

## **2014 JAG PROGRAM – LOCAL SOLICITATION**

### **CITY OF OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON**

#### **PURCHASE OF MOBILE COMPUTER TERMINALS**

##### **PROGRAM NARRATIVE**

The Olympia Police Department seeks to purchase up to six (6) mobile computer terminals (MCTs). Currently, the Department has twenty-seven (27) MCTs that are shared amongst 41 Patrol Officers and Sergeants. The MCTs are assigned to patrol vehicles, rather than to individual officers, due to their limited number. The Department believes that individually-assigned MCTs will accomplish the following:

- Improve communication for the officers both in the field and in the office.
- Increase officers' crime analysis capability.
- Improve technology training.
- Reduce the time that MCTs are off-line due to software and hardware problems.
- Reduce the support needed to keep the MCTs in good working order.

Today's police officers rely heavily on technology to perform their jobs, maintain their safety, and to communicate effectively. Their MCT is the primary tool used to receive information from the Department, to view crime data, to receive call data, to access important data-bases, and to interact with people who they are not meeting face-to-face. At present, an officer does not have access to an MCT during time when shifts overlap: during shift briefing, training time, etc. Our goal is to supply our officers with MCTs in the same manner as we assign them a radio: it will be at hand whenever they need it. They will have their MCTs at shift briefing to review crime data and briefing summaries; when discussing a suspect, they will be able to pull up a photo on-line to share with their colleagues; they will be able to check their e-mail for essential information. This functionality will move the Department closer to our goal of data-driven policing by improving access to information systems.

As an essential tool, efficiency is gained when the MCTs can be customized to the individual. Most of us liberally use "favorites" and "bookmark" functions on our computers at work and at home. Because an officer could find him or herself in any of the patrol cars when on duty, it is not feasible for every officer to have his or her customizations on all the MCTs. It would not only be impossible to configure each MCT for each officer, it would create significant confusion for users rather than streamlining their processes. With individually assigned MCTs, officers will be able to adjust their MCTs in a fashion that works best for their individual work processes. Rather than hunting for a specific icon, it will be right where the officer left it on the

electronic desk-top. Officers will be able to move around their electronic environments more quickly and with less frustration, which are both important gains.

The pace of technology is ever-growing. Keeping officers current with the necessary instruction for using their technology tools is imperative. The Olympia Police Department recognizes the value of regular IT training and schedules it as part of our annual training plan. However, it currently lacks sufficient tools to train effectively. The best technology training is hands-on, letting users practice the skills that they are learning. Current training in the Department is largely show-and-tell because MCTs cannot be spared for training as they are needed in the field. When Officers have their own MCTs, they will be able to actively learn rather than being passive trainees.

Support for the MCTs will diminish when they are no longer shared. The current, shared MCTs run essentially 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. With no specific officer assigned to an MCT, it can be difficult to track problems that may be related to user-use, rather than technical failures. Ownership plays heavily into responsibility for ensuring that equipment is used appropriately and adequately maintained.

The grant, if received, will fund the purchase or lease of up to six (6) MCTs. This will allow the City to outfit all the Patrol Sergeants with MCTs as a first-step trial for the eventual purchase of MCTs for each officer. The City will purchase or lease, depending on the terms available, a less-expensive version of the MCTs currently used in the Department. The City believes that the semi-rugged MCTs will withstand the rigors of deployment if they are assigned to only one officer, while using resources as efficiently as possible.

The City of Olympia Police Department will measure the effectiveness of the MCTs during the life of the JAG grant. To do so, police management staff will assess, on a quarterly basis:

- The number of officers using MCTs during shift briefings
- The number of hands-on technology training classes given
- The number of service tickets for assigned MCTs in comparison to service tickets for unassigned MCTs
- The percentage of officers using assigned MCTs who report increased communication abilities with an assigned MCT as measured by a survey.