

STATUS REPORT ON THE
BATON ROUGE AREA VIOLENCE ELIMINATION (BRAVE) PROJECT
FEDERAL AWARD NO. 2012-PB-FX-K001

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Baton Rouge Area Violence Elimination Program, or B.R.A.V.E., is a partnership between the City of Baton Rouge and the East Baton Rouge Parish District Attorney's Office to address violent crime in the 70802 and 70805 zip codes in Baton Rouge. B.R.A.V.E. is funded through a U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Program (USDOJ-OJJDP) grant, Federal grant number 2012-PB-FX-K001, that began on October 1, 2012. In addition to the Mayor's Office and District Attorney, the B.R.A.V.E. program also coordinated with the Baton Rouge Police Department, the East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office, the United States Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Louisiana, Louisiana State University's Office of Social Service Research and Development, local service providers, faith-based representatives and community leaders.

BRAVE was originally funded by USDOJ-OJJDP in the amount \$1,499,993. Subsequent supplemental awards in the amounts of \$1,458,231 and \$70,000 increased the total funding of the BRAVE project to \$3,028,224 by 2015.

Early in the administration of Mayor-President Broome the Mayor's Office (OM) was informed that the BRAVE grant was being suspended due to reporting and compliance deficiencies occurring in 2016 during the administration of Mayor-President Holden. The OM attempted to address the deficiencies with the USDOJ-OJJDP and requested a reauthorization and extension of the grant. This request was denied. The OM subsequently sought to spend the remaining grant funds in fulfillment of original grant aims that were never pursued or fulfilled. On July 26 the OM suspended the program pending further review after concerns were expressed by members of the East Baton Rouge City-Parish Metropolitan Council regarding BRAVE grant recipients and the status of Louisiana State University's (LSU) request for additional funding. Mayor-President Broome requested the completion of this report to review past performance and present status.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW and GRANT HISTORY

The B.R.A.V.E. project description in the original grant application is as follows:

The Baton Rouge Area Violence Elimination (BRAVE) program will address the displacement of violent juvenile crime occurring in the 70805 and 70802 zip codes, to a successful implementation of a Group Violence Reduction Strategy (GVRS) locally called the BRAVE program. The program will reduce and eliminate violent crime being committed by a small number of juvenile offenders. The program will be implemented under the guidance of the Mayor and the District Attorney to target violent youth offenders, ages 12-17, and their

associates. BRAVE seeks to (1) change the community norms toward gang and group violence; (2) provide alternatives to criminal offending by the targeted group; and (3) alter the perception of youth regarding risks and sanctions associated with violent offending. These will be accomplished through engagement and educational opportunities to increase the social cohesion of the community and development of an authentic police-community relationship; through the coordination of local service and educational providers who will offer help to youth and implementation of a focused deterrence strategy to community based policing.

From October 1, 2012 to September 30, 2016, the Holden Administration engaged the following local entities for services under the B.R.A.V.E. grant:

- Capital Area Human Services was contracted to provide abuse and health treatment to its program participants, provide police mentoring, and collect performance measures. (\$187,500/380,916)
- Healing Place Services was contracted to provide case management, educational career, and job assistance to participants in the program. (\$201,870/222,721.74)
- LSU was contracted to evaluate activities based on the grant goals and objectives, and analyze data related to BRAVE. (\$558,692/645,145.37)
- The Louisiana Sports Network was contracted to provide sports mentoring to referred program participants, provide program evaluation and collect performance measures. (\$42,000)
- Hope Ministries was contracted to provide job assessment to participants in the program and provide career and family mentoring to program participants. (\$75,000)
- Fealy and Sumner Policing Solutions were contracted to be technical advisors to aid BRAVE in advice, training, and performance evaluation of their strategies. (\$5,000)
- Family Youth Service Center was contracted (\$330,342)
- Tonja Myles was contracted to formulate, coordinate, and execute plans to safely arrest juvenile offenders that violated their conditions of supervision as appointed by the Juvenile Court Judge. In addition, she collaborates with law enforcement and the judicial system to monitor juvenile offenders and advocate for BRAVE in the public sphere. (\$195,000)
- Garrison & Associates were contracted to uphold the goals of BRAVE through engagement and educational activities intended to increase informal social control and police effectiveness. (\$1,050.00)
- EBR Truancy was contracted to provide case management and other social services to BRAVE participants. (\$330,342)
- Printing tech was contracted to provide push cards for the City of BR Mayor's Office. (\$110.50)
- TJM Promotions were contracted to provide wristbands for high school students. (\$310.00)

Conservative Total: \$ 1927216.5

Since the summer of 2017, there have been a number of smaller vendors issued contracts under \$10,000, for skills training in the field of cosmetology, mentorship, arts, and sports

networks, amongst other community services. Some of these companies were vendors previously for the city, many years prior to Mayor Broome taking office.

STATUS REPORT AT TRANSITION OF MAYORAL ADMINISTRATION

On February 14 2017 the Department of Justice notified the Office of the Mayor-President that the BRAVE grant funds were frozen due to an overdue progress report, which was due January 30, 2017. That delayed report followed earlier reports that were submitted in June 2016 and December 2016 that requested data on performance measures that were not being collected by the LSU Office of Social Research and, therefore, were not reported. Those measures related to youth served and the statistics involving youth and crime in the area. The June 30, 2017 report contained the data requested.

On March 1 2017 the Assistant Chief Administrative Officer and the Federal and State Grants Coordinator, conducted a telephone conference call with DOJ to discuss the requirements for lifting the freeze on the remaining funds which totaled \$1.6 million. A request for an extension was also discussed.

The OM was informed that the grant would likely not be extended because of poor programmatic performance, lack of enough youth and adults being served, two extension requests having already been approved and funding still had not been spent, and other findings from a previous audit. (Attachment "B") The SPM also specifically mentioned the need for transportation services as she was aware that transportation services for clients was a huge challenge to program success.

Additionally, the OM and the SPM discussed using the remaining grant funds for various interventions that did not appear to have been met in the BRAVE Project Narrative goals/outcomes or could improve performance outcomes. For example, call-ins, more programs that engage youth across the parish and within the targeted zip codes, as well as reporting requirements and the lack of reports submitted in the past. The OM suggested spending these funds in community programming related to the arts, sports, and other activities. The OM was informed that expenditures would be acceptable as long as they aligned with the grant. When the OM asked the SPM how the remaining \$1.6 million could be spent when there were currently only eight (8) BRAVE clients, the SPM explained that the funds could be used to serve BRAVE clients, their families and affiliates of BRAVE clients, and any resident in the targeted zip codes. (Attachment "B") The OM inquired about turning away youth or adults who attend BRAVE programs and request assistance but do not live in the targeted zip codes. The SPM explained that as long as 50% of the participants were from the targeted zip code, the OM could host activities parish-wide.

The new FSGC hired under Mayor-President Broome worked diligently between the months of March, April, and May 2017 to collect data and access OJJDP systems. The OM undertook the

completion of the extension request, attended BRAVE Core meetings, processed invoices for independent contractors, and held individual conferences with BRAVE clients and their families.

On May 5, 2017, the current OM submitted the revised overdue semi-annual report successfully into the GMS. The OM also submitted a draft contract of the Courier Transportation Service.

On May 5, 2017 the OM received a response from the SPM thanking us for submitting the overdue report and asked specifically what was being done about the need for transportation services for BRAVE. (Attachment "C") The SPM indicated that she recalled the OM working on a proposal for transportation services and wanted a status update. She was referring to the OM's previous commitment on the March 1, 2017 conference call that transportation services will be provided to grant participants.

On May 8, 2017, the OM was notified that the progress report had been approved, the request for Release Funds GAN for 2012-PB-FX-K001 (BRAVE Funding) was approved, and the hold on \$1.7 million in BRAVE funding had been lifted. (Attachment "D")

In response to the SPM's reference to unmet BRAVE goals, it was observed that one of the enumerated goals identified by the BRAVE Project Narrative stated:

Goal 2: Provide Alternatives To Violent Criminal Offending To Targeted Youth.

Output Measure 2a(1) - Approximately Twenty (20) community service providers will be organized to plan services for youth opting out.

Output Measure 2a(2) – Twenty-seven (27) clergy, churches, and faith- based institutions will be organized to communicate the message to youth that there is help for those who want to leave their violent lifestyle.

Output Measure 2b(1) – Approximately 25 youth annually will receive street outreach, case management and relevant transportation for services. Services will also include assessment, counseling, access to intensive addictive and mental health intervention, mentoring, educational, job/career prep assessment and planning, parental support groups and referral to area youth recreation and development programs.

*Output Measure 2b(3) – Twenty-five (25) youth participants will receive membership to the Louisiana Youth Sports Network to go along with additional scholarships that are donated for 70805 targeted youth. This agency uses sports to attract youth into character development situations, education on good citizenship values and practice in using conflict resolution strategies. **[This budget line item was never utilized.]***

Objective 2a: To coordinate BRAVE community providers to address the needs of 20- 40 targeted youth annually (25 average) who opt out of violent behavior and accept offers for help from community and law enforcement. Strategies included:

- *Coordinating existing agencies and providers to address needs of youth who choose a non- violent lifestyle.*
- *Establishing an array of evidence- based services and activities to attract youth and provide the intervention they need.*
- *Market ‘process” for opting out to clergy, providers, residents so they can provide information to violent youth.*

To develop and offer multiple services aimed at the crimogenic needs of 20-40 youth.

Strategies included:

- *Provide entry level case management and assessment of needs.*
- *Access to intensive addiction and mental health intervention, mentoring, counseling, parental support and any services as needed.*
- *Create a focused approach on job/ career assessment and planning, educational assistance, placement in one of vo-tech training programs.*
- *Promote nonviolent behavior/ character development through use of sports and recreation.*

The OM began to strategize about ways to reach the targeted goals enumerated in the grant narrative and identify the means to meet those goals.

REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDING BY LSU

In February 15, 2017 email, the former FSGC sent an email to the City-Parish Grants Review Committee (GRC) requesting the need to delete the amendment to the LSU agreement for BRAVE from the GRC agenda. This amendment requested \$125,000 in new money out of the grant for LSU to conduct research and evaluation of BRAVE project activities. The former FSGC also alerted the Mayor Pro-tem. (Attachment “E”)

The OM requested from LSU a more detailed explanation for the use of the requested \$125,000, as well as, a synopsis of any BRAVE expenditures and outstanding invoices. LSU acknowledged that the additional funds would be used for continued evaluation, crime data tracking services, and performance reporting. The OM responded to LSU that there was only \$36,000 remaining in the budget earmarked for LSU to provide those services, and \$645,000 of a total of \$681,000 had been expended. (Attachment “F”)

The City and LSU came to an agreement that the request for an additional \$125,000 would be contingent upon approval of the grant extension request. In a March 6, 2017 email the new FSGC (hired under Mayor-President Broome) made a request to LSU for copies of all BRAVE annual reports, and any updates on the successes and challenges of the BRAVE Program. The OM sent an email to the BRAVE Core team requesting all outstanding invoices be sent to the OM for processing, and to ensure an accurate picture of the budget, with any recommendations to improve the program. (Attachment "G")

At the request of the OM, a meeting was held with the BRAVE Core team to discuss successes and challenges of the Brave program, and outstanding invoices and budget matters. (Attachment "H")

REQUEST FOR NO-COST EXTENSION

The OM alerted LSU and the District Attorney that the City would be submitting another extension request, despite the chances of the extension not being approved. (Attachment "I") The OM hosted a meeting with representatives from the BRAVE Core team to exchange ideas in developing the extension request. (Attachment "J") Suggestions were made related to transportation, increased programming around the implementation of programs that had not been addressed including alternatives to criminal activity such as the arts and sports, the need to increase the number of case managers, street workers and surveillance, and the requirements for program evaluation and research.

In April 2017 the Office of the Mayor President officially requested an extension of the grant through August 31 2018. That request was denied on June 8 2017 and the following reasons were cited by the DOJ for the denial:

1. \$257,370 was listed as allocated to personnel, however, the Program Coordinator was funded by the City.
2. A grantee reported \$5460 for Project BRAVE Director and City financial management training in Washington, DC. However, it appeared that only one training had been completed online.
3. \$380,916 was listed for a contract with Capital Area Human Services District for mental health and substance abuse treatment for 150 youth and 600 case conference meetings, yet only 64 youth were served and it is unclear how many, if any, case conference meetings were held.
4. \$408,000 is listed for a contract with Family Youth Service Center for case management, transportation and community outreach, yet that grantee had not provided documentation of how many youths received those serves and what kind of services were being funded by the grant.

(Attachment "K")

(Attachment "L")

MOVING FORWARD

The OM sent the SPM an email accepting the denial and indicating that the BRAVE program would continue its efforts and provision of services until the end of the grant period. The email confirmed that the OM would implement community programs, services and interventions throughout the summer, including transportation services until September 17th. The OM also reaffirmed the conversation via telephone with the SPM that since we could not spend \$1.6 million in three to four months, the OM would award contracts under the \$17,500 threshold in a good faith effort to serve the community until the end of the grant. (Attachment "M")

Realizing the abbreviated time frame in which to work, the OM undertook to review the outstanding goals and output measures which had not been accomplished, and began to hold meetings with community stakeholders and potential service providers.

The FSGC requested OJJDP clarify in writing federal procurement requirements for contracts \$5000 and above because the OM anticipated spending dollars on smaller contracts for services because of the limited time before the grant would end, and to allow for a more expedited process for getting services to the community. (Attachment "N") The OM specifically mentioned the transportation service as an example, within the email. The OM was informed that all contracts below \$150,000 should follow city procurement procedures. Contracts over \$150,000 would be required to follow federal procurement procedures. Those procedures were provided for review.

At the request of the OM, the Parish Attorney provided a template for a Professional Services Agreement. The Parish Attorney explained that the OM would be responsible for drafting the professional service agreements, which would be reviewed by the Parish Attorney. (Attachment "O")

The OM asked the Chair of the Grants Review Committee (GRC) to explain the grants review process because the OM anticipated utilizing mini contracts to meet the outstanding goals of BRAVE during the last ninety days of the grant period. (Attachment "P")

The OM alerted the GRC that the OM would be submitting professional service agreements below \$17,500 to the GRC for review in its commitment to the SPM. This maximum amount of the contracts were set so that the contracts could be expedited. Council approval would create a significant time delay and jeopardize the opportunity to provide the services in the time remaining on the grant. (Attachment "P")

The services and compensation, excluding the canceled contract for Arthur Reed, were as follows:

- Todd Sterling of Alpha Media and Public Relations was contracted to provide audio/visual seminars for trauma training. In addition, public relations tools were to be developed. (\$9,950)

- Joseph Hines was contracted to provide a four-week summer program to improve youth's capacity for leadership, business, and entrepreneurship through self-discovery in the arts. Health, wellness, and art exposure were also to be provided. (\$9,600)
- Walter McLaughlin was contracted to provide a four-week creative arts program that targeted mentorship, event production, talent development, and community outreach. (\$9,800)
- Donney Rose was contracted to provide a four-week creative arts program for teenagers that targeted mentorship, poetry workshops, performance coaching, and improvisation techniques. (\$7,600)
- Desiree Bewley was contracted to provide a four-week creative arts program for teenagers that targeted mentorship, poetry workshops, performance coaching, and improvisation techniques. (\$7,600)
- Chancelier Skidmore was contracted to provide a four-week creative arts program for teenagers that targeted mentorship, poetry workshops, performance coaching, and improvisation techniques. (\$7,600)
- Christopher Patrick Turner was contracted to provide a four-week summer program to improve youth's capacity for leadership, business, and entrepreneurship through self-discovery in the arts. Health, wellness, and art exposure were also to be provided. (\$9,600)
- New Hope Outreach Ministries was contracted to assess, evaluate and counsel those suffering from addiction, abuse, and related mental health issues. Job readiness, retention, parenting skills, and case management were also in their realm of duties. (\$17,000)
- Pink Blossom Alliance was contracted to perform community outreach events in an effort to expose young women to professional women in their community, exposing them to careers in STEM, social services, criminal justice, etc. (\$9,900)
- Isaiah Marshall was contracted to serve as a facilitator/ host of community sporting events to cultivate community and establish skills that sports enhance such as teamwork, responsibility leadership, and pride. (\$9,500)
- Zuri Sanchez was contracted to serve as a facilitator/ host of community sporting events to cultivate community and establish skills that sports enhance such as teamwork, responsibility leadership, and pride. (\$9,500)
- Runner's Courier Services was contracted to provide transportation services to BRAVE program participants to court appearances, medical, and social service appointments. (\$17,500)
- Willie Payne was contracted to provide employment and skills training in the field of cosmetology, barbering, and hair styling to BRAVE participants. (\$9,900)
- Elm Grove Church was contracted to provide a summer youth academy focused on youth violence reduction and prevention. They agreed to utilize the curriculum designed and provided by the City-Parish. (\$16,000)
- Joseph Bean was contracted to serve as a facilitator/ host of community sporting events to cultivate community and establish skills that sports enhance such as teamwork, responsibility leadership, and pride. (\$9,500)

Total: \$160,550

The GRC was informed that the OM would bring a minimal number of contracts through the review process for approval, and that specifically the OM no longer needed the larger funding for the courier service since the request for a no-cost extension had been denied. It was decided to execute an agreement reflecting the need for transportation services for a shorter period of time.

The OM requested a proposal from Runner's Courier Service. This firm has done business with the City of Baton Rouge, and would be an immediate solution to the transportation problem acknowledged both by the BRAVE Core team and the SPM. (Attachment "P")

From mid-June until the present, it has been the sole intent of the OM to fulfil the goals of the BRAVE project narrative, and salvage the use of remaining funds to the greatest extent possible in the limited time remaining in the grant period.

All of the Professional Service Agreements entered into by the OM align with the goals and strategies identified in the approved BRAVE program narrative.

All contracts were encumbered by the Finance Department of the City, and signed by the Purchasing Department. A list of all BRAVE Professional Services Agreements, including scope of services, compensation, and terms, is attached. (Attachment "Q")