



U. S. Department of Justice

Office of the Associate Attorney General

The Associate Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20530

December 19, 2003

MEMORANDUM TO: Assistant Attorney General, Office of Justice Programs
Director, Bureau of Justice Assistance
Director, Bureau of Justice Statistics
Director, National Institute of Justice
Administrator, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
Director, Office of Victims of Crime
Director, Office of Violence Against Women
Director, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services

FROM: Robert D. McCallum, Jr. *Robert D. McCallum, Jr.*
Associate Attorney General

SUBJECT: Department Policy Concerning Grants

INTRODUCTION

The passage of the Violent Crime Control Act of 1994 substantially increased the resources available to the Department of Justice to assist state and local law enforcement, corrections agencies, prosecutors, courts, researchers, and non-profit organizations in the Department's efforts to combat crime and assist crime victims. State, local, and tribal governments bear most of the responsibility for crime control in our nation, and they do most of the work and spend most of our nation's criminal justice resources. Courts and a host of other publicly and privately funded non-federal organizations also are major forces in combating crime and assisting victims. The Department's leadership and its provision of resources to those on the front lines is key to the overall success of developing our nation's capacity to prevent and control crime and administer justice fairly and effectively.

In recent years, efforts have been made to ensure greater grant-making coordination between the bureaus and offices within the Office of Justice Programs (OJP), the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), and the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW). The leadership and staff of these components are to be congratulated for successes made to date -- successes that have achieved positive outcomes for the Department, grantees, states, tribes, and local communities.

However, as recently documented by the Inspector General, the challenge still exists to further coordinate the planning, funding, and administration of the Department's grant programs to optimize Department resources.

For instance, OJP, COPS, and OVW continue to recognize overlapping and duplicative statutory authorities that have resulted in program inefficiencies and a duplication of efforts. In addition, award processes differ between the components resulting in administrative and bureaucratic burdens on grantees who must understand the authorized uses of specific grant funds and a variety of reporting requirements. As stated in a November 5, 2003 Inspector General memo to the Attorney General, "Our audit determined that the Department's federal financial assistance programs are fragmented, resulting in reduced efficiency and increased costs to award and administer federal financial assistance funds to state and local agencies. We found structural overlap between OJP and the COPS Office, overlap in grant programs between the COPS Office and OJP, lack of on-line grant application processing in the COPS Office, overlap in OJP's organization structure, and inefficiencies in OJP's automated grant management systems."

I recognize that the Inspector General's report predated a number of improvements that have already been made and may not necessarily have considered all current information. But while significant progress has already been made to address the problems identified by the Inspector General, more remains to be done. A fully coordinated Department strategy for federal assistance to state and local entities must be implemented in order for the Department to achieve its mission of "providing federal leadership in preventing and controlling crime" as identified in the Department's Strategic Plan. Such a strategy will serve as an affirmation of our fundamental commitment to excellence in providing the highest levels of service to the American people and in serving as effective and responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars. To provide the leadership and assistance needed by states, tribes, and communities, OJP, COPS, and OVW must focus on mission, agree on goals, coordinate efforts, and report results of activities.

ESTABLISHMENT OF GRANTS COORDINATION POLICY

It is the policy of the Department that OJP (and its components), COPS, and OVW coordinate activities related to formula and discretionary grants. This policy will ensure that we maximize our resources, identify gaps in needed services, eliminate duplication, distribute resources fairly, coordinate our approach to assisting our partners in justice, and employ a comprehensive federal strategy to prevent and control crime.

To implement the policy, the Department is taking the following specific steps:

Department Grants Coordinating Committee. To maintain the integrity of the grant-making process and overall consistency with the Department's strategic plan, the Department hereby establishes a Department of Justice Grants Coordinating Committee. The Committee shall meet

regularly to share information, review proposed solicitations, determine collaborative opportunities, and discuss grant award procedures. The Committee shall be chaired by the Associate Attorney General. Committee membership shall include the Assistant Attorney General for OJP, the Director of COPS, the Director of OVW, and the individual OJP Bureau Directors.

Standard Solicitation Template and Awards Process. The Committee is hereby directed to develop a standard Department-wide grant program solicitation template and award process. A standard solicitation template and award process will greatly assist those seeking funding from the Department by creating a more transparent, defined, and coordinated process. In reviewing the award process, the Committee will take into account the peer review process; the application requirements; opportunities to increase involvement of faith-based organizations, small community-based organizations, and historically black colleges and universities; and will seek the input of the criminal justice and law enforcement community to ensure that their needs are identified and addressed. Each implementing entity will remain free to issue supplemental guidelines to prospective grantees necessary to accomplish its unique mission, provided these guidelines comport with the standard solicitation template and award process.

CONCLUSION

As we continue our efforts to win the war on terrorism, we must not neglect our efforts to win the war on crime. Therefore, the Department must improve our information and assistance to our state, local, and tribal partners in our shared efforts to combat crime and assist crime victims.

cc: John Ashcroft
Attorney General

James Comey
Deputy Attorney General