

Body-worn Camera and In-Car Cameras – Sworn Staff: \$720,000 (One-time) and \$1,841,000 (On-going)

The Contra Costa County Office of the Sheriff seeks funding for outfitting its sworn staff with body-worn cameras and patrol vehicles with in-car cameras. The Office has sought funding from both County general funds and alternate funding streams but has not received funding for the department-wide deployment of cameras thus far.

As outlined in the Police Executive Research Forum, “Body-worn cameras can help improve the high-quality public service expected of police officers and promote the perceived legitimacy and sense of procedural justice that communities have about their police departments. Furthermore, departments that are already deploying body-worn cameras tell us that the presence of cameras often improves the performance of officers as well as the conduct of the community members who are recorded. This is an important advance in policing. And when officers or members of the public break the law or behave badly, body-worn cameras can create a public record that allows the entire community to see what really happened.”

A department-wide body-worn and in-car camera infrastructure is one of the best systems to help bridge community-to-law enforcement relations and build and maintain trust with the citizens we serve.

Over the past eight years, the Office of the Sheriff has been actively compiling data on the employment of body-worn cameras and has attempted to develop related best practice methodologies in anticipation of the prospective full implementation of such systems. Foundational policy creation and application, comprehensive training procedures, infrastructure capability and fortitude, viable funding stream acquisition, and specific vendor identification were all components of the inquiry.

On November 6, 2014, Office of the Sheriff Policy and Procedures Manual Section 1.06.82 – Mobile Audio Video & Body Worn Camera was enacted. The policy outlined departmental standards for the proper deployment of body-worn and in-car cameras during the performance of deputy sheriffs’ duties.

On December 22, 2014, the Office of the Sheriff Custody Services Bureau, in conjunction with the Support Services Bureau – Technical Services Division, implemented a pilot program to use body-worn cameras in a custodial setting. The purpose of the six-month program was to ultimately determine the efficiency, effectiveness, and overall viability of expanding body-worn cameras throughout the department.

Citizen complaints and use of force incidents were measured and compared during this program. Data collected also included cost analysis, recommended storage requirements, and the effect of cameras on the volume or legitimacy of citizen or inmate complaints, especially those related to use of force encounters or conduct-related issues. During the pilot, complaints, and internal affairs referrals by citizens against deputies notably decreased.

Since this program, a more robust policy has been established, and two of the Office of the Sheriff’s contract cities have been using body-worn cameras with remarkable success. Additionally, the Office has analyzed the processing requirements needed in terms of public records act requests should body-worn and in-car cameras be implemented department-wide. Funding is also requested to up-staff the Professional Standards Unit, responsible for processing such public and legal requests.

On July 7, 2021, the Office of the Sheriff presented recommendations of the body-worn and in-car camera project to the Measure X Community Advisory Board. The goals of the project included:

- Provide a more transparent record of citizen encounters with law enforcement
- Accurately account for police-to-citizen contacts
- Audit video for employee adherence to policy and procedure
- Provide a training tool to assist deputies in improving their future responses to incidents
- Protect the public from police misconduct
- Protect deputies from unfounded allegations of misconduct
- Assist deputies with properly documenting a body-worn or in-car camera incident

Additional Professional Standards Division Personnel

The Planning and Research Unit of the Office of the Sheriff Professional Standards Division is a small unit comprised of a Sheriff's Specialist and a Special Assistant to the Sheriff. In addition to maintaining the Policy and Procedures Manual, this unit is the Office's liaison for juvenile justice, the Department of Motor Vehicles, the State Legislature, the California State Sheriffs' Association, the District Attorney, the Public Defender, and County Counsel's Offices. Furthermore, the unit handles Public Records Requests, U-Visa applications, and many other administrative functions. Moreover, the Planning and Research Unit processes records for lawsuits and Pitchess Motions.

With the significant rise in requests received by the Office pursuant to the California Public Records Act (PRA), the small unit processes approximately 200 requests per year, not including lawsuits and Pitchess Motions. The implementation of a body-worn camera and in-car camera program will add a significant volume of video footage. Adding additional technologies will undoubtedly and exponentially increase the already heavy workload of the unit. If the PRA mandates are to be honored and the timelines met, additional staffing will absolutely be necessary.

The unit should be bolstered to include two additional Sheriff's Specialists who can be trained in the legal mandates of PRA law, the review of confidential media for legal release content data and be able to navigate highly specialized software used to redact a variety of media. The unit should also include a Sheriff's Director who can adequately supervise the Specialists and provide training on all the aforementioned items, review the finished product prior to receiving PRA release approval, in addition to coordinating with County Counsel, Office of the Sheriff command staff and managers, the County Administrator's Office, other County agencies, and outside law enforcement agencies. Additionally, the Director will need to keep abreast of both current and suggested legal changes and challenges to PRA law, so the unit stays prepared and within legal parameters.

On July 7, 2021, the Office of the Sheriff presented recommendations of additional professional staff to support the body-worn and in-car camera project to the Measure X Community Advisory Board. The additional positions included:

- One Sheriff's Director FTE - responsible for planning, organizing, coordinating, and managing the operation of the Planning and Research Unit.
- Two Sheriff's Specialist FTE – responsible for gathering and analyzing data, preparing data and reports, and completing the tasks assigned to the Planning and Research Unit.

The initial one-time cost to purchase equipment, including 700 body-worn cameras, 160 front-facing vehicle cameras, and 160 rear-facing vehicle cameras, is approximately \$720,000. Annual costs of \$1,300,000 include software components and training and support. The software components include licensing, storage, redaction studio, sharing, and multicamera playback. Training, technical support, and warranties are essential for the continued use of the equipment.

The annual cost to add three additional professional positions to the Professional Standards Division Planning and Research Unit is \$540,000. The cost for one Sheriff's Director position is \$219,000 annually, and the cost for each Sheriff's Specialist position is \$161,000. Failure to include additional positions to support the body-worn camera and in-car camera project will result in major delays responding to the ever-increasing Public Record Requests.

Recommendation:

The County Administrator's recommendation is to fully fund the one-time allocation of \$720,000 and annual on-going allocation of \$1,841,000.