

## Backgrounder

# Join the campaign for a more equitable police funding model

AUMA is calling on municipalities across Alberta to join us in advocating for the Government of Alberta to implement a new, more equitable police funding model.

## Overview of current police funding model

Under the Police Act, the Alberta government is responsible for providing police services to those municipalities with populations of 5,000 or less, as well as to all municipal districts and counties, at no direct cost to them. The province meets this obligation by contracting the RCMP to police these communities through the Provincial Police Service Agreement (PPSA), signed by the Alberta and federal governments. Under the PPSA, the province is responsible for 70 per cent of the cost of policing, while the federal government pays 30 per cent. The PPSA also provides police services to Métis settlements, and to First Nations communities where other policing arrangements have not been made.

Some urban municipalities with populations of 5,000 or less have contracted the RCMP for enhanced policing to deal with special situations, or have either by themselves or in cooperation with other municipalities retained Peace Officers to provide an additional policing presence in their communities

Urban municipalities with populations over 5,000 have three options for providing police services in their communities:

- Develop a contract with the federal or provincial government or another municipality for the provision of policing services;
- Establish a stand-alone municipal police service; or
- Establish a regional police service with other municipalities, which may include the province.

The most common municipal policing arrangement in Alberta is the use of contract policing. Under this arrangement, the RCMP provides policing services to a municipality through the Municipal Police Service Agreement (MPSA). Under an MPSA, a proportion of the costs of policing are borne by the federal government, depending on the size of the municipality's population as shown in the following table.

Municipal Population	Policing Arrangement	Municipal Responsibility for Policing Costs
Over 5,000	Stand-alone or regional municipal police service	Municipality pays 100%  Municipal costs offset by MPAG provided by the Government of Alberta
Over 15,000	Municipal Police Service Agreement with RCMP	Municipality pays 90%  Federal government pays 10%  Municipal costs offset by MPAG provided by the Government of Alberta
5,000 to 15,000	Municipal Police Service Agreement with RCMP	Municipality pays 70%  Federal government pays 30%  Municipal costs offset by MPAG provided by the Government of Alberta

The province provides funding to municipalities to help meet the costs of policing services through the Municipal Police Assistance Grant (MPAG) Program. All municipalities that pay some or all of the costs of their policing qualify for this program. Recipients must provide reports on how the grant funds were used. The grant is issued annually to all eligible municipalities and no application is required.

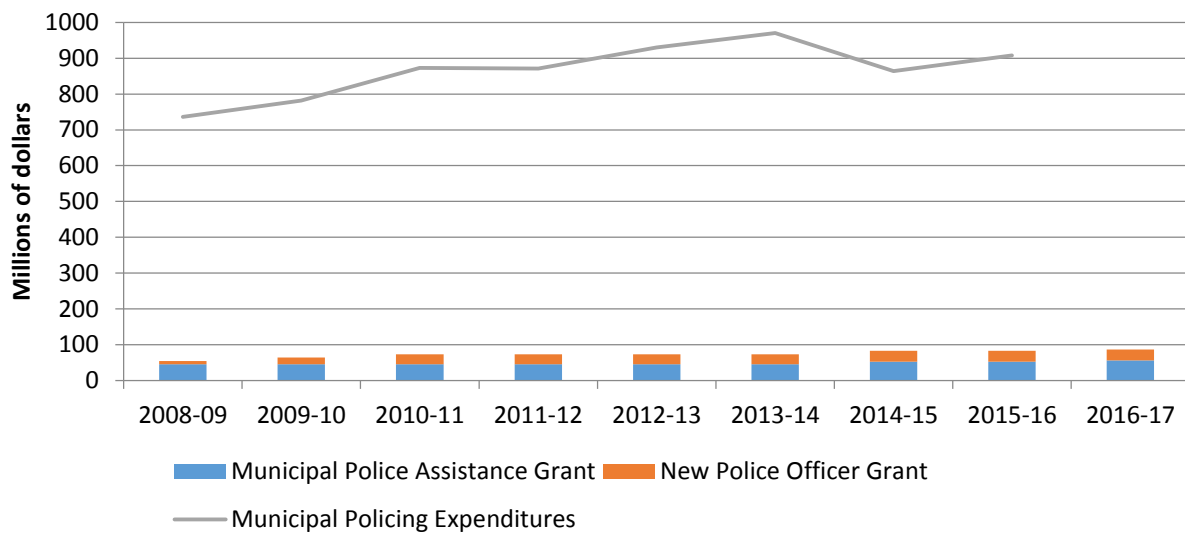
MPAG financial assistance is based on the following thresholds:

- Towns and cities with a population from 5,001 to 16,666 receive a \$200,000 base payment plus an additional \$8.00 per capita.
- Cities and urban service areas with a population from 16,667 to 50,000 receive a \$100,000 base payment plus \$14.00 per capita.
- Cities and urban service areas with a population over 50,000 receive grants of \$16.00 per capita.

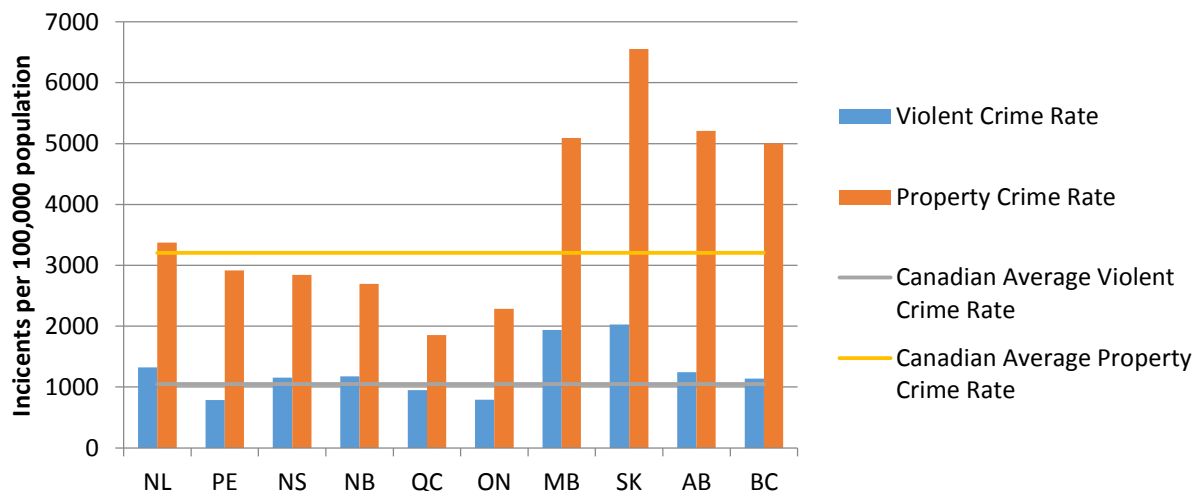
## Why action is needed

Currently, policing costs are only paid by urban municipalities with a population greater than 5,000. Small urban and all municipal districts and counties are exempt. Although the province provides some support through the MPAG Program, there have been chronic shortfalls in funding as the program has not kept pace with growing populations and increasing crime rates, as shown in the following figures.

### Provincial Policing Grants Compared to Municipal Policing Expenditures in Alberta



### Canadian Crime Rates, 2016



While municipal policing expenditures in Alberta increased 23.3% from 2008 to 2016, the MPAG only increased 15.8 per cent in that time. Meanwhile, crime rates in Alberta have remained high, with both our violent crime rate and property crime rate above the national averages in 2016.

## The solution

The inequitable responsibility for funding police services has frustrated many of AUMA's members for several years. In 2010, AUMA consulted with our members on potential approaches and made a number of submissions to the province, including the following principles for equitable police funding model:

1. A fair, flexible and equitable model should be developed that:
  - Ensures the level of provincial funding is sufficient to meet the standard levels of service.
  - Requires services beyond the standard level to be funded by the jurisdiction wanting the additional services.
  - Recognizes the unique needs of each municipality (i.e. specialized services).
2. The model should encourage efficiencies by:
  - Using other mechanisms to address municipal capacity issues.
  - Encouraging regional policing models.
3. The transition to a new model should:
  - Ensure an adequate impact assessment analysis is completed.
  - Ensure that effective education and consultation mechanisms are available to Alberta's municipalities.
  - Allow for an adequate notice period.
4. Revenues created from the new model should be reinvested in public safety:
  - Ensure any additional revenue collected from an "everyone pays" model is returned to the protection of public safety.
  - Ensure fine revenues stay in the communities they are generated in.

AUMA continues to support the "everyone should pay" concept. This means using a funding formula based on population and property assessment, with any resulting surplus funds being used for crime prevention and response. Under this model, approximately \$30 to \$35 million in police funding would be cost-shared among all municipalities.

## Get involved

AUMA has developed a [letter template](#) that you can download and adapt to send to your MLA outlining the urgent need for a new, more equitable police funding model.

If you have any questions about the letter writing campaign or AUMA's approach to police funding, please email [advocacy@auma.ca](mailto:advocacy@auma.ca).