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U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services



COPS Fact Sheet

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COPS in Schools

Helping Communities Prevent School Violence

"The vast majority of our schools are safe places for our kids to learn. But any violent incident is one too many. This initiative (COPS in Schools) helps train and support officers to be a real part of kids' daily lives - using the community policing strategies that have made neighborhoods safer all over America."

— President Clinton

Recent headlines about violence in our schools are resulting in a surge of interest in school safety. Unfortunately, these headline-making crimes are not isolated incidents.

- The National Center for Education Statistics reported that 74% of middle schools and 77% of high schools reported one or more violent incidents in their school.
- A recent Center for Disease Control survey reported that 20% of high school students carried weapons in the last month.
- According to a U.S. Department of Education report, 3,930 students between the ages of 5 and 17 were expelled for bringing a gun to school during the 1997-98 academic school year.

Many communities are discovering that trained, sworn law enforcement officers assigned to schools make a difference. Community policing officers perform a variety of functions within the school. From teaching crime prevention and substance-abuse classes to monitoring troubled students to building respect for law enforcement among students, School Resource Officers combine the functions of law enforcement and education.

COPS in Schools grants are awarded to law enforcement agencies who partner with schools. This partnership must define strategies to utilize problem solving and community policing

techniques to prevent school violence and implement educational programs. Applicants include a narrative that address each of the following areas:

- Problem Identification and Justification
- Community Policing Strategies
- Quality and Level of Commitment to Program
- Link to Community Policing

Applicants that receive a COPS in Schools grant receive additional funding to attend a national conference sponsored by the COPS program. The conference centers on partnership building training and innovative violence prevention strategies. Attendees include representatives from both law enforcement agencies and the partnered school districts.

Over the past two years, the COPS program has awarded more than \$296 million to fund over 2,600 school resource officers. These officers provide security at our nation's schools and educate students on crime prevention and delinquency. They serve as mentors and provide a line of defense against wayward youth.

"Fremont is a better city today because of the officers we have in our schools. The COPS in Schools program has allowed us to extend community policing from our neighborhoods to our classrooms. The extra officers we have received from the COPS program have made a real difference in Fremont. Not only are they helping make our schools safer, but they are mentors and positive role models for the kids who need the most help."

— Chief Craig Steckler, Fremont, California

For more information contact COPS Communication Division at 202.616.1728.

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