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May 1, 2024

Dear Grant Program Manager,

I write in support of Illinois State University (ISU) Police Department's COPS CPD Microgrant application for Amplifying Marginalized Voices in Community Policing.

ISU Police has primary jurisdiction for the university, serving over 20,000 students and 3,000 faculty and staff. The campus and surrounding Bloomington-Normal metro area are a vibrant, active, and diverse community. In support of that community, ISU Police seeks funding to add an LGBTQ accreditation from 'Out to Protect' and engage with underserved communities and cultures through an international film series.

Through the accreditation, ISU Police will revise its policies to reflect best practices in support of LGBTQ rights and interactions with police, and train 3 officers to serve as LGBTQ Liaisons. The film series will produce 4 screenings of international or culturally significant films over 2 years along with facilitated dialogues between law enforcement and underserved populations. These conversations will be captured in infographics representing the building of understanding and shown along with the films to engage and promote further dialogue with the community.

The Town of Normal, where ISU is located, prioritizes community engagement and development in its 2023 strategic plan, emphasizing the need to strengthen relationships with education and community organizations. ISU Police will collaborate with the Normal Theater, owned by the town, to organize free community screenings, aligning with campus efforts and fostering trust within the Bloomington-Normal community. Furthermore, ISU's 2024 strategic plan emphasizes fostering a culture of success and belonging, including expanding support services for diverse student communities. The police department aims to enhance its programs and services based on feedback gathered during these initiatives.

I urge strong consideration of Illinois State University's Amplifying Marginalized Voices in Community Policing application. Thank you for your attention to this letter.

Sincerely,



Eric Sorensen  
Member of Congress