

PORT HUENEME CITIZENS OPTION FOR PUBLIC SAFETY (COPS) PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

Under the Grand Jury's civil investigation function of city and county governments, the Grand Jury gathered information on the City of Port Hueneme Citizens Option for Public Safety (COPS) program. The objective was to determine if they were in compliance with the regulations as set forth in AB3229.

FINDINGS

AB3229, enacted in July 1996, established the COPS program and appropriated \$100 million from the state general fund for FY96/97.

This program provides funding to local agencies to ensure public safety, is a permanent on-going program, and requires a new appropriation for continued funding each fiscal year.

The State Controller allocated funds to each county by Sept. 15, 1996, and the counties had to allocate to the cities by Oct. 15, 1996. Each city was required to establish a Supplemental Law Enforcement Services Fund (SLESF) for deposit of the monies received from the county, as well as appoint a Supplemental Law Enforcement Oversight Committee (SLEOC). Of these funds, 75% will be allocated to the county and cities for front line municipal police services, and is allocated based on county population, which is determined to be the population of the unincorporated area less the population in the eligible special districts.

The revenues shall supplement existing services, and shall not be used to supplant any existing funding for front line law enforcement services provided by that entity. Front line law enforcement services include anti-gang and community crime prevention programs.

Starting in 1996, the city council is required to hold a public hearing in September of each year to consider these requests. Funding will be determined by a majority vote of those present at the council meeting within 60 days of receiving the request for funding. The city council must consider these written requests separate and apart from the proposed allocations from the city general fund.

The funds in each county shall be allocated as follows:

- 12.5% to the county sheriff for county jail construction and operation.
- 12.5% to the district attorney for criminal prosecution.
- 75% to the county and cities within the county for front line law enforcement services based on population.
- Cities should expect to receive about \$2.30 per capita or \$60 million on a statewide basis from this bill.
- The population for the county shall be the population of the unincorporated portion of the county.

- The population to be used is the most recent January estimate of population prepared by the population research unit of the State Department of Finance.

Use of Funds: Cities are required to appropriate COPS revenues to front line municipal police services. These funds shall be appropriated pursuant to written requests from the chief of police or chief administrator of the law enforcement agency that provides police services for that city. That request shall specify the front line needs including the personnel, equipment, and programs that are necessary to meet those needs.

There was a call for a special meeting of the Port Hueneme City Council, to be held on September 30, 1996, at 12 noon. The purpose was to hold a public hearing to consider the adoption of a resolution approving the City's participation in the COPS Program, and to approve the Police Chief's request for AB3229 funding under that program.

A staff report was submitted to the City Manager explaining AB3229 to the council. On September 30, 1996, a Special Meeting was held and Resolution #2980 was passed and adopted.

Pursuant to the adoption of that resolution, the City of Port Hueneme began recruiting for a Crime Prevention Officer, with a filing deadline of December 4, 1996.

This is a non-sworn position in the Police Department responsible for establishing and maintaining a variety of crime prevention and related programs. It requires a Bachelors Degree in Criminology, Police Science or closely related field, or any combination of education and experience that would provide the required knowledge, skills and abilities.

Some of the duties and responsibilities of the Crime Prevention Officer are as follows:

- Coordinates and maintains Neighborhood Watch and Neighborhood Watch Patrol Programs; attends organizational meetings to start up Neighborhood Watch and citizen patrol programs and attends regular meetings. Establishes and maintains crime prevention awareness programs; gives talks to schools, service clubs, business, and other community organizations.
- Establishes and maintains a Crime Analysis Program, a Street Gang Intelligence System, and collects, updates and disseminates information to officers on a continuing basis.
- Provides officer briefing bulletins to alert officers of potential criminal activities; collects and analyzes information contained in daily journals, bookings, reports, citations, and field information reports on persons, etc.
- Actively pursues funding grants to support the police department's crime prevention and community safety efforts; performs other related duties or special projects as assigned.

The Port Hueneme Police Department will rely on Oxnard's law enforcement agency as they implement this because of their experience with the COPS Program.

CONCLUSION

The Port Hueneme City Council and Police Department have effectively established and implemented this vital program for its citizens.

RECOMMENDATION

Future Grand Juries revisit Port Hueneme to monitor the progress and effectiveness of this newly adopted program.

RESPONSE REQUIRED

None