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Apopka Receives Federal Grant to Hire More Police Officers

APOPKA, Fla. – The City of Apopka has received a \$625,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Justice to hire additional police officers.

Apopka is among 184 law enforcement agencies across the country and only 12 in Florida to receive part of \$119 million through the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Hiring Program. The funding is aimed at creating or protecting more than 900 law enforcement positions nationally. U.S. Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch announced grant awards today at an event in Dallas, Texas.



The three-year, \$625,000 grant will allow the Apopka Police Department to fund five additional police positions. The much-needed assistance will help the city to ease heavy demands on the police department in keeping up with a growing community of more than 46,000 residents and businesses spread across 33 square miles of northwest Orange County. The grant requires a match from Apopka for \$339,800.

Federal grant funding also relieves some of the burden on city taxpayers to cover the needed costs for additional police officers. Apopka grant coordinator Dr. Shakenya Harris-Jackson applied to the COPS program as part of the city's greater emphasis to seek readily available grants and to invest those monies into local community improvements.

“The City of Apopka has a well-documented need for more police officers. Our immediate goal is to get Apopka’s police department to a ratio of 2.5 officers per 1,000 residents, which is the average among police departments across the state. We now stand at a ratio of about 2.2 officers per thousand,” said Apopka Mayor Joe Kilsheimer. “Over the long term, our goal is to achieve three officers per 1,000 residents, which is the average among many of the police departments in the Central Florida area. These additional officers will go a long way in allowing the City of Apopka to reach this goal and ensuring the citizens of Apopka continue to have a safe community in which to live.”

The grant provides funding directly to state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies for the hiring and rehiring of entry-level career law enforcement officers in an effort to create and preserve jobs and increase community policing capacity and crime prevention efforts.

The COPS Office is a federal agency responsible for advancing community policing nationwide. Since 1995, COPS has invested over \$14 billion to advance community policing, including grants awarded to more than 13,000 state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies to fund the hiring and redeployment of approximately 129,000 officers and provide a variety of knowledge resource products including publications, training, and technical assistance.

The City of Apopka is a growing area ideally located 13 miles northwest of Orlando with major roadway access to many parts of Central Florida. The hometown community has more than 45,000 residents across 33 square miles and includes a diverse mix of business development.

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