



# COPS Fact Sheet

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COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING SERVICES  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

## Universal Hiring Program Adding Officers to the Street

*"OUR CRIME RATE IS GOING DOWN  
AND THE PEACE AND TRANQUILITY SO  
LONG A TRADEMARK IN OUR  
COMMUNITY ARE BACK. THIS HAS  
BEEN THE MOST EFFECTIVE GRANT  
THAT I HAVE SEEN IN MY 32 YEARS  
IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE FIELD."*

*POLICE COMMISSIONER*

*WILLIAM FLEET*

*ROME (NY) POLICE DEPARTMENT*

The Universal Hiring Program (UHP) is one of several programs developed by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) to increase the number of officers on the beat. As state, local, and tribal law enforcement embrace the challenges of securing our homeland, this is now more important than ever.

A decade ago as crime was soaring, law enforcement officers were rushing from incident to incident. Today, ten years after the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 was signed into law, officers are walking the beat again. Citizens now know the officers policing their neighborhoods. Officers and citizens are partnering to develop creative and innovative ways to deal with long-standing problems, as well as the emerging needs of homeland security and defense.

### **Supporting Local Law Enforcement**

The COPS Office has awarded hiring grants through several programs over the course of its history. COPS formed the Universal Hiring Program in 1995 to supersede early programs such as Phase I; Accelerated Hiring, Education, and Deployment (AHEAD); and Funding Accelerated for Smaller Towns (FAST). UHP enables interested agencies to supplement their current sworn forces, or interested jurisdictions to establish a new agency, through three-year federal grants. To date, COPS has invested more than \$5 billion to hire over 68,000 law enforcement professionals through UHP and earlier COPS administered hiring programs.

### **Funding Provisions**

The National Strategy for Homeland Security, the Administration's roadmap for securing the homeland, highlights the key role that state and local governments play in responding to a terrorist attack. In addition, terrorism preparedness and prevention have become key responsibilities for state and local units. Priority consideration will be given to those applications that demonstrate a use of funds related to terrorism preparedness or response through community policing.

UHP grants cover up to 75 percent of the approved entry-level salary and benefits of each newly hired additional officer position over three years. There is a maximum federal contribution of \$75,000 per officer or deputy position over the three-year grant period. A minimum 25 percent local match is required. The match must be a cash match from funds not previously budgeted for any law enforcement purpose. Funding will begin once the new officers have been hired on or after the date of the award, and will be paid over the course of the grant.

Waivers of the local matching requirement may be requested under UHP, but will be granted only upon a showing of extraordinary fiscal hardship.

COPS grant funds must not be used to replace local funds that agencies otherwise would have devoted to sworn officer hiring. The hiring of officers under UHP must be in addition to, and not in lieu of, officers that otherwise would have been hired with local

funds. All grant recipients must develop a written plan to retain any COPS-funded officer positions awarded for at least one full local budget cycle after federal funding has ended. This plan must be clearly specified in the *Retention Plan Certification* form that all applicants are required to submit at the time of their application.

### **Contact COPS**

For more information, call the U.S. Department of Justice Response Center at 800.421.6770, or visit COPS Online at [www.cops.usdoj.gov](http://www.cops.usdoj.gov).

COPS offers a variety of publications, products, and training opportunities to advance community policing and support its grant programs. COPS publications and products offer insights and experiences from others in the field addressing specific problems including:

- ✓ Law Enforcement Responds to Terrorism: Lessons in Prevention and Preparedness
- ✓ Problem-Solving Tips: A Guide to Reducing Crime and Disorder Through Problem-Solving Partnerships
- ✓ COPS Collaboration Toolkit
- ✓ Assessing Responses to Problems: An Introductory Guide to Police Problem-Solvers
- ✓ Call Management and Community Policing
- ✓ Early Intervention Systems for Law Enforcement Agencies
- ✓ Community Policing in Action!

COPS also sponsors training opportunities and conferences to give law enforcement professionals an opportunity to learn, network, and exchange ideas. COPS publications and training opportunities are posted at COPS Online at [www.cops.usdoj.gov](http://www.cops.usdoj.gov).

### **FY 2004 Program Information**

The COPS Office did not offer an open solicitation for UHP this year. Fiscal Year 2004 UHP awards were made for applications received in 2002 and 2003.