

Antioch gets \$1.5 million grant to hire 5 police officers

By Paul Bugarino Contra Costa Times Contra Costa Times

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Antioch will soon have a few more police officers on the beat.

The East Contra Costa city received a \$1.5 million federal grant this week, which will allow it to hire five additional police officers.

Antioch was the lone city in the county to receive the grant from the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. It was one of 220 cities nationwide and 34 in the state selected for the funds.

Antioch police Chief Allan Cantando said he was ecstatic to hear the city had received the grant money. The police department, which is currently down 35 sworn officers from its allotted 126, was looking to hire back five officers.

Now it can double that.

"It's certainly welcome news and will help us hire more officers and with our overall goal of reducing crime on our streets," he said.

The city received the maximum it was allowed under the grant.

As part of the federal program's criteria, Antioch will fill police positions with veterans who have served at least six months in the military since Sept. 11, 2001.

Details of how the city will fund its 20 percent matching portion of the grant were unclear, City Manager Jim Jakel said at Tuesday's City Council meeting.

"At this point, all the information we have (received is) pretty much at the press release level," he said.

City leaders were elated at the news.

"It's awesome. We've been looking at creative ways to try and boost public safety and bring back code enforcement. This is a positive step in the right direction," Mayor Pro Tem Wade Harper said.

Mayor Jim Davis credited police staff and the city's lobbyist in Washington, D.C. for pushing hard to show the city's need.

The grant will pay for salary and benefits for the additional officers for three years.

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