



DICKINSON POLICE DEPARTMENT

Chief Joseph R. Cianni

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December 28th, 2023

President Decker & Commissioners,

The North Dakota Legislature appropriated \$3.5 million for the Back the Blue grants for local law enforcement and correctional officers. Of that amount, \$750,000 was for agencies with less than 10 officers. Based on those amounts, agencies with 10 or less officers as of June 1, 2023, received \$2,885 per officer. Agencies with more than 10 officers as of June 1, 2023, received \$1,419 per officer.

The Dickinson Police Department has received a total of \$61,742 from the Back the Blue legislative appropriations. These funds are to be used exclusively for recruitment and retention bonuses or for training/educational reimbursements to new recruits. The funds cannot be used to supplant existing local appropriations related to recruitment and/or retention and must be expended by March of 2025. It was recommended the Chief or Sheriff bring their distribution plan to their governing boards for consideration and for the governing board to approve the appropriation of the funds as presented by the Chief or Sheriff.

Due to the restrictive nature of how the funds must be spent, I am recommending a holistic, equitable approach geared specifically toward retention, i.e. retention bonuses. Each sworn staff member of the Dickinson Police Department who did not receive a sign-on bonus when they were hired will be paid an equal share of the fund balance in one lump sum distribution. Although I am appreciative of the funds and the spirit of this House Bill, I wish the legislators would have solicited more input related to discretionary distribution options from North Dakota Chiefs, Sheriffs and correctional professionals.

Respectfully,

Chief Joe Cianni

**Sixty-eighth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota
In Regular Session Commencing Tuesday, January 3, 2023**

HOUSE BILL NO. 1307
(Representatives Roers Jones, Lefor, Mock, O'Brien, Pyle)
(Senators Meyer, Patten, J. Roers, K. Roers)

AN ACT to provide an appropriation to the attorney general for a back the blue grant program; and to provide for a report.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:

SECTION 1. APPROPRIATION - ATTORNEY GENERAL - BACK THE BLUE GRANT PROGRAM - ONE-TIME FUNDING - REPORT TO SIXTY-NINTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY. There is appropriated out of any moneys in the general fund in the state treasury, not otherwise appropriated, the sum of \$3,500,000, or so much of the sum as may be necessary, to the attorney general for the purpose of providing back the blue grants to assist local law enforcement agencies with workforce recruitment and retention, for the biennium beginning July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2025. The attorney general shall provide grants to each city and county law enforcement agency in the state based on the proportional number of licensed peace officers and correctional officers employed by the city or county law enforcement agency compared to the total number of licensed peace officers and correctional officers employed by all city and county law enforcement agencies. Of the funding available under this program, a sum of at least \$750,000 must be granted to local law enforcement agencies employing ten or fewer employees working in a law enforcement capacity. Funding appropriated in this section may be used for providing hiring and retention bonuses to new and current law enforcement and correctional officers and providing tuition and fee payments on behalf of law enforcement trainees. This funding is considered a one-time funding item. Law enforcement agencies receiving funding under this section shall report to the attorney general regarding the use and effectiveness of the funding. The attorney general shall report to the sixty-ninth legislative assembly regarding the use and effectiveness of grant funds and the number of grants provided pursuant to this section.