

Nixa Police awarded \$160,000 grant from DOJ

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"This grant money is a game-changer for the Nixa Police Department," says Nixa Chief of Police Jimmy Liles. "It affords us the ability to roll out some exciting new technology over the next couple of years. Improving our information sharing will make a huge impact on our community. Criminals do not stay within jurisdictional boundaries and often commit crimes in multiple cities. Giving the officers instant access to information from other departments will allow us to better identify criminal patterns, solve crimes and better serve our communities."

Thanks to a grant written by the Springfield Police Department, the Nixa Police Department has been awarded grant funding to create better coordination with area agencies and upgrade crime reporting.

A key weakness in the computers and records management systems currently being used by Nixa Police Department is that information about crimes and suspects is not easily shared across jurisdictions. Right now, NPD computers don't talk to SPD computers or Greene County Sheriff's Office computers, even though bad guys tend to commit crimes in both cities. The fact that the systems are separate means Nixa Police don't always know that a crime which just occurred in Nixa fits a pattern of crimes occurring in Springfield. If we had easier access to that knowledge, it could help us narrow down suspects or even solve cases faster.

Another issue faced by the Nixa Police Department is that for many years, the FBI's uniform crime reporting (UCR) system has been used to track crime. However, in the UCR system, when officers write reports about an incident in which multiple crimes are committed, only the worst offense is reported as a crime statistic. This means it is difficult for our department to analyze all our crime data. Now, police departments across the country are required to transition to a more thorough reporting system, the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) by January 1, 2021. Until now, Nixa has been among other agencies across the Ozarks unable to make the NIBRS transition due to the cost of new software, equipment, and retraining of officers to use the system.

Thanks to a grant applied for by SPD (in cooperation with NPD and GCSO as sub-grantees), Nixa Police Department will be able to solve both issues (inter-agency information sharing, and becoming NIBRS compliant) at the same time. The U.S. Department of Justice awarded a total grant of \$411,772. Of that total amount, the largest portion, \$159,697 is for NPD, with \$156,762 for SPD, and \$95,313 for the GCSO.

This grant funding gives Nixa PD a unique opportunity to transition to the same record management system currently used by SPD and the GCSO, called NICHE. While Springfield and Greene County will use their grant funding to upgrade their NICHE systems to become NIBRS-compliant, Nixa PD will transition directly to a NIBRS-compliant NICHE system. This means Nixa gets a kind of double upgrade. We will have more thorough reporting AND greater information sharing with area departments. In the near future, more area departments may join the Springfield area NICHE system so law enforcement can more easily share and analyze criminal data across jurisdictions. That information sharing will enhance our agencies ability to see trends, adjust crime prevention strategies, improve investigations, and solve crimes.

Source:

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