

Frequently Asked Questions:

City of Chicago Sues Trump Justice Department on Funding Cut to Sanctuary Cities

Question: Why did the City of Chicago sue the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) on Monday, August 7, 2017?

Answer: The City of Chicago is suing the DOJ because the DOJ has put new conditions on federal funding we receive under the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (“Byrne Grant”). This is funding the City of Chicago has received since 2005. However, this year, the Trump Administration is now imposing new conditions on this funding that require Chicago to (1) allow U.S. Department of Homeland Security (“DHS”) personnel unlimited access to Chicago’s jails in order to interrogate arrestees about whether they are lawfully in the United States, and (2) provide DHS with at least 48 hours’ notice prior to an arrestee’s release. These conditions effectively federalize local detention facilities and could violate the Fourth Amendment in instances where detainees are otherwise eligible for release from local police custody.

Question: What is Chicago asking the court to do?

Answer: Chicago is asking the court to block the two new conditions on the Byrne Grant, as well as declare that Chicago’s Welcoming City Ordinance complies with federal law.

Question: How much funding would the City of Chicago lose?

Answer: The City of Chicago would lose \$2.2 million dollars in public safety funding under the Byrne Grant.

Question: What is this funding currently used for?

Answer: Chicago has used Byrne Grant funds for a variety of purposes that benefit public safety including the purchase of SWAT equipment, police vehicles and radios.

Question: What makes Chicago a welcoming city (also known as a “sanctuary city”)?

Answer: Chicago’s Welcoming City ordinance prioritizes effective local law enforcement and crime prevention over federal civil immigration issues. The Welcoming City Ordinance promotes public safety by ensuring that no city resident, regardless of their status, is afraid to cooperate with law enforcement, report criminal activity to the police, serve as a witness in court or seek help as a victim of crime.

Question: When are applications for Fiscal Year 2017 Edward Byrne grants due?

Answer: September 5, 2017.

Question: Who was Edward Byrne?

Answer: Edward Byrne was a New York City police officer who was murdered in 1988 while on duty protecting a Guyanese immigrant who had reported illegal activity to police.