

Grant: Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistant Grant Program 2016
Agency: City of Palmdale
Project Title: Enhanced Traffic Enforcement
Project Contact: Kelly Long, Public Safety Supervisor
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BACKGROUND

A. General Characteristics

The City of Palmdale (City) has a population of approximately 156,066. The city of 104 square miles is located approximately 60 freeway miles northeast of downtown Los Angeles in the high desert of the Antelope Valley. Early morning and early evening traffic flow increase drastically due to a large commuting work force. The City enjoys a relatively warm climate with approximately 300 days of sunshine per year.

B. Street and Highways

The roadway system in Palmdale has a total of 560 miles of paved roadway. The City is traversed by one major freeway running north and south, and one highway running east and west. There are a total of 189 miles of arterial roads, conforming to a basic grid plan that connects with roadways of similar nature in those cities and areas bordering Palmdale. The remaining 371 miles of paved roadway is made up of alleyways, collector and residential streets.

C. Operating Departments

The City of Palmdale employs 186 full-time personnel. The City contracts with the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department to provide law enforcement services for the City. The City currently contracts for personnel, including 90 deputies (of which 4 are motorcycle deputies), one motor/traffic sergeant, and one investigator assigned to the traffic unit.

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D. Existing Systems

Traffic enforcement for the City of Palmdale is provided by the Los Angeles County Sheriff Department under a service contract. Enforcement operations are conducted on a 24-hour basis, but are limited by response to priority and emergency calls for service of a criminal nature. In addition, during time periods such as late afternoon or early evenings when there is a high volume of calls for service, traffic units are utilized to respond to criminal calls instead of working traffic enforcement. DUI enforcement is done by all deputies assigned to field duties and is aided by eleven PAS devices assigned to traffic deputies.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Available collision information indicates that Palmdale has experienced a 10% increase in collisions from 2014 to 2015. Speed and DUI related collisions account for 19% of the total collisions throughout the city in 2015. Statistics show a decrease for 2015 in alcohol-related collisions of 4% from 2014. These DUI collisions accounted for approximately 5% of the total reported collisions for 2015, of which 44% of the DUI crashes resulted in injuries or fatalities.

ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM

The City of Palmdale has actively pursued traffic-engineering solutions to provide adequate capacity, operations, and safety through this growth. Additionally, the City has continued to increase its commitment of resources to traffic enforcement. The City utilized the FY 2005 through 2015 JAG grants, in addition to the ARRA JAG grant to offset the cost of deploying two

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additional motorcycle deputies to enhance our traffic enforcement program. Both deputies began their deployment in November 2005.

The motorcycle deputies are utilized to impact traffic problem locations, which are identified by collision records and citizen complaints. In 2015, the two grant deputies issued 2,915 citations for hazardous violations, concentrating on the speed-related problem areas throughout the City, especially around school zones. These two deputies also issued 538 non-hazardous citations, and made 278 traffic related arrests.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

The City of Palmdale proposes utilizing the 2016 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) funds to continue to contract for two additional motorcycle deputies. These two deputies will be utilized primarily for directed enforcement efforts to help reduce speed-related collisions. The deputies will also be available to respond to calls for service. The deputies will work in coordination with the City's Neighborhood Services Department to identify high-risk areas and other areas of concern (such as school zones). Quarterly statistical reports will be provided from the Sheriff's Department to the City and submitted as required.

PROJECT GOALS

Reduce total overall collisions in the City by 4% by the end of 2017.

Reduce speed related collisions by 4% by the end of 2017

Reduce DUI related collisions by 5% by the end of 2017

Reduce the percentage of DUI related collisions involving an injury or fatality by 15% by the end of 2017.

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COSTS

The City is eligible for \$64,321 through the 2016 JAG program. The City will utilize this funding in FY 2016-17 to partially fund the cost of the two motorcycle deputies. It is anticipated that the cost of the deputy items in FY 2016-17 will be \$196,570 each or a total of \$393,140 for both units. The City will utilize \$328,819 in General Fund expenditures to make up the difference in the cost of the deputies and the amount covered by the grant. The City will utilize the entire grant funding by June 30, 2017.