



U. S. Department of Justice

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U.S. ATTORNEY KEEFE ANNOUNCES \$240,000 AWARDED TO LOCAL COMMUNITIES TO ADDRESS COVID-19 PANDEMIC

TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA – Lawrence Keefe, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Florida, today announced that four counties in the district have been awarded a combined total of more than \$240,000 in Department of Justice grants to respond to the public safety challenges posed by the outbreak of COVID-19.

The grants, awarded to Bay, Leon, Madison, and Walton counties, were provided under the Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding program, authorized by the recent stimulus legislation signed by President Trump. These awards are among \$1.3 million directed to 14 Florida counties and cities under the program, which also provided \$31.8 million to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement for use statewide. Numerous other communities within the Northern District of Florida were eligible for funding under the grant program, and the Justice Department is moving quickly to award grants on a rolling basis, aiming to have funds available for drawdown as soon as possible after receiving applications.

“Throughout the many weeks our district and the nation have been dealing with the threat of COVID-19, our public safety first responders have worked tirelessly to make sure members of the public are safe,” U.S. Attorney Keefe said. “The resources of local agencies have been stretched thin, and these grant funds will help ease the financial burden on public safety agencies so they can continue protecting and serving our citizens.”

The grant awards announced so far include: Bay County: \$82,882; Leon County: \$90,627; Madison County: \$33,154; and Walton County: \$38,577.

“The outbreak of COVID-19 and the public health emergency it created are sobering reminders that even the most routine duties performed by our nation’s public safety officials carry potentially grave risks,” said Katharine T. Sullivan, Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Justice Programs. “These funds will provide hard-hit communities with critical resources to help mitigate the impact of this crisis and give added protection to the brave professionals charged with keeping citizens safe.”

The law establishing the grant program allows jurisdictions considerable latitude in the use of these funds for dealing with COVID-19. Potential uses include hiring personnel, paying overtime, purchasing protective equipment, distributing resources to hard-hit areas, and addressing inmate medical needs.

Agencies that were eligible for the fiscal year 2019 State and Local Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program are candidates for the emergency funding. Local units of government will receive direct awards separately according to their jurisdictions' allocations.

The Office of Justice Programs provides federal leadership, grants, training, technical assistance, and other resources to improve the nation's capacity to prevent and reduce crime, assist victims, and enhance the rule of law by strengthening the criminal and juvenile justice systems. More information about OJP and its components can be found at www.ojp.gov.

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