

Cost Of Trade Talks Security Pegged At Nearly \$24 Million

Total Is \$1.4 Million Higher Than Predicted

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MIAMI -- Security for the Free Trade Area of the Americas summit last November in Miami will wind up costing taxpayers at least nearly \$4 million -- about \$1.4 million higher than predicted.

The federal government will pick up roughly one-third of the amount. But local funds must cover the rest, and local officials say it's justified.

The meeting was a summit of 34 Western Hemisphere nations trying to create the world's largest free trade area. Miami-area police officials say handling security for such a large meeting was a good test of their ability to handle large-scale security.

Twenty-two agencies contributed to the security effort, including local and Miami-Dade County law enforcement forces, county departments and state offices. The summit's security costs are significantly higher than the \$9 million spent on security at the World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle in 1999. It's also higher than the \$10.4 million spent at the 2000 Republican Convention in Philadelphia.

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