens of Collin County. The purpose of the Collin County Constable's Office is to enforce the law in a fair and impartial manner, and to prevent and deter crime. Law enforcement in Collin County ensures the safety and well-being of the community while preserving the constitutional rights of all persons and is conducted within the statutory and judicial limitations set forth by law.

Essential functions of a Constables/PCT 3 are the following but not limited to:

- Provides law enforcement services by protecting the courtroom, researching property and assets, figuring writs of execution and order of sales, serving, subpoenas, citations, evictions, writs of possession and criminal warrants, arresting wanted persons and keeping the peace.
- Enforces the law by patrolling farm market and county roads using radar and visual observations, issuing citations for traffic offenses, checking for persons wanted for felonies and misdemeanors and being on hand during forcible evictions and property seizures.
- Investigates suspects by researching the whereabouts of the suspect, calling persons with outstanding warrants, explaining how to clear their warrants, scheduling appearances in court, arresting and transporting those who fail to appear in court and filing arrest reports.

A County Constable in the State of Texas has the following duties:

- Services as a licensed Peace Office
- Performs various law enforcement functions (including issuing traffic citations)
- Serves warrants
- Serves Civil papers (such as subpoenas and temporary restraining orders)
- Serves as bailiff for Justice of the Peace Court

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.

Goal: Improve public safety through prevention/reduction of injury to law enforcement officers.

Objectives:

- Purchase bullet-resistant shields for 12 Constables and 1 reserve.
- Train Constables in proper maintenance.
- Constables will attend ALERRT Training.

Measures:

- Constables will have access to bullet-resistant shields 100% at work
- Constables will be trained on usage and proper care, storage and maintenance of Bullet-Resistant Shield at 100% upon receiving the shields (signature will be required).

Data Management

The Collin County Constable's Office utilizes several methods to collect, track, and maintain data. Data is collected and reported using a program called Athena for criminal incident-based reporting and Odyssey for civil incident based reporting.

Target Group

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

The Constables provide services within Collin County and surrounding counties.

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.

Bullet-Resistant Shields saves Lives.

National Institute of Justice (NIJ) funded the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) in 2012 to provide independent, evidence-based knowledge regarding the impact that body armor has had on officer safety, building on previous research efforts on this topic. Detailed information from the FBI's LEOKA dataset on 1,789 officers assaulted by firearms, knives/other cutting instruments, and were killed or severely injured as a result between 2002 and 2011 was analyzed for cases where officers were shot in the torso. Among the 637 officers who were shot by a firearm in the torso, those who wore body armor were 76% less likely to be killed than those who did not wear armor controlling for an array of individual and incident characteristics. This research comports with previous reports on the benefits of body armor in saving lives.

1. National Institute of Justice, Strengthen Science, Advance Justice. Mark E. Greene, September 30, 2018.

2. Intelligence Models and Best Practices, "Successful Law Enforcement Using Analytic Methods", M.B. Peterson, 1998.