

Eliminate the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS)

SAVINGS IN MILLIONS OF DOLLARS

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2016-2020	2016-2025
\$248	\$280	\$286	\$292	\$298	\$305	\$311	\$319	\$327	\$336	\$1,404	\$3,002

Heritage Recommendation:

Eliminate the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS). This proposal saves \$248 million in 2016 and \$3.0 billion over 10 years.

Rationale:

Created in 1994, COPS promised to add 100,000 new state and local law enforcement officers on the streets by 2000. Research by The Heritage Foundation has demonstrated that COPS not only failed to add 100,000 additional officers⁶⁹ to America's streets, it was also ineffective at reducing crime.⁷⁰

State and local officials, not the federal government, are responsible for funding the staffing levels of police departments. By paying for the salaries of police officers, COPS funds the routine, day-to-day functions of police and fire departments. In *Federalist* No. 45, James Madison wrote:

The powers delegated by the proposed Constitution to the federal government are few and defined. Those which are to remain in the State governments are numerous and indefinite. The former will be exercised principally on external objects, as war, peace, negotiation, and foreign commerce; with which last the power of taxation will, for the most part, be connected. The powers reserved to the several States will extend to all the objects which, in the ordinary course of affairs, concern the lives, liberties, and properties of the people, and the internal order, improvement, and prosperity of the State.

When Congress subsidizes local police departments in this manner, it effectively reassigns to the federal government the powers and responsibilities that fall squarely within the expertise, historical control, and constitutional authority of state and local governments. The responsibility to combat ordinary crime at the local level belongs wholly, if not exclusively, to state and local governments.

The COPS program has an extensive track record of poor performance and should be eliminated. These grants also unnecessarily perform functions that are the responsibility of state and local governments.

Additional Reading:

- David B. Muhlhausen, "Impact Evaluation of COPS Grants in Large Cities," Heritage Foundation *Center for Data Analysis Report* No. 06-03, May 26, 2006, <http://www.Heritage.org/research/reports/2006/05/impact-evaluation-of-cops-grants-in-large-cities>
- David B. Muhlhausen, "Byrne JAG and COPS Grant Funding Will Not Stimulate the Economy," statement before the Senate Judiciary Committee, May 12, 2009, <http://www.Heritage.org/research/testimony/byrne-jag-and-cops-grant-funding-will-not-stimulate-the-economy>.



Calculations:

Savings are expressed as budget authority as reported on page 230 of “Analytical Perspectives, Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2015, Table 29-1. Federal Programs by Agency and Account,” http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/budget/fy2015/assets/29_1.pdf. Budget authority is not provided for 2025, but is assumed to increase at the same rate as the geometric mean of the previous nine years.