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CUYAHOGA COUNTY PROSECUTOR

Crime Strategies Unit Awarded \$360,000 Grant; Federal Funding Will Go Towards Violent Offender Database

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CLEVELAND – Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Michael C. O'Malley announced that the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office (CCPO) Crime Strategies Unit (CSU) was awarded a \$360,000 grant as part of the U.S. Department of Justice's Innovative Prosecution Program. Between October 2019 and September 2021, funding will be used to enhance data collection efforts to help inform the prioritization of investigations and prosecutions of the County's most violent offenders. CCPO will partner with the Begun Center for Violence Prevention Research and Education at Case Western Reserve University's (CWRU) Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences to strengthen the data collection efforts, conduct research, and disseminate important information to law enforcement.

"This effort will be a crucial component in helping law enforcement agencies reduce the most serious offenses that occur within our communities," said Prosecutor O'Malley. "We are excited to begin this project and look forward to working with our partners throughout the County."

The grant will be used to improve the collection and consolidation of data on violent offenders from multiple County law enforcement agencies. This will include quantitative (e.g. age of offenders/victims, day and time of incidents, types of crimes), qualitative (e.g. names of offenders/victims, case narratives, investigative notes), visual (e.g. photos of ballistics, offenders, and social networks), and geographical information (e.g. addresses of incident/offender/victim).

This data will help researchers and law enforcement detect, track, and analyze violent crime trends. A social network analysis software program will be utilized to identify associates of offenders. Risk Terrain Modeling will be used to predict, with high levels of certainty, when and where crime will occur, providing valuable insight for crime deterrence. A criteria-based priority system will also be implemented after initial research has been conducted.

"The goal here is to reduce some of the most violent criminal offenses in Cuyahoga County," said Rachel Lovell, PhD, CWRU lead researcher on the grant. "We've been working with the prosecutor's office for almost five years. We've got a great working relationship with the County as a community partner. This initiative is a good fit for our research team."

Funding will be utilized to coordinate the sharing of violent crime information between local, state, and federal agencies in the County.

Money will go towards new personnel positions (including a lead Special Investigator) and increased training (including webinars and toolkits that will be distributed amongst both law enforcement and violence prevention researchers).

Cuyahoga County has over 56 police municipalities and numerous other law enforcement agencies. In 2015, the CCPO assembled the CSU to coordinate information-sharing efforts between agencies. The Unit analyzes common factors, summarizes similar incidents, and implements strategies to decrease violent crime throughout the County.

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