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DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE CONTINUES ATTEMPTS TO RESTRICT CHICAGO FROM PUBLIC SAFETY GRANTS

DOJ Places Supplemental Award Condition Requiring Chicago to Refrain from Using \$3 Million COPS Grant Until Compliance with 1373 is Certified – With No Guidance on Certification

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today announced that the Trump Justice Department is again attempting to prevent Chicago from using public safety grants unless Chicago abandons its values as a Welcoming City by placing restrictions on the recently awarded Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) grant.

“In the face of a federal judge rejecting the Trump Justice Department’s attempt to use one federal grant to blackmail cities, they’ve doubled down with another attempt on a second federal grant,” said Mayor Emanuel. “You would think the Trump Justice Department has actual priorities they need to focus on, instead of repeatedly trying to inject their personal politics into our public safety. I have a message for President Trump: Chicago’s values are not for sale. We will remain a Welcoming City.”

Chicago was awarded \$3.125 million on Monday. As part of the grant, the Department of Justice placed a supplemental award condition that prohibits using the funds to hire police officers until Chicago’s compliance with federal statute 1373 has been resolved.

Chicago maintains that it is in compliance with 1373, and in April and October, submitted information to the Department of Justice certifying its compliance. The Department of Justice refuses to resolve this issue, clarify its position on what is required to comply with 1373, or explain why Chicago is not in compliance, essentially preventing Chicago from accessing federal funds for community policing.

A federal judge in September issued a preliminary injunction against the Department of Justice after it attempted to impose new conditions on the Byrne JAG Grants, which also support public safety.

“We’ve already been successful in court in stopping the Trump Justice Department from tying public safety grant funds to abandoning our values as a Welcoming City, and we believe that there is precedent to prevent this special condition from being enforced,” said Ed Siskel, Corporation Counsel. “The DOJ should stop playing games with money that funds hiring of police officers and remove this stipulation from the award, or provide clarity on what is required for compliance with 1373. Otherwise we will ask a judge to intervene.”

In September, the Justice Department announced additional priority consideration criteria for COPS Office grants. According to the Department of Justice, applicants would receive additional points in the application scoring process, and potentially increase their grant amounts, by certifying their willingness to cooperate with federal immigration authorities within their detention facilities.

Chicago received its full grant amount.

The COPS Hiring Program provides grant funding directly to state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies to support hiring additional law enforcement officers for three years to address specific crime problems through community policing strategies.