

PROGRAM NARRATIVE

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Statement of the Problem

The Sex Offender Registry and Sex Offender Community Notification systems in [REDACTED] [REDACTED] are not unified in a way that best protects the public from this dangerous segment of society. These areas of public safety need to be centralized to make them as effective as possible in the effort to not only become substantially compliant with the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act, but to safeguard the citizenry of the state.

As is the case with many states throughout the country, [REDACTED] is facing one of the largest budget deficits in the state's history. The economic climate is distressed, has been so for many months, and is expected to be very slow in its recovery. State government has made cuts to the budget across the board, and there are more to come. Elected officials, administrators, and policy makers continue their analysis of the budget to find the areas where more cuts can be made to the existing essential programs. These difficult circumstances are the unfortunate reality during this timeframe in which the state of [REDACTED] has made a commitment to implement the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act. Though some of the obstacles faced can be overcome in the [REDACTED] General Assembly, there are many logistical changes that need to occur as well. Many of these changes cannot be made without additional funding from sources other than the state. The funds from this grant will help to put many of these items in place.

Even though it is facing these enormous obstacles, the State of [REDACTED] continues to work towards substantial implementation for compliance with the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act. A commission has been formed whose sole focus is the implementation of SORNA. The commission is comprised of representatives from the Office of the Governor, the Office of the Attorney General, the [REDACTED] State Police, the Department of Corrections, and the Sex Offender Notification Unit. This commission meets periodically to review the

requirements to be substantially compliant with the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act that have been achieved, review the remaining items that need to be addressed on the substantial implementation checklist, and set goals, both short and long term, for implementation for substantial compliance. The commission has analyzed the current system in [REDACTED] and has identified the legislative and logistical changes that must occur for substantial compliance with SORNA.

[REDACTED] has accomplished some of its goals in the effort to become substantially compliant with the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act. In 2008 the [REDACTED] Parole Board's Sex Offender Community Notification Unit began listing the street addresses of sex offenders on the sex offender website. Prior to this change only an approximate address was provided to the public. Also in 2008, the [REDACTED] General Assembly enacted several laws that enumerated more offenses that require registration, enacted a new criminal offense if sexual in nature, and increased criminal penalties for child enticement. In addition to this legislation, the [REDACTED] State Police sought and received funding to computerize the existing Sex Offender Registry, which allows real time access to the state sex offender database by both state and local law enforcement. Computerization has allowed law enforcement to initiate immediate entry of sex offender information and also provides law enforcement with full and simultaneous access to the updated computerized database. The database allows the inclusion of work addresses, license numbers and vehicle registration, which was not the practice in [REDACTED] prior to the SORNA requirements.

One of the issues [REDACTED] faces for substantial compliance is getting legislation passed through the General Assembly. The requirements for SORNA present a dramatic change in the law and policy that [REDACTED] has adopted over the years. Further collaboration with

the [REDACTED] General Assembly is taking place, as current [REDACTED] General Law, regulations, and policy must be amended for implementation. Specifically, amendments regarding retroactivity, website requirements, the length of registration, moving towards offense-base classification, and those required to register are essential.

Draft legislation has been written and will be submitted this legislative session that will specifically address the requirements for substantial implementation of the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act. The members of the commission have outlined the strategy to get this legislation passed, which includes meeting with the members of the leadership of the [REDACTED] General Assembly, meeting with members of community groups to gain their support for the legislation, and meeting with members of advocacy groups to address their potential concerns with the legislation.

There has been other legislation already filed regarding sex offenders, though none of these bills specifically speak to bringing the state into compliance with SORNA. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] require community notification when a sex offender is appealing their tier level classification. Currently, community notification cannot be issued if an offender is seeking such an appeal. [REDACTED] requires a landlord to disclose their sex offender status on any lease they sign with a tenant. Finally, [REDACTED] requires an offender to be on a GPS while they are appealing their tier level classification.

Project Goals and Objectives

While the draft legislation begins the process for passage in the [REDACTED] General Assembly, the commission working on the implementation of the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act in [REDACTED] is focusing on the logistics: moving the Sex Offender Community Notification Unit and the website over to the [REDACTED] State Police, who currently house and maintain the statewide registry; cleaning up the Sex Offender Registry; further enhancements to the computerized registry; and centralizing the overall process for sex offender registration in the jurisdiction, updates on their information, verification of their information, and community notification; and training law enforcement agencies within the jurisdiction on the Sex Offender Registry system.

Currently, a budget article is in the process of being drafted to move the Sex Offender Community Notification Unit from the [REDACTED] Parole Board to the [REDACTED] State Police. This would further centralize the jurisdiction's sex offender registration and community notification process. The budget article is cost-neutral, therefore it is anticipated that this transfer is highly probable.

The Sex Offender Registry, which was turned over to the [REDACTED] State Police in January 2009, needs to be cleaned up to be brought into further compliance with SORNA. The personnel who manage and maintain the registry work closely with the software company who supplied and set up the system. They have been working diligently to clean the existing data, and update the information in the database. Funding from this grant will enable the department to pay these staff members overtime for the extra time they will spend doing this important work on the registry.

Along with the time needed on cleaning up the existing Sex Offender Registry, computer enhancements to that system are crucial. Computer technology is always in a state of innovation. Though implemented fairly recently, the computer registry already needs many updates. Support from this grant will greatly help with these much-needed improvements that will keep [REDACTED] on track with sex offender registration and community notification.

The members of the [REDACTED] State Police currently managing the Sex Offender Registry and the members of the Sex Offender Community Notification Unit currently under the jurisdiction of the Parole Board will be logistically brought together to centralize the process for registration, verification and maintenance of information on sex offenders, as well as notification of the community in which these offenders reside, work, and attend school. Funding from this grant is critical for this unification. This process must be centralized so that a team who is trained and solely focused on this process will now do the all of the input of the necessary information about the sex offender into the registry. The local police departments will no longer be responsible for this important task, which due to too many users and user error from lack of training on the system requires time dedicated to cleaning the data in the registry. This project will make the work on sex offender registration and community notification integrated for greater effectiveness.

Training of law enforcement within the jurisdiction is another important part of the equation for substantial implementation. Members of law enforcement from local departments need to be trained on how to retrieve information from the Sex Offender Registry once it has been cleaned up and improved. Financial support from this grant will pay for the cost of compensation for instructors who will supply this training to officials from the state Department of Corrections and members of state and local law enforcement.

Project/Program Design and Implementation

The Sex Offender Community Notification Unit currently evaluates sex offenders in the community and uses certain risk instruments to decipher the level of risk they pose to the community. Once the unit is moved over to the ██████████ State Police this risk assessment process will change. The draft legislation mentioned above that specifically addresses the requirements for compliance with SORNA moves from the current risk-based model to the three-tier offense-based classification system. This legislation determines the level for which those convicted of each particular offense must register. The members of this unit will shift their responsibilities from the evaluation of sex offenders to registration of sex offenders, following-up with them and verifying their information once they are back in the community.

The movement of the Sex Offender Community Notification Unit to the ██████████ State Police will transfer the management of the Sex Offender Community Notification Website as well. The movement of the website needs to be as seamless as possible to ensure that none of the information in the system is compromised or lost. This will require the hiring of a computer consultant who can focus solely on this project. This consultant will be there from beginning to end, protected from the threat of cuts in funding from the state, which is extremely important to guarantee that it is done properly. Along with this movement of the website, the computer consultant will also bring the website into further compliance with SORNA requirements. The entire ten core required items will be included for viewing by the public; links to sex offender safety and education resources; and instructions on how to seek correction of information that an individual contends is erroneous would be made available.

Equally as important, the existing personnel at the ██████████ State Police will contribute to bringing the sex offender computer registry into conformance for compliance.

██████████ only recently moved from a paper-based system to a computerized system. The paper-based system was housed at the Department of the Attorney General, and prior to computerization was moved to the ██████████ State Police. As mentioned earlier, the ██████████ State Police sought and received funding for this computer system. The database users who entered the initial information into the system were not formally trained which resulted in inaccurate information being entered into the database. The staff that manages the registry needs to spend time sifting through some of the data to ensure it is correct and up-to-date. The members of ██████████ State Police who work on this system will work overtime to accomplish this goal.

At the same time the system still requires enhancements to continue to be effective and to fulfill the requirements of SORNA. One of the biggest enhancements needed for the state's Sex Offender Registry is a new server. The current server is old and increasingly unreliable. If the server goes down the vital information about sex offenders in the community could be lost, jeopardizing the safety of the entire community. This is something that simply cannot happen.

The members of the ██████████ State Police who will work on the clean up of the database will also work with the company who supplies the software to make sure all of the requirements for SORNA are fulfilled. This includes making sure all of the sex offenses in existence in the jurisdiction are added to the list in the registry for each sex offender's information, including the capability to list multiple offenses, if that is the case. Attempts and conspiracies, federal offenses, foreign offenses, military offenses, juvenile adjudications, and state and local offenses will all be included in the options of this registration software. These enhancements will also include the ability to record all of the minimum standards of required information for each sex offender. The Sex Offender registry in ██████████ is currently able to

record the offender's criminal history, date(s) of birth, driver's license or identification card, employment information, name(s), phone numbers, physical description, resident address, school information, social security number(s), text of registration offense, and vehicle(s) information. The enhancements that will be added through funding from the grant will be, but are not limited to, DNA information, fingerprints, Internet identifiers, palm prints, passports and immigration documents, photographs, professional licensing information, and temporary lodging information.

The enhancements to the Sex Offender Registry will also include the ability to instantly forward the information about the sex offender to all other jurisdictions in which they are required to register; the jurisdiction of their residence, the jurisdiction of their employment, and the jurisdiction of their school.

Once the Sex Offender Registry, Sex Offender Community Notification Unit, and the Sex Offender Community Notification Website are brought together, they will then physically work out of two central locations in [REDACTED]. These locations will be easily accessible by public transportation to ensure that sex offenders will be able to get to them within the required time period of three business days, if not incarcerated. These two locations will include members of the Sex Offender Community Notification Unit, who will be responsible for taking and processing the required information about the registering sex offender; access to the Sex Offender Registry to input the information about the sex offender; a Live Scan machine to take finger and palm prints; a camera to take the picture of the sex offender to download into the registry; and access to the public Sex Offender Registry website to add or update information about sex offenders present in the jurisdiction within three business days.

Financial support from this grant will help to set up these two remote locations. The server will remain at the **RILETS** Data Center at the [REDACTED] State Police Headquarters.

The computers, routers, T-1 lines, printers, scanners, cable work, network switches, furniture, cameras, and installation and initial support costs will be paid for through funding from this grant.

Two of the minimum standards that must be included in the Sex Offender Registry, the biometric samples of fingerprints and palm prints, will be recorded through Live Scan machines. The financial support from this grant will buy two units, one for each location. These units will enter this data into the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) under the unique type of transaction (TOT) of "Sex Offender" for registration. These machines will allow this important biometric data to be entered into the system at the same time as all of the other information about the sex offender. The sex offender will not have to go to another facility for the finger and palm prints to be taken, which will ensure that this data is taken and recorded.

Having this unit operating out of two centralized locations, whose sole focus is registration of sex offenders, community notification of the presence of sex offenders, and verification of the information provided by sex offenders upon registration will be an enormous step towards Rhode Island's goal to be substantially compliant with SORNA.

Once the Sex Offender Registry is updated and enhancements are in place, the law enforcement agencies within the jurisdiction that will have access to the information in the registry will need training on the on how to use the system. Again, due to budget constraints in the state the compensation for training is not possible in the near future. In order for SORNA to be successful, law enforcement's ability to use and understand the system is vital. Funding from the grant will be used to provide the instructors who will train local law enforcement on the Sex Offender Registry system, and to provide written materials for the training.

Capabilities/Competencies

The [REDACTED] State Police, an agency within the [REDACTED] Department of Public Safety, will manage this project. The [REDACTED] State Police is responsible for statewide law enforcement and regulation, and is an accredited law enforcement agency certified by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). Along with accrediting the organization, CALEA has designated the [REDACTED] State Police as a Flagship Agency, an honor bestowed on only a small percentage of accredited agencies nationwide. The [REDACTED] State Police is comprised of sworn and civilian members, both of who will work on the implementation of the project, and after.

Once the Sex Offender Registry, the Sex Offender Community Notification Unit, and the Sex Offender Community Notification Website are centralized within the division of the [REDACTED] State Police they will become the Sex Offender Registration and Community Notification Unit. This unit will function within the Technology and Communication Services Unit, which is supervised by a lieutenant of the [REDACTED] State Police. This supervisor will manage the staff responsible for the installation of the new server and the clean up of the existing Sex Offender Registry. These same members of staff, under the supervision of the lieutenant, will work with the computer software company to install the enhancements into the registry. The computer software company originally developed and installed the Sex Offender Registry and has an established relationship with the telecommunications staff at the [REDACTED] State Police. This will allow for the expedient addition of enhancements to the Sex Offender Registry for compliance with SORNA.

The Technology and Communications Unit of the [REDACTED] State Police will also supervise the installation of the technology at the two remote locations for sex offender

registration and community notification. Therefore, once the new server is in place, the database is cleaned up, and the enhancements are added to the registry, the same team will ensure that the entire system is in place so that the registration process is solid.

The Community Notification Unit currently at the [REDACTED] Parole Board will be moved to the [REDACTED] State Police. This unit includes a Supervisor, two Investigators, and one Administrative Assistant. A budget article will transfer the funding for these positions from the Parole Board to the [REDACTED] State Police. The individuals currently in those positions will come to the state police with the unit, but will have different responsibilities, as mentioned previously. These personnel will work at the two centralized remote locations in the state at which sex offenders will register and update their registration information. The current supervisor will become the Unit Manager of both locations; the two Investigators will be split up so that one will work at each registration site; and the Administrative Assistant will work between both locations as support to the Unit Manager and Investigators. These staff members have experience working with the sex offender population in [REDACTED]. Their knowledge and experience are extremely valuable to this project. Their sole focus will be the registry and community notification, which will ensure that these processes are done correctly for every sex offender.

The [REDACTED] Department of Public Safety's Central Management Office will serve as the gatekeeper of the funds from the grant once they are awarded. This office has a great deal of experience with grants administration. In fact, this office houses the Public Safety Grants Administration Office, the statewide agency responsible for oversight of federal grant funding in [REDACTED]. This office will make sure that the grant money is appropriated according to the rules of the grant award.

The training of local police and officials from the [REDACTED] Department of Corrections on how to use the Sex Offender Registry will take place at the [REDACTED] Municipal Police Academy. Police officers from thirty-eight of the thirty-nine cities and towns in [REDACTED] received their initial police training at this academy. The personnel at the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Municipal Police Academy is highly experienced at coordinating training programs, and is the ideal place for this type of instruction.

Impact/Outcomes and Evaluation/Performance Measure Data Collection Plan

One of the problems facing the state for compliance with SORNA is the current condition of the Sex Offender Registry. The continued improvement of the database through clean up and added enhancements will be, itself, the documentation that this project funded by the grant is successful. Another indicator will be the decrease in the number of complaints from local police departments when they access the registry. Currently, there are a number of complaints that are received. This number will be recorded and monitored as the changes are implemented. By the end of the implementation the number is expected to have decreased substantially. Further evidence that progress is being made will be the increased number of sex offenders whose information in the current registry is complete and updated. Then, as the enhancements are added to the registry system, all of the specific information about each sex offender that is required for SORNA compliance will be added. The supervisor of the unit, a lieutenant of the ██████████ State Police will monitor all of this work to ensure steady progress is being made. The lieutenant and members of the unit will work closely with the companies hired to add the enhancements to the existing system and install the technology needed at the two remote locations, and will make sure these important pieces are done completely and in a timely manner.

The lieutenant in charge of the Technology and Communications Services Unit will also monitor the movement of the Sex Offender Community Notification Unit from the Parole Board to the ██████████ State Police. The current supervisor of the unit at the Parole Board, who will move with the unit and become the Unit Manager of the remote registration locations, will work closely with the company who will move the Sex Offender Community Notification Website. The design of the database will be enhanced during this process to add the core requirements that are not currently included so that ██████████ can be brought further towards compliance.

The commission that was formed to focus on the implementation of the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act will meet on a bi-monthly basis to review the progress being made by the members of the team working on the project. After each piece of the project is completed the team members will review the work to make sure all requirements have been filled before looking ahead to the next step. At the end of project implementation both the commission members and the team working on the project will evaluate the Sex Offender Registry and Sex Offender Community Notification Website to make sure all items required for compliance with SORNA have been put in place. This will include reviewing the actual information on registered sex offenders in the database and the website to make sure it is comprehensible and complete.

The majority of the program costs funded by the grant are one-time expenditures. The money for overtime for personnel is needed for a specified period of time to perform the task of cleaning the data in the Sex Offender Registry. The majority of the contracts with the companies installing the enhancements to the registry and the technology in the new centralized remote locations for registration are one-time costs as well. Some of the computer services the grant would pay for will need to continue after the grant period. These costs will be sustainable by the department. The cost of the actual equipment for this project will be one-time costs as well. The movement of the personnel from the Parole Board to the ██████████ State Police will take place through a budget article. Therefore, the funding for these positions will be transferred to the ██████████ State Police, requiring no assistance from the grant. The funding for the movement and addition of items to the website will be one-time costs, and the department will be able to sustain the funding for the cost of support for it once the grant period ends. The funding for the instruction at the ██████████ Municipal Police Academy is only needed during the

grant period. The local departments will no longer be entering information into the database. They will now only need to access the Sex Offender Registry to retrieve information on sex offenders in the community, so they will need training only for that function. This training can occur during the grant period.

This project is absolutely sustainable after the grant period. Financial assistance from this grant, however, is essential to achieve these objectives that will bring the State of [REDACTED] further towards substantial compliance with the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act.