



## Recommendation for Action

**File #:** 21-3318, **Agenda Item #:** 27.

11/4/2021

### **Posting Language**

Approve an ordinance amending the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Austin Police Department Operating Budget Special Revenue Fund (Ordinance No. 20210811-001) to accept and appropriate \$200,000 in grant funds from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, for the City of Austin De-Escalation Training Project.

### **Lead Department**

Austin Police Department.

### **Fiscal Note**

Funding in the amount of \$200,000 is available from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. A City funding match is not required. A fiscal note is attached.

### **For More Information:**

Robin Henderson, Interim Chief of Staff, Austin Police Department, 512-974-5030.

### **Additional Backup Information:**

The City Manager's Office has reviewed this grant for alignments directed by Resolution 20200611-096 and recommends approval. This action will accept \$200,000 in grant funds from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services and amend the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Austin Police Department (APD) Operating Budget Special Revenue Fund to appropriate \$200,000 for the City of Austin De-Escalation Training Project for the grant period of October 1, 2021 - September 30, 2023.

Funding will be used to:

- purchase a virtual reality simulator
- provide Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactic (ICAT) certification training
- develop custom simulation scenarios
- train police officers

Increased emphasis on the use of de-escalation policies and training is critical to reducing negative outcomes and the potential use of deadly force during law enforcement responses. While most large police departments in the United States offer some form of de-escalation training, substantial variation in training exist, and the effects of many training protocols are unknown (CBS, 2019). Among de-escalation trainings, the Police Executive Research Forum's (PERF) ICAT training has shown promise (Ingel et al., 2020a). ICAT includes training in critical thinking skills for the management of potentially volatile police-citizen encounters integrating crisis recognition and intervention, communication, and tactical skills. The training is designed for officers who primarily encounter situations where de-escalation can improve outcomes and applies to situations where individuals are either unarmed or armed (PERF, 2016). Importantly, the training is flexible and adaptable to fit within local context and officer experiences (PERF, 2016b). ICAT training is available in a "train the trainer" format where PERF will train Austin key personnel to prepare them to, in turn, train APD officers (approximately 800 over grant term). While local adaptations can be incorporated, there is little available information about this to guide departments. APD will develop a localized ICAT training protocol and train patrol staff in the de-escalation technique. The skills taught will be reinforced through simulation training in

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locally developed scenarios deployed in a simulation environment. This customization will enhance the ICAT model by incorporating enhanced pedagogical approaches including customizing scenarios to teach basic skills while increasing complexity over time. As well, the development of local simulations will allow the department to control unintentional effects of simulation such as unintentionally enhancing racial bias based on the content of simulations.

**Strategic Outcome(s):**

Safety.