

Letter from the Office of Justice Programs to Program Grantees

Dear Office of Justice Programs Grantee:

As a result of the Budget Control Act of 2011, the President signed the budget sequestration order on March 1st, which requires across-the-board reductions to most Federal Government accounts. For the Department of Justice, the total reduction was \$1.67 billion in Fiscal Year (FY) 2013, which, by law, must be applied to all Department programs. This reduction will result in serious consequences for the administration of justice for our communities across the Nation. The sequestration cut OJP FY2013 funding levels by about \$110 million. We understand these reductions impact all of us, including our grantees and customers in the state, local and tribal justice communities.

As I explained in my February 22nd email to OJP's grantees and cooperative agreement recipients, senior leadership throughout the Department of Justice has been working to determine how we could best manage sequestration budget reductions while protecting the Department's ability to perform its mission, including how we can best position the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) to mitigate the impact on our state, local, tribal, and non-profit partners.

Sequestration budget reductions will affect FY 2013 funding levels for OJP programs across the board. Sequestration will not reduce grantee funds received in previous fiscal years.

Providing training and technical assistance to our state, local and tribal justice partners is part of OJP's core mission. However, in light of the budget environment and concerns over government spending, we have redoubled our vigilance of the expenditure of tax dollars, particularly larger expenditures, at such a critical time. As a result, and due to the restrictions on spending under the sequestration, the ability of OJP's federal staff to travel and participate in grantee meetings and events will be significantly reduced, and possibly eliminated in the near term.

For cooperative agreement recipients, newly proposed state, local and tribal conferences will continue to be carefully scrutinized throughout the review. We continue to strongly encourage grantees and cooperative agreement recipients to consider alternative means to achieve our collective goals, including the use of video conferencing, webinars, and other technologies when feasible. All conference costs should be kept to the bare minimum needed to support essential business. Large conferences (including training events) with combined expenditures over \$100,000 will likely be postponed except in cases where life and safety or other mission critical needs are at risk without the event taking place at the current time.

Still much is unknown regarding the final impact of the sequestration and the final fiscal year 2013 appropriations. We will continue to monitor this situation closely and will share with you information as it becomes available.

We thank you for your work in support of state, local and tribal justice and your partnership, and your understanding in these extraordinarily difficult times.

Sincerely,

Mary Lou Leary
Acting Assistant Attorney General
Office of Justice Programs