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The Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Program: An Overview

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Summary

The Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program, administered by the Department of Justice (DOJ), provides financial assistance to eligible police departments to help improve community policing efforts. Under the Consolidated Appropriations Resolution for FY2003 (P.L.108-007), the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program is operating for another year with funding appropriated at \$928.9 million for FY2003. The budget request for FY2004 is \$163.7 million. The budget proposal includes a realignment of almost half of the programs administered under COPS to the Justice Assistance, Improving the Criminal Justice System under the Office of Justice Programs in DOJ. Although proponents argue that community policing involves a new approach to policing, the Department of Justice has been conducting research on this approach for many years. By late 1992, approximately 300 police departments nationwide reportedly incorporated elements of community policing in their law enforcement efforts. Congress approved legislation establishing the COPS grant program, namely the Supplemental Appropriations Act of 1993 (P.L. 103-50) and the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (P.L. 103-322). However, authority to make grants for hiring and rehiring officers through COPS expired in FY2000. Funding was appropriated for the COPS program for two fiscal years beyond the program expiration date. Reauthorization of the program remains uncertain. Legislation to reauthorize COPS, however, was introduced in the 108th Congress (S.6).

This report provides an overview of the COPS program, including a brief discussion of the establishment of the program, guidelines and requirements for grantees, and a summary of various Department of Justice initiatives under the COPS program. Updates on this report will be made as legislative action occurs.

Establishment of the COPS Grants Program

Police departments administer community policing programs to reduce and deter crime in neighborhoods and to help citizens feel safer in their communities. Some examples of community policing include police officers walking in a community; officers on bicycle patrol; more visible police cruisers; police satellite centers (in shopping

centers, stores and recreation centers); and residential officer programs in selected communities across the country.

During the 103rd Congress, legislators enacted various provisions encouraging law enforcement agencies to use a community policing approach and providing federal funding for hiring additional police officers. Also, during his 1992 presidential campaign, and again in his 1994 State of the Union Address, President Clinton promised to put 100,000 more police on the streets and expand the community policing program. Next, Congress passed three acts providing funding to hire more police officers. First, the Supplemental Appropriations Act of 1993 (P.L. 103-50) provided \$150 million to hire or rehire over 2,000 additional local law enforcement officers. Second, the Commerce, Justice, State, Judiciary Appropriations for FY1994 (P. L. 103-121) signed into law on October 27, 1993, provided an additional \$25 million for community policing grants to state and local governments.

Last, Congress enacted the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (P.L. 103-322), signed into law on September 13, 1994. The Public Safety Partnership and Community Policing Act, Title I, established the Cops on the Beat program and authorized a total appropriation of \$8.8 billion: \$1.332 billion for FY1995, \$1.85 billion for FY1996, \$1.95 billion for FY1997, \$1.7 billion for FY1998, \$1.7 billion for FY1999, and \$268 million for FY2000.¹

COPS Program Requirements

Under Title I of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, the Attorney General is authorized to award grants to states, localities, Indian tribal governments, other public and private organizations, and regional consortia to increase the number of police officers and to concentrate those officers on community policing deployment. Funds may be used to hire new officers (including former members of the Armed Services), rehire officers who have been laid off, provide training to officers to improve interactions with communities, obtain equipment or support systems, or provide overtime pay. Funds also may be used for other purposes, such as: to train law enforcement officers in crime prevention and community policing techniques; develop technologies that emphasize crime prevention; link community organizations and residents with police; develop innovative programs; and support the purchase of not more than one service weapon per officer hired or redeployed.

At least 85% of available funds must be used to hire or rehire officers or procure equipment, pay overtime, or build support systems. No more than 15% may be spent for the other purposes specified in the statute. When funds are used to add police officers, the costs of hiring or rehiring each officer generally cannot exceed \$75,000.

Up to 3% of appropriated funds may be used for technical assistance provided by the Attorney General, development of a flexible model for the application of community

¹ Named the Cops on the Beat program under Title I of the Act, the program is now more commonly called the COPS Program. To fund the COPS program and other anti-crime initiatives, the 1994 Crime Act established the Violent Crime Reduction Trust Fund, Title 31. Funds for programs authorized by the Act must be provided in the annual appropriations bills.

policing strategies by state and local governments, or for evaluations or studies. Fifty percent of the amount remaining must be reserved for local governments or private organizations serving populations of more than 150,000. The other 50% must be awarded to those serving populations of 150,000 or less.

In awarding grants, the Attorney General has discretion to give preference to applicants that exceed the 25% match requirement generally required. The federal share of a grant that covers more than one year must decline from year to year. Grants for purposes other than hiring or rehiring officers may cover not more than three years. Grants for hiring and rehiring may be renewed for up to five years. State and local governments may use seized assets in their match requirement. Federal funds appropriated for law enforcement on Indian lands may be used by tribal governments to meet matching requirements. The Attorney General may waive the 75/25 match requirement for applicants.

If all applicants cannot be funded, a minimum of at least 0.5% of appropriated funds are allocated to each qualifying state, together with grantees within that state. Qualifying states are those that meet statutory requirements, as well as those set by the Attorney General. Statutory requirements include development of a long-term strategy, demonstration of public safety need and the need for federal assistance, and certification that the application has been coordinated with affected agencies. Jurisdictions with populations of less than 50,000, and those applying for grants of less than \$1 million, may receive a waiver from application requirements as well as expedited processing. "An appropriate amount of funds" must be made available to Indian tribal governments.

COPS Grants²

Although Attorney General Janet Reno established the COPS office within the Department of Justice on October 9, 1994, the Department of Justice (DOJ) had already awarded a number of COPS grants before the office was created. As described above, DOJ distributed funds from the Supplemental Appropriations Act of 1993 (P.L. 103-150) under the Police Hiring Supplement Program (PHS). Distributed between December 1993 and May 1994, PHS awards funded 2,003 officers at a total of \$148,421,993.

The Commerce, Justice, State Appropriations Act of FY1995 (P.L. 103-317), signed into law on August 29, 1994, provided \$1.3 billion to fund the COPS program. The 1994 Crime Act (P.L. 103-322) signed into law on September 13, 1994, provided authorization for these and later COPS program monies. In October 1994, President Clinton and Attorney General Janet Reno announced the award of Phase I grants from the FY1995 monies authorized in the 1994 Crime Act. The final Phase I total as of March 1999 was 2,779 officers funded at a total of \$200.2 million.

On November 1, 1994, the COPS Office announced that grants would be awarded under two programs: (1) COPS AHEAD (Accelerated Hiring Education and Deployment)

² The following brief discussion of various COPS programs is based on U.S. Department of Justice. Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. COPS Facts. July 1996 and December 1998. For further information on COPS program grants, DOJ's web site address is [<http://www.usdoj.gov/cops>] or call DOJ's Response Center at 1-800-421-6770.

grants for municipalities with populations of 50,000 and above; and (2) COPS FAST (Funding Accelerated for Smaller Towns) grants for towns with populations below 50,000. COPS AHEAD grants permitted interested agencies to begin recruiting and hiring new officers immediately in anticipation of later COPS grant funding. In June 1995, COPS AHEAD and COPS FAST were superseded by the Universal Hiring Program (UHP). The final DOJ totals for these two programs (COPS AHEAD and COPS FAST) as of December 1998 were \$683,333,866 for over 10,000 officers.

Table 1. Total of COPS Grants Awarded for New or Redeployed Officers from FY 1995 to FY 2000

Program	Number of Officers	Est. Funding (in millions)
Police Hiring Supplement (PHS)	2,003	148.4
Phase 1	2,779	200.2
COPS AHEAD	4,000	284.0
COPS FAST	6,100	400.0
Universal Hiring Program (UHP)	103,000 ^b	6,000.0 ^b
COPS MORE and MORE '96 ^a	23,240	530.0
COPS MORE '98	N/A	435.8 ^b
Youth Firearm Violence Initiative (YFVI) ^a	45	8.7
Distressed Neighborhoods Pilot Project	784	116.0
Small Communities Grant Program	1,000	12.0
Grand Total	142,951	8,135.1

Source: Adapted from U.S. Department of Justice. Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. *COPS Facts*. March 1999 and COPS website [<http://www.cops.usdoj.gov>], April 11, 2000.

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding.

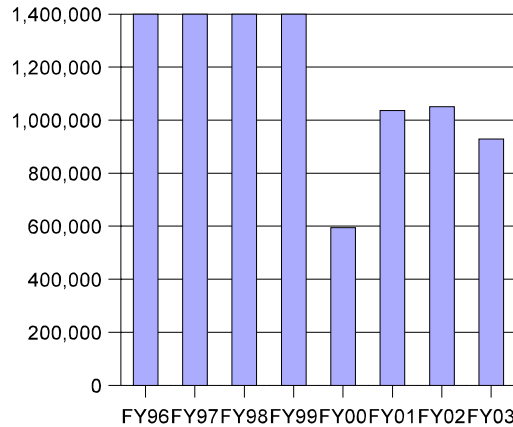
^a Under the COPS MORE and YFVI programs, numbers of officers and funding totals apply only to the redeployment of law enforcement personnel. The number of officers funded under COPS MORE '98 was not available as of July 6, 2000.

^b Totals taken from most recent COPS website update, April 11, 2000.

COPS Programs: New and Redeployed Officers

As the authority to hire officers under the 1994 Crime Act approached the FY2000 expiration date, the COPS program's elimination appeared imminent. COPS received a deep cut in funding in FY2000 but the funding increased and remained steady the following fiscal years. Congress funded the COPS program at \$1.050 billion under the Commerce, Justice, State, Judiciary appropriations (P.L. 107-77) for FY2002. COPS received \$1.037 billion in FY2001 (P.L. 106-553). For FY2000, \$595 million was provided under the Consolidated Appropriations Act (P.L. 106-113). This amount is approximately a billion dollars less than amounts funded in previous years. A total of \$1.4 billion each was appropriated for FY1996, FY1997, FY1998, and FY1999 under the Omnibus Consolidated Rescissions and Appropriations Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-134), and the Omnibus Consolidated Appropriations Act, FY1997 (P.L. 104-208), and the Department of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, FY1998 (P.L. 105-119), and the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations for FY1999 (P.L. 105-277) respectively. FY1997 funds for the COPS program may be used for police hiring initiatives but not other community policing strategies or training. Figure one below shows appropriation funding trends for COPS from fiscal years 1996 to 2003.

**Figure 1. COPS Funding FY1996 to FY 2003
(\$ in millions)**



Source: P.L. 104-134 for FY1996-1999 appropriations, P.L. 106-113 for FY2000 appropriations, P.L. 106-553 for FY2001 appropriations, House Conference Rept 107-278 for FY2002, and Consolidated Appropriations, P.L. 108-007 for FY 2003.

Since the enactment of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act (1994 Crime Act), several law enforcement initiatives were developed under COPS. Two popular COPS programs, that provided over \$5.2 billion combined in funds to agencies, are the Universal Hiring Program (UHP) and the COPS Making Officer Redeployment Effective (COPS MORE).

Universal Hiring Program (UHP)

The COPS Universal Hiring Program (UHP) was developed under the 1994 Crime Act to deploy additional officers devoted to community policing on the streets and rural areas across the country. UHP enables interested agencies and jurisdictions to supplement current sworn forces or establish new agencies through federal grants for up to three years. UHP replaced three hiring programs, Phase I, COPS AHEAD, and COPS FAST, that were built on the foundation of the 1993 Police Hiring Supplement (PHS) program. As of October 2001, the COPS Office awarded, under FAST, AHEAD, and UHP grants, a total of \$4.4 billion to hire 61,000 new officers.

COPS MORE

On December 14, 1994, the COPS Office announced another grant program, COPS MORE (Making Officer Redeployment Effective). COPS MORE grants were designed to expand the time available for community policing by current law enforcement officers, rather than fund the hiring of additional law enforcement officers. COPS MORE provides funds to acquire new technologies and equipment, hire civilians for administrative tasks, and pay for officer overtime. This initiative was developed to redeploy officers so more of their time is spent on the streets instead of at the station. The COPS Office awarded

grants under COPS MORE in 1995, 1996, 1998, and 2000. In 2001 up to \$81 million in funding is available to law enforcement entities nationwide.

In addition to UHP and COPS MORE, several law enforcement initiatives have emerged under COPS in recent years. For example, two police hiring initiatives announced by the COPS Office in December 1998 include the Safe Schools and Indian Country law enforcement improvements initiatives. The Safe Schools initiative was designed to enhance the partnerships between law enforcement agencies and schools to improve safety in elementary and secondary schools and to hire school resource officers. Second, in the Consolidated Appropriations Act for FY2000, (P.L. 106-113) up to \$40 million was appropriated for hiring uniformed officers and to assist with other law enforcement improvements on tribal lands. These programs continue to receive funding under COPS. The table below provides a breakdown of the most recent funding appropriation totals for selected COPS programs and activities that assist state and local law enforcement agencies across the country.

Table 2. Appropriation Levels for Public Safety and Community Policing Programs Under COPS in FY 2001 through FY 2003
(in millions)

Public Safety and Community Policing	FY 2001 (P.L. 106-554)	FY 2002 (H.Rept. 107-278)	FY 2003 (P.L. 108-007)
Hiring Law Enforcement Officers/School Resource Officers (SROs)	\$408,323 (\$180,000 for SROs)	\$330,000 (\$180,000 for SRO's)	\$353,238 (\$200,000 for SRO's and terrorism efforts)
Training and Technical Assistance	\$20,731	\$20,662	\$20,662
Bulletproof Vests	\$25,444	\$25,444	\$25,444
Tribal Law Enforcement	\$34,923	\$35,000	\$35,000
Police Corps	\$29,435	\$14,435	\$15,000
Methamphetamine Enforcement and Cleanup	\$48,393	\$70,473	\$57,132
School Violence/Project Sentry	\$14,967	\$14,967	\$15,210

Source: Department of Justice online budget documents, www.usdoj.gov for FY 2001, House Conference Report 107-278 for FY 2002, and Consolidated Appropriations Resolution, P.L. 108-007 for FY 2003.

In addition to COPS grants for new or redeployed officers, funds from the program were awarded for other initiatives, research, and training in law enforcement in the 1990s. The Youth Firearms Violence Initiative (YFVI) was developed in accordance with the Public Safety Partnership and Community Policing Act of 1994 (Title I, P.L. 103-322). Under this program, the COPS Office awarded in September 1995 up to \$1 million to 10 police departments to combat the rise of youth firearms violence. The COPS Anti-Gang Initiative promotes earlier YFVI grant efforts by applying community policing strategies to reduce the rise of youth gangs in 15 local communities. Also, DOJ announced over \$14 million in November 1995 for evaluation and research grants to police agencies, universities and criminal justice facilities to evaluate community policing. DOJ's training grants provide funding for community policing to public safety, educational and research organizations. Programs funded under the COPS include the Advancing Community Policing program, the Visiting Fellowship program and the Regional Community Policing Institute. Other COPS programs included Troops to COPS and Community Policing to Combat Domestic Violence.