

## **Project Narrative**

### **Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding Grant (CESF)**

#### **Hampton Commonwealth's Attorney's Office**

#### **Title of Project: Coronavirus Prevention, Preparedness, and Response**

#### **Need Statement**

As the Chief Law Enforcement Officer for the city of Hampton, the role and responsibilities of the Commonwealth's Attorney is critical to the safety and well-being of the citizens we serve. The statutory mission (Code of Virginia 15.2-1627) of the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office states, "the attorney for the Commonwealth and assistant attorneys for the Commonwealth shall be a part of the department of law enforcement of the county or city in which he is elected or appointed, and shall have the duties and powers imposed upon him by general law, including the responsibility of prosecuting all warrants, indictments, or information charging a felony, and he may in his discretion, prosecute Class 1, 2, and 3 misdemeanors, or any other violation, the conviction of which carries a penalty of confinement in jail, or a fine of \$500 or more, or both such confinement and fine."

The 2011 census report documented a population of 136,401 in the city of Hampton. The Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney prosecutes over **6,100 cases a year**, including all felonies and some misdemeanors committed against the citizens of this community. The current leadership of the office is made up of the Commonwealth's Attorney, Chief Deputy, three Deputies, sixteen Assistant Attorneys and twenty Support staff to include the Victim Services Unit. The Hampton Commonwealth's Attorney's Office is committed to enhancing the quality of life for the citizens of this city by ensuring that crime victims be treated with dignity, respect, sensitivity and fairness; and that the laws of the Commonwealth be enforced in pursuit of justice for all.

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented prosecutors' offices around the country with collateral consequences and significant unmet needs. In March 2020, legal and non -legal staff in the Hampton Commonwealth's Attorney's Office successfully transitioned to remote operations; however, with the reopening of the judicial system, there has been an increase of employees and of the public returning to government buildings as the court resumes hearings. To maintain social distancing requirements as well as operate efficiently and effectively, the unmet need for supplies and technology will assist with the prevention, preparation, and response to coronavirus. Prosecutors, victims, and witnesses want to make sure that they remain safe while adhering to guidelines. The general public can be apprehensive about attending court due to the fear of the coronavirus, and this can inhibit the criminal justice process for all involved. In an effort to be proactive in the prevention, preparation and responsiveness to the coronavirus, the following items are necessary: masks, hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, disinfectant spray, antibacterial soap, and no-touch tools.

In addition to supplies, the office has a need to enhance the technological infrastructure to include a visitor and victim-witness management check-in system as well as electronic discovery and e-subpoena infrastructure with our existing case management system, PROSECUTORbyKARPEL (PBK). Discovery is the legal procedure by which parties are

required to exchange case information and evidence with one another that is relevant to litigation, and eDiscovery is the electronic form of discovery. The office currently requires defense attorneys to appear in person to review files for the purpose of discovery. In preparing and responding to the coronavirus, e-discovery will benefit the office by eliminating or reducing the need for in-person interactions between the defense bar and our staff when reviewing files and prepares the office in the event that the judicial system has to resume working remotely in the future due to the coronavirus pandemic. The many benefits of eDiscovery include: eliminating paper copies; creating an electronic record of the discovery material; creating a record of when the discovery material was turned over, what information was provided and when the defense retrieved the material; providing a more cost and time efficient method than paper-based discovery processing; and providing a program that is fully integrated with Adobe Acrobat Professional for redaction and date stamping. The need for supplies and information technology are critical to mitigate the impacts of the coronavirus by protecting prosecutors, the defense bar, investigators, and support staff in the Hampton Commonwealth's Attorneys' Office, who are all on the front lines of ensuring that justice is served.

### **Project Description**

In order to safely bring our justice system back to this new normal, the Commonwealth's Attorneys' Office will implement a multifaceted approach to preventing, preparing and responding to the coronavirus.

First will be to create Coronavirus Court Kits for victims and witnesses attending court. The kits will include one disposal mask and hand sanitizer. The courts mandate that anyone 10 years or older are required to have a mask. In the event that victims and witnesses do not have the necessary mask to attend court, our office will provide a kit to prevent refusal of entry by court personnel. The individual hand sanitizers will be provided compliments of the Victim Services Unit.

Secondly, a Coronavirus Employee Kit to supply to all staff in the office. This kit will include disposable & cloth masks, wipes, and a no touch tool. The supplies will be on hand and available when they need to be replenished.

The third approach is to integrate e-discovery and e-subpoena to the current PROSECUTORbyKARPEL (PBK), which is a cloud-based case management system. PBK will streamline the daily tasks and include features such as document generation, eDiscovery, reports and ad hoc reporting to meet statistical needs, and many other integrated features. In order to receive eDiscovery, defense attorneys have to sign up with and provide an email address to which the eDiscovery can be transmitted.

Lastly, the fourth approach is a visitor and victims/witnesses check in management system. This system will provide social distancing by allowing visitors to check in for appointments and court. The system will activate once a visitor has signed in. The Victim Services Unit personnel will be notified through text or email that they have arrived. The innovative part of using this system in court is that it will provide victims and witnesses with an electronic copy of their victim rights information which will eliminate the hand off of paper from advocate to victim or witness.

Having the necessary supplies and technology in place, will enable the Hampton Commonwealth's Attorney's office to do the essential work while adhering to the required mandates, and continue to prepare, prevent and respond to the current coronavirus pandemic.

### **Statement of Coordination**

The City of Hampton has worked very diligently to ensure that all city departments are knowledgeable of statewide requirements and mandates issued by the Governor regarding the coronavirus. The City Manager engaged the assistance and support of the city's emergency management and public safety logistics teams to determine what is needed to slow the spread of the virus in Hampton. The coordinated efforts included contacting local businesses and volunteer partners who assisted in the manufacturing of CDC recommended masks. The masks were cleaned and packaged with CDC recommendations on proper wearing and cleaning techniques and were issued to city departments. As one of the city departments, the Commonwealth's attorney's office staff each received one packaged mask and info. The city also issued infrared thermometer to departments and require that temperatures get checked before entering city buildings. The office continues to coordinate efforts with the Victim Services Unit to avoid duplication of services with victims and witnesses who have to appear in court. Since the pandemic, the Attorneys for the Commonwealth and Victim services staff coordinate Zoom Meetings and conference calls with crime victims and witnesses to alleviate the amount of time spent in the office, and the Courts have reduced the number of cases per docket for crowd control.

In an effort to ensure no duplication of services or supplantation, the city has an internal committee that is discussing and coordinating all CARES Act, FEMA Public Assistance grants and others specific to Human Services, Law Enforcement and Fire to ensure that there is no duplication of projects and efforts. The city of Hampton's proactive stance is in the development and overall strategic plan and picture for the city and the services that it provides during this pandemic. Some of the services that are being provided or that grants are being written for include PPE, Personnel costs associated with COVID-19 response, EMS billing related to COVID-19 response, support to small businesses, and support to our vulnerable population.

### **Budget Narrative**

To implement the four approaches for the CESF grant during the period of January 20, 2020 to September 30, 2021, we estimate the cost to be \$49,940. The requested funding will be under the equipment and supplies and other operating expenses categories. The current data management system, PROSECUTORbyKARPEL has the ability to add and create features that will aid in the implementation of needs during this pandemic and beyond. The pricing for the integration and interfacing of two of the approaches were provided through the Karpel Implementation pricing guide. The additional features needed are directly related to adding eDiscovery and eSubpoena to the office's data management system. The Visitor and Victim/Witness Check-in Management System is called, "The Receptionist." It includes the hardware, iPad and the basic annual subscription. It is a web-based application that is delivered ready for use. Based on the pricing provided by both companies and the compatibility with the current system, it was more cost effective to utilize the services and expertise of Karpel's IT specialists and "The Receptionist" full service system.

If awarded, it is anticipated that the costs for maintenance and annual subscriptions will be assumed by the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office and Victim Services Unit's budgets, after the grant cycle concludes.

### **Equipment**

#### **Visitor and Victim/Witness Management System (\$5,752):**

The requested funding of \$1,438 per unit x 4 will cover the cost of the Visitor and Victim/Witness management system operating in 4 different locations. The kiosks will be housed in the Hampton Commonwealth's Attorneys' Office entrance, General District Court, Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court, and the Circuit Court buildings where victims/witnesses check in to attend court. This system will also allow victims and witnesses to receive an electronic or printed version of the victims' bill of rights information.

### **Supplies and Other Expenses**

#### **Supplies (\$9,248):**

The requested funding will provide office supplies needed to prevent, protect, and respond to the coronavirus. The protective items would include: **6,100** disposal masks-\$3,660 (\$30 x 122 boxes @ 50 masks per box), **400** cloth masks-\$2912 (**400** @ \$7.28 ea.), **7** hand sanitizer and stands-\$700 (\$100 x 7), **53** touch tool keys- \$1,060 (**53** x \$20 ea.), 3 boxes of disposal gloves-\$66 (\$22 x 3 boxes @ 100 per box, and **50** disinfectant wipes \$850 (50 boxes x \$17 ea.).

#### **Other Expenses (\$35,000):**

##### **Karpel E-discovery and eSubpoena System**

The requested funding will be for the installation and maintenance fees which will include, One Call Integration-\$10,000, External Agency Software-\$10,000, e-Subpoena for Law Enforcement Software \$10,000 and Pistol Interface-\$5,000. These software applications will be enhancements to the PROSECUTOR BY KARPEL program. This application will minimize the amount of direct contact with all parties needing access to case file information and subpoenas for Law Enforcement.