



COPS
Community Oriented Policing Services
U.S. Department of Justice

Pre-Award Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for 2023 COPS Office Anti-Heroin Task Force (AHTF) Program

Getting Started

Q. What is the purpose of COPS Anti-Heroin Task Force (AHTF) Program funding?

A. The AHTF is a competitive award program designed to advance public safety by providing funds to locate or investigate illicit activities, through statewide collaboration, relating to the distribution of heroin, fentanyl, or carfentanil or unlawful distribution of prescription opioids.

Q. Is AHTF an open solicitation?

A. Yes. State law enforcement agencies authorized by law or by a state agency to engage in or to supervise anti-heroin, -fentanyl, -carfentanil, and –other opioids investigative activities such as locating and investigating illicit activities including activities related to the distribution of heroin, fentanyl, carfentanil, or unlawful distribution of prescription opioids are eligible to apply.

Allowable Costs Under AHTF

Q. What may my agency request funding for under the AHTF award program?

A. Agencies may request funding to pay for the following:

- Personnel and fringe benefits
- New civilian personnel to work directly on anti-heroin and other opioids investigation activities
- New entry-level sworn personnel to work directly on anti-heroin and other opioids investigation activities
- Equipment directly related to anti-heroin and other opioids investigation activities
- Supplies directly related to anti-heroin and other opioids investigation activities
- Travel/Training directly related to anti-heroin and other opioids investigation activities
- Contracts/Consultants directly related to anti-heroin and other opioids investigation activities
- Other costs, including overtime for sworn officers and civilians engaging in anti-heroin and other opioids investigation activities

Agencies may elect to redeploy locally funded sworn personnel to engage in AHTF activities and assign newly hired AHTF-funded officers to backfill their positions.

Funding requests are not limited to your agency's entry-level salary and benefits. AHTF award funds will pay for experience level salaries as reflected in your agency's approved pay-scale.

AHTF will pay only for costs not already funded in the applicant's local budget. Please refer to the AHTF solicitation allowable and unallowable costs for a nonexhaustive list.

Q. May AHTF funding be used to fund treatment programs or prosecution of heroin and other opioids related activities?

- A.** No. Agencies may only request funding for costs directly related to anti-heroin and other opioids investigative activities. However, we do encourage applicants to pursue collaboration with agencies involved with treatment, prevention, and even prosecution. Collaborative work by public safety and public health can not only improve the outcome of investigations but also help bridge the gap between overdose and treatment. As an example, local law enforcement agencies have stepped up across the United States to implement protocols to transition overdose victims to treatment programs provided by the public health sector. It has also laid the groundwork for accurate assessment of drug trends which is critical to strategic deployment of investigative resources.

Q. May AHTF funding be used to fund overtime for sworn officers?

- A.** Yes. Agencies may request funding for overtime for sworn officers engaging in anti-heroin and other opioids investigation activities under the Other Costs budget category.

Q. May AHTF funding be used to fund overtime for civilian positions?

- A.** Yes. Agencies may request funding for overtime for civilians engaging in heroin and other opioid investigative activities under the Other Costs budget category.

Q. What is the maximum amount to be awarded per award?

- A.** Each award will be capped at \$4 million.

Q. Is there a match requirement?

- A.** No, there is no local match.

Q. How long is the award period for AHTF?

- A.** AHTF is a three-year (36-month) award program. All budget requests must not exceed this three-year period.

Q. May AHTF funding be used to rehire sworn officers previously employed by our agency?

- A.** Yes. Officers previously employed by your agency may be rehired using AHTF funds.

Q. May AHTF funding be used to fill sworn officer positions that are vacant at the time we apply for AHTF funding?

A. No. Officers funded with AHTF funds must be in addition to any officers funded in your agency's local budget. However, AHTF funding may be used to fill vacant sworn officer positions if the positions are unfunded in the law enforcement budget (i.e., state, local, or BIA funding has not been budgeted to pay for the salary and benefits costs of the positions) because of a hiring freeze or budget cuts due to local fiscal distress.

Preparing Your Application

AHTF applications are a two-part process. Applicants will submit the SF-424 in Grants.gov and the **full** application in JustGrants. For further guidance and resources, read the solicitation document and the Application Resource Guide carefully, access the [DOJ Application Submission Checklist](#), and see the [JustGrants Application Submission training page](#).

Q. What is the deadline for this solicitation?

A. Complete application packages for the AHTF 2023 solicitation are due in JustGrants **Tuesday, April 25, 2023, at 4:59** p.m. ET. The SF-424 and SF-LLL must be submitted in Grants.gov by Tuesday, April 18, 2023.

You are urged to register in Grants.gov as soon as your agency believes it will apply for AHTF funding. **Note: Hard copy or emailed applications will not be accepted.**

Law Enforcement Coordination

Q. Are recipients of AHTF awards required to coordinate with other law enforcement entities?

A. Yes. Recipients are required to coordinate with federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies to maximize the impact and effectiveness of the award. The recipients must coordinate and work with U.S. Attorneys' Offices in their states, coordinate and work with local and tribal law enforcement agencies in any area impacted by the work of the COPS Office Anti-Heroin Task Force Program, and coordinate as appropriate with other federal law enforcement partners such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) or Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to assist tribal law enforcement agencies.

Budget-Related Questions

Q. What are allowable fringe benefits?

A. In addition to Social Security, Medicare, health insurance, life insurance, vacation (enter value for line item only if funds are not included in the base salary listed above), sick leave (enter value for line item only if funds are not included in the base salary listed above), retirement, Worker's Compensation, and unemployment insurance, the following are allowable fringe benefits:
(1) dental insurance, (2) vision insurance, (3) prescription drugs, (4) holiday pay, (5) disability

insurance, (6) accidental death and disability, (7) 401(k) plan, (8) liability insurance, (9) shift differential payments, (10) accident insurance, (11) bonding insurance, (12) Police Trust, (13) state funded retirement system, (14) professional liability insurance, (15) Federal Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA) tax, and (16) survivor benefit. Other benefits, such as severance pay, hazard pay, etc., are not allowed.

The COPS Office will not pay for any fringe benefits not listed, and if your agency pays those benefits for locally funded officer positions, your agency will be required to do so for AHTF-funded officer positions with local funds.

Q. Are fringe benefits allowable for requested overtime costs?

A. Yes, but the only fringe benefits allowable for requested overtime compensation are FICA, Worker's Compensation, and unemployment insurance. The COPS Office will not pay for any other fringe benefits for requested overtime costs. If your agency pays for additional benefits for overtime, then your agency will be required to do so with local funds.

Q. Are subawards allowed under the AHTF program?

A. No, subawards are not an allowable cost under this program.

Q. Are academy costs allowed under the AHTF program?

A. No, academy costs are unallowable under this program.

Q. How do I determine the health care and fringe benefits costs for my agency?

A. An agency should contact its Human Resources/Benefits Office to help determine their costs for health care and fringe benefits.

Q. How should an agency calculate the first-year salary and benefit package of officers who will be recruits promoted to sworn officer positions, given that a recruit and sworn officer fall under different pay and benefit levels?

A. The first-year salary and benefits package should be the sworn officer salary and benefits of the officer post-graduation.

Q. My agency has officers who are exempt from Social Security benefit deductions. How should I address this in the AHTF application?

A. Agencies that have officers that are exempt from Social Security benefit deductions should check the "Exempt" option on the application. By checking "Exempt," the agency is not required to submit additional information.

Q. Are indirect costs allowable under the AHTF award?

A. No, AHTF does not pay for any indirect costs.

Q. If awarded funding from the AHTF program, will our agency be obligated to keep the total number of officers on staff at the time the funds were awarded?

A. To comply with the nonsupplanting requirement of the AHTF award, the recipient must maintain its locally funded sworn force baseline and any planned increases of officer positions during the award period.

Nonsupplanting requirement

Q. Does the nonsupplanting requirement apply to the AHTF program?

A. Yes. The nonsupplanting requirement is a legal requirement in the Public Safety and Community Policing Act, which is the COPS Office's authorizing statute. The nonsupplanting requirement means COPS Office award funds must be used to supplement (not replace) state, local, or Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) funds that would have been dedicated toward law enforcement if federal funding had not been awarded. As it applies to your agency's AHTF award, recipients must not reduce the level of state, local, or BIA funding that would have been dedicated toward any hiring or procurement as a result of receiving federal funding.

AHTF funding and other COPS Office awards

Q. May our agency request funding under AHTF if we have an active COPS Office hiring award for sworn officer positions?

A. Yes. Agencies with an active COPS Office hiring award are not disqualified from applying for an AHTF award, but the AHTF-funded position(s) must be over and above the number of officer positions funded in the agency's local budget and under any other COPS Office hiring award.

Q. May AHTF funding be used to retain officers hired under other COPS Office hiring programs?

A. No. AHTF funding may not be used to comply with the retention requirement of your other COPS Office hiring awards. Instead, your agency must use state, local, or tribal funding to retain the COPS Office-funded positions for the required retention period following the conclusion of the award period. In addition, the retained officer position(s) must be over and above your agency's locally funded sworn force and any full-time sworn positions awarded under the AHTF award.

Retention requirement

Q. Is there a retention requirement for officers hired under AHTF?

A. No. There is no retention requirement for officers hired using AHTF funding. However, recipients will be subject to the nonsupplanting requirement.

Other Questions

Q. What is the formula for disbursing AHTF award funds?

A. AHTF is not a “formula” award program. All applications will be reviewed based on the information provided in the solicitation survey data; the statewide primary treatment admission data for heroin, fentanyl, carfentanil, and other opioids; and other relevant factors determined by the COPS Office. Awards will be made on a competitive basis.

Q. When should I expect notification if awarded AHTF funding?

A. The COPS Office anticipates making AHTF award announcements prior to September 30, 2023.

Questions? For technical assistance with submitting the **full application** in JustGrants, contact the JustGrants Service Desk at JustGrants.Support@usdoj.gov or 833-872-5175. The JustGrants Service Desk operates 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. eastern time (ET) Monday through Friday, and 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. ET on Saturday, Sunday, and federal holidays. Email requests for JustGrants assistance may be sent 24/7/365 and will be handled during operating hours.

For programmatic and general assistance with the solicitation requirements, contact the COPS Office Response Center at 800-421-6770 or by email at AskCOPSRC@usdoj.gov. The Response Center’s hours of operation are Monday–Friday (except U.S. Federal Government holidays; see <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/snow-dismissal-procedures/federal-holidays/>) from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time (ET).