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# US slashes Hub grants for security

The Boston Globe

## Antiterrorism funds cut by nearly a third

By Charlie Savage and Donovan Slack, Globe Staff | June 1, 2006

WASHINGTON -- The Boston area this year will receive nearly one-third less federal grant money to help buy equipment and train emergency workers for possible terrorist attacks, the Department of Homeland Security announced yesterday.

The federal government will give Boston and its surrounding communities about \$18.2 million in urban area antiterrorism grants, down from about \$26 million last year. As a whole, Massachusetts will receive about \$41 million from several homeland security grant programs, down from \$58.8 million last year, the department said.

The cuts were echoed in other major cities as well. The two cities that were attacked by terrorists on Sept. 11, 2001 -- New York and Washington, D.C. -- lost about 40 percent of their funding. At the same time, several smaller cities, including Louisville, Ky., and Omaha, saw their funds rise.

Homeland Security officials said the smaller grants to major cities were the result of two factors: Congress cut about \$500 million from the overall grant budget this year, including about \$100 million from the program that funded high-risk urban areas.

In addition, officials said, the department used a new system for evaluating applications for grant money. The formula employed a more sophisticated analysis of the risk posed by a potential terrorist attack, as well as the quality of the proposed spending plans submitted by each applicant city.

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Boston has used its federal grant money to fund extra training and drills for police and firefighters, improvements to the security of roads and bridges that may be potential targets, and upgrades to communication systems.

Funds have been used for one-time expenses including 2,000 radios to enhance interagency communications and for ongoing programs such as the Boston Regional Intelligence Center that tracks crime data in nine Boston-area cities. City officials said last night they are not sure exactly how the cuts will affect those programs.

“It’s too early to tell how this will impact specifically our current activities,” said Seth Gitell, spokesman for Mayor Thomas M. Menino.

Menino said this year’s funding will be enough to address the city’s “most critical needs,” but he called on the federal government to reverse the nationwide cuts.

“While these resources will be put to good use and help Boston stay a national leader in preparedness, I strongly encourage the administration and the congressional leadership to restore [the cuts] from the urban areas program,” Menino said in a statement released last night.

Officials did not explain in detail why the new risk-based formula resulted in fewer dollars being allocated to major cities that lost funds, or how various funding proposals were evaluated. As a result, the cuts provoked expressions of outrage and bewilderment from lawmakers representing such areas.

The Republican chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee, Peter King of New York, called the decision to cut New York City’s grants “indefensible and disgraceful.” King has previously attacked the Bush administration over its handling of other homeland security issues, including the failed deal to put six major US ports under management by a Dubai company. [Continued...](#)

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