

Digital mapping tech expected to save time and lives

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The head of the state's Office of School Safety says digital facility mapping is expected to "save time and save lives" during violent incidents and medical emergencies.

The office, part of the state Department of Justice, yesterday announced applications are being accepted for the 2021 Wisconsin Act 109 Digital Mapping of School Buildings 2022 grant program. This program will provide reimbursement for school boards and private school governing bodies for critical incident mapping data, a release shows.

"Our law enforcement partners have been telling us that this is going to be helpful, and this is what they feel could save time and save lives," Trish Kilpin said during a Newsmakers interview hosted by WisconsinEye.

One such company that provides "geo-spatial mapping" services for schools and other clients, Critical Response Group, has deployed its technology at over 400 schools in Wisconsin. That's according to Joe Hanson, regional director of sales and implementation for the company, who spoke during a recent Wisconsin Technology Council event in Madison.

During the interview, Kilpin explained 2021 Wisconsin Act 109 amends existing state law to allow schools to submit digital maps of their buildings to the OSS and law enforcement in lieu of blueprints. She noted these maps can provide better information for first responders in the case of school shootings as well as health-

related incidents.

“We want to get that information to the first responders so they can pull up to the most appropriate entrance and they can access that patient as efficiently and quickly as possible,” she said.

Applicants can apply for up to \$5,000 per building, a DOJ release shows. A total of \$2 million in grant funding is available, with the project period running from this month through the end of June 2024.

Tom Wohlleber, executive director of the Wisconsin School Safety Coordinators Association, says schools in the state have become much more dependent on technology as they respond to various incidents.

“We often know, when an event goes south, it often has to do with a breakdown in communications — whether that’s in the physical technology of communications, or in the process of communications that the school system has set up amongst its staff as well as among emergency responders,” he said during yesterday’s WisconsinEye interview.

See the full interview:

<https://wiseye.org/2022/07/11/newsmakers-assessing-school-safety-in-wisconsin/>

See the DOJ release:

<https://www.wispolitics.com/2022/doj-launches-2-million-critical-incident-mapping-data-grant-program/>

See more on the Critical Response Group in a recent story:

<https://www.wisbusiness.com/2022/experts-tout-tech-aimed-at-helping-first-responders/>

-By Alex Moe