



U. S. Department of Justice

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UNITED STATES ATTORNEY LAWRENCE KEEFE ANNOUNCES AWARD TO IMPROVE SCHOOL SAFETY

TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA – Lawrence Keefe, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Florida, announced that the Washington County, Florida, School District received \$500,000 from the Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) School Violence Prevention Program (SVPP). Nationally, the COPS Office SVPP awarded nearly \$50 million in school safety funding. SVPP provides up to 75% funding for school safety measures in and around primary and secondary schools and school grounds.

"We are pleased that so many children within our District will benefit from the Justice Department's School Violence Prevention Program," said U.S. Attorney Keefe. "Even here in Northern Florida, we are not free from the threat of school violence. I'm confident Washington County will use these funds to take impactful steps to improve safety for our children, and the teachers and others who work every day to educate them in a safe, nourishing environment."

"With the new school year underway, the safety of our nation's students remains paramount," said COPS Office Director Phil Keith. "Although this school year may look different at the start, now is the ideal time to make preparations to enhance school safety for when all of our children are back in the classroom."

The Students, Teachers, and Officers Preventing School Violence Act of 2018 (STOP School Violence Act of 2018) gave the COPS Office authority to provide awards directly to states, units of local government, Indian tribes, and public agencies (such as school districts and law enforcement agencies) to improve security at schools and on school grounds in the jurisdiction of the grantee through evidence-based school safety programs. The \$500,000 award announced today can be used for coordination with law enforcement; training for local law enforcement officers to prevent student violence; metal detectors, locks, lighting, and other deterrent measures; technology for expedited notification of local law enforcement during an emergency;

and other measures that provide a significant improvement in security. The full list of SVPP awards can be found here:

https://cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/2020AwardDocs/svpp/Award_List.pdf.

In addition to the school safety grants announced today, the COPS Office School Safety Working Group, which is composed of representatives from eight national law enforcement organizations, has identified 10 essential actions that can be taken by schools, school districts, and law enforcement agencies to help prevent critical incidents involving the loss of life or injuries in our nation's schools and to respond rapidly and effectively when incidents do occur. [The Ten Essential Actions to Improve School Safety](#) are applicable to school shootings as well as to other areas of school safety, including natural disasters and traumatic events such as student suicide. Adopting policies and practices based on the recommendations in this publication can help make school communities safer and save lives.

The COPS Office is the federal component of the Department of Justice responsible for advancing community policing nationwide. Since 1994, the COPS Office has invested more than \$14 billion to advance community policing, including grants awarded to more than 13,000 state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies to fund the hiring and redeployment of more than 134,000 officers and provide a variety of knowledge resource products including publications, training and technical assistance.

The United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Florida is one of 94 offices that serve as the nation's principal litigators under the direction of the Attorney General. To access available public court documents online, please visit the [U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida](#) website. For more information about the United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Florida, visit <http://www.justice.gov/usao/fln/index.html>.

The year 2020 marks the 150th anniversary of the Department of Justice. Learn more about the history of our agency at www.Justice.gov/Celebrating150Years.

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