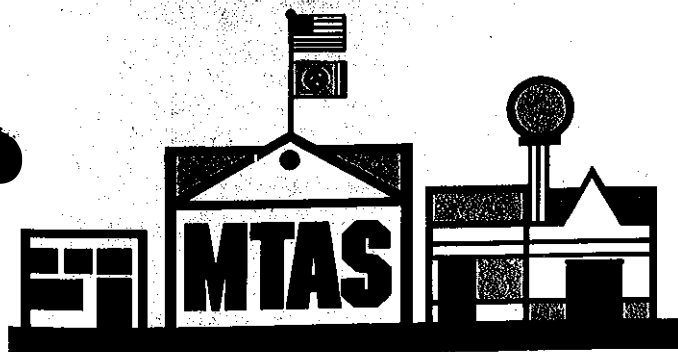




Bulletin No. 14

TECHNICAL BULLETIN

MUNICIPAL TECHNICAL ADVISORY SERVICE
THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
IN COOPERATION WITH THE TENNESSEE MUNICIPAL LEAGUE



May 2, 1988

INFORMATION SYSTEM FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR MUNICIPAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

by Phillip A. Keith

In a joint venture between the Knoxville Police Department and the Tennessee Department of Corrections, \$664,000 are available to local municipalities for the purpose of developing or enhancing computerized information systems. The funding is made possible through the U. S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance State Block Grant Program and the Tennessee Department of Corrections, the designated state agency to receive law enforcement block grants. Unlike most state block grant programs, none of the funding appropriated to the State of Tennessee is earmarked for administrative cost. A project administrator (local unit of government) had to be identified to administer the funds. The City of Knoxville committed to serve as the project administrator for the block grant funds. This means good news for many local municipal law enforcement agencies hoping to develop or expand computerized information systems in their jurisdictions.

Funding for the project is setup on a fifty-fifty matching formula, with the local recipient agency providing a cash match. The maximum funding level at the present time is \$6,492.50 or \$12,985.00 for the total project cost. The basic proposition is simply, if the local municipality can provide \$6,492.50, the City of Knoxville (Knoxville Police Department) will provide \$6,492.50 in matching state block grant funds. The options available to the local municipality make the funding very attractive, as the agency requesting the funding can either enhance an existing system or acquire necessary hardware and software to establish new capabilities. If the agency determines a new system is necessary, the agency may purchase essential equipment and software through the procurement arrangement contractually established through the Montgomery County (Tennessee) Purchasing Department. In essence, the Montgomery County Purchasing Department has the equivalent of a state contract to permit any governmental entity to purchase the computer package offered by the prime contractor, Computer Communications Inc. (CCI).

One of the many benefits of the project is that any local municipality can replace its existing National Crime Information Center/Tennessee Information Enforcement System (NCIC/TIES) terminal with a similar terminal from CCI, capable of providing all functions of NCIC/TIES. The benefit to the local agency is a cost savings of approximately \$250.00 per month which the agency currently pays to the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI) for lease cost of the existing terminal. This benefit may not serve all agencies, however, many agencies currently do lease the NCIC/TIES terminals from TBI. These savings will pay for approximately fifty percent of the matching cash requirement within twelve to fourteen months.

During March 1988, a series of workshops were conducted in Jackson, Nashville, and Knoxville. The success of the workshops speak for themselves, as more than forty law enforcement agencies attended the workshops and applied for the funds. ***To qualify for funding consideration, a requirement of the project is to have all grant applications submitted to the Knoxville Police Department no later than August 30, 1988.*** The first deadline for funding was April 30, 1988, with remaining funding being awarded to the applicants filing after April 30, 1988. Agencies that do not currently have funds to provide the matching requirements, but intend on having the funding available in the next fiscal year, are encouraged to file an application prior to the August 30 deadline, with a notation indicating the matching funds will not be available until the next fiscal year. This process will enable the law enforcement agency to begin acquisition, with payment scheduled for immediately after the beginning of the next fiscal year.

Training for the operation of the newly acquired systems purchased through the Montgomery County Purchasing Department will come from three sources. First, the Knoxville Police Department will establish three regional training sessions for the agencies. Secondly, a user's group will be formed to facilitate assistance from one agency to another on a need basis and to develop future capabilities on the new systems. The third source of training and technical assistance will be provided by The University of Tennessee's Center for Government Training (CGT) and the Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS). Collectively, the training should provide proficiency skills to each agency acquiring a new system.

The initial software applications will permit law enforcement agencies to computerize critical information such as: offense; reports; dispatch cards; the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Uniformed Crime Reports; arrests; and one other file to be determined by a working committee of the Tennessee Chiefs of Police Association. The collected and computerized information should provide the agencies with the capability of making more informed decisions and provide timely and pertinent access to information to support field operations.

The available funding should result in providing Tennessee law enforcement agencies with newly developed technology and upgrade the quality of law enforcement data across the state. Advancements being offered through this joint venture have not been available to law enforcement agencies for many years. It may be some time before a similar offer is available.

Further Information

Further information on information system funding may be obtained by contacting Lieutenant Phil Keith or Judie Martin at the Office of Planning and Budget, Knoxville Police Department, 800 E. Church Avenue S. E., Knoxville, TN 37915, telephone number (615) 521-1252/1339, or your MTAS Management Consultant.

The Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) is a statewide agency of The University of Tennessee's Institute for Public Service. MTAS operates in cooperation with the Tennessee Municipal League in providing technical assistance services to officials of Tennessee's incorporated municipalities. Assistance is offered in areas such as accounting, administration, finance, public works, ordinance codification, and wastewater management.

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E14-1050-00-001-88

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