

APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 2, 2017.** Please include this application form with electronic entry.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: County of Henrico

Program Title: A Focus on Customer and Employee Safety - Critical Incident Response Program

Program Category: Criminal Justice & Public Safety

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Name: John A. Vithoukias

Title: County Manager

Signature: 

1. Program Overview

The Critical Incident Response Program is a three-tiered practical and training approach: to create a safer work environment for our employees, to train our employees on response to critical incidents, and to promote and provide an external training program for our residents and visitors. The program began as an opportunity to conduct a serious examination of our security infrastructure following the deadly shootings in San Bernardino, California in December 2015. A collaborative team was established consisting of the Divisions of Police and Fire and the Department of General Services, which is tasked with site administration and management of the organization's physical buildings. The team conducted site surveys at those department buildings that were determined to be most at-risk and presented those findings to the affected department heads, Police and Fire Chiefs, and the County Manager's staff.

Based on these surveys and further discussions, the team developed an internal training program for over 4,000 county employees. This program was first presented to department heads and key officials and later delivered electronically to all county employees. The training program focused on response to active shooter incidents, suspicious packages, vehicles, and persons, and the "See Something, Say Something" campaign.

The county also produced a training video for our residents and visitors covering the same material. The video has been aired on the local cable-access channel and has been presented in a training format to over 25 businesses and community groups thus far.

Lastly, the public-safety team has worked collaboratively with Henrico County Public Schools' (HCPS) administration to improve the collective response to critical incidents at schools. This partnership has resulted in the development of improved procedures for Fire, Police, and Schools to include a full implementation of the Incident Command System (ICS) for all responding agencies.

2. Problem/Challenge/Situation Faced by Locality

The shootings in San Bernardino County, California, on December 2, 2015, targeted employees attending a holiday function at a state-run facility. Although this was one of many active-shooter events that has occurred in the U.S., the fact that it took place in a government building greatly raised awareness within our locality of the need to train and educate our workforce on how to prepare for and respond to a similar incident should it happen in our jurisdiction. A brief examination of the FBI's report on Active Shooter incidents shows that approximately 70 of the 160 incidents that occurred from 2000 to 2016 happened in school or government buildings. Thus, the public-safety team from Fire, Police, and General Services was assembled and began working on site surveys of our most at-risk facilities. Up to this point, no such assessments or examination of our local government infrastructure had ever been conducted in the county's history.

Simultaneously, the county recognized the need to provide meaningful and significant training for employees detailing how to respond to critical incidents. A training program was developed collaboratively between the public-safety team of Fire and Police, along with the Department of Human Resources, based on the Department of Homeland Security's "Run, Hide, Fight" concept and their "See Something, Say Something" program. The training program was delivered in a classroom format for agency heads and key officials and electronically for the remainder of the county's approximately 4,000 employees. The success of this internal training resulted in the county producing its own video for public presentation on critical incident response.

The San Bernardino incident also resulted in the Police Division receiving multiple requests from area businesses and civic groups to conduct training in active-shooter response. Prior to this time, officers would provide such training, but it was inconsistent as the course material varied from instructor to instructor. The public-safety team, therefore, assembled a cadre comprised of both

Police and Fire officials who would conduct business training based on these requests and using a unified lesson plan. This lesson plan ensured the message was consistent amongst the cadre, and, to date, the training has been presented to some 25 businesses in the community

3. How Program Fulfilled Awards Criteria

This program is worthy of award because it clearly addresses the need for localities to educate and prepare for critical incidents and does so in a cost-effective, collaborative manner that fits the culture and need of the specific locality using it. The Henrico County program goes well beyond the basics of “Run, Hide, Fight” being shown and trained throughout the United States. The program not only started with the internal assessment of the county's infrastructure, but the assessment was also conducted by a joint public-safety team of Police, Fire, and Security officials and the affected department heads. The results of these assessments were shared with county management, who immediately embraced the program and began implementation of some of the recommendations as well as fully supporting the expansion of the program to include both internal and external training by using a collaborative cadre of public-safety officials within the county.

While training programs like these may not be unique in the U.S., the fact that this program is administered by a joint cadre rather than by law enforcement alone is exemplary and unique in local government and other public safety arenas. Beyond that, the internal training component added the Department of Human Resources to the collaborative effort, working hand-in-hand with public safety personnel from Police, Fire, and Security. This unique partnership is certainly unparalleled elsewhere.

This program goes beyond training employees. It prepares all employees and our community – businesses, civic groups, religious organizations, citizens, and visitors – at no additional cost to the community or the county. We have also provided scenario-based training in tabletop form to

the retail community, and we have worked together with them to assist them in understanding the need to have current emergency plans, what to look for, how Public Safety will respond, and how they should respond.

We have worked with HCPS to revise our response plan to include policies and have attended several training sessions in active shooter training, reunification, bomb-related emergencies, and the like, which join HCPS and public-safety personnel together in a training environment. This improves our real-world response should a critical incident occur. This real-world response has already happened at least twice within the county, and because of this work, it resulted in the establishment of a seamless Incident Command and successful resolution of the incidents without injury or death to any students, staff, or first responders.

The development and delivery of a very high-quality training video for our community will serve as a lasting legacy of the hard work that has gone into the development of the Critical Incident Response Program. One or all of the tiers of this program are easily replicated for other localities and can be adjusted to meet the needs of the locality and their unique community. For these reasons, we think this program is worthy of a Virginia Association of Counties award.

4. How Program Was Carried Out

The Critical Incident Response Program initially began with the first objective to conduct site surveys and security assessments of those county facilities deemed to be most at-risk based on the San Bernardino incident and other similar incidents in the United States. This process began by teaming up a Fire battalion chief and a Police lieutenant, both of whom are assigned to special operations and have vast experience in tactical and critical incident response. This team then expanded to include the county's chief of the Security Division, a small division tasked with the physical security of all county facilities.

The newly-formed team went to approximately twelve county facilities over the course of about three months and not only conducted walk-throughs of each facility but also began discussions with department heads and staff about processes and physical security at their sites. The team observed how employees arrived and left from their workplace; where offices and spaces were situated throughout each facility; how customers (both internal and external) engaged the facility; what known or identified vulnerabilities existed; and if any existing physical security apparatus was currently in place at each site. During the walk-throughs, the team also identified those items that presented vulnerabilities, such as areas where card readers did not properly operate, where duress alarms were needed, whether any duress alarms present worked, and how long these alarms took to notify the Security console of any problem.

The discussions with department heads and staff included dialogue about how their processes worked to engage external customers and where they saw opportunities to better secure their sites along with what types of physical or building security items they would like to see in the future. The team also participated in meetings with building stakeholders, in some cases, who were representative of the tenants of that building to discuss the need for emergency drills and the logistics involved in executing such drills. The team discussed the need for emergency plans, assembly areas, evacuation routes, emergency notifications, phone trees, alternate notification procedures such as computer messaging and text messaging, and the like.

In one county building that houses approximately eight different departments, the result of this effort has been the creation and continuing development of a building emergency committee comprised of representatives from each department in the building. This committee meets monthly and discusses issues of concern as well as makes plans for emergency drills such as a tornado evacuation drill that was held in March 2016. By conducting these drills, the committee could test the notification procedures, emergency response plans, evacuation plans, assembly

areas, and demobilization and normalization processes to ensure they worked as planned. The committee has also revamped the existing emergency policies in place for the building, which also houses a state-run agency. Despite this agency falling under state guidelines and a differing set of priorities and procedures, the committee found common ground and developed policies and procedures that worked for all departments within the structure.

The timeframe for this process was originally determined to be six months as the public-safety team was unsure of the extent of the assessment process and the cooperation of those agencies represented by the assessment. However, county leadership was extremely supportive of this process and was involved from the beginning by helping to properly pave the way for the team, which enabled the team to conclude the initial round of assessments in approximately three months. At the end of that timeframe, a presentation was developed for the staff of the Police and Fire Chiefs and General Services. The information was later presented to the County Manager, who, with his staff, continued unreserved support of this phase of the process, immediately taking several of the recommendations from concept to implementation.

The county administration was also briefed during the assessment phase about the development of a county training program. The public-safety team worked together with the Department of Human Resources to create a simple and easy-to-understand presentation that could be rolled out to the county's approximately 4,000 employees. This presentation had initially been given a one-year timeframe to complete as the concept of electronically delivering the training program to employees of varied skill levels, those with little or no computer access, and newly hired employees presented a challenge. Again, the collaborative partnership within county departments rose to the forefront, and after several planning meetings and sessions, an electronic delivery method was developed so that all employees would have access to this vital training.

Flexibility, both in delivery methods and audience, allowed the training to be provided individually, in workgroups to those without computer access, in staff or group meetings, and in various large group sites in the county. Members of the training cadre were available at each session to answer any employee questions, but, most importantly, department heads and agency key officials were provided this training in person by the two lead instructors. This agency head training proved to be quite beneficial as the agency heads were able to return to their various departments and brief their staff as well as ask the lead instructors any pertinent questions that helped them answer similar queries when they returned to their departments. Department Heads were urged to review and update their internal emergency plans, and the Deputy Emergency Coordinator also was made available to meet with any department that needed assistance in this area. This process was completed in less than six months, and the training program was delivered to all county employees preceded by a communication from the County Manager emphasizing the importance of the training and the partnership that had gone into creating the program.

Henrico County has been fortunate that no actual active shooter incidents have occurred in our schools, but, during the development of the training program, it became important to ensure that HCPS was included in these discussions. The public-safety team met with the Safety and Emergency Management Coordinator to review existing policies and procedures related to critical incident response in our schools. While the Police Division has ongoing meetings with HCPS' safety staff, these meetings were specifically oriented towards examining the improvement of policies within HCPS, Police, and Fire. The assembled workgroup included representation from these three departments as well as representatives from the Federal Bureau of Investigations and the Department of Homeland Security.

Collectively, a new policy was written for the Police Division, and later adopted by the Division of Fire, that addressed how responders would handle school-related critical incidents. This policy

was written from the perspective of new first-line and second-line supervisors in Police and Fire to address concerns such as wholesale adoption of the Incident Command Systems (ICS) philosophy, integration with HCPS staff, evacuation, reunification, media issues, and demobilization and return to normal operations. This process took approximately two months to complete and was done while developing the county training program that was also made available to HCPS' administrative staff.

The county's Department of Public Relations and Media Services joined the collaborative efforts of this program and produced a video for the community addressing how to respond to active shooter situations. This video for county residents and the business community could be used for information and training to assist in learning how to properly respond to an active shooter situation, a suspicious package, other suspicious situations such as threats to the business, and the "See Something, Say Something" concept. The producer of the video assembled a cast of experts to include those in Police and Fire as well as a survivor of the Virginia-Tech shooting and worked on this project for approximately three months. The resulting product was a high-quality, professionally-produced video that dramatically explains all the concepts previously discussed. This program has aired on the local cable-access channel and will be used in ongoing training within the business community.

5. Financing and Staffing

Current staff created, designed, and implemented the Critical Incident Response Program utilizing existing resources. Although staff time is extremely valuable, it is a cost the county would incur with or without this project. The initial costs of this program included the salaries of the personnel conducting the security assessments, who were a Fire battalion chief and a Police lieutenant. Added to this cost would be the time involved for the agency head/department representatives and other collaborative partners who were directly involved in the program. Since these costs

were already budgeted and would have been expended regardless of the specifics of this project, the costs to the county were essentially zero.

The recommendations that were made to General Services for “target hardening” technologies, such as additional card readers, panic alarms, security cameras, etc. do bear some cost. However, at this time, any upgrades that have or will be done will be part of the county’s existing budget and will be phased in over time to stay within budget constraints. These costs would also include the allocation or re-allocation of security officers to be posted at these sites, although many of the sites at which assessments were completed already have specific county security staff assigned to the facility. Those that do not have officers assigned are part of the Security Division’s regular patrol rotation along with those of the Police Division.

This concept would also be the same for the development of the training program. Since no outside resources were used in the development of the program or its delivery, no additional costs were borne by the county for the training program.

The development, production, and distribution of the training video shared on local cable-access channels and to outside businesses, bore no cost to the County because development of such programs is included in the Department of Public Relations and Media Services’ budget. However, if a locality had to contract with an outside vendor for the development of a similar program, it is estimated the necessary costs for this part of the project would be between \$5,000 to 10,000 (source: Henrico County Media Relations Department, 1/5/2017)

6. Program Results

There are many measures by which we can judge this program to be considered a success:

1. Eight departments within one county building have formed a safety committee that continues to meet on a quarterly basis. They have revised their departmental and building

emergency plans by streamlining processes and creating an internal electronic notification process that did not exist before this program. Additionally, they have conducted two different emergency drills to date (one hurricane drill and one tornado drill), which helped the committee to improve their escape plans, assembly areas, and other facets of the plan.

2. Inter-agency collaboration and cooperation because of this program has increased dramatically and was highlighted earlier in 2016, when two different bomb-threat calls happened at the courthouses within the county government complex. Because of the relationships created by this program, Incident Command was quickly setup, and a policy group of decision makers, all of whom already were used to working together, made decisions and took actions within their areas of responsibility. This resulted in a seamless evacuation of the buildings, a systematic search protocol, and handling of the calls with minimal disruption to other county services.
3. The training program developed for county employees was launched to more than 4,000 employees, demonstrating to them the county's commitment to their safety and giving them valuable instruction in how to handle a critical incident should it occur.
4. The cadre developed to teach the Critical Incident Program to outside businesses and entities has provided training to our community, reaching over twenty different businesses and organizations, totaling several hundred participants. These companies ranged in size from small non-profit organizations with three employees, to churches, to two Fortune 500 companies with thousands of employees. Additionally, we have conducted tabletop exercises on at least two different occasions with the management of all our retail shopping malls in our jurisdiction so they understand what the county's response would be to a critical incident and what their role is in planning, preparation, recovery, and returning to operation.

The training video produced by the Department of Public Relations and Media Services was shown locally in several different time slots and is also available on the county's website so that any of our over 350,000 citizens or visitors can educate themselves on both the county's response and their response to a critical incident

7. Brief Summary

The Critical Incident Response Program is a three-tiered practical and training approach: to create a safer work environment for our employees, to train our employees on response to critical incidents, and to promote and provide an external training program for our residents and visitors. The program began as an opportunity to conduct a serious examination of our security infrastructure following the deadly shootings in San Bernardino, California in December 2015. A collaborative team was established consisting of the Divisions of Police and Fire and the Department of General Services, which is tasked with site administration and management of the organization's physical buildings. The team conducted site surveys at those department buildings that were determined to be most at-risk and presented those findings to the affected department heads, Police and Fire Chiefs, and the County Manager's staff.

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