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Project Summary

In dealing with the aftermath of school shooting events such as Parkland, Sandy Hook, and Uvalde, states across the nation began to initiate a renewed focus on school safety training.

Habersham County Sheriff Joey Terrell has always made the safety of Habersham County Schools the top priority of his administration. Habersham County Sheriff's Office Colonel Murray Kogod has always been deeply enmeshed and had a passion for school safety, especially when it comes to the training of school resource officers, school administrators, school safety coordinators, and other disciplines involved in keeping Georgia schools safe. To this end, a collaboration of entities, to include the Habersham County Sheriff's Office, other local, state, and federal agencies, the Georgia Public Safety Training Center, the Georgia Peace Officers Standards and Training Council, and representatives of school systems throughout the state, came together to form an alliance. The alliance would incorporate and merge all the separate efforts being made to improve school safety into one collective body known as the Georgia Alliance of School Resource Officers and Educators or GASROE.

GASROE incorporates all aspects of the education component into the mix. Through the collaboration of School Resource Officers, school safety coordinators, administrators, nurses, school counselors, custodians, mental health professionals, and other school staffers, we can build strong relationships and train together to form strong partnerships that do better at keeping Georgia schools safe.

GASROE's mission is to provide training throughout the year and throughout the State, in addition to an Annual Conference Event. GASROE brings all aspects of the "boots on the ground" professionals involved in school safety together to provide instruction and training that addresses current issues and new trends and provide participants with the latest tools available to address them. The GASROE alliance has resulted in the collaborative training event known as the Georgia School Safety Summit or GS3. Whether it be a large scale, annual conference or various regional mini-conference offerings throughout the state, the alliance's goal is to offer the most up-to-date, relevant, and informative training opportunities for members to become knowledgeable on the latest trends and to equip them with the necessary tools needed to address these issues within their own jurisdiction.

Project Description

Currently, the GASROE collaboration hosts the Georgia School Safety Summit or GS3, a large-scale conference event held in Athens, Georgia at the University of Georgia Continuing Education Center. In 2022, the GS3 conference event brought together approximately 200 school safety professionals for four (4) days of general and breakout session trainings. The future desires of the alliance are to accommodate larger numbers at the annual, large-scale event and, additionally, collaborate with local law enforcement agencies and school systems across the state to provide additional mini-conference trainings at hosting facilities within identified regions of the state.

The Habersham County Sheriff's Office, as part of GASROE collaborative effort, is requesting funding to provide the financial resources necessary to support the equipment needs and the initial course development material expenses needed to create a "course library" and equipment stock that can be maintained and expanded for course offering at the annual, large-scale event and to meet the demands associated with additional regional, smaller-scale GS3 training offerings.

Target Population/Professional Disciplines and Needs Assessment

The Target Population/Professional Disciplines that make up the core demographics of those being served by the GASROE collaboration are the school-based policing agencies (whether it be contracted services with the local sheriff's office/police department or a Board of Education Police Department), school system superintendents, school safety directors, school administrators, school counselors, school mental health professionals, school nurses, and other school system staff who have a daily presence within schools at all times while schools are in session.

The Needs Assessment reveals that the best approach to safer school environments is to provide all school systems within the State of Georgia with a foundational framework, based on the gathering, compiling, and condensing of input from all disciplines involved in school safety and the creation of best practices training, that can be applied in every school system in the State of Georgia.

The ultimate benefactors are all the above-mentioned and, ultimately, the students who can focus their attentions on learning rather than safety. This is because the training provided through the alliance has enabled and empowered the school safety professionals around them to put measures in place that provide a safe and secure learning environment for them.

Alignment with Best Practices

As mentioned earlier, the training developed through the alliance is based on the input of all “boots on the ground” disciplines involved on the school safety process. The alliance gathers, compiles, and condenses input from all facets of the school safety environment and works with the alliance collaboratives to develop best practices training that can be delivered through the GS3 conduit and taken back to the respective jurisdictions for implementation.

Course offerings at all alliance training events are customized and continually updated to meet the ever-changing demands and trends within the school environment. These course offerings provide training on areas such as use of force, de-escalation, crisis intervention, mental health trainings and trainings on every facet of school safety. Examples of specialized training offered by the alliance include, but are not limited to, the following:

Understanding the Gang Influence in Schools

This training focuses on the importance of information sharing among SROs and School Administration to report and address issues of gang activity. Topics include the definition of a gang and criteria required to identify criminal gang activity.

Drug Detection in the Hallways

This training focused on the signs and symptomatology for youth under the influence of drugs. Topics include information on immediate medical intervention for students under the influence of drugs and proactive measures for drug awareness.

Experiencing the Simulated Emergency School Event

What will a person do when faced with an Emergency School Event? Will de-escalation work? Will use of force be necessary? Using a shooting simulator system, such as the InVeris 100P FATS System, this training provides attendees with a realistic, virtual, and safe training experience that gives participants the opportunity to experience multiple emergency events and see how they would do when attempting to resolve the incident.

Civilian Situational Awareness and Response (C.S.A.R.)

What do teachers, support staff, and students need to know to be prepared for an emergency school event? The Civilian Situational Awareness and Response (CSAR) training provides strategies, guidance, and a clear plan of action for civilians to take to survive an active shooter event. Topics include understanding the active shooter event, what to expect during an active shooter event, civilian response options, and direction on conducting tabletop and full-scale exercises in your respective jurisdiction. The training also provides school personnel and school

resource officers alike with training materials to educate their school system on a proven plan for surviving an emergency school event.

The 5 “I’s” of Student Threat Assessment

This training introduces a systematic, detailed approach to student threat assessment. By following the step-by-step guide, the school’s threat assessment team is equipped to take whatever affirmative action is necessary to protect the school environment and to provide appropriate services to the involved student.

School Facility Security Vulnerability Assessment

This training provides attendees with a comprehensive school safety assessment form to assist school staff in evaluating their security controls and methods. Instruction will include a section-by-section review of the form and a sharing of examples and experiences to help the respective jurisdiction complete a full assessment and identify necessary security upgrades.

S.R.O./Administration Relationship Panel Discussion

Participants will review the G.A.S.R.O.E. TRIAD School-Based Policing Model as an approach to building and/or enhancing the School Resource Officer/Administrator relationship. Additionally, participants will participate in an open forum discussion regarding successes and challenges in developing this relationship and review scenarios that show the relationship successfully at work.

School Bus Strategies

This training covers information and strategies vital to the reporting and handling of threats of physical alterations and/or anonymous tips of potential weapons on school buses.

T.O.Y.S. Elementary Visitation Program

Teaching Our Youth Safety (T.O.Y.S.) in Schools is a Kindergarten – Fourth Grade 15-minute visitation lesson program that allows SROs the opportunity to begin to build that positive relationship as soon as kids enter the school system. Lesson topics include Bicycle Safety, Community Helpers, Bullying, Choices and Consequences, Helping Hands, Little Leaders, Water Safety, Internet Safety and Home Alone.

Additional course offerings currently in preliminary development stages include Field Training for the S.R.O. and Managing a Successful S.R.O. Program.

Proposed Timeline

The grant funds will be utilized initially to prepare for the 2023 Georgia School Safety Summit (GS3) annual conference that will be held in June of 2023. Following the 2023 GS3 conference, the materials and equipment secured with grant funds will be utilized to continue to provide on-going, up-to-date trainings throughout the state, for years to come.

Proposed Budget

The proposed budget consists of equipment and course development expenses that will assist with the building of the initial course library of training and the acquisition of the equipment stock needed to be able to improve and expand training opportunities provided by the alliance throughout the State of Georgia for years to come. These expenses are one-time expenses that, upon full expenditure of the grant funding, will be maintained by future alliance contributions.

Operational Needs	Estimated costs:		
1 - InVeris 100P FATS System Virtual Shooting Simulator	\$ 62,160.00		
Tables/Chairs for Classroom Set-up	\$ 500.00		
Conference Registration Fees	\$ 5,400.00		
Supplies & Materials	\$ 3,740.00		
Pull-Behind Trailer to Haul Equipment	\$ 5,200.00		
Audio/Visual Equipment	\$ 23,000.00		
Total Operation Cost			\$ 100,000.00
Total Request for GS3 Training			\$ 100,000.00