

## Project Narrative (Attachment 1)

Williamson County covers 1,135 square miles and is one of the fastest growing counties in the nation. The 2000 U. S. Census showed that the County population was 249,967 which reflected a 79% growth during the previous decade. In the 2000 census, the US Census Bureau's reported numbers were comprised of 86,893 households, and 67,512 families in the County, with a population density of 220 people per square mile. The total number of housing units in Williamson County in 2000 was 90,325, with an average density of 79.5 per square mile. There are 50,796 households with one or more people under 18 years and 18,550 households with one or more people 65 years and over. The phenomenal growth continues as the estimated population in 2007 was 359,979 representing 220,428 more residents compared to the 1990 census. The cities that comprise the population are Bartlett, Cedar Park, Florence, Georgetown, Granger, Hutto, Jarrell, Leander, Liberty Hill, Round Rock, Taylor, Thrall and Weir. Round Rock is the largest city in the County with 95,992 population estimated in 2007.

The population increases have correlated to an increase in disposed and pending criminal cases that flow through the County Courts of Law and the District Courts of Law. For the calendar year of 2008 there were 10,414 disposed court cases and 7,511 pending cases. Due to the extraordinary growth in population and the number of cases in the criminal justice system, it is imperative that the County's justice system improve its technology in order to continue its low statistical crime rates as identified in the Capital Area Council of Governments Statistical Overview of Criminal Justice Related Activities. The improved technological equipment will help shorten trials, make presentations of information and evidence more efficient, and allow defendants to receive a fair and speedy trial.

Although this is an important and necessary improvement to the criminal justice system in Williamson County, it will not require coordination efforts involving JAG and related justice funds. The Williamson County Sheriff, District Court Judges, County Court Judges and others involved in the criminal justice system recognize the importance of modernizing and integrating the technology for the six County courtrooms that hear criminal cases.

The proposed integration and upgrade of technology equipment for the courtrooms will entail providing multi media lecterns which will be mobile, but tethered to the side of the courtrooms. A lectern can be positioned in the middle of a courtroom when in use during a trial, but can be easily moved to the side of the courtroom when required. Lecterns will house a DVD/VCR combo player for presentation of evidence. Having both systems available will ensure that all evidence can be viewed quickly without a delay to reformat the information.

The lecterns will also be equipped with a locking pull out drawer which will hold an Elmo document camera. The document camera can be utilized by placing objects or documents on the flatbed surface to be projected for jury viewing. A Panasonic 3500 Lumense Projector will be installed in the ceiling using the standard Chief projector mounting hardware. The projector will display on the existing electric projection screens that are installed in the courtrooms. The signal from a computer will be split by a distribution amplifier so that it can be displayed on the projector and simultaneously on two Panasonic flat panel displays that will be visible to the gallery for those observing the trial.

The audio will use the existing speaker system and tie into the existing TOA 9000 series audio mixer with available open circuits. Mounted to the lecterns will be Extron control panels with white backlit buttons for ease of use. The control panels provide the ability to turn on and off the projector and displays; switch from computer to document camera; control of the electronic screen; volume control from the computer; and control of DVD/VCR functions.

Williamson County courtrooms have no projectors or audiovisual equipment installed to broadcast visual and auditory digital information during criminal trials. In more and more cases, law enforcement is collecting evidence through digital sources: digital photography, computer forensics, digital recordings, etc. Prosecutors and defense attorneys need equipment available in the courtroom to broadcast such evidence. In addition, juries expect visual information to supplement the oral presentations during trials. During voir dire, the trial opening and closing statements, lawyers need to be able to make Powerpoint presentations that clarify and explain the law and evidence.

This program would permit the purchase and installation of equipment for the projection of images and broadcast of sound in the six courts hearing criminal cases. Such equipment would enhance the ability of prosecutors and defense attorneys to achieve a fair resolution in cases. This project is very important to Williamson County and the municipalities that rely on the County Courts of Law and the District Courts of Law to fairly dispose of cases that flow through the Williamson County Justice Center. It is also important to the defendants who seek a fair and speedy trial, as well as the residents that depend on the justice system to provide a safe community.

The objective of the program is to upgrade six County Courts of Law and District Courts of Law with digital equipment necessary to present information and evidence during trials. The upgrades will be accomplished within three years of receiving funds.

This project will be started and completed expeditiously and will provide Williamson County economic benefits, including employing local electronic technicians. This is an important economic impact as there have been many layoffs by computer and technology companies in Williamson County and the surrounding area.

The County organizational structure is comprised of eleven major departments. All activities of the County are carried out in accordance with applicable Federal, State and local laws. Williamson County has redesigned its program to ensure better accountability and stability for currently managed grants.

The Williamson County Auditor's Office organization for grants provides an ongoing process of controls to ensure quality performance, including separate project accounts with line items to detail budgets. Coordination between the Auditor's Office and the Purchasing Department provides the structure, validation and responsibility necessary to bid items appropriately. This ultimately allows the County to process invoices submitted for payment in an organized and highly accountable method.

The Williamson County Auditor's Office currently has the organizational structure to support the management of \$26.4 million in County grants. These grants are used for parks, streets, victims' assistance, juvenile services, emergency 911 addressing, law enforcement equipment, HUD, and homeland security.

Williamson County is currently managing in excess of \$500 million in road bond projects, another \$200 million in Texas Department of Transportation road projects, and \$6 million in a Homeland Security grant for the update of a radio communication system. All programs have received clean audit reports from the outside auditor of Pattillo, Brown & Hill, LLP Certified Public Accountants. Williamson County has been classified as a low-risk auditee in the context of OMB Circular A-133 and State of Texas Uniform Grant Management Standards.

The project will begin with the approval of the Recovery Act grant funding and will be completed within three years. All six courtrooms will be completed with upgrades within a three year timeframe.

The performance measures that will be collected for this grant project will include the completion of a minimum of three courtrooms in year one, two additional courtrooms in year two, and the final courtroom completed during year three.