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Agency Name: Fort Bend County

Grant/App: 3944603 **Start Date:** 10/1/2022 **End Date:** 9/30/2023

Project Title: Human Trafficking Investigation and Prosecution Project

Status: Application Pending Submission

Eligibility Information

Your organization's Texas Payee/Taxpayer ID Number:

17460019692080

Application Eligibility Certify:

Created on:12/28/2021 10:34:23 AM By:Suzy Morton

Profile Information

Applicant Agency Name: Fort Bend County

Project Title: Human Trafficking Investigation and Prosecution Project

Division or Unit to Administer the Project: District Attorney's Office

Address Line 1: 301 Jackson St

Address Line 2:

City/State/Zip: Richmond Texas 77469-3106

Start Date: 10/1/2022

End Date: 9/30/2023

Regional Council of Governments(COG) within the Project's Impact Area: Houston-Galveston Area Council

Headquarter County: Fort Bend

Counties within Project's Impact Area: Fort Bend,Harris,Montgomery

Grant Officials:

Authorized Official

Name: KP George

Email: county.judge@fortbendcountytexas.gov

Address 1: 301 Jackson Street

Address 1: Office of the County Judge

City: Richmond, Texas 77469

Phone: 281-341-8608 Other Phone: 281-633-7769

Fax: 832-471-1858

Title: The Honorable

Salutation: Judge

Position: County Judge

Financial Official

Name: Robert Sturdivant

Email: Accounting@fortbendcountytexas.gov

Address 1: 309 S. 4th Street, Suite 533

Address 1:

City: Richmond, Texas 77469

Phone: 281-341-3760 Other Phone: 281-341-3769

Fax: 281-341-3774

Title: Mr.

Salutation: Mr.

Position: County Auditor

Project Director

Name: Mark Hanna

Email: mark.hanna@fortbendcountytexas.gov

Address 1: 301 Jackson Street

Address 1: Suite 101

City: Richmond, Texas 77469

Phone: 281-238-4460 Other Phone:

Fax:**Title:** Mr.**Salutation:** Deputy Chief**Position:** Deputy Chief - Felony Division, Fort Bend County DA**Grant Writer****Name:** Wesley Wittig**Email:** Wesley.Wittig@fortbendcountytexas.gov**Address 1:** 301 Jackson ST**Address 1:** Rm. 101**City:** Richmond, Texas 77469**Phone:** 281-341-4431 Other Phone: 281-642-0605**Fax:****Title:** Mr.**Salutation:** Mr.**Position:** Executive Assistant District Attorney**Grant Vendor Information****Organization Type:** County**Organization Option:** applying to provide services to all others**Applicant Agency's State Payee Identification Number (e.g., Federal Employer's Identification (FEI) Number or Vendor ID):** 17460019692080**Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS):** 081497075**Narrative Information****Introduction**

The purpose of this funding is to support projects addressing the commercial sexual exploitation of people in Texas.

The funding announcement, located on the [eGrants Calendar](#) page, describes the organization types, activities, and costs that are eligible under the announcement. The PSO's [eGrants User Guide to Creating an Application](#) guides applicants through the process of creating and submitting an application in eGrants. Information and guidance related to the management and use of grant funds can be found in the PSO's Guide to Grants, located on the [PSO Resource for Applicants and Grantees webpage](#).

Certifications

Trauma Informed Response

Each application should include proposed strategies to ensure that individuals experiencing commercial sexual exploitation receive a trauma informed response. A trauma informed response for this population should not be contingent upon a direct outcry of victimization. **Funds administered through this grant program may not be used in furtherance of activities to investigate, arrest, detain, or prosecute individuals for engaging in prostitution under Texas Penal Code § 43.02.**

Community Collaboration

Applicants from communities with an existing human trafficking task force or coalition must **upload documentation of active membership in the task force or coalition**. Applicants should also **upload letters of support from any partners** critical to achieving the proposed objectives. All documents must be uploaded onto the Upload.Files Tab prior to the submission and certification of the eGrants application.

Data Collection

All projects are required to collect data related to the local response to commercial sexual exploitation, and applications are expected to affirm the ability to collect such information; at a minimum, this includes the following individual-level data for prostitution and sex trafficking offenses: System Person Number; Date of Birth; Gender; Race/Ethnicity; Date of Arrest; Charge 1; Charge 2 (if applicable); Date of Final Case Disposition; Case Disposition; and Sentence. Grantees may be required to provide data to PSO or a designated third-party evaluator.

Project Evaluation

Each application should clearly identify the goals of the project, including methods for evaluating progress toward those goals. Additionally, recipients of funding under this announcement may be required to participate in a third-party evaluation funded by PSO and in improvement reviews performed by PSO program staff. Grantees must make good-faith efforts to follow recommendations by the evaluator and PSO staff – including recommended project modifications – as a condition of ongoing funding.

Training and Technical Assistance

Recipients of funding under this announcement may be required to participate in training and technical assistance opportunities recommended by PSO program staff. Grantees must make good-faith efforts to participate in designated trainings as a condition of ongoing funding.

Targeted Investigation and Prosecution

Applicants should describe how the proposed strategies will improve local investigations and/or prosecutions of sex buyers, traffickers, and/or other actors benefitting from the commercial sexual exploitation of people. **Applicants should also provide baseline data on prostitution and sex trafficking related arrests for at least one prior year**, including (at a minimum): the number of arrests by age, gender, and offense; and a breakdown of case dispositions by offense. Offense data should include (at a minimum); prostitution-buying; prostitution-selling; promotion of prostitution; aggravated promotion of prostitution; compelling prostitution; child sex trafficking; and adult sex trafficking.

In addition to the requirements found in existing statute, regulation, and the funding announcement, this program requires applicant organizations to certify compliance with the following:

Activities that Compromise Victim Safety and Recovery

Applicant agrees to not engage in activities that jeopardize victim safety, deter or prevent physical or emotional healing for victims, or allow offenders to escape responsibility for their actions.

Polygraph Testing Prohibition

A peace officer or attorney representing the state may not require an adult or child victim of an alleged sex offense to submit to a polygraph examination or other truth telling device as a condition for proceeding with the investigation of such an offense. In addition, the refusal of a victim to submit to a polygraph or other truth telling examination will not prevent the investigation, charging, or prosecution of an alleged sex offense or on the basis of the results of a polygraph examination.

Cybersecurity Training Requirement

Local units of governments must comply with the Cybersecurity Training requirements described in Section 772.012 and Section 2054.5191 of the Texas Government Code. Local governments determined to not be in compliance with the cybersecurity requirements required by Section 2054.5191 of the Texas Government Code are ineligible for OOG grant funds until the second anniversary of the date the local government is determined ineligible. Government entities must annually certify their compliance with the training requirements using the Cybersecurity Training Certification for State and Local Governments. A copy of the Training Certification must be uploaded to your eGrants application. For more information or to access available training programs, visit the Texas Department of Information Resources Statewide Cybersecurity Awareness Training page.

Criminal History Reporting

Entities receiving funds from PSO must be located in a county that has an average of 90% or above on both adult and juvenile dispositions entered into the computerized criminal history database maintained by the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) as directed in the *Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, Chapter 66*. The disposition completeness percentage is defined as the percentage of arrest charges a county reports to DPS for which a disposition has been subsequently reported and entered into the computerized criminal history system.

Counties applying for grant awards from the Office of the Governor must commit that the county will report at least 90% of convictions within five business days to the Criminal Justice Information System at the Department of Public Safety.

Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR)

Eligible applicants operating a law enforcement agency must be current on reporting complete UCR data and the Texas specific reporting mandated by 411.042 TGC, to the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) for inclusion in the annual Crime in Texas (CIT) publication. To be considered eligible for funding, applicants must have submitted a full twelve months of accurate data to DPS for the most recent calendar year by the deadline(s) established by DPS. Due to the importance of timely reporting, applicants are required to submit complete and accurate UCR data, as well as the Texas-mandated reporting, on a no less than monthly basis and respond promptly to requests from DPS related to the data submitted.

Compliance with State and Federal Laws, Programs and Procedures

Local units of government, including cities, counties and other general purpose political subdivisions, as appropriate, and institutions of higher education that operate a law enforcement agency, must comply with all aspects of the programs and procedures utilized by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security ("DHS") to: (1) notify DHS of all information requested by DHS related to illegal aliens in Agency's custody; and (2) detain such illegal aliens in accordance with requests by DHS. Additionally, counties and municipalities may NOT have in effect, purport to have in effect, or make themselves subject to or bound by, any law, rule, policy, or practice (written or unwritten) that would: (1) require or authorize the public disclosure of federal law enforcement information in order to conceal, harbor, or shield from detection fugitives from justice or aliens illegally in the United States; or (2) impede federal officers from exercising authority under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), § 1226(c), § 1231(a), § 1357(a), § 1366(1), or § 1366(3). Lastly, eligible applicants must comply with all provisions, policies, and penalties found in Chapter 752, Subchapter C of the Texas Government Code.

Each local unit of government, and institution of higher education that operates a law enforcement agency, must download, complete and then upload into eGrants the [CEO/Law Enforcement Certifications and Assurances Form](#) certifying compliance with federal and state immigration enforcement requirements. This Form is required for each application submitted to PSO and is active until August 31, 2023 or the end of the grant period, whichever is later.

Civil Rights Liaison

A civil rights liaison who will serve as the grantee's civil rights point of contact and who will be responsible for ensuring that the grantee meets all applicable civil rights requirements must be designated. The designee will act as the grantee's liaison in civil rights matters with PSO and with the federal Office of Justice Programs.

Enter the Name of the Civil Rights Liaison:

Yvette R. Maldonado

Enter the Address for the Civil Rights Liaison:

301 Jackson St Richmond, TX 77469-3108 yvette.maldonado@fbctx.gov

Enter the Phone Number for the Civil Rights Liaison [(999) 999-9999 x9999]:

(281) 341-8630

Overall Certification

Each applicant agency must certify to the specific requirements detailed above as well as to comply with all requirements within the PSO Funding Announcement, the *Guide to Grants*, the *Grantee Conditions and Responsibilities*, any authorizing or applicable state and federal statutes and regulations to be eligible for this program.

X I certify to all of the application content & requirements.

Project Abstract :

In April 2020, the Office of the Governor provided funding allowing the Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office to hire staff dedicated to the investigation of human trafficking and related offenses: a criminal investigator and a criminal investigative analyst. The success of our program has inspired local law enforcement agencies to dedicate additional resources to human trafficking; since the award of the grant funding, the Missouri City Police Department, the Fort Bend County Constable's Office Precinct 4, and the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office have created additional investigative positions dedicated to human trafficking. These new positions, led by the District Attorney's investigative staff, will work together on proactive and long-term investigations. There has been additional office space created, the Sienna Annex, a cost that is absorbed by the county, to provide communal office space for these additional law enforcement officers as they work on inter-county activities. Currently, the Fort Bend County District Attorney's office has two dedicated human trafficking prosecutors. This current project application seeks continued funding for the two previously awarded positions in the Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office: a criminal investigative analyst and a criminal investigator assigned to work on investigations involving child exploitation and child sex trafficking. Fort Bend County is one of the fastest growing counties in Texas, estimated to reach one million residents by 2022. Due to its proximity to the Texas-Mexico border, the 59 corridor, and the well-known Bissonnet "track" of roadway walked nightly by victims, Fort Bend County is perfectly positioned to see its citizens fall victim to the epidemic of human trafficking. Houston, parts of which are located inside of Fort Bend County, is a well-known hub for human trafficking, due to the lack of zoning, international tourism, and ethnic diversity. In a report published by the Human Trafficking Hotline on November 2020, in 2019, the hotline received 2,720 tips in Texas related to human trafficking and identified 2,455 victims. The Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office seeks to continue to address modern-day trafficking by utilizing investigative techniques centered around obtaining modern-day evidence derived from cellular telephones, social media, and geolocation data, with the goal of eradicating networks of traffickers and obtaining convictions without relying on victim testimony. The Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office also seeks to address the problem of human trafficking as one of supply and demand, and plans to prioritize the identification and prosecution of sex buyers. By focusing on the identification and prosecution of sex buyers, we will be able to reduce the demand for commercial sex and eliminate profitability for third-party beneficiaries (i.e., "pimps" and "traffickers"). By creating a team-oriented approach with prosecutors, criminal investigators, and a criminal intelligence analyst working together, we can more efficiently identify and prosecute traffickers without putting the onus on the victims at trial, allowing victims to focus on recovery.

Problem Statement :

Prosecutors typically cannot rely on traditional prosecution methods in cases involving trafficking or trafficking related offenses. In many of these cases, the victim is unwilling to testify against his/her trafficker due to fear or trauma. In others, it may be difficult to establish the necessary elements of force, fraud, or coercion with a lack of physical evidence and a jury uneducated in grooming and trauma bonds. Our goal is to continue implementing a modern-day prosecution solution: seeking out modern-day evidence. Research supports our conclusion that modern day traffickers use the Internet almost exclusively to conduct business. This includes recruiting and grooming victims, advertising sexual conduct, communicating with victims, communicating with co-actors, taking and disseminating photographs, communicating with "clients," and arranging transportation. By drafting search warrants for cellular telephones, geolocation data, and social media accounts, we obtain crucial evidence in the

form of communications, photographs, and location data, and remove the necessity of victim cooperation from the equation. Additionally, this method does more than ameliorate the problem of victim testimony; it also seeks to identify and destroy an entire network of traffickers. Having access to a trafficker's cellular telephone and/or social media gives law enforcement critical insight into everyone involved in a trafficking scheme, from the driver to the photographer to the client. Identifying and prosecuting each individual involved in the scheme not only makes the underlying case stronger, but also provides the victim reassurance that there is no one left to retaliate against him/her if they cooperate with law enforcement, and may reduce pressure to return to the criminal enterprise. Conducting large-scale, long-term, technology-forward investigations takes considerable time and resource investment. Identifying relevant social media accounts takes time (sometimes weeks, depending upon the available information) and training. Cellular telephone forensic reports and returns from social media accounts are typically comprised of thousands of pages. Since adding the criminal intelligence analyst to our team in 2020, we have been able to more quickly identify traffickers and victims, and reduce the length of our investigations. We are requesting continued funding for the criminal intelligence analyst to assist with managing this part of the workload (i.e., data mining of all available systems to gather and retrieve information, including social media accounts, and surveillance support). Search warrants detailing human trafficking and related offense investigations are often a minimum of 30 pages and can take half a day or longer to draft. Locating and interviewing victims identified during the investigation, and ensuring that they are provided with appropriate resources, can take days or weeks. Jail calls range to up to 20 minutes per call and individuals typically make multiple calls per day, every day. Since adding a criminal investigator and analyst to our team, we have been able to more quickly follow up on identified traffickers and identify other individuals in their network who may be exploiting identified victims. When the courts reopen, we expect these cases to move faster through the court system. Finally, we recognize that sex-trafficking is demand motivated. To that end, we are dedicated to prioritizing the prosecution of sex buyers. Since the beginning of the current grant term, our office conducted or participated in 5 undercover operations dedicated to identifying and prosecuting sex buyers, with the goal of reducing sex trafficking in our county by reducing demand. Despite taking place during the COVID-19 pandemic, approximately 57 men were arrested for attempting to buy sex. These new cases will be filed as felony offenses and be handled by the current prosecutors assigned to Human Trafficking.

Supporting Data :

In January of 2019, the Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office made combating the epidemic of human trafficking a priority. As a result, we have seen a significant increase in the number of cases both filed and accepted for prosecution in our office. This priority has continued into the 2021-2022 grant period. With regards to prostitution cases, in 2018, 23 cases were filed against individuals designated as sellers. Of those cases, only 9 were prosecuted. In 2019, 32 cases were filed against individuals designated as sellers; however 27 of those cases were prosecuted. This increase in the number of cases prosecuted reflects a positive change in investigatory practices made by local law enforcement agencies at the behest of the Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office. With regards to cases involving sex buyers, in 2019, the Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office saw a large increase in the number of sex buyers (from one case referred in 2018 to 23 cases referred in 2019) prosecuted by our office; 100% of the cases filed were accepted for prosecution. Ninety-five percent of buyer cases filed in 2019 were the result of proactive investigations conducted by the Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office. We also saw a notable increase in the number of Human Trafficking and related cases (compelling, promotion, and smuggling) filed and accepted for prosecution in our office. In 2018, six out of seven referred cases were accepted for prosecution. In 2019, 12 out of 15 referred cases were accepted for prosecution, a 100% increase. The Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office was either the lead investigative agency or provided major assistance in all but one of these cases. Two of the cases filed in 2019, in which four victims under the age of 19 were identified, came from implementing the innovative investigative tactics discussed herein. This long-term, technology-intense investigation involved over fourteen search warrants and tens of thousands pages of social media returns. The evidence obtained led us to identifying additional suspects and victims, and will result in the filing of additional cases and/or upgrading charges. This particular investigation demonstrates the success of the specialized methods and model we have adopted, and intend to continue using with the assistance of this grant. In July of 2019, the Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office, as the primary investigator of human trafficking related offenses in the county, conducted a three-week long undercover operation, the results of which exemplified the current need for additional personnel. As a result of that operation, sixty-four individuals were arrested, including 24 sex buyers and six pimps. Additionally, two juveniles were rescued. While local law enforcement agencies and social service organizations participated during the operation, the Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office was solely responsible for all follow up investigation. Due to a lack of personnel, the Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office had to refer four follow up investigations into individuals suspected of human trafficking, but arrested on drug charges, to other law enforcement agencies. In 2020, the Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office built on the momentum generated in the county from the 2019 undercover operation by hosting another proactive operation. Delayed by COVID-19, Operation Patriot took place over four days in September 2020 in two cities within Fort Bend County. As a result of Operation Patriot, 46 individuals were arrested, including six individuals for promotion of prostitution. Five victims were recovered. The Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office is dedicated to employing a trauma-informed approach to recovery of victims, and ensured that advocates and medical personnel were available on scene during Operation Patriot. Our dedication to collaboration extends beyond social service

organizations to law enforcement statewide. Both during and after this operation, the Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office partnered with the Office of the Attorney General's Human Trafficking & Transnational/Organized Crime Section to assist in further investigation and prosecution of some of the arrested individuals. The follow up from this operation continues, as we obtain evidence from cellular telephones and social media, in an effort to gain evidence against additional traffickers. The Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office also filed charges resulting from months long investigations into human trafficking related activity, including charges against a perpetrator who sexually exploited his girlfriend, a mother who provided her juvenile daughter to a pimp, a trafficker who sexually assaulted and impregnated a child while on a \$300,000 bond, another who trafficked and impregnated a runaway child, and a woman who was profiting from her sister's prostitution activities. During the 2020-2021 grant cycle, the Fort Bend County DA's Office Human Trafficking Investigators and assisting agencies referred over 104 human trafficking/exploitation cases, charged over 135 individuals for human trafficking related offenses. We believe that these numbers are low due to the pandemic, but they still represent an enormous uptick in the number of trafficking and related cases filed in this county. With the reopening of the courts, increase of proactive investigations, and new inter-county task force, we expect a measurable influx in cases for the grant period.

Project Approach & Activities:

The Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office seeks to continue to address modern-day trafficking by utilizing investigative techniques centered around obtaining modern-day evidence, such as cellular telephones, social media, and geolocation data, with the goal of eradicating networks of traffickers and obtaining convictions without relying on victim testimony. We use a team-oriented approach to investigating and prosecuting human trafficking, with collaboration between prosecutors, criminal investigators, and a criminal intelligence analyst. We are requesting funds to continue employing a criminal intelligence analyst, who uses both open source and law enforcement databases to gather information on both suspects and victims. This includes obtaining and reviewing prior offense reports, prior bond paperwork, jail communications, "CPS" records, social media accounts, and other relevant information. This approach requires daily case review and follow up because social media platforms allow users to post temporary content; for example, if we are watching a suspect's Instagram account, they may post to their Instagram Story, which is only available to view for 24 hours after it is posted. Information gathered by the criminal intelligence analyst is documented and saved for both current and future investigations, and to build a database of information that can be used to identify other networks of traffickers. The analyst is responsible for developing contacts at other agencies, including in contiguous counties, to ensure we are responsibly using resources and any to identify and address overlaps in investigative targets as early as possible. The analyst assists the dedicated Human Trafficking investigator with review of forensic reports from cell phone search warrants, information obtained from social media account returns, jail communications, and other evidentiary material. Additionally, the criminal intelligence analysts is utilized during proactive operations, where often the only information that law enforcement has about potential suspects are their online username and/or a phone number. By having criminal intelligence analysts on scene during these operations, we are able to quickly obtain crucial information about suspects before they even arrive on the scene. This not only gives us an investigatory advantage, but also helps alleviate safety concerns for undercover officers. We are requesting funds to continue employing a criminal investigator dedicated to investigating human trafficking and related offenses. The investigator reviews information compiled by the criminal intelligence analyst, draft search warrants, conduct interviews, set up medical and sexual assault examinations, set up forensic interviews of victims at our local Children's Advocacy Center and TxFNE, set victims up with victim advocates, request grand jury subpoenas and provide testimony in court for bond hearings and trials. The investigator will also follow up on leads that develop from search warrant returns. The investigator will also work in an undercover capacity in order to effectuate the rescue of identified victims. The criminal investigator, criminal intelligence analyst, and prosecutors will continuously update one another regarding developments in each case, so that tasks can be delegated efficiently and evidence reviewed thoroughly. This team approach will ensure that all investigations are thorough from start to finish, and result in convictions for traffickers and recovery and justice for victims.

Capacity & Capabilities:

Prosecution of Human Trafficking and related offenses is currently handled out of the Special Crimes Division of the Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office, which consists of a Chief, and three felony prosecutors. Prior to January 2019, Human Trafficking cases were handled within other divisions and no single individual was responsible for handling human trafficking cases. In January of 2019, the human trafficking caseload was added to the child exploitation caseload, which was handled exclusively by two prosecutors within the Child Abuse Division in addition to their reduced child abuse caseloads. In early 2020, initial review of misdemeanor prostitution cases, which was previously handled by the Intake Division, was reassigned to the Child Abuse Division. With the increased demands on the prosecutors handling the human trafficking and child exploitation caseload, in mid-2020, the Child Abuse Division cross-trained prosecutors on the child exploitation cases, so that a portion of that workload could be redistributed. In late 2021, the Human Trafficking cases began being assigned to the Special Crimes Division and handled by two prosecutor. One with full time Human Trafficking responsibilities and a second prosecutor that also has Child Abuse responsibilities. Prior to receiving our grant award, the Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office employed one investigator who was assigned to the Human Trafficking Rescue Alliance (HTRA), who was

responsible for all human trafficking related investigations occurring in Fort Bend County. As of April 2020, we have a second, grant funded investigator who assists with the human trafficking investigations in our county. Additionally, as of April 2020, we have a grant funded analyst to assist with the human trafficking investigations. The addition of these positions has increased the number of human trafficking cases and related offenses being investigated and prosecuted in Fort Bend County. Prior to the inclusion of this additional staff, we hosted one proactive operation. Despite COVID-19, we were able to host two proactive operations in 2020. In 2021, the office hosted 5 undercover operations that resulted in approximately 50 prostitution, solicitation of prostitution, and human trafficking offenses being filed. The Human Trafficking Rescue Alliance (HTRA) is a collaboration of local, state and federal law enforcement agencies working together with area social service organizations. In 2019, the Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office executed a Memorandum of Understanding renewing our commitment to HTRA. This membership allows us to partner and share resources with a variety of agencies, including the FBI, Department of Justice, Department of State, and victim resource agencies such as YMCA International, United Against Human Trafficking, and the Landing, among others. With HTRA, we have access to personnel needed to conduct proactive investigations targeted at identifying and rescuing victims of trafficking, as well as identifying and prosecuting sex buyers and pimps. However, this alliance does not provide resources for the time-consuming follow up investigation that is required in each case. Our partnership with the other members of HTRA also ensures that victims and potential victims encountered during proactive operations receive a trauma-informed response and subsequent care. Social service organizations are always present on scene during these operations to give immediate assistance to victims and potential victims, including arranging medical care and finding housing. Our goal of moving toward technology-based investigations also ensures that victims can continue to focus on their recovery needs, rather than the stress, worry, and fear that accompanies the wait and preparation for eventual prosecution. The Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office also has a long standing relationship with Child Advocates of Fort Bend. Since 1996, the District Attorney's Office has been part of a multi-disciplinary team collaboration with the Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) branch of that organization, local law enforcement agencies, the Department of Family and Protective Services- Child Protective Services (DFPS-CPS), and medical and mental health care providers. The CAC provides trauma informed forensic interviews, as well as trauma informed therapy services for children, youth, and caregivers. The CAC also provides family advocates and court advocates for child victims. Our CAC assists officers with coordination of acute and non-acute sexual assault examinations for children and youth, and provides out-sourced therapy and social service referrals for clients as needed. The CAFB-CAC is the Office of the Governor's designated Care Coordination Agency for child victims of human trafficking in Fort Bend County. The Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office is also a member of the Houston Metro Internet Crimes Against Children (HMICAC) Task Force, a network of state and federal law enforcement agencies in the Southern District of Texas who are involved in proactive and reactive investigations and prosecutions of persons involved in child abuse and exploitation involving the internet. Our strong ties with the Houston Metro ICAC Task Force has allowed for collaboration in cases where child victims were exploited on the internet as part of the commission of a Human Trafficking offense. The Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office is also a member of our local coalition in the fight against Human Trafficking, the Fort Bend County Human Trafficking Task Force. The Fort Bend County Human Trafficking Task Force connects and empowers services providers, law enforcement agencies, and stakeholders to prevent, detect, and dismantle human trafficking in Fort Bend County. Membership in the Fort Bend County Human Trafficking Task Force, which meets quarterly, allows us to have regular contact and conversations with other county agencies, including Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation, Behavioral Health Services, the Office of the County Judge, the Fort Bend County Attorney's Office, as well as other interested parties including Access Health, the George Foundation, and Child Advocates of Fort Bend. While the task force was not active in 2020 due to the pandemic, we look forward to regrouping when it is safe to do so. In 2020, we gained a partner in the fight against human trafficking when the Officer of the Attorney General (OAG) reached out to assist in our investigation and prosecution efforts. We are currently collaborating with the OAG on the prosecution of four individuals arrested out of Operation Patriot. Also in 2020, the Missouri City Police Department dedicated an investigative position to handle human trafficking and internet crimes against children. This investigator joined the District Attorney's investigators in serving as a case agent during Operation Patriot. These collaborative efforts will increase case filings resulting in an accelerated need for prosecutorial support in the county.

Performance Management :

In 2019, the Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office conducted one undercover operation that was wildly successful. Our hope in 2020 was to conduct three proactive operations, but with the COVID-19 pandemic, we were only able to manage two, large-scale operations (January 2020 Stafford John Op, September 2020 Operation Patriot). Since May of 2021, the office has either hosted or participated in 7 undercover operations that resulted in approximately 70 buyer arrest and approximately 17 victims rescued. We intend to use information obtained during the operations as a starting point for long-term, in-depth, technology-focused investigations dedicated to eradicating networks of traffickers. The very nature of such investigations contemplates a lengthy time period; therefore, our measure of success is one of quality versus quantity. As a member of HTRA, we are already subject to data collection requirements and reporting standards on a quarterly basis, at which point we are able to evaluate the success of the project and make any adjustments needed.

Target Group :

We expect to identify and rescue victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation in Fort Bend County (and/or those who have a nexus to Fort Bend County), and seek to provide them with referrals necessary to facilitate their recovery as healthy and productive citizens. We also expect to identify perpetrators who engage in human trafficking and related offenses to hold them accountable for their crimes through aggressive prosecution.

Evidence-Based Practices:

In a 2015 study conducted by Thorn, in collaboration with Texas Christian University, 260 survivors of domestic minor sex trafficking provided information on recruiting practices, experiences in the life, technology use, advertising, interactions with buyers, and prosecution. When asked about the role technology played in trafficking, 63% reported communicating online with their trafficker, 57% reported that their trafficker purchased a cellular telephone for them to use, and 75% reported their trafficker used social media and "apps" regularly. The Thorn study found that, as of 2015, the most common sites accessed by traffickers were Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Tagged, MeetMe, MocoSpace, and Twitter. Additionally, the Thorn survey found that online advertising was also increasing at an alarming rate: only 38% of those who were trafficked prior to 2004 were advertised online, compared to 75% of those who were trafficked post 2004. In 2018, the Ohio Attorney General's Human Trafficking Commission commissioned a study into how social media is used to contact, recruit, and sell children for sex. The study, which was conducted by the University of Toledo Human Trafficking and Social Justice Institute, found that social media not only allows a trafficker to have access to multiple vulnerable potential victims at once, but that social media allows a trafficker to mask traditional clues that they are a potentially dangerous individual. The research confirms what we observed in our investigations in 2019 and 2020 – that social media and cellular telephones are important tools of the trade in the trafficking world. Having a sufficient number of dedicated personnel trained to locate social media sites, draft search warrants, and review information and evidence obtained from social media search warrant returns and cellular telephone forensics is imperative to obtaining and knowledgably evaluating information that will not only lead to successful prosecutions, but may lead to identification of additional suspects and identification and rescue of additional victims. References: Bouche, Vanessa, The Role of Technology in Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking, Texas Christian University, January 2018; Miller, Dan, Study Details Link Between Social Media and Sex Trafficking, Forensic Magazine: Rockaway, October 8, 2018.

Project Activities Information

Introduction

This section contains questions about your project. It is very important for applicants to review their funding announcement for guidance on how to fill out this section. Unless otherwise specified, answers should be about the EXPECTED activities to occur during the project period.

Selected Project Activities:

ACTIVITY	PERCENTAGE:	DESCRIPTION
CSEP Targeted Investigation and Prosecution	100.00	The Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office seeks to address modern-day trafficking by utilizing investigative techniques centered around obtaining modern-day evidence, such as evidence derived from cellular telephones, social media, and geolocation data, with the goal of eradicating networks of traffickers and obtaining convictions without relying on victim testimony. We seek to introduce a team-oriented approach to investigating and prosecuting human trafficking, with collaboration between prosecutors, criminal investigators, and a criminal intelligence analyst.

CJD Purpose Areas

PERCENT DEDICATED	PURPOSE AREA	PURPOSE AREA DESCRIPTION
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Measures Information

Objective Output Measures

OUTPUT MEASURE	TARGET LEVEL
Number of human trafficking/exploitation cases investigated by the unit/division benefiting from the grant.	180
Number of human trafficking/exploitation cases referred for prosecution.	100
Number of individual exploiters criminally charged for any offense.	90
Number of survivors from human trafficking/exploitation cases who were referred to service providers.	40

Objective Outcome Measures

OUTCOME MEASURE	TARGET LEVEL
Number of cases against exploiters dismissed or acquitted.	0
Number of cases against exploiters resulting in a deferred adjudication.	25
Number of cases against exploiters resulting in a felony conviction.	15
Number of cases against exploiters resulting in a misdemeanor conviction	5
Number of individuals arrested for a human trafficking/exploitation related incident resulting from the project activities.	130

Custom Output Measures

CUSTOM OUTPUT MEASURE	TARGET LEVEL
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Custom Outcome Measures

CUSTOM OUTCOME MEASURE	TARGET LEVEL
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Resolution from Governing Body

Applications from nonprofit corporations, local units of governments, and other political subdivisions must include a [resolution](#) that contains the following:

1. Authorization by your governing body for the submission of the application to the Public Safety Office (PSO) that clearly identifies the name of the project for which funding is requested;
2. A commitment to provide all applicable matching funds;
3. A designation of the name and/or title of an authorized official who is given the authority to apply for, accept, reject, alter, or terminate a grant (Note: If a name is provided, you must update the PSO should the official change during the grant period.); and
4. A written assurance that, in the event of loss or misuse of grant funds, the governing body will return all funds to PSO.

Upon approval from your agency's governing body, upload the approved resolution to eGrants by clicking on the **Upload Files** sub-tab located in the **Summary** tab.

Contract Compliance

Will PSO grant funds be used to support any contracts for professional services?

Select the appropriate response:

☒ Yes

☐ No

For applicant agencies that selected **Yes** above, describe how you will monitor the activities of the sub-contractor(s) for compliance with the contract provisions (including equipment purchases), deliverables, and all applicable statutes, rules, regulations, and guidelines governing this project.

Enter a description for monitoring contract compliance:

For a lease contract of this size the grantee submits a purchase order to our purchasing department who is tasked with ensuring the lease follows county and statutory guidelines, in cooperation with the County Attorney. Invoicing, payments, and compliance issues will be handled by the Fort Bend County Auditor's Office.

Lobbying

For applicant agencies requesting grant funds in excess of \$100,000, have any federally appropriated funds been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any federal contract, the making of any federal grant, the making of any federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any federal contract, grant loan, or cooperative agreement?

Select the appropriate response:

☐ Yes

☒ No

☐ N/A

For applicant agencies that selected either **No** or **N/A** above, have any non-federal funds been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress in connection with this federal contract, loan, or cooperative agreement?

Select the appropriate response:

☐ Yes

☒ No

☐ N/A

Fiscal Year

Provide the begin and end date for the applicant agency's fiscal year (e.g., 09/01/20xx to 08/31/20xx).

Enter the Begin Date [mm/dd/yyyy]:

10/1/2022

Enter the End Date [mm/dd/yyyy]:

9/30/2023

Sources of Financial Support

Each applicant must provide the amount of grant funds expended during the most recently completed fiscal year for the following sources:

Enter the amount (in Whole Dollars \$) of Federal Grant Funds expended:

92377738

Enter the amount (in Whole Dollars \$) of State Grant Funds expended:

6782504

Single Audit

Applicants who expend less than \$750,000 in federal grant funding or less than \$750,000 in state grant funding are exempt from the Single Audit Act and cannot charge audit costs to a PSO grant. However, PSO may require a limited scope audit as defined in 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart F - Audit Requirements.

Has the applicant agency expended federal grant funding of \$750,000 or more, or state grant funding of \$750,000 or more during the most recently completed fiscal year?

Select the appropriate response:

☒ Yes

☐ No

Applicant agencies that selected **Yes** above, provide the date of your organization's last annual single audit, performed by an independent auditor in accordance with the State of Texas Single Audit Circular; or CFR Part 200, Subpart F - Audit Requirements.

Enter the date of your last annual single audit:

9/30/2020

Debarment

Each applicant agency will certify that it and its principals (as defined in 2 CFR Part 180.995):

- Are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, sentenced to a denial of Federal benefits by a State or Federal Court, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any federal department or agency;
- Have not within a three-year period preceding this application been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (federal, state, or local) transaction or contract under a public transaction; violation of federal or state antitrust statutes or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property; or
- Are not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (federal, state, or local) with commission of any of the offenses enumerated in the above bullet; and have not within a three-year period preceding this application had one or more public transactions (federal, state, or local) terminated for cause or default.

Select the appropriate response:

☒ I Certify

☐ Unable to Certify

If you selected **Unable to Certify** above, please provide an explanation as to why the applicant agency cannot certify the statements.

Fiscal Capability Information

Section 1: Organizational Information

*** FOR PROFIT CORPORATIONS ONLY ***

Enter the following values in order to submit the application

Enter the Year in which the Corporation was Founded: 0

Enter the Date that the IRS Letter Granted 501(c)(3) Tax Exemption Status: 01/01/1900

Enter the Employer Identification Number Assigned by the IRS: 0

Enter the Charter Number assigned by the Texas Secretary of State: 0

Enter the Year in which the Corporation was Founded:

Enter the Date that the IRS Letter Granted 501(c)(3) Tax Exemption Status:

Enter the Employer Identification Number Assigned by the IRS:

Enter the Charter Number assigned by the Texas Secretary of State:

Section 2: Accounting System

The grantee organization must incorporate an accounting system that will track direct and indirect costs for the organization (general ledger) as well as direct and indirect costs by project (project ledger). The grantee must establish a time and effort system to track personnel costs by project. This should be reported on an hourly basis, or in increments of an hour.

Is there a list of your organization's accounts identified by a specific number (i.e., a general ledger of accounts)?

Select the appropriate response:

☐ Yes

☐ No

Does the accounting system include a project ledger to record expenditures for each Program by required budget cost categories?

Select the appropriate response:

☐ Yes

☐ No

Is there a timekeeping system that allows for grant personnel to identify activity and requires signatures by the employee and his or her supervisor?

Select the appropriate response:

☐ Yes

☐ No

If you answered 'No' to any question above in the Accounting System section, in the space provided below explain what action will be taken to ensure accountability.

Enter your explanation:

Section 3: Financial Capability

Grant agencies should prepare annual financial statements. At a minimum, current internal balance sheet and income statements are required. A balance sheet is a statement of financial position for a grant agency disclosing assets, liabilities, and retained earnings at a given point in time. An income statement is a summary of revenue and expenses for a grant agency during a fiscal year.

Has the grant agency undergone an independent audit?

Select the appropriate response:

☐ Yes

☐ No

Does the organization prepare financial statements at least annually?

Select the appropriate response:

☐ Yes

☐ No

According to the organization's most recent Audit or Balance Sheet, are the current total assets greater than the liabilities?

Select the appropriate response:

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

If you selected 'No' to any question above under the Financial Capability section, in the space provided below explain what action will be taken to ensure accountability.

Enter your explanation:

Section 4: Budgetary Controls

Grant agencies should establish a system to track expenditures against budget and / or funded amounts. Are there budgetary controls in effect (e.g., comparison of budget with actual expenditures on a monthly basis) to include drawing down grant funds in excess of:

a) Total funds authorized on the Statement of Grant Award?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

b) Total funds available for any budget category as stipulated on the Statement of Grant Award?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

If you selected 'No' to any question above under the Budgetary Controls section, in the space provided below please explain what action will be taken to ensure accountability.

Enter your explanation:

Section 5: Internal Controls

Grant agencies must safeguard cash receipts, disbursements, and ensure a segregation of duties exist. For example, one person should not have authorization to sign checks and make deposits.

Are accounting entries supported by appropriate documentation (e.g., purchase orders, vouchers, receipts, invoices)?

Select the appropriate response:

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Is there separation of responsibility in the receipt, payment, and recording of costs?

Select the appropriate response:

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

If you selected 'No' to any question above under the Internal Controls section, in the space provided below please explain what action will be taken to ensure accountability.

Enter your explanation:

Budget Details Information

Budget Information by Budget Line Item:

CATEGORY	SUB CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	OOG	CASH MATCH	IN-KIND MATCH	GPI	TOTAL	UNIT/%
Personnel	Certified Peace Officer - All Others	Personnel Certified Peace Officer - Police Department Title: Criminal	\$112,759.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$112,759.00	100

		<p>Investigator. Employee Name: Anthony Ruggeroli. Job Description: Investigator to work on human trafficking and child exploitation cases. Investigator will be responsible for conducting and assisting with undercover operations dedicated to identifying and rescuing victims of human trafficking and child exploitation. Investigator will be responsible for following up and obtaining additional digital evidence, including geolocate, social media, and cellular telephone evidence to identify networks of traffickers. Total Salary and Fringe: \$112,759.00 (for 12 month period). This includes an anticipated county wide 5% cost of living adjustment.</p>						
Personnel	Certified Peace Officer - All Others	Allocated funds for overtime allows our investigator, Anthony Ruggeroli, to work the	\$7,500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$7,500.00	100

		necessary hours for operations and investigations which often time requires more than the standard working time frame of 8a – 5p into the late evening hours and often exceeding 40 hours per week						
Personnel	Analyst (e.g., crime, crime scene investigators, forensic, crime laboratory, etc.)	<p>Personnel Analyst (e.g., crime, crime scene investigators, forensic, crime laboratory, etc.)</p> <p>Title: Criminal Intelligence Analyst.</p> <p>Employee Name: Katelyn Boga.</p> <p>Job Description: The criminal intelligence analyst will be responsible for working with human trafficking investigators and prosecutors to obtain additional information on individuals suspected of human trafficking and child exploitation utilizing open source and law enforcement databases. The criminal intelligence analyst will create a database of information learned from reviewing jail calls and search</p>	\$81,290.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$81,290.00	100

		warrant returns, and maintain communication with contiguous counties in order to quickly and effectively locate victims, traffickers, and evidence.. Salary and fringe benefits: 81,290.00. This includes an anticipated county wide 5% cost of living adjustment.						
Personnel	Analyst (e.g., crime, crime scene investigators, forensic, crime laboratory, etc.)	Overtime pay for Analyst. Allocated funds for overtime allows our analyst, Katelyn Boga, to work the necessary hours for operations and investigations which often time requires more than the standard working time frame of 8a – 5p and more than 40 hours per week	\$7,500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$7,500.00	100
Contractual and Professional Services	Investigative Services	Proactive Operations related to investigating sex trafficking demand. Money to be used to fund operation expenses (e.g. hotel rooms) for the FBDAO to conduct proactive operations aimed at apprehending suspects seeking to purchase sex from minors/youths. We anticipate	\$4,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$4,000.00	0

		conducting at least two demand-focused operations within the 2022 year. Each operation requires at least 5 hotel rooms over the span of 2 – 3 nights.						
Contractual and Professional Services	Vehicle Transportation-Related Services	2 Government Lease Vehicles (Mid-size SUV) through Enterprise for 12 months, at a rate of \$700 per month (government rate). One vehicle for the Investigator and another vehicle for the analyst. The analyst goes out on operations from the Woodlands to Galveston and attends meetings with other law enforcement agencies and has to travel from her office at the Sienna Annex to the main District Attorney's Office at the Fort Bend County Justice Center. Also, the Analyst goes to forensic interviews at the CAC in Rosenberg or TxFNE in Houston.	\$16,800.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$16,800.00	0
Travel and Training	In-State Incidentals and/or Mileage	Sending personnel directly working on this project to the Dallas Crimes Against Children's Conference. We	\$6,460.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$6,460.00	0

		are anticipating a registration fee of \$600 per person as the conference goes back to an in person format. Lodging per person is estimated at \$2,000. The Conference has used the Fairmont Hotel in the past. Five nights at government rate of \$140 per night = \$2,000. This national conference typically includes multiple courses related to commercial child sexual exploitation and human trafficking as well as digital evidence collection.						
Supplies and Direct Operating Expenses	Cellular, Fax, Pager, and/or Office Telephone	Cell phone plan for Human Trafficking Investigator and Criminal Intelligence Analyst (\$60 per month each at government rate).	\$1,440.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,440.00	0
Supplies and Direct Operating Expenses	Backup Drive System and Accessories (\$5,000 or less per unit)	Ten (10) SAMSUNG T5 Portable SSD 500GB - Up to 540MB/s - USB 3.1 External Solid State Drive, Blue (MU-PA500B/AM) @ \$82.99 ea.	\$829.90	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$829.90	0
Supplies and Direct	Specialized Computer	We are requesting two	\$2,520.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,520.00	0

Operating Expenses	Software (\$5,000 or less per unit)	licenses for Callyo video software. The investigators currently have access to Callyo software to record and capture text messages and phone calls. The Callyo Video software is a surveillance tool that would allow an undercover officer to video record an undercover interaction with his/her phone and would allow other officers to watch the interaction live, which would be highly beneficial to the investigation and also provide a great safety measure as well. This software would be used for primary or secondary audio/video evidence collection during undercover investigations. The licenses are \$40.00 per month.						
Supplies and Direct Operating Expenses	Desktop System and Accessories (\$5,000 or less per unit)	Two (2) - BUFFALO Portable Blu-ray Drive/External, Plays and Burns Blu-Rays, DVDs, and CDs with USB Connection. Compatible with Laptop, Desktop	\$194.90	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$194.90	0

		PC and Mac. @ \$97.45 ea.						
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Source of Match Information

Detail Source of Match/GPI:

DESCRIPTION	MATCH TYPE	AMOUNT
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Summary Source of Match/GPI:

Total Report	Cash Match	In Kind	GPI Federal Share	GPI State Share
\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

Budget Summary Information

Budget Summary Information by Budget Category:

CATEGORY	OOG	CASH MATCH	IN-KIND MATCH	GPI	TOTAL
Contractual and Professional Services	\$20,800.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$20,800.00
Personnel	\$209,049.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$209,049.00
Supplies and Direct Operating Expenses	\$4,984.80	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$4,984.80
Travel and Training	\$6,460.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$6,460.00

Budget Grand Total Information:

OOG	CASH MATCH	IN-KIND MATCH	GPI	TOTAL
\$241,293.80	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$241,293.80

Condition Of Fundings Information

Condition of Funding / Project Requirement	Date Created	Date Met	Hold Funds	Hold Line Item Funds
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