



# **VCJC FY22 One-Time Funding Request**

**Vermont Criminal Justice Council  
Vermont Police Academy**

**Senate Appropriations**

*04/01/2021*



# Vermont Criminal Justice Council (VCJC) Financial Request

## SCENARIO-BASED TRAINING PROGRAM UPGRADES (\$100,000)

Scenario-based training has been, and continues to be, the most valuable teaching method we utilize. It provides a dynamic learning environment for students, as well as an ability for instructors to assess core competencies. Live demonstration of techniques and procedures, followed by an opportunity to practice them, has a significant impact on our students' professional growth, development of safe habits, and ability to learn critical lessons in a setting that is free from harm.

On the Academy campus, we have a building designed for running training scenarios. It is used for basic, in-service and canine training. Currently, the space is severely underutilized due to much needed upgrades. The following additions would significantly modernize the training we are able to deliver.

**Scenario Simulator** - An interactive scenario simulator that provides a library of video-based scenes that require students to interact and apply de-escalation techniques and an appropriate level of force for each situation (which can include no force at all). Instructors observe the students' responses and can progress the scenario accordingly, which is particularly helpful when students under- or over-react. For example, failing to attempt to de-escalate a situation could cause the level of danger to increase. Whereas, appropriate attempts to de-escalate could prevent the subject from getting increasingly upset and drawing a weapon. Instructors can present a "threat" in a safe environment and then review the student's perceptions, decision-making, verbal skills, choice of weapon, reaction time, and understanding of related law. The simulator offers safe and consistent scenarios to practice these skills, as no human role player is required. The system would include an upgrade to an old system we already have that could be used for regional training and provide a much-needed upgrade to our on-campus facility including a 180 to 360 degree experience, significantly increasing the realism of the scenario for the student. It includes software, large projection screens, projectors, and simulated OC spray, flashlight, and handgun equipment, as well as a complete training package for two Academy instructors. Scenarios cover a wide variety of situations including active shooters, mental health crisis response, traffic stops, dealing with difficult people, dealing with armed people, etc. Regular software upgrades are included in the base price (i.e. no ongoing fees). Live scenarios will still occur, but this equipment significantly broadens the scope and frequency of what we can offer.

Cameras and a mounting system/brackets would provide an opportunity for instructors to record and observe students' reactions and decision-making skills. Recordings could be used, in the moment, to review the student's response and coach them as needed. It also provides an avenue for supervisory staff to observe the student without decreasing the realism of the scenario and also avoiding the added stress of being directly watched. Immediate feedback using video playback, is an extremely powerful teaching tool.

Repairs and new batteries for police radio units used by recruits. The existing units are many years old, worn, and several are completely out-of-service. It is not uncommon for recruits to call dispatch and never receive a response due to a radio malfunction.

Mats – essential safety equipment for injury prevention during high-risk activities. They can also be used for fitness training, entrance testing, and use of force training.

A small amount of used furniture/fixtures would allow for the creation of realistic settings for live scenarios (i.e. simulating a store, home, etc.).



# Vermont Criminal Justice Council (VCJC) Financial Request

## **ENTRANCE TESTING (\$50,000)**

S.124 requires that, “ In order to further the goal of defining law enforcement officers as community guardians, the following entities shall report to the Senate and House Committees on Government Operations on or before January 15, 2021 on their progress in regard to the following topics, including any recommendations for legislative action, except that the Criminal Justice Council (Council) shall submit a verbal progress report to those Committees by that date and any recommendations for legislative action on or before March 15, 2021:

The Council shall consult with the Human Rights Commission, the American Civil Liberties Union, statewide racial justice groups, statewide groups representing individuals with lived experience of a mental health condition or psychiatric disability, and other relevant organizations and individuals in reviewing law enforcement applicants’ current written, oral, and psychological examinations for cultural sensitivities and overall appropriateness.”

The CJC has established an ‘Entrance Testing working group,’ consisting of Academy staff and Council Members, who will work with consultants/vendors to establish a contemporary testing process. To develop a statistically valid and reliable test for entry into a program, significant develop and analysis work is required. Once developed, the ongoing testing fees will be paid by the hiring agencies, as is current practice.