

**Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies – Department of Justice –
Community Oriented Policing Services – Technology and Equipment**

Project Title: La Mesa Drone as First Responder

Project Description:

The La Mesa Police Department seeks funding to establish a Drone as First Responder (DFR) program and establish a Real-Time Crime Center (RTCC) to enhance public safety and reduce emergency response times. Drones launch immediately on high-priority calls, often arriving within minutes to provide real-time aerial video and critical intelligence before officers arrive. The RTCC consolidates and analyzes live feeds and data to direct field response.

Together, DFR/RTCC capabilities will shorten response times by quickly locating suspects, victims, and hazards; confirming descriptions and directions of travel; and identifying access points, obstacles, and perimeter needs. Integrated aerial imagery and intelligence will improve decision-making during crimes in progress, missing or at-risk persons, traffic collisions, and brush or structure fires—supporting safer tactics and more efficient deployment of resources.

At major events and large gatherings, including the annual La Mesa Oktoberfest and weekly Farmer's Market, the DFR program and the RTCC will strengthen situational awareness by detecting emerging issues, coordinating responses, and improving communications with partner agencies such as fire and emergency medical services.

Funds will support drone aircraft, launch/landing and charging equipment, secure data storage, and technology to integrate video, mapping, CAD, and intelligence platforms within an RTCC environment, as well as initial and ongoing pilot and analyst training. Operations will follow FAA requirements and all local, state and federal privacy safeguards. By delivering rapid, accurate information to responders, this DFR/RTCC program will help protect the community more effectively and efficiently.

Estimated Start Date: October 1, 2026

Estimated End Date: September 30, 2027

Amount Requested for FY27: \$2,000,000

Total Project Cost: \$2,000,000

FY27 President's Budget Request Amount: 0

FY26 Enacted Amount: 0

Can the project obligate all appropriated funds within 12 months after enactment?: Yes

Request submitted to another subcommittee this fiscal year? No

Is the funding requested by a governmental or non-profit organization? Governmental

Recipient Point of Contact: Captain Greg Runge

Recipient Phone Number: 619-667-7544

Recipient Email Address: grunge@cityoframesa.gov

In which congressional district(s) is the recipient located? CA-51

Recipient Legal Name: La Mesa Police Department

Street Address: 8085 University Avenue

City: La Mesa

State: CA

Zip Code: 91942

Project Address: 8085 University Avenue

City: La Mesa

State: CA

Zip Code: 91942

If Project is not located in your district please identify congressional district: n/a

Project Information URL: <https://sarajacobs.house.gov/services/transparency>

Request Explanation (purpose and why is it a good use of taxpayer funds):

This project is a strong use of taxpayer funds because it delivers measurable public-safety benefits at a relatively low cost, improves efficiency, and reduces risk.

DFR can arrive in minutes, giving first responders immediate information that speeds medical aid, improves suspect location, and reduces time spent searching—especially for crimes in progress and missing-person calls. Using real-time video and RTCC analysis help supervisors and dispatchers send the right resources the first time, reducing unnecessary lights & sirens responses, duplicate units, and extended scene times — stretching taxpayer-funded staffing

further. This technology also provides better situational awareness that can prevent ambushes, reduce officer-involved uses of force, and improve de-escalation by confirming what is actually occurring before officers enter. Avoiding even a small number of serious injuries or major incidents can save significant public funds. For large gatherings and emergencies (traffic collisions, brush fires, critical infrastructure issues), DFR/RTCC supports coordinated response with fire/EMS, faster routing, and more informed incident command decisions. Recorded aerial video and RTCC documentation strengthen evidence quality, support accurate reporting, and can reduce complaints and litigation costs.

Is the recipient a State, Tribal, or local law enforcement agency? Yes

Can this project spend a smaller amount of appropriated funds within 12 months of the enactment of the appropriations act?

Yes.

If yes, please provide any details that may be helpful for understanding the scalability of the project.

The proposed Drone as First Responder (DFR) and Real Time Crime Center (RTCC) project is highly scalable and can be implemented in phases depending on the funding amount. With a reduced award, the agency could first establish the core RTCC infrastructure, including essential hardware, software, and one or more initial drone platforms, while prioritizing deployment in the highest-call-volume or highest-risk service areas. The project is designed so that key components—such as additional drones, docking stations, camera integrations, analytics tools, and expanded staffing—can be added over time as additional funding becomes available. This phased approach would still allow the agency to begin realizing immediate benefits, including improved situational awareness, faster response support, and more efficient deployment of personnel, while preserving the long-term vision of a fully integrated DFR and RTCC program.

Please provide the location of this project, in the format 'City (or County), State'. [This location will be printed in the public disclosure table. Examples include: 'Hazard, KY', or if the project is not located within a city, but rather a county: 'Perry County, KY']

La Mesa, CA