

## Comments from ND Sheriffs on Back the Blue Grants

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### Increased Deputy morale

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The recruitment bonus helped us hire a couple correctional officer. The bonus caught there eye and applied. The staff that got the retention bonus felt valued and wanted to stay. This was a great program for the smaller agencies that could not give out the big yearly pay.

The Billings County Sheriff's Office utilized this grant for retention bonuses of current officers. The grant was distributed equally amongst the officers to show appreciation for the work they've done and continue to do. It was well received and appreciated by the officers. We retained all of our officers, so it appears to be working.

It helped bridge some of the income gaps that Golden Valley County just cannot afford. For example, one of my deputies used the money to work on the exterior of his house, and two of the deputies used the money to purchase new duty weapons. Initially, I was concerned about other County Offices seeing that the Sheriff Office had received a bonus, and being jealous. It seems that beings the funds came from the State, and not the County Commissioners, the other county employees did not seem to care.

Although i feel the funds would better be better spent on retirement programs for law enforcement, such as increased multipliers, or health care for retired officers from 55 to medicare, this program is also beneficial as well. It seems especially beneficial for smaller jurisdictions and for corrections. Corrections officers are extremely under paid in the state of north dakota and this program should focus primarily on those positions and those law enforcement officials employed in the smaller jurisdictions.

Everyone appreciates a monetary bonus, whether for retention or as an incentive for applying for public service. These grant funds add a needed level of assistance to our county in an attempt to maintain our current staff and help in attempting to gain new hires, that would not be available to us otherwise.

It was an appreciated Thank you from the State. During the grant period it helped to retain the staff and they were given equal payments over the two year period. One new Deputy was hired. He was given a payment after completing his FTO and 6 month probation. The remaining funds were given to everyone at the end of 2024.

The funds were used to retain; however, both deputies left for other law enforcement positions

With our limited budget, it was able to help bridge the gap in our pay to others pay to help retain staff that may have otherwise been looking to go elsewhere for higher pay.

It helped to show our officers that they are valued.

Our County falls under the Garcia Ruling to where we are unable to provide overtime pay so the retention bonus helped with the extra work the Deputies provide.

It was very important in retaining the staff we have.

The grant allowed us to recruit one deputy and train him, give a sign on bonus to another deputy and the rest was split between all the other deputies.

It helped us compete with agencies that already have a sign on bonus because we are a smaller agency and don't have the funding to do so on a regular basis. It also helped with retention of our more seasoned & trained staff to keep them in our community and showing them, they are appreciated.

The back the blue grant was beneficial to us as an agency as it has helped us to retain a lot of the staff that we have with between 1-4 years of experience, which I believe can also be accredited to the leadership team that we

have established, and the relationships that we have formed with our staff. As for recruiting I believe that it was beneficial in way of us being able to offer something to new hires to show our appreciation for the jobs that they do. Some other numbers that I feel may be beneficial, our facility has not lost an employee with over 4 years experience since 2022, mostly in part we just don't have employees with that longevity as of yet. We have a total of 12 employees with less than one year of experience, 9 employees with between 1-2 years of experience, 4 employees with between 2-3 years of experience and 1 employee with over 8 years experience. Of course these numbers are only based on this time of employment, when I feel that we would potentially get a better look at the actual number if we factored in previous employment or total length of employment within corrections. Of our 53% turnover in 2024, four of the employees that left us are back and still employed with us today, partly thanks to the back the blue grant in my opinion. We have 12 employees that have been with us prior to 2024, and 10 employees that were hired during 2024 that we have managed to keep employed with us thanks to the back the blue grant. In addition, 4 of 4 employees that we have hired in 2025 are still with us, we have not lost anyone that we have hired yet this year, which I feel is in part due to the culture that the back the blue grant was able to help us create in our facility. I hope that these numbers have been helpful.

It assisted our agency in retaining some of our correctional officers who were looking for other employment. We were able to increase their pay with adjustments approved by the County Commission and provide them with a retention bonus.

it was not. no one left. The money would be better spent in 1/2 % increase in Pers retirement funding

This grant was used as retention bonuses and was greatly appreciated by the staff. It is hard to keep a full staff in a small rural agency.

I'm not sure there is a clear way to quantify the usefulness of the retention bonus staff received. To my knowledge there hasn't been any indications the bonus resulted in someone choosing to stay with our office that otherwise would have left.

We used it as a retention bonus and all recipients were much appreciative and this kept one officer from seeking other employment.

I don't know if it made any difference when people decided to leave. What we did learn is that our employees recruit the best candidates and we are looking at implementing recruitment bonuses for staff that recruits successful candidates.

It was greatly appreciated, but I feel the money could be used to make law enforcement more attractive for long term retention beyond 4 years such as increasing the multiplier for retirement. For the small Counties the Bonus helps but it still doesn't compete with the high salaries of the bigger jurisdictions.

The deputies really appreciated it and helped in retention

Our county utilized it to retain employees through the biennium. We are disbursing based off retention after notification of the funds being received. Our office is currently fully staffed and has been for the longest period in the last 8 years. I think it assisted with retention but if it was a larger sum it would hold more weight. I also think it would be a significant improvement if the legislature set the amount per officer and required eligible officers to complete a form and have it signed off by their department head in order to receive the funds. I think agencies utilized the previous funds in ways that were not intended by the state.