

Council Agenda Item 26-XXXX



MEETING DATE: July 27, 2026

SUBJECT/TITLE: Acceptance of 2026 High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Grant

SUBMITTED BY: Kerry Cronin-Jones

RECOMMENDATION: Approve.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION: 19-0787R, 20-0489R, 21-0163R, 22-0409R, 22-1030R, 23-0212R, 24-0355R, 25-0462R

BACKGROUND: The City of Duluth was designated a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) in 2018. This federal designation provides funding and access to resources that support the work of the Lake Superior Violent Offender Task Force (LSVOTF) through participation in the HIDTA Program. The Duluth Police Department participates in the Task Force, and the City of Duluth serves as its fiscal agent.

The 2026 HIDTA award will support Task Force operations, including training, travel, supplies, and other operational needs necessary to investigate and disrupt organized drug trafficking activity affecting the region.

Participation in the HIDTA Program provides several important benefits to the City and its law enforcement partners, including:

- Investigative coordination among federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies investigating major drug trafficking organizations. Participation provides access to coordination resources that help agencies identify connections between investigations, strengthen case development, improve officer safety, and support effective information sharing while operating within applicable laws, policies, and privacy protections.
- Regional investigative deconfliction across jurisdictional boundaries to help agencies coordinate enforcement activities, avoid conflicting operational actions, reduce duplicative investigative efforts, and make the best use of limited public safety resources.
- A focus on major trafficking organizations by directing investigative efforts toward disrupting and dismantling significant drug trafficking networks and their associated financial operations, rather than concentrating enforcement on lower-level drug possession offenses.

Acceptance of this grant enables the LSVOTF to continue leveraging federal resources that strengthen regional partnerships, improve coordination across jurisdictions, enhance investigative effectiveness, and support the City's ongoing efforts to protect public safety, while imposing no additional cost on the City's General Fund.

BUDGET/FISCAL IMPACT: Acceptance of this grant will have no impact on the City's General Fund. Grant funding supports LSVOTF operational expenses, reducing costs that would otherwise be paid from the Task Force's operational account, which is currently funded through forfeiture proceeds.

OPTIONS:

- Approve: Accept the 2026 HIDTA grant award, allowing the City to continue utilizing federal funding and collaborative resources to support coordinated regional investigations targeting organized drug trafficking.
- Do Not Approve: Decline the grant award, reducing available resources for the LSVOTF and limiting the Task Force's ability to participate in coordinated regional investigations targeting organized drug trafficking organizations.

NECESSARY ACTION: Approve acceptance of the 2026 High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) grant award.

ATTACHMENTS: Document A - Notice of Award