



City of Portsmouth, N.H.



Police Department

Mark D. Newport
CHIEF OF POLICE

January 30, 2025

Office of U.S. Senator Maggie Hassan
1589 Elm Street, 3rd Floor
Manchester, NH 03101

Dear Senator Hassan,

I am writing to ask for your support and assistance in addressing the freeze on federal government grants and its impact on Portsmouth and our surrounding communities. The Portsmouth Police Department depends on federal grants to fund programs impacting local, seacoast, and statewide communities.

Locally, federal grant funds are utilized for bulletproof vests for officers and enforcement patrols on our roadways, which include speed, distracted driving, DUI, and pedestrian/bike enforcement. With the help of federal dollars, we offer victim witness advocate services, staff training, and law enforcement equipment such as body-worn cameras and investigative equipment.

The Seacoast Emergency Response Team is made up of 14 NH communities. Federal funds are awarded to Portsmouth Police to fund equipment for the team, which benefits all the participating communities when the team responds to an incident or provides augmented security at highly attended events on the Seacoast.

Statewide, the Portsmouth Police Department heads up the NH Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force. This grant funds positions, investigative equipment used in its centralized Manchester forensic lab, and investigative overtime. This funding is crucial to NH ICAC's efforts to investigate, prosecute, and develop effective responses to internet-based sexual crimes against children.

Portsmouth Police current federal awards total \$1,952,719, of which \$1,173,969 has been expended, but not all reimbursed yet. The City still awaits \$593,981 in federal reimbursements for those expended funds through 12/31/24. In addition, the \$778,750 remaining balance is already in use for planned training and equipment, and three staff members were paid either wholly or partially with federal funds.

The loss of these funds would reduce staff, significantly impact investigations into internet-based sexual crimes against children that have skyrocketed and continue to climb, and impact services for victims of crime, roadway safety, and the safety of our officers.

Law enforcement is not just a local concept. Portsmouth has over 32 mutual aid agreements, including towns north into Maine and south to Boston, MA, and west of the city. In addition, the US Department of Homeland Security office, in Manchester, NH, is based at the same location as the ICAC computer forensic lab. Homeland Security staff utilize this lab and available resources for their own investigations.

Federal funds may be awarded to Portsmouth, NH, but the net benefits are far-reaching for the investment in equipment, training, and staff the grants support.

We would appreciate any assistance you could offer in releasing the anticipated freeze of federal grant funds.

Thank you,

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

Mark Newport, Chief of Police