


Office of the Attorney General

Washington, D. C. 20530

May 10, 2001

MEMORANDUM

TO: Heads of Department Components

FROM: Attorney General John Ashcroft 

SUBJECT: Guidance for Preparing FY 2003 Budgets

This memo serves to provide you with guidance regarding the FY 2003 budget development process.

The budget planning process requires great focus and discipline. Our objective is to develop a sound, reasonable Department of Justice budget submission that focuses on the priorities set forth and firmly supports our primary mission to enforce the law and defend the interests of the United States, ensuring fair and impartial administration of justice for all Americans.

I. Framework for Budget Planning

As you know, the mission of the Department is to "enforce the law and defend the interests of the United States according to the law; to provide federal leadership in preventing and controlling crime; to seek just punishment for those guilty of unlawful behavior; to administer and enforce the nation's immigration laws fairly and effectively; and to ensure fair and impartial administration of justice for all Americans." Component budgets should reflect the pursuit of these goals and related objectives.

First, the Justice Department's Strategic Plan for FY 2001-2005 is the "blueprint" that will guide the formulation of 2003 component program budget estimates and performance planning. Requests for additional resources or redirection of existing resources should be focused on the objectives outlined below (see Section II).

Second, our performance plans will be used to evaluate the successes of each component, and the Department as a whole, in accomplishing its mission. Measurable results as delineated in the Department's stand-alone Performance Plans and the performance information that your component includes with its budget submission will weigh heavily in the budget decision making process.

II. Strategic Goals and Objectives

Strategic Goal #1: Keep America safe by enforcing federal criminal laws.

Priority Objectives for FY 2003:

- Reduce the incidence of gun violence.
- Reduce the trafficking of illegal drugs.

Strategic Goal #2: Prevent and reduce crime and violence by assisting state, tribal, local and community-based programs.

Priority Objectives for FY 2003:

- Reduce the incidence of gun violence.
- Reduce the trafficking and use of illegal drugs.
- Reform and reorganize the management of grant programs to meet the challenges of proper dispensation and monitoring of funds, elimination of overpayments, and implementation of greater security measures to reduce the risk of fraud.

Strategic Goal #3: Protect the rights and interests of the American people by legal representation, enforcement of federal laws and defense of U.S. interests.

Priority Objective for FY 2003:

- Reduce racial discrimination and promote racial reconciliation through vigorous enforcement of civil rights laws and development of cooperative prevention programs.

Strategic Goal #4: Fairly and effectively administer the immigration and naturalization laws of the United States.

Priority Objectives for FY 2003:

- Restructure INS operations to:
 1. Provide better services, including a substantial reduction in the benefits processing backlog.
 2. Secure America's borders, including reducing the incidence of alien smuggling.

Strategic Goal #5: Protect American society by providing for the safe, humane and secure confinement of persons in federal custody.

Priority Objectives for FY 2003:

- Reduce prison overcrowding through efficient management, state, local and private agreements, and construction of additional federal detention facilities.
- Develop and maintain the necessary infrastructure for detention and incarceration of federal detainees and sentenced prisoners.
- Develop and implement plan for drug-free prisons.

Strategic Goal #6: Protect the federal judiciary and provide critical support to the federal justice system to ensure it operates effectively.

Priority Objective for FY 2003:

- Protect the rights of crime victims and assist them in moving through the processes of the federal justice system.

Strategic Goal #7: Ensure excellence, accountability and integrity in the management and conduct of Department of Justice programs.

Priority Objectives for FY 2003:

- Strengthen internal financial and computer systems' integrity and security.
- Develop and maintain grant management accountability mechanisms to ensure proper dispensation and monitoring of funds.

III. Process and Timeline

Component budget estimates shall be provided to the Justice Management Division no later than June 25, 2001.

As reflected in the President's blueprint, the Administration is committed to moderating budget growth. Our budget approach must be modified here at the Department in response to that commitment, as we will need to evaluate how to operate under limited growth while meeting our key objectives.

Therefore, components are to submit three separate budget estimates assuming FY03 funding at (a) 90% of the President's FY02 budget level as submitted to Congress (FY02 level), (b) 100% of FY02 level, and (c) 120% of FY02 level. Additional instructions will be provided to your executive officers and budget officers in the coming days.

Recognizing that changes to one part of the criminal justice system may affect other parts of the system, each budget submission should reflect the impact that the changes in an individual component will have on other relevant components. Therefore, I expect that your requests will be coordinated with counterparts to ensure that resource needs are viewed systemically. Resource requests that have not been appropriately vetted within the Department will not be considered.

Thank you for your cooperation in this endeavor. I look forward to working with you on developing a budget that advances our mission and effectively and efficiently serves all Americans.