



April 24, 2026

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Collins, Ranking Member Murray, Chair Cole, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

On behalf of the Major County Sheriffs of America (MCSA), I write to request strong, sustained funding for critical law enforcement, public safety, and homeland security programs in Fiscal Year 2027 appropriations.

MCSA represents the largest Sheriff's Offices in the nation, serving counties with populations exceeding 400,000. Together, our members protect more than 100 million Americans and are on the front lines of addressing violent crime, fentanyl trafficking, cyber threats, terrorism, and border security challenges that require sustained and reliable federal partnership.

As you develop Fiscal Year 2027 appropriations, we highlight the following priorities:

National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN)

MCSA requests funding for the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) at no less than \$110 million in Fiscal Year 2027 to sustain operations and expand capacity nationwide.

Administered by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), NIBIN is a critical investigative tool that connects firearm evidence across crime scenes, identifies serial shooters, and generates actionable leads in violent crime investigations. For many jurisdictions, particularly those without local forensic capacity, it is the only system capable of linking gun crimes across local, state, and regional boundaries.

This level of funding is necessary to sustain the system, ensure the timely processing of ballistic evidence, and expand access to additional jurisdictions. Without sustained investment, agencies will face delays in analysis, missed investigative leads, and a reduced ability to identify and disrupt patterns of violent crime.

Drones for Public Safety and Counter Unmanned Aircraft Systems

Law enforcement agencies are increasingly encountering unauthorized or malicious drone activity that can disrupt operations, interfere with emergency response, and pose significant public safety risks. This includes the use of drones to deliver contraband into correctional facilities, creating serious security risks for incarcerated populations and staff. Addressing this threat requires access to counter unmanned aircraft systems capabilities and properly trained personnel to deploy them safely and effectively.

Congress took an important step through passage of the *Safer Skies Act*, which authorizes state and local agencies to carry out counter drone activities. However, those authorities depend on access to Federal Bureau of Investigation certified training and approved technology. Without dedicated resources for training, agencies cannot operationalize these authorities or ensure personnel are prepared to use these tools in complex, real world environments.

At the same time, recent Federal Communications Commission actions have limited the availability of certain foreign manufactured drone systems. As a result, agencies risk losing critical capabilities unless they are able to transition to approved, U.S.-made or trusted alternatives, which requires new investment to replace existing fleets and maintain operational capability.

Public safety agencies deploy unmanned aircraft systems to locate missing persons, document crime scenes, monitor large scale events, and support disaster response. These systems are now a core operational tool across law enforcement and emergency response.

These challenges underscore the need for dedicated federal support.

Dedicated funding is essential for public safety drone programs, counter unmanned aircraft systems equipment, and the training required to deploy these capabilities safely and effectively.

High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Program

MCSA requests robust, sustained funding for the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) Program at no less than current levels and continued placement within the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP).

HIDTA provides the framework for coordination among federal, state, and local agencies working to disrupt drug trafficking networks, supporting intelligence sharing, joint operations, and real-time collaboration across jurisdictions. Its locally driven structure ensures resources are aligned to emerging threats and that state and local partners play a central role in operational decision making. Maintaining HIDTA within ONDCP is essential to preserving this model, sustaining effective coordination across all levels of government, and ensuring the program remains focused on its core mission of disrupting drug trafficking and protecting communities.

Department of Justice Grant Programs Supporting Local Law Enforcement

MCSA requests strong, sustained funding for core Department of Justice (DOJ) grant programs that support state and local law enforcement operations.

The Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program (Byrne JAG) provides flexible funding that agencies use to support task forces, purchase equipment, deliver training, and advance locally driven public safety initiatives. The COPS Hiring Program (CHP) supports hiring and retention, helping agencies address staffing shortages and maintain community policing capacity.

Programs such as the Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Use Program (COSSUP), the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program (JMHCP), and the Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) Program support coordinated responses to substance use and behavioral health challenges, reduce recidivism, and improve outcomes for individuals in crisis.

The STOP School Violence Act programs, administered through the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) and the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), support threat assessment, reporting systems, and prevention strategies that improve school safety.

Continued investment is also needed in core operational capabilities, including body worn cameras, digital forensics, and high tech crime programs. High tech crime programs provide the training and technical assistance needed to analyze digital evidence, investigate cyber enabled crime, and address increasingly complex technology driven offenses that are now central to nearly every major investigation, including the investigation of Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC).

Support for forensic science capacity is also critical. For example, the Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program helps state and local laboratories process evidence, reduce backlogs, and ensure timely, reliable forensic analysis that is essential to solving crimes.

Officer safety and wellness programs remain essential. The Bulletproof Vest Partnership (BVP), the Preventing Violence Against Law Enforcement and Ensuring Officer Resilience and Survivability Program (VALOR), the National Suicide Awareness for Law Enforcement Officers Program (SAFLEO), and the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program (PSOB) provide critical support to officers and their families.

MCSA also supports continued funding for training programs authorized under the Law Enforcement De-escalation Training Act, which equip officers with practical tools to safely manage high risk encounters.

Finally, the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP) provides reimbursement to local jurisdictions for incarceration costs and remains an important component of federal support.

Homeland Security Priorities

MCSA strongly urges robust funding for the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) and the State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP).

These programs are the backbone of federal support for state and local preparedness. They support critical capabilities in threat prevention, intelligence and information sharing, interoperable communications, and coordinated response across jurisdictions. From day-to-day operations to large-scale events and complex incidents, UASI and SHSGP ensure that agencies have the tools, training, and coordination necessary to protect their communities.

MCSA has serious concerns with any proposed nonfederal cost match requirements. Imposing additional cost burdens would restrict access to these funds, particularly for jurisdictions with limited resources, and ultimately weaken national preparedness by reducing participation where support is often needed most.

Overdose Prevention and Behavioral Health Programs

MCSA requests continued support for prevention, treatment, and recovery programs administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

These programs support first responders, expand access to treatment, and provide the data needed to identify and respond to emerging drug threats. They also support the distribution of naloxone, which law enforcement officers and other first responders use every day to reverse overdoses and save lives. In many communities, this support is the difference between life and death.

Training and Technical Assistance

MCSA supports continued investment in training and technical assistance programs that ensure federal funding translates into real, on-the-ground operational capability.

These programs are the bridge between funding and field impact, helping ensure resources are delivered, implemented, and used effectively. Training equips personnel to use new tools and technologies, while technical assistance helps agencies integrate them into daily operations.

This support is especially important for smaller and rural agencies that may lack the capacity to compete for and manage federal funding, ensuring resources reach the field and are used effectively across all communities.

Federal Agency Structure and Stakeholder Engagement

MCSA urges careful consideration and direct engagement with state and local stakeholders before any changes to federal agency structure or grant administration are finalized.

Proposals affecting Department of Justice grant programs, including potential consolidation of the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office), the Office of Justice Programs (OJP), and the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), would directly affect how agencies access funding, training, and technical assistance. Similarly, proposed changes to Department of Homeland Security components, including the Office of Intelligence and Analysis and the Office of State and Local Law Enforcement, could impact how intelligence, information, and operational support are delivered to state and local partners.

These entities are the primary pathways through which federal resources, expertise, and intelligence support reach the field, including through fusion centers and day-to-day coordination with local agencies. Changes to their structure or function can directly affect operations and information sharing.

Any restructuring should be developed in close consultation with the stakeholders who use and administer these programs.

Federal Grant Administration

MCSA encourages continued oversight of federal grant administration to ensure funding is delivered in a timely and predictable manner.

Delays in posting Notices of Funding Opportunity (NOFOs) and in disbursing awarded funds create planning challenges for agencies and slow the deployment of resources. When timelines are unclear or inconsistent, it becomes more difficult to align hiring, procurement, and program implementation with available funding. Timely NOFO releases and predictable disbursement processes are essential to ensuring appropriated funds are put to use efficiently and without delay.

Taken together, these investments and policies strengthen the ability of state and local agencies to prevent, investigate, and respond to evolving threats and to protect the safety of communities nationwide.

MCSA appreciates your continued leadership and looks forward to working with you to advance these priorities in the Fiscal Year 2027 appropriations process.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob Gualtieri', written in a cursive style.

Sheriff Bob Gualtieri
MCSA President