

COPS HIRING PROGRAM AWARD SELECTION METHODOLOGY

The COPS Hiring Program (CHP) is funded through the fiscal year (FY2011) appropriations act, and provides \$243,439,595 directly to law enforcement agencies to hire and/or rehire career law enforcement officers.

CHP grants cover 100 percent of the approved entry-level salary and fringe benefits of each newly-hired and/or rehired, full-time sworn career law enforcement officer over three years (36 months). At the conclusion of the 36-month federal funding period, grantees are required to retain the COPS-funded positions for a minimum of 12 months. The retained CHP-funded position(s) should be added to the grantee's law enforcement budget with state and/or local funds, over and above the number of locally-funded positions that would have existed in the absence of the grant. CHP grant funding is based on an agency's current entry-level salary and benefits for full-time sworn officers. Any additional costs for higher than entry-level salaries and fringe benefits will be the responsibility of the grantee agency. There is no local match required by grant recipients.

CHP funding may be used on or after the grant award start date in one or more of the following hiring categories:

- Hire new officers, which includes filling existing officer vacancies that are no longer funded in agencies' budgets.
- Rehire officers who have already been laid off (at the time of the grant application) as a result of state, local, or Bureau of Indian (BIA) budget cuts.
- Rehire officers who are (at the time of the grant application) currently scheduled to be laid off on a specific future date as a result of state, local, or BIA budget cuts.

Grantees that receive CHP grant funds to rehire an officer who was, at the time of grant application, *scheduled to be laid off on a specific future date* as a result of state, local, or BIA budget cuts, must continue to fund the officer with its own funds through the date of the scheduled lay-off. A grantee may not reduce its budget for sworn officers just to take advantage of CHP funding. To avoid violating the terms of the grant, CHP grant funds must not be used to supplant (replace) local funds that agencies otherwise would have devoted to sworn officer hiring. The hiring or rehiring of officers under CHP must be in addition to, and not in lieu of, officers who otherwise would have been hired or rehired with state, local, or BIA funds.

The 2011 COPS Hiring Program was an open solicitation. All local, state, and tribal law enforcement agencies that have primary law enforcement authority (with an operational police department as of May 25th, 2011) were eligible to apply.

At the end of the application period, 2,712 law enforcement agencies requesting more than \$2 billion to fund the hiring of 8,999 officers were considered for funding.

Selection Methodology

Beginning with the design of a data-driven application and continuing through the capping of awards, the selection process placed objectivity and balance at the forefront.

Similar to FY2010, the COPS Office focused on balancing the need for federal assistance, as measured by economic and fiscal health questions along with crime rates, with an applicant's current commitment to community policing and their proposed community policing plan. The decision was made to balance the two categories of factors equally, with 50 percent of the overall score based on crime and fiscal need and 50 percent on community policing. In this manner, the COPS Office evenly valued the importance of fiscal distress and reported crime against current and proposed community policing strategies. Additionally, models similar to those used in FY2010 were used to determine the weight of the questions within each broad category. For example, within the 50 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 238 of the 2,712 CHP requests were ultimately funded, which is only about 9% 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. Recognizing this split, applicants were split into these two groups before scoring, so large cities and small communities were not ranked in comparison to each other. Second, the COPS Office must ensure that at least $\frac{1}{2}$ of one percent of hiring funds (\$1,217,198) is allocated to each state or territory with eligible applicants. Although this sometimes resulted in a lower scoring applicant in one state to receive funding ahead of a higher scoring applicant in another state, this requirement helps ensure that smaller states and territories are not excluded from funding.

Capping Methodology

All agencies were asked to cap their requests at no more than 5% of their current actual sworn force strength, up to a maximum of 50 officers. However, in order to provide funding assistance to the largest number of eligible agencies, the COPS Office decided to further reduce the cap from a maximum of 50 officers to 25 officers. This reduction only affected those agencies that applied for more than 25 officers (about 2% of all applicants).

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.

Priority Crime Awards

In FY2011, the COPS Office asked all CHP applicants to target specific public safety problems 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 score as well as taking into consideration other statutory requirements. The remaining 10% of funding was set aside to fund Department of Justice priority crime problems. This funding was awarded to select applicants whose community policing plans focused on homicide, rape, and repeat offenders.