

# **COPS** is changing in 2011!

## **Ask Us How**

### **What is changing in FY 2011?**

The COPS Office established an office-wide initiative to enhance the integration of community policing principles into our grant programs, and to better align COPS grant programs with the advancement of community policing.

These enhancements will better meet the COPS Office mission, which is to “advance public safety through community policing.”

Enhancements include:

- Requiring COPS grant applicants to complete a more comprehensive community policing plan. *COPS Hiring Grant Program applicants will be asked to identify specific community problems that they will target using grant funding.*
- Improved assessment of agency community policing practices using the Community Policing Self-Assessment Tool (CP-SAT).
- Targeted technical assistance and resources to agencies based on the community problems identified within the agency’s grant application and the results of their Community Policing Self-Assessment Tool (CP-SAT).
- Enhanced progress reports, monitoring efforts, and technical assistance to ensure successful grant implementation.

### **What COPS programs are impacted?**

All COPS hiring grant programs as well as discretionary grant programs. Targeted grant programs (e.g., COPS Technology) will not be changed in FY 2011.

### **What is the definition of community policing?**

Community Policing is a philosophy, not a program within a law enforcement agency.

The Community Policing philosophy promotes organizational strategies, which support the systematic use of partnerships and problem – solving techniques, to proactively address the immediate issues that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime. We also characterize it as improving public safety by ***building relationships and solving problems.***

### **How will grant applications change?**

The COPS Office will ask applicants to address how grant funding will assist them in building partnerships, solving problems, and sustaining organizational change.

The application will allow applicants to identify specific community crime and disorder problems that they seek to address with COPS funding, and the specific community policing strategies and tactics they plan to employ against these problems.

Narrative questions will be limited within the application, but specificity within the community policing plan will be required.

### **What is the Community Policing Self Assessment Tool (CP-SAT)?**

The Community Policing Self Assessment Tool (CP-SAT) is a resource that will assess the community policing strategies employed within individual agencies. The goal of the CP-SAT is to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of an agency’s community policing, and to work with the agency to support them in the areas that they decide need improvement.

### **Is the CP-SAT a grant requirement?**

Yes. The CP-SAT will be a mandatory grant requirement for all COPS hiring grant program grantees. Grantees will be required to take the CP-SAT at the beginning and at the end of their three-year grant period.

Although it constitutes a new grant requirement, the tool has been thoroughly tested and has been available on a voluntary basis to many law enforcement agencies. The tool is viewed as a valuable way to objectively capture information on community policing practices which can support the identification of training and development needs.

## **Why is the COPS office making the CP-SAT mandatory, shouldn't we know the priorities for our own organization and community?**

The CP-SAT isn't intended to establish priorities for COPS grantee agencies, but rather by completing the CP-SAT it will allow grantees to capture their community policing strengths and better understand areas they may consider improving. Having this information will also support the COPS Office in our efforts to provide more tailored assistance, support, and resources.

## **Our department has recently spent the last year evaluating our practices, updating our polices, revisiting our mission statement, and determining our organizational goals and objectives. We have a very clear understanding of our strengths and weaknesses. Will we still be required to take the CP-SAT?**

Yes, if awarded a COPS hiring grant. While we applaud your efforts to examine your agency's needs and direction, and accordingly implement strategies to advance and improve your practices, all COPS hiring grantees will be required to complete the CP-SAT. We believe that this will provide you with additional valuable information.

## **What if my agency does not show improvement between the first time we take the CP-SAT and the second?**

The goal of the CP-SAT is to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of an agency's community policing, and to work with the agency to support them in the areas that they decide need improvement. Because the assessment is quite comprehensive, there is not an expectation that an agency will be able to close all the gaps identified within the assessment.

## **How will the COPS Office use the Results of the CP-SAT?**

The COPS Office will use the results of the CP-SAT to identify areas that agencies need additional support to better implement community policing strategies. The COPS Office will use this information to tailor our grant programs and other resources (e.g., training, publications, etc.) to better meet agencies needs.

## **Can our agency take the CP-SAT without applying for a COPS grant?**

Yes. The full (longer) version of the CP-SAT is currently available to any agency seeking to undertake an assessment of their community policing. Because limited technical assistance is provided under an existing grant award, this resource may not be available to the general law enforcement agency population indefinitely.

## **How much time will it take to complete the CP-SAT?**

The CP-SAT is a survey that is administered to staff from various ranks and functions across the agency. It takes approximately 15 minutes per respondent to complete the survey.

## **Why is the COPS Office Adding New Grant Requirements?**

In this era of tight state and local budgets, the demand for COPS grants has increased significantly. However, it is unrealistic to expect that our grants will be able to close the gap between the hiring needs of law enforcement agencies and the fiscal capacity of local budgets.

Therefore, it is important that we look at COPS funding as 4-year problem solving grants, rather than simply financial assistance to fill a budgetary gap. Our grants should be viewed as a means for communities to address specific and persistent crime and disorder problems rather than a means of offsetting local budgets. This shift in perspective is at the root of our COPS 3.0 initiative.

Moreover, we will work to improve our technical assistance resources by making them more widely available, more easily accessible, and more relevant to the challenges confronting the field.

## **How do I Obtain More Information?**

The COPS Office Response Center is staffed from 9:00 – 5:00 EST, Monday through Friday. Response Center staff members are always available to answer any additional questions you may have and can also refer you to your Grant Program Specialist. Response Center Staff can be reached by phone at 1.800.421.6770 or by e-mail at [askcopsrc@usdoj.gov](mailto:askcopsrc@usdoj.gov).

In addition, please visit the COPS Office's website at [www.cops.usdoj.gov/](http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/)