

# **COPS Office School Violence Prevention Program (SVPP)—How Decisions were Made to Allocate \$33 Million When More than \$162 Million was Requested**

The SVPP solicitation opened on March 29, 2019, and application submissions were required by May 31, 2019. The COPS Office received 598 applications from states, units of government, Indian tribes, and public agencies requesting more than \$162 million in federal funding.

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

The COPS Office developed an application for SVPP funds that met the requirements of the statute with a focus on advancing public safety by providing funds to improve security at schools and on school grounds. States, units of local government, Indian tribes, and public agencies (e.g., school districts) were eligible to apply for funding.

## **The COPS Office balanced scoring indicators**

Applicants were asked a variety of school safety and fiscal health questions so that the COPS Office could assess each applicant's need for improved security and fiscal need for funding.

Applicants were asked to submit information to include:

- Census population
- Total number of schools
- Total school enrollment
- Dollars spent per student
- Crime indicators

## **The COPS Office checked and double-checked, verifying the data applicants provided**

The application system contains numerous built-in logic checks to help prevent the submission of erroneous data. Once the application period closed, specialists in the COPS Office immediately reviewed the data contained therein. The COPS Office reviewed multiple data points within each application and

in some cases contacted applicants to verify information provided in their application. This verification process was crucial to ensuring that all applicants were properly evaluated based on accurate and reliable economic, crime, and school data.

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

### Basic Minimum Requirements, Fiscal and School Safety Need Data Review

Each of the 598 applications underwent a basic minimum requirements review to ensure that: (1) funding requested was for allowable costs (2) the applicant was eligible to apply for funding, and (3) the applicant's project narrative was responsive to the section headings described in Section 13: Narrative Review.

The fiscal and school safety need was evaluated for each eligible applicant who passed the basic minimum requirements review. The COPS Office focused on balancing the applicant's need for federal financial assistance with their school safety need based on their responses to a series of application questions. All applicants were ranked based on their relative fiscal and school safety need.

### Comprehensive Narrative Review

Approximately 230 applications were advanced for a comprehensive review of their written narrative. Applications advanced included those with the greatest demonstrated fiscal and school safety need. Furthermore, to ensure geographic diversity, a minimum of two (2) applications from each state were advanced to the next phase, wherever possible. The COPS Office also ensured that rural, suburban, and urban areas were each well-represented.

Reviewers evaluated factors in the Project and Budget Narrative sections of the application, to include:

- School safety planning and assessment efforts
- Funding request and integration
- Management and implementation plan
- Sustainability plan

### Final Funding Decisions

The COPS Office considered a number of factors when making final funding decisions, to include:

- Demonstrated need for improved school security
- Demonstrated need for financial assistance
- Strength of the written narrative proposal
- Geographic distribution, to include urban, suburban, and rural areas

- Capacity to make the improvements sought with grant funds
- Use of evidence-based strategies and programs such as those identified by the Comprehensive School Safety Initiative of the Department of Justice
- The presence of a catastrophic incident in the jurisdiction

A total of 103 of the 598 SVPP requests were funded, which represents approximately 17 percent of the total number of applications submitted.