

Obama asks each department to cut \$100M

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- President Barack Obama challenged his Cabinet members Monday to each trim \$100 million from departmental budgets while he reviews what programs can be erased.

"(Take) \$100 million here and \$100 million there, and pretty soon, even in Washington, it adds up to real money," Obama said after his first meeting with his Cabinet.

"We have an obligation to make sure that this government is as efficient as possible and that every taxpayer dollar that is being spent is being spent wisely," Obama said.

The president said he asked his Cabinet members to "to identify at least \$100 million in additional cuts to their administrative budgets."

The requested cuts are in addition to the the work Obama said he, Office of Management and Budget Director Peter Orszag and others have undertaken "to go line by line (in) the budget and identify programmatic cuts that need to be made."

Obama said he expected to identify 100 programs in the current budget that could be eliminated.

He noted cost-saving efforts in several departments, including the Department of Homeland Security's purchases of office supplies in bulk, which the department says should save \$52 million over five years, and the Veterans' Department canceling or delaying attendance at conferences, estimated to save \$17.8 million.

"There are a host of efficiencies that can be gained without increasing personnel or budget but rather decreasing the amount of money unnecessarily spent," Obama said.

"We also have a deficit, a confidence gap, with American people. We've got to earn their trust. They've got to feel that their dollars are being spent wisely."

Individually, the cuts and cost-saving efforts will not solve the country's long-term fiscal issues, Obama said, "But taken together, they can make a difference and they send a signal that we are serious about how government operates."

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