



SCHOOL of CONTINUING  
and PROFESSIONAL STUDIES  
Center for Public Safety and Justice

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**READY FOR IMMEDIATE  
RELEASE**

**The University of Virginia's Center for Public Safety and  
Justice and the Howard and Carol Safir Foundation Are  
Seeking Proposals for a New Public Safety Research Initiative  
Grant Program**

[CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va., Sept. 30, 2025] The University of Virginia's (UVA) Center for Public Safety and Justice ("the Center"), in partnership with the Howard and Carol Safir Foundation ("the Foundation"), is pleased to invite proposals for the Howard and Carol Safir Foundation Public Safety Research Initiative Grant Program. This forward-leaning effort is designed to support the development of practical, innovative solutions to urgent and complex challenges in public safety.

The Foundation's Public Safety Research Initiative Grant Program plans to award three research grants, one grant dedicated to each of the following categories: (1) Urban Policing, (2) Drug Enforcement and (3) Cross-Jurisdictional Collaboration. Each selected project will receive up to \$50,000 over a two-year period and will culminate in a Public Safety Innovation Symposium hosted at UVA. At the symposium, grantees will share findings, insights, and tools with an audience of researchers, public safety leaders, and practitioners from across the country.

This initiative honors the legacy of Howard Safir, a transformational public safety leader whose distinguished career spanned more than three decades. Mr. Safir served as New York City's Police Commissioner and Fire Commissioner and held senior leadership roles in the U.S. Marshals Service and the Drug Enforcement Administration. Throughout his public service, he was widely respected for championing innovative, data-informed, and community-centered strategies that strengthened public trust, improved outcomes, and elevated standards across agencies.

To carry forward Mr. Safir's legacy of leadership and service, the Safir family - led by his wife Carol Safir and children Jennifer and Adam Safir - established the Foundation and partnered with the Center to advance his vision for public safety grounded in excellence, innovation and impact. This call for proposals represents the first major funding opportunity under the initiative.

**Establishment of Innovation Labs**

The initiative is anchored by three Innovation Labs, each representing a core area of Mr. Safir's public safety priorities. Selected proposals will be aligned with one of the following Labs:

- **Urban Policing Lab:** This Lab will support research and actionable strategies focused on crime prevention, public engagement and urban community improvement. Proposals may address issues such as unlawful ATV and dirt bike gatherings, facial recognition use in investigations, police response to autonomous vehicles, strategies for improving case clearance rates and practical applications of science, as well as technology and/or data that reduce crime victimization. New topics and ideas are welcome.
- **Drug Enforcement Lab:** This Lab will support research and actionable strategies to disrupt the illicit drug trade and reduce its impact on communities. Topics may include the use of cryptocurrency in trafficking, evolving drug delivery methods, improved intelligence-gathering practices, informant management, forensics and lawful intercept of drug trafficking communications. New topics and ideas are welcome.
- **Advancing Safety and Justice Across Jurisdictions Lab:** This Lab will support research and actionable strategies that focus on interagency coordination and cross-jurisdictional collaboration. Proposals may include developing joint task forces, approaches to protecting public officials, fugitive capture, witness safeguarding, or strategies for international law enforcement partnerships. New topics and ideas are welcome.

Applicants are expected to use the funding to support the practical innovation work of their lab rather than on general convenings, caucuses or policy deliberations.

### **Eligible Recipients**

Eligible recipients of a HCSF Public Safety Research Initiative Grant include federal, state, or local law enforcement agencies, colleges/universities (includes faculty and PhD students), nonprofit organizations, and private sector firms.

### **Submission Requirements**

- Proposals must be no more than 10,000 words (approximately ten single-spaced pages) and must include the following components.
  - Contact information for the submitting individual or organization
  - Identification of the selected Innovation Lab and proposed topic
  - Executive summary
  - Statement of the problem or issue being addressed
  - Project objectives, research questions, and intended outcomes
  - Detailed research plan
  - Budget summary (not to exceed \$50,000)
  - Applicants may submit proposals to more than one Innovation Lab, but each submission must be unique and focused on a single lab topic.
  - Finalists may be asked to provide more information in writing or through oral interviews.
  - Proposals must be submitted via email to [SCPS-CPSJ@virginia.edu](mailto:SCPS-CPSJ@virginia.edu) by 11:59 pm EST on November 10, 2025.

### **Scoring**

All submissions will be reviewed by a Research Selection Committee convened by the Center for Public Safety and Justice. Final funding decisions will be made in consultation with UVA's School of Continuing and Professional Studies to ensure strategic alignment, practical impact, and feasibility. The Research Selection Committee will score each proposal based on the following criteria:

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Points</b>
1. Identification of the Selected Innovation Lab and Proposed Topic	Clarity and appropriateness of the proposed topic and selected Innovation Lab	10
2. Statement of the Problem or Issue Being Addressed	Clear definition and scope of the public safety issue; use of supporting data; alignment with current challenges in public safety	20
3. Project Objectives, Research Questions, and Intended Outcomes	Well-defined, measurable, and achievable objectives and research questions; clear linkage to the identified problem; anticipated impact in the selected Innovation Lab	25
4. Detailed Research Plan	Comprehensive description of project and research plan; appropriateness of research methods; feasibility of the research plan; innovation and/or scalability; risk identification and mitigation; potential for research to generate actionable strategies that will positively impact the field and/or public	35
5. Overall Quality and Readiness	Professionalism and completeness of the proposal; qualifications of team; institutional support; project readiness	10
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>

**Award Notification and Questions**

Awardees will be notified by January 30, 2026. For questions regarding proposal preparation or submission, please contact Jenna Tyler, Center Research Scientist, at [jenna.tyler@virginia.edu](mailto:jenna.tyler@virginia.edu).

**About UVA’s School of Continuing and Professional Studies**

The University of Virginia School of Continuing and Professional Studies helps working adults finish their degrees and advance their careers. The School offers a variety of online and in-person programs including bachelor’s degree completion programs, professional certificates, a master’s in public safety, and other career accelerators. The School believes there are many paths to a great education and brings high-quality, accessible, and affordable education to working adults across the country.

**About UVA’s Center for Public Safety and Justice**

UVA's Center for Public Safety and Justice connects research, education and partnerships that advance effective responses to public safety challenges, both nationally and globally. The Center aspires to build a trusted network of professionals dedicated to creating safer communities through excellence, integrity and forward-thinking solutions. The Center's mission is to challenge future public safety leaders and key stakeholders to improve public service and strengthen community wellbeing in a rapidly changing world. The Center aims to address complex challenges through education, collaboration, research and innovation, strengthening public service and communities.