COPS Anti-Methamphetamine Program—How Decisions were Made to Allocate Approximately $6 Million Available When More than $11 Million was Requested

The COPS Office received applications from 19 eligible state law enforcement agencies requesting $11,939,931 in federal funding for the FY 2014 COPS Anti-Methamphetamine Program (CAMP).

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

The COPS Office developed an application for CAMP funds that met the requirements of the statute with a focus on advancing public safety by providing funds to investigate illicit activities related to the manufacture and distribution of methamphetamine. Only state law enforcement agencies authorized by law or by a state agency to engage in or supervise anti-methamphetamine investigative activities were eligible to apply for funding.

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 regarding their jurisdiction's methamphetamine problem on such indicators as

- reported seizures of methamphetamine for the previous three years;
- current anti-methamphetamine investigative activities;
- planned or current involvement in an anti-methamphetamine task force.

The community policing philosophy engages in a proactive and systematic examination of identified problems that can be countered with effective responses. Community policing relies heavily on partnerships and relationships between law enforcement and the community it serves. Narrative questions were designed to examine an agency's formation of collaborations with federal, state, local, or tribal partners such as other law enforcement and public agencies, private organizations, or participation in multijurisdictional task forces. Agencies were asked to identify and describe the types of partnerships they intended to initiate or enhance in order to address their identified methamphetamine problem.

The COPS Office verified with applicants the data that was submitted

The application system contains numerous built-in logic checks to help prevent the submission of erroneous data. In addition, once the applications were submitted, specialists in the COPS Office immediately reviewed the data contained therein. 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 accurately and consistently reported seizure data.

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

Comprehensive Review

The 19 eligible applications underwent a comprehensive review process that included both internal specialists and external methamphetamine subject matter expert (SME) peer reviewers.

Peer reviewers evaluated the following criteria in the Project Narrative and Budget Narrative sections of the application to determine the quality of each application. The reviewers looked at the following:

- Problem identification
- Current methamphetamine investigative activities
- Anti-methamphetamine task force participation
- Collaboration and partnerships
- Strategy to achieve program goals
- Applicable and allowable budget items requested

The peer reviewers then developed recommendations based on a rating of "Highly Recommended," "Recommended," or "Not Recommended" for each proposal. From the recommendations, eleven agencies ranked within the "Highly Recommended" and "Recommended" ratings; eight agencies that were "Not Recommended" were removed from further consideration.

Data Scoring

The focus for funding was on state-level law enforcement agencies in states with high rates of identified methamphetamine problems, as indicated through the following sources of state-wide data:

- Number of seizures of precursor chemicals
- Numbers of seizures of finished methamphetamine
- Number of seizures of methamphetamine laboratories
- Number of laboratory dump seizures

State methamphetamine seizure data for applicants that received a rating of "Highly Recommended" or "Recommended" was then scored and ranked within their respective recommendation rating categories. A methodology for scoring was established to analyze and rank the seizure data provided in each application. Each category is of equal value, and the data was scored based on the rate of change between each year and the most recent year's data. Below is a classification of each item that was scored:

- Seizure data rates for most recent year

  - Seizures of precursor chemicals rate for most recent year
  - Seizures of finished methamphetamine rate for most recent year
  - Seizures of methamphetamine laboratories rate for most recent year
  - Laboratory dump seizures rate for most recent year

- Percent change in seizure rates across three years

  - Percent change in seizures of precursor chemicals rates across three years
  - Percent change in seizures of finished methamphetamine rates across three years
  - Percent change in seizures of methamphetamine laboratories rates across three years
  - Percent change in laboratory dump seizures rates across three years

One applicant was removed from consideration for their seizure data score.