

FOLLOW-UP REPORT

Department of Public Safety

Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant

OCTOBER 2021



TIMOTHY M. O'BRIEN, CPA
DENVER AUDITOR

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City and County of Denver



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AUDITOR'S LETTER

October 7, 2021

In keeping with generally accepted government auditing standards and Auditor's Office policy, as authorized by city ordinance, the Audit Services Division has a responsibility to monitor and follow up on audit recommendations to ensure city agencies address audit findings through appropriate corrective action and to aid us in planning future audits.

In our follow-up effort for the "Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant" audit report issued in August 2020, we determined the Department of Public Safety fully implemented all of the recommendations it agreed to in the original audit report.

The Highlights page in this report provides background and summary information about the original audit and the completed follow-up effort. Following the Highlights page is a detailed implementation status update for each recommendation.

I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the personnel at the Department of Public Safety who assisted us throughout the audit and the follow-up process. For any questions, please feel free to contact me at 720-913-5000.

Denver Auditor's Office

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Timothy M. O'Brien".

Timothy M. O'Brien, CPA
Auditor



Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant

OCTOBER 2021

Objective

Our objective was to determine (a) whether the Denver Department of Public Safety is complying with expenditure requirements under the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant, (b) whether the department properly reported grant expenditures to the grant-governing authority, and (c) whether the Denver Police Department made the appropriate determination regarding the subrecipient status of the District Attorney’s Office.

Background

The Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program is the leading source of federal justice funding to state and local jurisdictions. The grant provides states, tribes, and local governments with critical funding necessary to support a wide range of program areas — including law enforcement, prosecution, indigent defense, courts, crime prevention and education, corrections, drug treatment and enforcement, planning, evaluation, technology improvement, crime victim and witness initiatives, mental health programs, behavioral programs, and crisis intervention.

This audit reviewed two justice assistance grant awards within the city’s Department of Public Safety — one award to the Denver Police Department and another award to the Denver Sheriff Department.

ORIGINAL REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

We found all expenditures in our sample were allowable, according to grant requirements and federal regulations. However, we also noted the following compliance issues.

The Denver Police and Sheriff Departments Submitted Several Grant Reports Late

Specifically, the Denver Police Department submitted five of 21 reports late, and the Denver Sheriff Department submitted seven of nine reports late.

The Denver Police Department Did Not Take Appropriate Measures to Identify Subrecipients of Grant Funding

The Denver Police Department never completed the city’s required “Subrecipient vs. Contractor” worksheet, which would document the District Attorney’s Office’s status as a grant subrecipient.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Federal grant requirements ensure agencies like the Department of Public Safety spend grant money on appropriate programs and services — which, in the case of the justice grants, means funding programs to keep residents safe.



4

FULLY IMPLEMENTED



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PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED



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NOT IMPLEMENTED

Oct. 7, 2021

Action Since Audit Report

Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant

4 recommendations proposed in August 2020



FULLY
IMPLEMENTED

4



PARTIALLY
IMPLEMENTED

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NOT
IMPLEMENTED

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We found the Department of Public Safety fully implemented all recommendations and mitigated the risks identified during the original audit. As a result, we conclude our follow-up effort related to the “Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant” audit.

Because the Department of Public Safety took action to prioritize timely grant reporting, it can help ensure grant-related activities are monitored to meet grant requirements and achieve performance expectations for the programs that keep Denver residents safe. Additionally, because it has confirmed that subrecipients are reported accurately, Public Safety can help ensure subrecipients are monitored in compliance with grant requirements.

FINDING 1 | The Denver Police and Sheriff Departments Submitted Several Grant Reports Late

Recommendation 1.1



FULLY IMPLEMENTED

PERFORM CROSS-TRAINING FOR GRANT-REPORTING DUTIES – The Denver Police Department should plan for the unexpected loss of key staff members by cross-training employees on grant-reporting duties in case the primary person departs.

AGENCY ACTION

Original target date for completion: Aug. 1, 2020

Denver Police Department staff created a job aide for Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant reporting to help cross-train alternate staff besides the grant administrator for grant reporting. In addition, the grant administrator’s manager completed Department of Justice’s financial training that included grants management. The manager also said they are now the backup staff member, taking over grant-reporting duties for the primary grant administrator when required. Therefore, this recommendation is considered fully implemented.

Recommendation 1.2



FULLY IMPLEMENTED

INCREASE THE PRIORITY FOR ON-TIME REPORTING – The Denver Sheriff Department should take steps to increase the priority of on-time grant reporting – such as including the timing of reports in employees’ performance metrics, creating desk-level procedures for grant reporting, or using calendar reminders to inform staff when report due dates are coming up.

AGENCY ACTION

Original target date for completion: July 31, 2020

The Department of Public Safety decided to implement Asana, a project management system, for grant reporting reminders. Asana contains report due dates for the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant, which populate on a calendar and are assigned as tasks on the grant administrators’ dashboards. Because the department implemented a system to remind staff of report due dates, this recommendation is fully implemented.

FINDING 2 | The Denver Police Department Did Not Take Appropriate Measures to Identify Subrecipients of Grant Funding

Recommendation 2.1

COMPLETE REQUIRED WORKSHEET – The Denver Police Department should complete the “Subrecipient vs. Contractor” worksheet associated with the city’s Fiscal Accountability Rule 9.2 to determine whether the District Attorney’s Office is a subrecipient of its Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant funding and to document this decision. To determine proper classification, the police department could consult with the U.S. Department of Justice and/or other city agencies, such as the City Attorney’s Office or the Department of Finance.



FULLY IMPLEMENTED

AGENCY ACTION

Original target date for completion: Aug. 1, 2020

Department of Public Safety staff completed a memo that documents the determination of the District Attorney’s Office as a subrecipient of the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant. While they did not complete the exact worksheet document, the determining factors in the memo match those of the worksheet, and the worksheet says that “the original signed worksheet, or other similar documentation” should be maintained by the department.

Public Safety staff also said they were advised by the Budget Management Office to use the memo in lieu of the worksheet, and Budget Management Office staff confirmed this was acceptable. Therefore, the recommendation is considered fully implemented.

Recommendation 2.2

REPORT SUBRECIPIENT DETERMINATION – If the results of the “Subrecipient vs. Contractor” worksheet indicate the District Attorney’s Office is a subrecipient of Denver Police Department grant funds, the police department should report the District Attorney’s Office as a subrecipient in all future reports of ongoing grants and in all future grant applications for the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program.



FULLY IMPLEMENTED

AGENCY ACTION

Original target date for completion: Aug. 1, 2020

The Department of Justice approved a modification for the Department of Public Safety's Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant program to move all District Attorney's Office positions and benefits to subawards. Public Safety also now includes a category in its budget for subawards to track the money allocated to the District Attorney's Office.

Because the Department of Justice was notified of the subrecipient and because the Department of Public Safety is now budgeting subawards, this recommendation is fully implemented.

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