

COPS HIRING PROGRAM – SELECTION METHODOLOGY

HOW DECISIONS WERE MADE TO ALLOCATE THE \$111 MILLION WHEN MORE THAN \$500 MILLION WAS REQUESTED

Due to limited funding for FY 2012 and an abundance of unfunded applications from FY 2011, only local, state, and federally recognized tribal law enforcement agencies with a pending 2011 CHP application were eligible to update their application for 2012 CHP funding consideration (2,470 agencies). Agencies whose requests were fully funded in FY 2011, or that received the maximum allowable 25 officer positions in 2011, were not eligible to apply for 2012 CHP. The CHP solicitation opened on March 1, 2012, and all updated applications were required to be submitted by March 22, 2012.

Ultimately, the COPS Office received applications from 1,411 law enforcement agencies requesting 3,780 officer positions, for \$526,340,412 million in federal funding.

The COPS Office focused on supporting veterans

Our military service members represent only 1% of our population, but they shoulder the responsibility of protecting our entire nation. The COPS Office is committed to supporting military veterans and the law enforcement agencies that hire them as our veterans seek to transition into careers as law enforcement officers. For FY 2012, all new hires supported with COPS funding must be positions filled by post-9/11 military veterans. The newly hired officer must be a military veteran who served on active duty for a period of at least 180 days, any part of which occurred on or after September 11, 2001.

The COPS Office developed an application to meet the requirements of the law

The COPS Office developed an application for CHP funds that met the requirements of the statute and mission of the COPS Office to increase the ability of law enforcement to implement community policing strategies within the three primary elements of community policing: 1) problem-solving; 2) partnerships; and 3) organizational transformation.

The COPS Office balanced scoring indicators

To measure and compare the necessary scoring indicators, the COPS Office consulted with experts in the fields of policing, criminology, and public finance to develop appropriate application questions. Applicants were asked to submit information on such indicators as:

- Reported crime for the previous three years
- Current commitment to community policing
- Planned community policing activities
- Changes in budget for law enforcement agencies and revenues for local governments
- Poverty and unemployment rates.

In asking a variety of fiscal health questions, the COPS Office focused on getting as complete a view as possible of the fiscal distress being experienced by applicants through objective and verifiable indicators that all agencies, from rural communities to large cities, could accurately report.

The community policing philosophy engages in a proactive and systematic examination of identified problems that can be countered with effective responses. Applicants were asked to identify the specific community problem they wished to address with COPS funding.

Community policing relies heavily on partnerships and relationships between law enforcement and the community it serves. A number of questions were designed to examine an agency's formation of partnerships, such as working with other public agencies, private organizations, or participation in regional law enforcement partnerships. Agencies were asked to identify the number and types of partnerships they intended to initiate or enhance in order to address their identified problem.

The COPS Office checked and double-checked, verifying the data applicants sent

Once the applications were submitted, specialists in the COPS Office immediately reviewed the data contained therein. The COPS Office reviewed more than 400 data points within each application. In some cases, the COPS Office contacted applicant agencies to verify information provided in their application. This data verification process, though time-consuming, was crucial to ensuring that all applicants were properly evaluated based on accurate and reliable economic, crime, and community policing data. This process included checking against available reported data such as the Uniform Crime Statistics reported annually to the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The COPS Office developed a uniform system of evaluating the information that applicants submitted

Selection Methodology

Similar to CHP in FY 2011, the COPS Office focused on balancing the applicant's need for federal assistance (as measured by economic and fiscal health questions) with crime rates and the applicant's current commitment to community policing and their proposed community policing plan. For FY 2012, an applicant's commitment to community policing and the strength of their overall community policing plan were the basis for initial scoring. A minimum percentile score was created for the community policing portion of the application. Agencies that were in the bottom 25th percentile in terms of community policing were removed from further consideration.

For the remaining applicants, to address the severe fiscal distress facing many law enforcement agencies, fiscal need comprised 75 percent of the overall application score and crime rates comprised 25 percent of the overall score. Additionally, models similar to those used in FY 2011 were used to determine the weight of the questions within each broad category. For example, within the 75 percent of the score allocated to the need for federal assistance, applicants were ranked on measures of recent economic conditions as well as those of systemic socioeconomic health. COPS

Office staff followed up with applicants and reviewed publicly available data to ensure that the information was as error-free as possible before completing the ranking protocol.

Due to the high demand and limited funding available, only 221 of the 1,411 CHP requests were ultimately funded, which is only about 15% of the total number of agencies that submitted applications.

In addition, two long-standing statutory requirements designed to ensure national distribution of COPS Office funding had an impact on which applications were ultimately funded. First, the COPS Office must distribute half of all hiring funds to agencies serving populations of more than 150,000 and half to those of fewer than 150,000. Second, by law the COPS Office must ensure that at least ½ of one percent of hiring funds (\$556,774 for FY 2012) is allocated to each state or territory with eligible applicants. Although this ultimately means that sometimes a lower scoring applicant in one state receives funding ahead of a higher scoring applicant in another, this requirement helps ensure that smaller states and territories are not excluded from funding.

Capping Methodology

All agencies' requests were capped at no more than 5% of their current actual sworn force strength, up to a maximum of 25 officers. However, to provide funding assistance to the largest number of eligible agencies, the COPS Office decided to further reduce the cap from a maximum of 25 officers to 15 officers for agencies below one million in service population. The COPS Office concluded that this additional cap restriction would allow for assistance to a greater number of law enforcement agencies during these difficult fiscal times.

The COPS Office set aside funds to address Administration priorities

In FY 2012, the COPS Office asked all COPS Hiring Program applicants to target one specific public safety problem that would be addressed if awarded COPS hiring funding. Ninety percent of the available CHP funding was awarded to agencies with the highest total ranked scores as well as taking into consideration the statutory requirements. The remaining 10% of funding was set aside to fund Department of Justice high priority crime problems. This funding was awarded to select applicants focusing on homicide and children exposed to violence/teen violence. Focusing on the community policing plan of the eligible applicants, 18 agencies were selected for funding from this 10 percent set aside. Agencies selected for ninety percent of the available funding may also have selected homicide, other violent crime and children exposed to violence/teen violence, in addition to those listed on the following page that were selected based on these specific problem areas. A total of 18 agencies were chosen for set aside funding in the amount of \$11,089,627. *If an agency was funded under both the set aside and the ranked scoring list, their officers awarded under the set aside are specified.*

Seven agencies were awarded 27 officers and \$3,023,571 in agreeing to focus their COPS-funded officers (or an equivalent number of veteran officers) to initiate or enhance their community policing-based efforts to address the problems of children exposed to violence/teen violence.

These specific agencies are:

- Argo Police Department (AL), 1 officer
- St. John Police Department (IN), 1 officer
- Baldwin Municipal Government (LA), 1 officer
- Village of Russells Point (OH), 1 officer
- Chester Police Department (PA), 5 officers
- City of Pittsburgh (PA), 13 officers
- Chesapeake Police Department (VA), 5 officers

Six agencies were awarded a total of 27 officers and \$3,191,056 in agreeing to focus their COPS-funded officers (or an equivalent number of veteran officers) to initiate or enhance their community policing-based efforts to address the problem of homicide. These specific agencies are:

- Bellwood Police Department (IL), 2 officers
- New Orleans Police Department (LA), 9 officers total (7 under the set aside)
- Kansas City Board of Police Commissioners (MO), 10 officers total (8 under the set aside)
- D'Iberville Police Department (MS), 1 officer
- City of Canton (OH), 7 officers
- Municipality of Mayaguez (PR), 2 officers

Five agencies were awarded a total of 39 officers and \$4,875,000 to address the problem of homicide related to gun violence as reported in the other violent crime category. Each of these agencies will agree to focus their COPS-funded officers (or an equivalent number of veteran officers) to initiate or enhance their homicide related to gun violence reduction efforts. The specific agencies are:

- Norwich Police Department (CT), 4 officers
- St. Cloud Police Department (FL), 4 officers
- Round Lake Park Police Department (IL), 1 officer
- Bayonne Police Department (NJ), 9 officers
- Philadelphia Police Department (PA), 25 officers total (21 under the set aside)