Title: 2022 Connecticut Crime Gun Intelligence Center

Due Date: May 23, 2022

Proposal Narrative

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1. <u>Statement of the Problem/Description of the Issue</u>

<u>Precipitous increase in firearm-related violent crime</u> - The Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection's (DESPP) Division of Scientific Services (DSS) provides forensic services to all state and local law enforcement in Connecticut including Hartford, Bridgeport, New Haven, and Waterbury. This includes all firearms analysis. DSS saw an average 92% increase in firearms-related submissions:

Number of Requests Per Offense for Calendar Year (CY) 2018-2021				
Offense Type	2018	2019	2020	2021	% Increase Since 2018
Assaults	235	232	409	384	63%
Homicides	70	84	148	172	146%
Weapons Discharge	631	661	1,249	1,744	176%
Weapons Possession	481	422	433	672	40%
Other	260	215	193	352	35%

Homicide and assault cases related to firearms increased an average of 104% since 2018. Weapons discharges with no victims reported have increased 176%. Weapons possessions have increased about 40%. In CY 2021, 384 assaults (nonfatal shootings) and 172 homicide cases were submitted. A total of 3,324 incidents related to firearms in Connecticut were submitted to DSS in CY 2021.

<u>Stats/research findings/evidence</u> - From 2018-2019, there was an average of 1,645 requests for firearms analysis at DSS. In 2021, 3,324 requests for analysis were received, a 102% increase in evidence submissions related to gun violence. The increase in forensic analysis substantiates the claimed increase in gun violence in Connecticut. In an April 2022 DOJ release, greater focus and tracking was recommended for "ghost guns". Ghost guns are guns assembled from parts kits with no serial numbers or tracking information. It is estimated there were over 45,000 privately manufactured ghost guns recovered by law enforcement since 2016. Improved tracking is one of ATF's recommendations to address violent crime and gun violence.[i] Connecticut saw a 400% increase in ghost guns submitted to DSS for firearms analysis since 2019. A January 2022 GAO

report found 40% of guns trafficked to Central America were from the United States. The study

recommends better gun tracking is needed to disrupt firearms trafficking.[ii] The 2018 National

Police Foundation's "The Strategic Use of Crime Gun Tracing and Its Relation to NIBIN"[iii]

report indicates the importance of adding firearms eTrace (serial number) tracking information

from point of manufacture to sale along with corresponding NIBIN associated crime information

as a valuable intelligence tool.

Uniform Crime Report (UCR)[iv]/NIBRS[v] Data for Connecticut										
Year	Violent crime	Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	Rape	Robbery	Aggravated assault	Property crime	Burglary	Larceny-theft	Motor vehicle theft	Arson
2020 (NIBRS)*	5,107	108	524	1,695	2,368	50,476	5,897	37,125	7,297	159
2019	6,265	95	686	1,892	3,592	48,155	6,010	36,495	5,650	199
2018	7,058	75	741	2,145	4,097	56,882	7,385	42,534	6,963	217
2017	7,796	96	722	2,757	4,221	59,779	8,145	44,710	6,924	285

Geographic diversity and population - In its compact borders, Connecticut has forested hills,

urban skylines, shoreline beaches, white-steeple colonial churches, and historic village greens.

There are classic Ivy League schools, modern expressways, corporate offices, and small farms.

Connecticut is New England's 2nd smallest and southernmost state. Connecticut has 8 counties

and 169 cities/towns covering 5,000 miles. Connecticut, with a population of 3.6 million[vi], is

racially, ethnically, and economically diverse with 29.1% African American or Hispanic, 65.9%

Caucasian and 5.0% Asian/Other. The State has 5 major cities with populations over 100,000

residents: Bridgeport, New Haven, Stamford, Hartford, and Waterbury.

Precipitous increase and challenges - DSS saw an average 104% increase in violent crimes gun-

related requests for analysis since 2018 from law enforcement in Connecticut. One challenge

encountered in violent crimes is that there is often other forensic evidence analyzed in a case

which may include firearms, DNA, and fingerprint analysis. In violent crimes involving guns,

NIBIN leads are dispersed to affected agencies, but associated DNA and fingerprint results are not provided at the same time. A gap exists in the distribution of other forensic results that may establish leads to individuals associated with violent crime. DNA and fingerprint analysis results are only distributed to the primary agency and not to other agencies linked via the NIBIN lead.

Strong partnerships - DESPP and DSS have a strong partnership with local tribal offices and help in investigations and forensic analysis of crimes that occur on tribal land.

2. Program Design and Implementation

New vs. expansion - We will use funds to develop a new CGIC in the DESPP. The Connecticut State Police (CSP) has a Gun Tracing Task Force (GTTF) with CSP detectives and Task Force Officers (TFOs) from Waterbury, Bridgeport, Hartford, and New Haven. The GTTF works with CSP Watch Center. The Watch Center (WC) is an investigative intelligence gathering Unit in the CSP dedicated to gun crimes and works closely with the GTTF, FBI, ATF, Hartford, Bridgeport, and New Haven Police Departments. DSS will work with the Watch Center and Office of the Chief State's Attorney's (OCSA) in providing forensic analytical leads in gun crimes. Forensic leads will incorporate information from CODIS (DNA database), AFIS (fingerprint database), drug, electronic evidence analysis and other forensic evidence for all associated cases that were established by the original NIBIN lead. The leads in the NIBIN database help pull together additional forensic intelligence to provide to the Watch Center and law enforcement. OCSA's 20% of the award will fund 35% of the hours worked by a Research Analyst (RA). This RA is a full-time position hired by DSS to help incorporate forensic data and upload eTrace information for serial numbers restored at DSS for guns submitted for operability testing. It is estimated about 30% of guns submitted are missing or have obliterated serial numbers. The RA will work with an ATF contractor located at DSS to research gun information and to upload missing serial

numbers. DSS test fires weapons that are designated to be destroyed by the CSP Weapons Destruction Unit (WDU). A recent study indicated 50% of the guns destined for destruction have not had an eTrace conducted. DSS proposes to produce an eTrace request for the weapons at time of entry for NIBIN acquisition. The RA will research through OCSA to determine docket numbers assigned to any arrests made as a result of NIBIN leads. The inclusion of the docket number information will be provided to the other 13 state prosecutor offices to provide a comprehensive report on the gun crimes associated with an individual for more successful prosecutions. The funds allocated to the OSAC will fund 35% of the RA's time to work on NIBIN lead tracing cases through the criminal justice system and updating criminal prosecution docket number information for the Forensic Intelligence package.

Working group - DSS will work with the Watch Center (WC), which in turn works with the GTTF, area CGICs, OCSA, prosecutors, and local law enforcement. The WC actively participates in the monitoring of gun crime activity and has an active working relationship with the Hartford, Bridgeport, and New Haven Police Departments and State's Attorney's offices.

Crime Gun Intelligence Center - The WC will work with DSS in receiving case data from NIBIN leads and forensic database hits from CODIS and AFIS and help in distributing information to the various law enforcement. The WC will use the i2 Analyst Notebook to combine the crime intelligence for dispersal to the other CGICs and associated law enforcement agencies.

Effective investigations/prosecutions - The OCSA works with all Department of Criminal Justice Geographical Area Courts and State's Attorney's Offices (SAOO to prosecute crimes. The project will disperse intelligence packets to the SAO and the RA will associate all criminal prosecution docket numbers to create links between the cases prosecuted for violent crimes.

<u>Training staff and partners</u> - DSS has a well-established training program to teach officers on how to acquire gun evidence into the NIBIN Acquisition Unit.

<u>Violent crime prevention strategies</u> - Timely information to all agencies associated with NIBIN leads including DNA/fingerprint information helps the investigation for successful prosecution.

<u>Gun shots fired</u> - ShotSpotter technology is located in 3 major cities in Connecticut to produce a timely response to gun shots fired.

<u>Collection of performance data and final analysis report</u> - Performance will be measured by tracking the number of guns eTraced, number of NIBIN leads released, and number of forensic intelligence packets disseminated associated with the NIBIN leads. The number of arrests and convictions related to forensic intelligence will be tracked by our partners at the State's Attorney's Office and the OCSA. A final analysis report will be provided in the closeout of the grant and will indicate successes and weaknesses for future improvement.

<u>Implementing CGIC model</u> - DSS will establish an electronic interface with NexGen, which is a record management system (RMS), used by about 94% of the agencies in the Connecticut. The interface will lead to the creation of a searchable database repository combining forensic data with law enforcement operations across local jurisdictions. DSS will use the RMS to allow law enforcement officers to receive timely results of NIBIN entries and additional associated investigative leads developed by DNA and the fingerprint databases. The RA will compile forensic results from the databases and work with the WC to distribute the information to the law enforcement linked by the NIBIN lead. The NexGen RMS has situational information from the crime scene that when coupled with the NIBIN and other forensic intelligence can provide strong leads for investigators. The grant will establish the interface between NexGen and DSS lab management system (LIMS) (see flowchart).

Work with entities on new policies/procedures - DSS provided 2 NIBIN Acquisition Units (kiosk and van) for all law enforcement entities including probation and parole agencies 24/7. Training is provided by DSS to use the NIBIN acquisition units to encourage the timely entry of gun crime evidence. As of March 2022, 990 entries have been made using the NIBIN Acquisition Units and 10 law enforcement have been trained. DSS works with the ATF, local State's Attorneys and United States Federal Attorneys to provide forensic analysis results for prosecution. Additionally, DSS will work with the WC to provide meetings and presentations to all law enforcement stakeholders for the update of GunStats.

NIBIN use - DSS provides3 BrassTrax Acquisition Units that acquire cartridge case evidence for searching through NIBIN. One unit is in a DSS kiosk area for trained law enforcement and the other is a mobile BrassTrax Acquisition Unit on a van and is provided to law enforcement to conduct NIBIN entry at their crime scene or police department.

ATF NNCTC - DSS has a MOU with the National NIBIN Correlation and Training Center (NNCTC) to conduct correlations for all entries made on the Site 140 acquisition units.

Deliverables - The deliverables have been implemented. DSS will continue to train law enforcement officers on the acquisition of crime guns evidence into NIBIN. DSS will add eTrace for weapons and forensic intelligence packets to the NIBIN leads that are distributed from the NNCTC to provide a comprehensive intelligence package.

Task Force Officer (TFO) to local ATF field office - The CSP has a GTTF composed of a Sergeant, 4 Detectives, and 4 TFO from New Haven, Hartford, Bridgeport, and Waterbury. GTTF will assign a CSP TFO to work with the local ATF field office. The CSP TFO will partner with ATF agents to conduct NIBIN- and eTrace-related investigations, target NIBIN/eTrace offenders, develop and analyze NIBIN/eTrace intelligence, and help ATF with firearms

trafficking and straw purchase investigations. The investigative information accumulated from the GTTF and the TFO will be provided to the CSP WC, which is a 24/7/365 operation focused on real time local/state level, such as critical incidents, mutual aid, complex criminal investigations, agency helps on gun crimes/violent crimes, hate crimes, and deconfliction. The WC will work to distribute the investigative information and forensic intelligence developed on the cases provided by DSS to the associated law enforcement. The TFO will partner with ATF agents for firearms trafficking and straw purchase investigations.

Prioritization of NIBIN through GunStat - Monthly NIBIN data including leads established will be provided for GunStat dissemination. The WC will prioritize intelligence release through GunStat to help law enforcement in their local investigations. The information will help in predictive policing efforts to combat gun crime in areas.

ATF eTrace account to trace recovered crime guns - DSS has an ATF contractor onsite that can access eTrace and can upload gun information for weapons submitted to DSS for analysis. Additionally, the RA will have an eTrace account to help in the update of serial numbers of obliterated serial numbers restored at DSS. DSS is essential in the gun destruction process. All guns, before being destroyed by the WDU, must be test-fired by DSS and the test fires acquired into NIBIN. DSS found that 50% of guns are missing an eTrace. DSS will use the RA to incorporate the missing eTrace information for the guns.

Comprehensive crime gun tracing - As firearms are submitted to the lab for entry into NIBIN, an eTrace will be conducted on the gun by the ATF contractor or RA. If the gun was not traced, the information will be uploaded at DSS to start the tracing process. DSS processes guns from law enforcement and weapons submitted for destruction from the WDU. It is estimated that 50% of

the weapons from the WDU are not traced and destroyed after entry into NIBIN. A portion of the guns destroyed are turned in from gun buyback programs or were unclaimed found property.

Partnership with district attorney's office/work with ATF - DSS works with the OCSA and the regional prosecutors. Executive Assistant State's Attorney(EASA) John Doyle will be the primary point of contact and will work with incorporating the various Geographical Area courts to which the NIBIN leads are associated to ensure that the forensic intelligence was reviewed.

Commitment to process firearm evidence with crime lab - DSS has an MOU in place with the ATF for the use of NIBIN for acquisitions and correlations.

Expected objective and performance measures – By incorporating forensic intelligence along with investigative intelligence more successful investigations leading to arrests will be a byproduct since the CODIS and AFIS data will provide possible suspect names. This shared information will also lead to successful prosecution between the courts for the same individual results in lower gun crime rates.

Timeline - A timeline with milestones, deliverables, and responsible parties is attached.

Evidence from all shooting incidents accepted for entry and correlation - There are no restrictions placed on evidence submitted for entry and correlation.

Routing NIBIN entries free from fee-for-service restrictions - There are no fee for service restrictions for using NIBIN or acceptance of evidence at DSS.

Minimizing latent print and DNA demands - Law enforcement has been trained on the best practices of processing for latent print and DNA collection to reduce the wait time on entry into NIBIN. DSS Management reviews submissions, both in real-time and retrospectively. Policies limit or discourage unnecessary testing.

Intake procedures - DSS has streamlined practices to get gun evidence searching in the NIBIN database. A NIBIN kiosk is available 24/7 and a mobile NIBIN is available to police.

Technician input of shooting evidence and test fires before full firearm examination - An ATF Contractor is onsite to acquire evidence upon receipt to DSS.

Release of unconfirmed NIBIN leads to the CGIC team - DSS NIBIN site 140 uses the NNCTC for its correlations. Acquisitions are reviewed in 24-48 hours and NIBIN leads are distributed at completion of correlation via email. Emails are sent to the law enforcements agencies associated with the lead and the associated CGIC team members.

Priority of evidence submissions into NIBIN - DSS operates under the ATF MROS (Minimal Required Operating Standards) for NIBIN Acquisition Units. Under the standards, the cartridge case evidence is entered into NIBIN as soon as possible. All cases are worked upon receipt with priority of entry given to current/recent cartridge case and test fires from crime guns. Older/backlogged cases are worked as submitted.

Timely notifications - The CSP WC is a 24/7/365 operation that distributes timely investigative information. CSP has policies to monitor investigative stages and follow-up. Intelligence packages distributed will be emailed to all parties associated with the case to ensure notifications are received. The NexGen interface will notify the agency whose evidence was submitted to NIBIN of all associated leads. A second tier, using non CGIC grant funds, will result in a scalable relational intelligence database from the NexGen interface output. The database will provide automated standard reports and ad hoc queries to law enforcement and prosecutors.

Ensuring accountability for follow-up investigations and work with prosecutors - The OCSA and the local State Attorneys are the head law enforcement officers for their geographical areas in

Connecticut. Procedures promulgated from the State Attorney's will ensure accountability through prosecutors and inspectors and investigation follow-through.

Review meetings with stakeholders and feedback to NIBIN site - Monthly Microsoft Teams meetings will be held with key stakeholders to review data and follow-up on investigations. Monthly data gathering is conducted for all entries made into the NIBIN acquisition units.

Successes communicated to NIBIN site for dissemination - Monthly data information is provided by the ATF on the number of acquisitions made in the State. DSS monitors these acquisitions and compares these to the number of leads established from the entries.

How technology will be implemented - DSS is a NIBIN site with 3 BrassTrax Acquisition Units that acquire cartridge case evidence for searching through NIBIN. One of the Units is located in a kiosk area of DSS and available 24/7 for all trained law enforcement for NIBIN use. DSS has a mobile BrassTrax Acquisition Unit on a van and is provided to law enforcement to conduct NIBIN entry at their crime scene or police department. DSS provides training and access to law enforcement for using NIBIN Acquisition Units. DSS will work with NexGen and the WC to incorporate the interface and use the i2 Notebook to depict the NIBIN leads, forensic intelligence, and investigative information into a complete CGIC package.

Safeguarding privacy/civil rights/civil liberties - The CSP has policies/procedures in its Administrative and Operation Manual and the DESPP Ethical Conduct Policy ensuring that information gathered is confidential. Upon gathering of probable cause, search and seizure warrants and arrest warrants will further investigations.

3. Capabilities and Competencies

List of Key Team Members		
Name	Title	Role
James Rovella	Commissioner	Commissioner of DESPP
Dr. Guy Vallaro	Director	Director of DSS
Stavros Mellekas	Colonel	Commanding Officer of CSP

List of Key Team Members		
Name	Title	Role
Jack Goncalves	Lieutenant Colonel	Commanding Officer of CSP Field Command
Anthony Giuliano	Lieutenant	Commanding Officer of Bureau of Special Investigations (BSI)
Kenneth Ventresca	Sergeant	Commanding Officer of WC
Kyle Bombace	Sergeant	Commanding Officer of GTTF
John Doyle	Executive Assistant State's Attorney	Liaison with all Geographical Area Courts.
Jocelyn Kaotzanis	United States' Attorney	Chief OCDETF - District of Connecticut
Lucinda Lopes-Phelan	Deputy Director of Identification	Manager of NIBIN, Firearms and RA

Lead agency, team leads and agency coordination - DESPP (with DSS and CSP) is the lead agency in this project. The applicant has successfully managed grant projects, initiated trainings and projects for law enforcement and provided guidance in criminal investigations on successful prosecution of cases. The team has the capabilities/competencies to achieve the objectives and deliverables. The project's contacts are Lucinda Lopes-Phelan (DSS) and Lt. Anthony Giuliano and Sgts. Ken Ventresca and Kyle Bombace (CSP). Key team members will meet quarterly to ensure the coordination between the various agencies.

Individual capabilities/competencies - Dr. Guy Vallaro, DSS Director, successfully managed numerous projects/grants in his 10 years at DSS. He led DSS through successful accreditation inspections and improved the technologies/testing capabilities at DSS. Lucinda Lopes-Phelan, Deputy Director, expanded the NIBIN program at DSS and tracked performance measures in many grants. Lt. Anthony Giuliano (CSP-BSI) has led the Unit in investigations ranging from trafficking to undercover investigations. Sgt. Kenneth Ventresca, WC Commanding Officer, has led criminal investigations to the arrest and prosecution of criminal cases including gun crimes. Sgt. Kyle Bombace, GTTF Commanding Officer, has led criminal investigations to the arrest and prosecution of criminal cases including gun crimes.

Capacity to develop/implement new policies/procedures and work with stakeholders - DSS has a strong relationship with state law enforcement and the State's Attorney's Office. DSS launched

training and provided both a NIBIN Acquisition Unit and a Rapid DNA instrument that law

enforcement use 24/7 at DSS. This resulted in timely leads for violent criminal investigations.

<u>Executive support/command staff involvement</u> - The DESPP Commissioner and Colonel support

the incorporation of a CGIC in CSP that will work with DSS. The DSS Director meets with the

DESPP Commissioner and the CSP Colonel in monthly command staff meetings to discuss

prevention of gun crimes.

<u>Partnership with ATF</u> - DESPP (DSS, CSP) has a good partnership with the ATF in support to

ATF investigations in forensic and law enforcement capacities. ATF has a contractor located at

DSS to help in NIBIN entry and eTrace of crime guns submitted for NIBIN entry.

4. <u>Plan for Collecting the Data Required for Performance Measures</u>

Data will be collected monthly on number of NIBIN Leads generated for the cases entered into

NIBIN. It includes the number of leads that had additional forensic intelligence available from

other databases (CODIS and AFIS). Working with the WC and other CT CGICS, we will gather

feedback on the intelligence resulting in arrest. Lucinda Lopes-Phelan will collect the data for

DSS. Sgt. Ken Ventresca will collect for the WC and GTTF and EASA Jack Doyle will collect

the data from the various prosecutor's offices. Data will be combined by the Research Analyst

and reported by DSS in semiannual progress reports and the quarterly key team member

meetings. The number of arrests and successful prosecutions will help determine the project

impact. Data will be reported semiannually and discussed in stakeholder meetings.

[i] https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/04/26/2022-08026/definition-of-frame-or-receiver-and-identification-of-firearms

[ii] https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-22-104680 Firearms Trafficking: More Information is needed to Inform U.S. Efforts in Central America.

[iii] https://crimegunintelcenters.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/CGIC_best_practice_strategic_10.15.pdf

[iv] https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2017/crime-in-the-u.s.-2017/topic-pages/tables/table-5

[v] https://crime-data-explorer.app.cloud.gov/pages/explorer/crime/crime-trend

[vi] https://worldpopulationreview.com/states/cities/connecticut