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**W00A**  
**Department of State Police**  
**FY 2025 Operating Budget**  
**Response to the Department of Legislative Services Analysis**

**House Appropriations Committee**  
**Public Safety and Administration Subcommittee**  
**Delegate Jazz Lewis, Chair**  
**February 29, 2024**

**Senate Budget and Taxation Committee**  
**Public Safety, Transportation, and Environment Subcommittee**  
**Senator Sarah Elfreth, Chair**  
**March 1, 2024**

**Introduction**

The Department of State Police (DSP) appreciates this opportunity to provide responses to recommendations and requested updates contained in the Operating Budget Analysis prepared by the Department of Legislative Services (DLS).

DSP’s responses to the recommendations and requested updates:

On page 13, [Vehicle Theft Prevention Council and Fund](#) – “The fiscal 2025 allowance includes \$3.3 million for VTPC, including \$3.1 million in grant funding. This program is level funded with fiscal 2024. Typically, the allowance only includes the statutorily mandated \$2.0 million for the program, including grant funds, a contractual position, and operational costs. Appendix 4 provides a summary of recent grant awards from VTPC by jurisdiction. In both fiscal 2024 and 2025, an additional \$1.3 million was provided to begin new programs to combat carjackings in addition to car thefts. However, while the department reports that funding to target carjackings will be available in fiscal 2024, it also reports that there are insufficient special funds available to make awards at this level for a second year. Funding that supports this grant comes from uninsured motorist penalty fees. DSP reports that the fund began fiscal 2024 with a starting balance of approximately \$1.9 million. It is projected to have a closing balance of approximately \$700,000. **DSP should comment on how awards for targeting car thefts and carjackings will be met in fiscal 2024 and 2025.**

**Agency Response:**

The Vehicle Theft Prevention Council Fund is non-lapsing. The VTPC carried forward a fund balance of \$1.9 million into FY24. The VTPC has been appropriated \$3.3 million for FY24. Awards will be based on this appropriation. The level of awards for FY25 will be determined, at the end of FY24, by funds carried forward and the FY25 appropriation.

On page 15, [Hiring, Promotion, Retention and Vacancies](#) - “In November 2023, DSP launched its foundational stakeholder project, an effort to gather feedback from frontline employees of the department regarding recruiting, performance, promotions, transfers, and improving DSP operations, including how to increase employee morale and retention. It is the first of five projects in the performance perspectives program. **The department should comment on the results of the foundational stakeholder project and its plans for the performance perspectives program.**”

**Agency Response:**

Performance Perspectives Program (P3) - Phase One Results:

The gathered perspectives from First Phase Stakeholders are encouraging on multiple levels. All twenty-three barracks and four aviation commands participated in the in-person sessions. The 365 Foundational Stakeholders provided comments across twelve areas they deemed essential. The analysis of the findings and projected impacts resulted in the following grouping of response initiatives:

- Group 1 - Implement by end of 2024 2nd quarter.
- Group 2 - Implement by end of 2024.
- Group 3 - Outside of Command Staff’s control.
- Group 4 - Will remain the same per other considerations.
- Group 5 - Requires further review or improved circumstances.

An additionally important result from the first phase is the establishment of the Frontline Stakeholders Liaison Program. This program will provide an active conduit for feedback between the P3 Frontline Stakeholders Liaisons (P3FSL) and Command Staff via a Liaison Coordinator. The P3FSL were briefed on the projected impacts during February 2024.

Next Steps:

Each phase of the program is designed to follow the following steps:

- Gather perspectives from project phase stakeholders.
- Perform analysis of findings and create projected impacts.
- Develop response initiatives per projected impacts.
- Share response initiatives with project stakeholders.
- Update relevant policies, procedures, practices and associate stakeholders.
- Implement feedback system to help qualify and adjust policies, procedures and practices.

Time Line:

- Second Phase engages Supervisory Stakeholders. (April 2024)
- Third Phase engages Director Stakeholders. (July 2024)
- Fourth Phase engages Senior Stakeholders. (September 2024)
- Fifth Phase engages a collaborative set of Stakeholders. (November 2024)

On page 19, [Workforce Assessment Study](#) – “In response to the findings presented, DSP plans to examine the recommendations identified by employee focus group participants, as it analyzes existing policies. The department also envisions a second phase of the workforce assessment study that increases focus group size, reaches more community members, and uses a research approach that will reach more people and enable anonymous participation. **The department should comment on its vision for the second phase of the workforce assessment and provide its timeline.**”

**Agency Response:**

In an effort to solicit more participation and provide expanded opportunities for others to compete in the competitive bid process, MDSP ODEI drafted an updated scope of work to solicit a vendor to work alongside ODEI to create and analyze surveys for all MDSP employees. The surveys will be constructed with benchmarkable questions and administered quarterly over the course of one year by the ODEI, focusing on various topics, including but not limited to, workplace culture and morale, engagement, well-being, DEI, principles and values, performance, perceptions, and leadership. Feedback collected will be reviewed with the selected vendor and utilized to make amendments and improvements to MDSP policies, procedures, operational practices, and workplace culture, and to develop and implement a DEI framework within MDSP. The scope of work for the second phase of workforce assessment is currently posted on the eMaryland Marketplace Advantage with a closing date of April 8, 2024. The Quartermaster Division anticipates the bids to reflect a cost within its delegation of authority (\$100,000). If, for some reason, the bid exceeds its delegation authority, DSP will be in a position to submit a procurement packet to the DGS Office of State Procurement. The scope of work calls for a two-year contract and is expected to result in actionable data in order to improve MDSP operations.

On page 23, [Maryland State Police Gun Center](#), “The department does not yet report any MFR data associated with the Gun Center’s operations. Though MFR measures will be published in the future, the department reports that it needs a database system to have an accurate means of tracking its data. Currently, the department would only be able to report basic information such as the total number of calls. DLS notes that this information may still be valuable to report as a way of representing total workload changes over time. Between fiscal 2024 and 2025, \$2.6 million is included in the budget for the database development. The database will enhance data reporting, support the tracking of cases throughout the judicial process, identify repeat offenders, and enable better coordination with the Licensing Division. Additional coordination with the Licensing Division may also be required. **DSP should comment on how vacancies associated with the Gun Center may be impacting its operations and on the progress that it has made in acquiring or developing the center’s database system.**”

**Agency Response:**

The Maryland Gun Center presently has 10 vacant civilian positions. With the passage of SB0861/CH0142 in 2022, the Center is experiencing a growing workload. A significant obstacle to expanding the Gun Center team is the limitation of our current database system (Microsoft Access), which only allows one user at a time. This bottleneck not only delays the team's responses to inquiries but also complicates collaboration among team members. For example, during day shift, the 3 to 4 investigators must closely coordinate to share database access,

ensuring that requests are processed as accurately and efficiently as possible. Adding more investigators under the constraints of the current database would further strain our ability to manage this workflow effectively.

Database development - DSP was able to fill 4 civilian positions: scrum master, developer, quality assurance, and database administrator. We experienced a delay in the start of the project as we had to completely re-bid one of the developer positions. Development began in earnest in January 2024. To date we have assigned and explained roles for the involved personnel, created our sprint schedule, researched and reviewed project requirements, organized our product backlog, created an initial database schema, and created initial tasks for our next few sprints. A basic user interface framework has been developed and work is ongoing for the process of entering cases. We expect to be in production Q3 2025.

### **DLS Operating Budget Recommended Actions**

1. Reduce the general fund appropriation to delete funds for the supplemental retirement account match, which is budgeted in the Department of Budget and Management. (-\$113,500 GF)

#### **Agency Response:**

DSP does not concur with the recommended action. DSP's allowance in the match program was not additional funding. DSP reallocated funding from other line items to this new program. It would be most beneficial to allow DSP to return the allocations to the original line items instead of reducing the general fund budget.

2. Increase turnover expectancy for 28 new positions to 25% to be consistent with budgeted turnover for new positions. (-\$ 319,844 GF)

#### **Agency Response:**

DSP does not concur with the recommended action. Due to the increased staffing needs at the Licensing Division, DSP has continuously been publishing and hiring for these civilian classifications. DSP has process 30 new hires in the Licensing Division in the current FY. The Licensing Division is projecting a significant increase in workload beginning in July 2024. Therefore, DSP is requesting to forego the typical 25% budgeted turnover for these new positions.

3. Adopt the following narrative:

Quarterly Report on Permitting Applications: The Licensing Division within the Department of State Police (DSP) administers provisions of State law and regulations related to the licensing and registration of firearms, handgun permits, security guards, and other licensing functions. The Public Safety Article establishes various requirements related to how quickly the division must turn around applications. The committees request that information on applications received and processing days needed for an application to receive a final disposition be submitted once per quarter on the following dates: July 1, 2024; October 1, 2024; January 1, 2025; and April 1, 2025.

**Agency Response:**

DSP concurs with this recommended action.

4. Increase turnover expectancy for 6 new positions to 25% to be consistent with budgeted turnover for new positions. (-\$ 74,570 GF)

**Agency Response:**

DSP does not concur with this recommended action. The DSP has continuous recruitment postings for the Emergency Dispatcher position. DSP has processed 14 new hires of emergency dispatchers in the current FY. As such, the DSP is requesting to forego the typical 25% budgeted turnover for these new positions.

5. Add the following section:

SECTION XX. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, that \$250,000 of the general fund appropriation within the Department of State Police (DSP) may not be expended until DSP submits the Crime in Maryland, 2023 Uniform Crime Report (UCR) to the budget committees. The budget committees shall have 45 days from the date of the receipt of the report to review and comment. Funds restricted pending the receipt of the report may not be transferred by budget amendment or otherwise to any other purpose and shall revert to the General Fund if the report is not submitted to the budget committees.

Further provided that, if DSP encounters difficulty obtaining, or validating the accuracy of, the necessary crime data by November 1, 2024, from local jurisdictions who provide the data for inclusion in the UCR, DSP shall notify the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy (GOCPP). From each jurisdiction's third quarterly State Aid for Police Protection (SAPP) disbursement, the office shall withhold a portion, totaling at least 15% but no more than 50%, of that jurisdiction's SAPP grant for fiscal 2025 upon receipt of notification from DSP. GOCPP shall withhold SAPP funds until such a time that the jurisdiction submits its crime data to DSP, and DSP verifies the accuracy of the data. DSP and GOCPP shall submit a report to the budget committees indicating any jurisdiction from which crime data was not received by November 1, 2024, and the amount of SAPP funding from each jurisdiction.

**Agency Response:**

DSP concurs with this recommended action.

