

OBAMA ADMINISTRATION EASES VETERANS TRANSITION TO CIVIL SOCIETY THROUGH COPS GRANTS



The U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) today announced funding awards to over 220 cities and counties, aimed at generating or saving around 800 police positions. These positions were under threat owing to financial problems that necessitated budget cuts. The grant seeks to increase police jobs and most of these jobs are to go to military veterans who served after 9/11. Labor Department statistics showed that the unemployment rate for the recent veterans was high and stood at 12.7 percent in May. Speaking about the high unemployment rate Vice-President Joe Biden said that it is “a little over two points higher than it is for the rest of the population.” He termed it “unconscionable.” The Justice Department’s COPS (Community Oriented Policing Services) program has said that of the 629 of the 800 police jobs funded for the next three years, all the jobs for the newly hired officers, must go to veterans. To be eligible the veterans must have served for at least 180 days active duty since 9/11. This is the first time in its 18 year history that COPS had made it mandatory for cities and counties seeking federal funding, to hire only veterans. The announcement regarding the new COPS requirement was made by Attorney General Eric Holder in Philadelphia. He said, “Today, we step up our support for recent veterans by offering them the chance to pursue meaningful careers in law enforcement. At a time of budget shortfalls, these grants will provide opportunities for much-needed, highly-trained professionals – with a proven commitment to service - to continue their careers in communities all across the country.” Vice-President Joe Biden said on Monday that this enterprise is part of the Obama’s administration’s attempts to assist the veterans to ease into civilian life. With lack of jobs becoming a rigid unmoving problem, the administration was hard pressed to provide employment to the veterans. But President Obama declared, in his State of the Union message, that providing employment for the veterans would take precedence for his administration. The Obama administration has already provided for tax-cuts to private companies that provide employment to veterans. He has demanded of the private sector that it provide training to 100,000 veterans and their spouses by 2013. The administration has helped veterans obtain industry-recognized credentials and licenses, increased access to intensive re-employment services; developed online tools to boost veteran employment; and encouraged hiring of veterans in healthcare-related fields. Vice-President Joe Biden in a Press Conference said, that the administration’s latest proposal is a “continuation of our effort to do two things: make the streets safer and make sure returning veterans from the 9/11 generation — Afghanistan, Iraq — don’t have to come back and fight as hard for a job as they fought for us.” During the conference call, famous Associate Attorney General Tony West said that the Police departments are facing their own problems in connection with financing and funding. He further said that at least 85 percent of departments have reported budget cuts, owing to which countless police positions around America were lying vacant, as there was no funding to fill them. The new grants that were announced on Monday totaled in excess of \$111 million and will help financially reinforce departments in 221 cities and counties. Best of all, since the money is already appropriated, it will not result in a budget fight in Congress. Biden said that these cities “will be a little bit safer because of these cop grants. “ They want to keep serving when they get back, and these cop grants are going to help them get that chance.” “This new opportunity for veterans is a commitment to support those who are coming home from their tour of duty,” said Bernard Melekian, COPS Office Director. “We sincerely hope this effort encourages our veterans to continue to protect and serve the United States through new law enforcement careers.”