



Bedford County Sheriff's Office

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Michael J. Brown
Sheriff

Committed to Excellence

April 14, 2016

Open letter to the Citizens of Bedford County:

The Bedford County Sheriff's Office will be submitting a grant application for the funding of 26 Body Worn Cameras, BWC. The grantors stipulate that the project abstract be made public for viewing. Any comments or questions may be directed to the Sheriff's Office via email through the website or to the grant writer below.

Grant Writer : Robin Sundquist – rsundquist@bedfordsheriff.org

Project – Body Worn Cameras Policy and Expansion Project CFDA#16.835

Total Funding request to U.S Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs - \$10,335

Abstract –

Bedford County, VA, is over 764 square miles. Bedford County Sheriff's Office is the primary law enforcement agency for the entire county. Due to its size, calls are usually answered by a single deputy, many times his/her back-up being miles away. Most of the Field deputies have on-dash cameras. However, these cameras are only pointed at one angle and many times do not record an incident when out of frame. With the addition of BWC, the video will record everything from deputy's angle. It is not dependent on the proximity of his patrol car, though on-dash cam also provides footage. Digital video is time marked making presentation of footage to a jury a valued benefit that is certainly better than relying on conflicting eyewitness testimony, if any. In this past year, this agency encountered two fatal shooting incidents. Dash cam footage was reviewed by the Commonwealth's Attorney' however, due to darkness and objects blocking the view of the camera, the final exoneration of those involved in these high profile shootings took months to review, leaving the field grossly short-handed while awaiting complete analysis. In both of these situations, had these deputies been equipped with BWC, the situations would have been easily reviewed and officers cleared in a timely manner. The assimilation into the expanded use of BWC will be quite seamless due to the fact that the server that is used to upload in-car camera video has been upgraded to accommodate BWC and is currently in use. Project implementation continues to demonstrate the transparency this agency has with the community. The policy and training outlines how deputies can best identify which types of encounters should be recorded. Policy has been reviewed by the Commonwealth's Attorney. Training includes Deputy-community relationships, privacy issues, and transparency that can be shared with the public and media. Training is completed by shift Supervisors to subordinate deputies when they receive their issued BWC. The online policy certification quiz, which they must score 100% provides a medium to show all users have been trained and understand the policy regarding BWC. Additionally, footage will be utilized for training purposes. Anticipated outcomes will include swift closure to questionable events, either in favor of the suspect, or perhaps the competency of the officer. The project abstract posted on the County and Agency website will be open for public comment during the county Board meeting.

#End#