



STRATEGIC REPORT:

NEW PUBLIC SAFETY FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

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Grants Office, LLC (www.grantsoffice.com) is a private company providing grants support and information to state and local government, hospitals and schools, and industry partners.

State and local public safety agencies can take advantage of several current grant opportunities to fund new technology investments.

CHANGES IN THE GRANTS LANDSCAPE

When looking into grants opportunities, it helps to understand that two recent trends have affected the public safety grants landscape. One is a move toward competitive distribution. This is in contrast to the formula distribution and congressional earmarks of past years. An example is the Byrne Discretionary Grants program, launched in April 2007, which provides broad funding for law enforcement agencies. Competitive grants are a good thing for public safety, partly because recipients are required to submit a funding plan before they can draw down funds, which encourages more thorough planning. Competitive grants also allow funders to determine where to spend money in order to address the biggest vulnerabilities in public safety.

MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR URBAN AREAS

The second trend is a distribution of funds in larger, urban areas. In 2002 and 2003, in the earliest rounds of funding from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), funds were pushed to states, which were then responsible for redistributing the funds to local agencies. Now, local agencies have more opportunities to apply for funds directly. One example is the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) program, which provides funds specifically for high-threat, high-density urban areas. Six Tier-1 and 39 Tier-2 cities were targeted in 2007, and more are expected to be added to the list in 2008. Infrastructure protection program (IPP) grants, which are intended for preselected large municipalities and busy ports, are another funding opportunity for local public safety agencies. IPP grants for port security and transit security grants are worth approximately \$200 million each, and other opportunities are also available.

PUBLIC SAFETY INTEROPERABILITY COMMUNICATIONS GRANTS

Currently, states have a one-time opportunity to apply for Public Safety Interoperability Communications (PSIC) grants. Approximately \$1 billion in funding is coming from the auction of portions of the broadcast spectrum that television stations are vacating as they convert to digital TV. States that receive PSIC grants must pass 80 percent of their allocation through to local first-responder agencies. They can use up to 5 percent for the statewide interoperable communications plan, and the remainder for administration and other statewide projects. The Cisco® IP Interoperability and Collaboration System, which provides interoperability among all radio systems, landline phones, and cell phones, is eligible for PSIC grants.

PSIC grants will be administered on a rolling basis between October and December 2007.

The application has three parts:

Basic application: This includes a short description of how the state will pass funds to local agencies and how it will spend its 5 percent of the allocation.

Investment justification: To be submitted by December 3, 2007.

Statewide interoperability plan: Also to be submitted by December 3, 2007.

Grants Office can assist with the PSIC grant application process.

MORE PUBLIC SAFETY FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

A sample of other current funding opportunities includes:

The DHS Grants Program, worth \$1.6 billion, is slated to begin in December 2007. Eligible programs include interoperable communications, data sharing, cybersecurity, and more. Urban areas apply for DHS grants through the UASI, and states apply through the state administrative agency. Applicants can submit up to 15 investment justifications.

The Weed and Seed program supports wireless access points and video surveillance in high-crime areas. The deadline was September 30, 2007, but the program will be available again in 2008 at around the same time.

Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools funds video surveillance and information sharing across a community. It requires that five or more agencies in the community establish a memorandum of understanding to develop a coordinated, communitywide approach to emergency response. The deadline is expected to be April 2008.

Other programs are available for tribal agencies, transportation agencies, and rural public agencies.

CISCO GRANTS SUPPORT PROGRAM

Most public safety agencies lack the dedicated resources to keep up to date on constantly changing grants opportunities. The Cisco Grants Support Program-administered by Grants Office, a private company-helps public safety agencies identify grants for which they qualify based on the type of project, type of agency, and geographic location. Agencies complete a short form, which usually takes just 10 minutes, and the researchers at Grants Office then look for appropriate programs from federal and state organizations and foundations. If the agency is referred by a Cisco Account Manager, the research is provided free of charge. The agency can then either submit the grants application itself or professionally engage Grants Office to provide this service.

For assistance identifying and applying for public safety grants, send an e-mail to mpaddock@grantsoffice.com.



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