

WORLD-HERALD BUREAU

WASHINGTON - Federal grants to state and local governments in such areas as homeland security , community development and law enforcement assistance would be trimmed under the budget proposal sent Monday by President Bush to Congress.

The proposal is a plan suggested by the White House. Actual federal spending could look significantly different after the Democrats who control Capitol Hill are finished with the budget-writing process.

Still, the presidential blueprint serves as a starting point for spending discussions.

Bush wants to keep spending unrelated to defense or homeland security essentially flat as part of his overall goal of eliminating the budget deficit by 2012. One consequence of that approach would be less money reaching cities and states for a variety of programs.

For example , Nebraska received nearly \$24 million in homeland security grants in fiscal year 2006 , which included more than \$8 million as a special urban area security grant for Omaha .

Under Bush's proposal , Nebraska would receive only about \$3.4 million in 2008.

Lt. Gov. Rick Sheehy said that over time , homeland security grant funding to states should decline if they are doing their jobs correctly , but not by as much as under Bush's proposal. Sheehy , the state's homeland security coordinator , said lower funding levels would make it difficult to implement the programs that the state is required to carry out as part of national preparedness plans.

Omaha Mayor Mike Fahey's office said the homeland security grant cuts would be especially difficult now that the city was dropped from a special urban area funding program.

Iowa received \$16 million in homeland security grants in 2006 , but would receive only \$3.9 million in 2008 under the president's proposal.

Bush's plan also calls for about a 30 percent reduction from 2006 levels in community development block grants that are used for housing rehabilitation and construction , job creation and retention , and improvements to public infrastructure.

Some local law enforcement assistance programs would be combined and their total spending reduced. That includes the COPS program , which has paid for school resource officers and technology improvements , and Byrne-JAG grants , which fund anti-drug and anti-gang efforts.

Nebraska and Iowa lawmakers were still reviewing the budget proposal.

Rep. Lee Terry , R-Neb. , said the president delivered what he promised: a very austere budget. Terry said he would push to restore funding in areas such as the Byrne-JAG program.

Rep. Jeff Fortenberry , R-Neb. , said , "The challenge before Congress is to prudentially manage revenues while delivering important services , particularly to those in need. . . . I am pleased we are moving in the direction of a balanced budget."

Rep. Adrian Smith , R-Neb. , said the proposal offers a responsible plan. "But Congress must have the courage to take a hard look at this proposal and what it could mean for all of America ," he said. "This is

exactly what I intend to do in the coming weeks."

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