



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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May 31, 2022

TO: Members
Joint Committee on Finance

FROM: Bob Lang, Director

SUBJECT: Department of Justice: Section 13.10 Request for Release of Funding for COPS House Grant Program -- Agenda Item III

REQUEST

On April 21, 2022, the Department of Justice (DOJ) submitted a request under s. 13.10 of the statutes for release of \$1,000,000 GPR in 2022-23 for community-oriented policing (COP) house grant program with grant awards anticipated in approximately July, 2022.

BACKGROUND

The Racine Police Department (RPD) has operated COP houses for over 20 years. According to the RPD:

A COP House is a physical home located in a residential area which is staffed by police officers and other service providers. It is open to the public during strategically decided hours. Officers who staff the COP House work with intention to build relationships with residents and prioritize the needs of the neighborhood. Residents can frequent the house to interact with officers and access services provided by partner agencies and organizations.

The 2021-23 biennial budget, 2021 Act 58, created an annual GPR appropriation under s. 20.455 (2)(cp), initially budgeted at \$0, for DOJ to issue grants for COP houses. Act 58 also placed \$1,000,000 GPR in 2021-22 in the Joint Committee on Finance GPR supplemental appropriation to fund these grants.

On February 18, 2021, Senate Bill 124 creating the statutory criteria for a DOJ COP House grant program was introduced. On May 11, 2021, Senate Substitute Amendment 1 to SB 124 was passed by the Senate on a 33-0 vote. The Assembly concurred with the bill on June 16, 2021. On June 22, 2021, the bill was enacted as 2021 Act 51.

Under the act, cities with a population of 30,000 or more are eligible for the grants. The act requires that DOJ use the following criteria when determining grant awards: (a) maximize grant resources to serve the greatest number of people and the greatest number of cities; (b) the city's plan to integrate the community-oriented policing house into the fabric of the community and the neighborhood; (c) future ability to use the community-oriented policing house for multiple purposes, including building relationships between law enforcement and the community and connecting residents of the neighborhood to community supports; and (d) the ability for community organizations, government agencies, faith-based organizations, and other nonprofit entities to use the community-oriented policing house once it is established.

ANALYSIS

The Department proposes to administer the COP House program grants in two rounds of funding: the first to support planning activities; and the second to support the acquisition of housing. The first grant opportunity proposes to make a maximum of \$324,000 (maximum of \$36,000 per agency) to engage in a four-month planning process. The application process would open this spring, with an anticipated grant performance period from July 1, 2022, to October 31, 2022. The planning award funding may be used by grant recipients to pay staff or contractors for research, planning and relationship building activities necessary to start a program, and the identification of housing for purchase.

The second grant opportunity would be opened in approximately November, 2022, for agencies awarded planning grants that complete the planning process and that are interested and ready to begin housing acquisition. The remaining grant funding of at least \$676,000 would be awarded for the purchase and rehabilitation of housing, with an anticipated grant performance period of January 1, 2023, to June 30, 2023.

According to DOJ, the grant program would be for cities establishing new COP house programs and would be open to agencies participating in the state Beat Patrol grant program. Since the City of Racine has an established a COP House program with six houses, DOJ indicates it would not be eligible for this particular grant program. Beat Patrol grants are awarded to the ten cities (currently including Racine) with populations of 25,000 or more that apply and have the highest rates of violent crime. Consequently, eligible agencies for COP House grants would be departments in the cities of Beloit, Green Bay, Kenosha, Madison, Manitowoc, Milwaukee, Sheboygan, Wausau and West Allis. [All cities currently receiving the Beat Patrol grant have a population of 30,000 or more.] As of 2020, there were 27 cities in Wisconsin with a population of 30,000 or more. Once it determines how many agencies are interested in purchasing a house, DOJ will establish maximum grant amounts.

Note that the COP House grants appropriation is an annual appropriation. The Department's request would place funding in 2022-23 and establish the base funding for the 2023-25 biennium. As a result, \$1,000,000 annually would be available in 2023-24 and 2024-25 for additional grants.

If the Committee wishes, the Department's request for release of funding could be approved. [Alternative 1] Alternatively, the Committee could approve DOJ's request but on a one-time basis in 2022-23. [Alternative 2] If the request is denied, funding would remain in the Committee's biennial

supplemental appropriation, and DOJ could submit a subsequent request seeking release.
[Alternative 3]

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the request and transfer \$1,000,000 GPR in 2022-23 held in reserve for this purpose from the Committee's s. 20.865(4)(a) appropriation to the Department's s. 20.455 (2)(cp) appropriation.
2. Approve the Department's request but specify that funding in 2022-23 would be provided on a one-time basis.
3. Deny the request.

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