

Senate Democratic Policy Committee Hearing
**“An Oversight Hearing on Reduced Federal Funding For
Law Enforcement and the Rise in Violent Crime”**

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The Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) would not be able to meet the policing demands of the community without federal financial assistance. The Minneapolis Police Department depends heavily on grants for providing basic equipment, training and overtime for officers.

Over the last 10 years Federal funding through the Block Grants has decreased by 76%; and there is zero funding for hiring new officers.

Federal Block Grants

Since 1996, the Minneapolis Police Department has depended on the Federal Block Grants. The grants enabled us to equip our ERU (SWAT), Narcotics and Precinct Community Response Units and augment our Crime Lab, Investigations, Property and Evidence Units and Patrol Functions with basic equipment, current support tools and technology. Equipment included ballistic vests, rifles, fingerprinting capabilities and communications tools (radios, mobile digital computers for squad cars, etc.). The grants also made it possible to provide mandatory and pro-active training for MPI officers.

Block Grant Awards to the MPD:

1996 - \$1,618,249	1999 - \$1,135,123	2002 - \$776,074	2005 – Edward
1997 - \$1,062,768	2000 - \$1,006,276	2003 - \$540,106	Byrne (JAG)
1998 - \$1,166,388	2001 - \$993,014	2004 - \$222,433	Grant - \$500,759

Another key element of the Block Grants was finding for Overtime — where we could ‘buy-back’ the officers to work additional hours. The MPD focused the buyback on special details — targeted at specific issues, such as assaults, robberies, street and neighbourhood crimes, drug dealing, gang activity, juvenile crime and problematic geographic areas.

Homeland Security

The nation-wide wake up call of September 11, 2001 is still top priority for police departments. Only through the Homeland Security Grants and other outside

funding has the MPD has been able to purchase equipment, provide training, increase intelligence and plan for potential catastrophic events such as pandemics and terrorist acts. Minneapolis is frequently called upon to assist other agencies (being the largest police force in the state); and therefore must continue to be a local leader in emergency preparedness.

Staffing

Minneapolis needs more police officers. In the mid 1990s, the MPD had 920 sworn officers. Now, in 2006 we are down to 790. This was due in part to a 62% loss of Local Government Aid from the state in 2003, where the MPD barely escaped sworn lay-offs, and was forced into a hiring freeze. The City has recognized the desperate need and is trying to funding the hire of 70 officers over the next two years, bringing the MPD up to 860 officers.

“COPS”, the federally sponsored program for local jurisdictions to hire police officers allowed the MPD to hire 71 officers during the 1990’s — bringing the department up to the 920 officer strength. “COPS” paid two thirds of the officers’ salaries for a couple years, with Minneapolis’ commitment to retain and pay for the officers for an additional two years. “COPS” hires also allowed the department to expand diversity in its work force.

As Personnel salary is the MPD’s largest budgetary expense, one can see that the “COPS” program was invaluable,

Crime

In 1996, prior to the Block Grants, the city was labeled “Murderopolis”, by the New York Times, due to a spike in murders that year (in 1997, we had a 50% decrease). After a decade of ‘holding our own’, due in part to grant funding, the MPD is now experiencing challenges in the growing violent crime rate. There is no doubt that additional well-equipped officers are needed to combat the current rise in crime in Minneapolis. 2005 showed a 15% increase in Part I Crimes.

Budget

The Minneapolis Police Department’s 2006 operating budget is \$106,000,000, with \$18,000,000 of that coming from grants and other outside revenue sources. Since the early 90’s we have depended on the grants and other sources to provide nearly 15% of our annual budget. Without grants, the Minneapolis Police Department would be in dire straits.

MPD average budget breakdown is:	Salaries/Benefits/insurance	84%
	Fleet/Radio/Utilities	9%
	Overtime	3% (Natl Avg 6%)
	Equipment/Training	1%
	Jail Fees/Other	3%

The City of Minneapolis

The State of Minnesota and the City of Minneapolis have been ranked high for livability, including safety, education, health, recreation, and a strong economy. These create both opportunities and challenges for the MPD.

The City of Minneapolis has a population of 380,000 and covers over 52 square miles of residential, industrial and recreation areas. A huge positive for the Twin City area is the outstanding cooperation between law enforcement and emergency services agencies — both within city departments, neighbouring jurisdictions and state and federal officials. Minneapolis, having the largest police force in the state, is frequently called upon to assist other agencies.

There is a dramatic change in the demographics of Minneapolis with growing non-English speaking communities, including Hmong, Hispanic and Somali immigrants. All city departments are challenged by communication and cultural differences.

Summary

Grants are the mainstay of the Minneapolis Police Department. They provide us needed equipment, especially tactical issue, and funding for overtime. Without grants, this police department will not have the resources to combat the ever increasing daily violence on the streets or the ability to assist the citizenry in times of local and national emergencies.