

DOJ Strategic Objectives

Promote and strengthen relationships and strategies for the administration of justice with state, local, tribal, and international law enforcement

Program Goals

1. Promote the careful and deliberate use of body-worn cameras and body-worn camera policy development
2. Help de-escalate conflicts between police and community members, resulting in improved safety for all
3. Increase the number of police agencies using body-worn cameras
4. Assist law enforcement agencies to develop a comprehensive approach that employs body-worn cameras in officer practice, resulting in increased accountability and transparency.

Body-Worn Camera Policy and Implementation Program

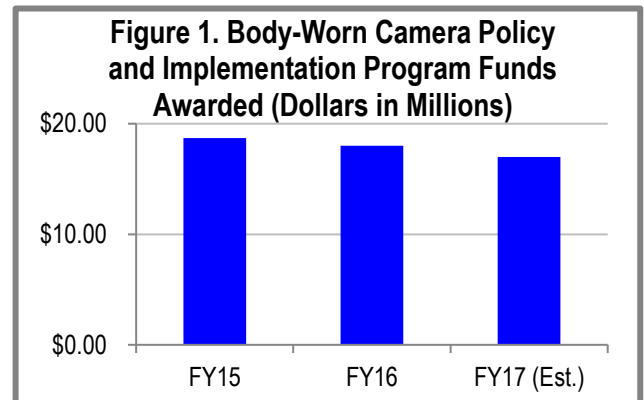
Introduction

Law enforcement agencies across the country are using body-worn cameras (BWC) as a promising evidentiary tool that can be of value to police, prosecutors, and other criminal justice practitioners. Research suggests that body-worn cameras can enhance

downstream justice outcomes by providing unalterable digital evidence. When properly implemented, body-worn cameras can enhance officer and citizen safety and improve law enforcement interactions with the public. This research reveals that the presence of body-worn cameras helps strengthen accountability and transparency,¹ and can assist in de-escalating conflicts, resulting in more constructive encounters between the police and members of the community. Several studies to date have documented substantial decreases in complaints against officers and use of force by police when body-worn cameras are deployed.^{1,2,3} Studies have also identified decreases in the number of frivolous complaints filed against officers² and “founded” complaints.³ The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) recognizes body-worn cameras as a law enforcement strategy that can be effective in improving public safety, reducing crime, and fostering public trust between police and the citizens they serve.

Program Overview

For fiscal year (FY) 2015, DOJ awarded over \$18 million to support the implementation of BWC programs in law enforcement agencies across the country (Figure 2). The program awarded 70 sites for implementation and expansion of existing BWC programs. Another award was issued to a national training and technical assistance (TTA) provider to build a national capacity to support the implementation of recommended body-worn camera policy. Figure 1, above, presents the amount of funding awarded to BWC programs under each solicitation.



¹ Miller, L., Toliver, J., & Police Executive Research Forum. (2014). *Implementing a Body-Worn Camera Program: Recommendations and Lessons Learned*. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.

² White, M.D. (2014). *Police Officer Body-Worn Cameras: Assessing the Evidence*. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.

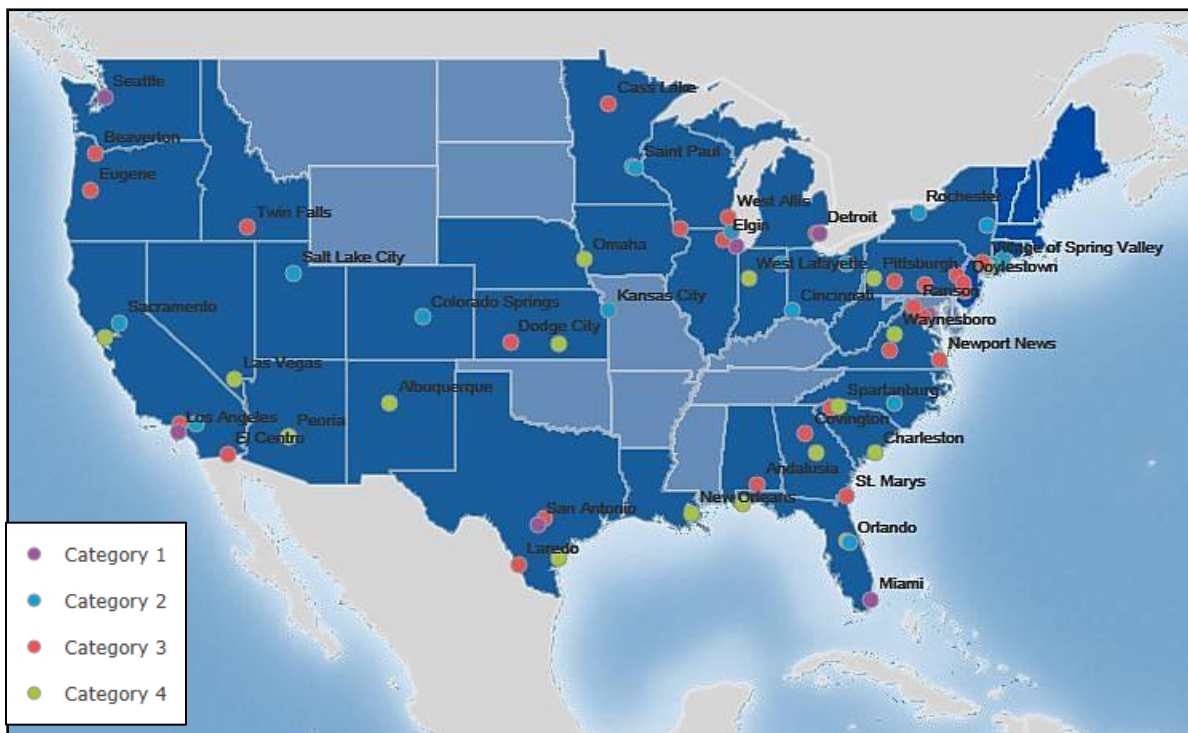
³ Katz, C.M., Kurtenbach, M., Choate, D.E., & White, M.D. (2015). *Phoenix, Arizona, Smart Policing Initiative: Evaluating the Impact of Police Officer Body-Worn Cameras*. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice.

Table 1. FY 2015 BWC Awards by Category

Category	Total Awards ⁴	Total Funds Awarded (Dollars)
FY 2015		
Category 1 (Large Agencies)	7	\$ 6,600,000
Category 2 (Medium Agencies)	18	\$ 7,334,332
Category 3 (Small Agencies)	28	\$ 2,773,304
Category 4 (Expansion)	17	\$ 2,039,706
Total	70	\$ 18,747,342

Table 1 outlines the four separate award categories, based on the size of the agency and their experience with a BWC program. Category 1 seeks to establish new BWC programs in large police agencies with 1,000 or more sworn officers; Category 2 seeks to establish new BWC programs in mid-sized police agencies with more than 250, but fewer than 1,000 sworn officers; Category 3 seeks to establish new BWC programs in small police agencies with 250 or fewer sworn officers; and Category 4 seeks to assist agencies with existing BWC programs and established body-worn camera policies and practices that want to expand their program to more officers.

Figure 2. FY 2015 BWC Grant Recipient Sites



Body-Worn Camera Program Outcomes

The BWC program includes two project phases: planning and implementation. When grantees and subgrantees are in the planning phase of their project, it is expected that they are conducting outreach activities to engage the community and various stakeholders to gain their input and support. Outreach can take the form of a formal in-person meeting, a briefing at a group meeting, web-based outreach, or a

⁴ Total awards do not include subgrant awards.

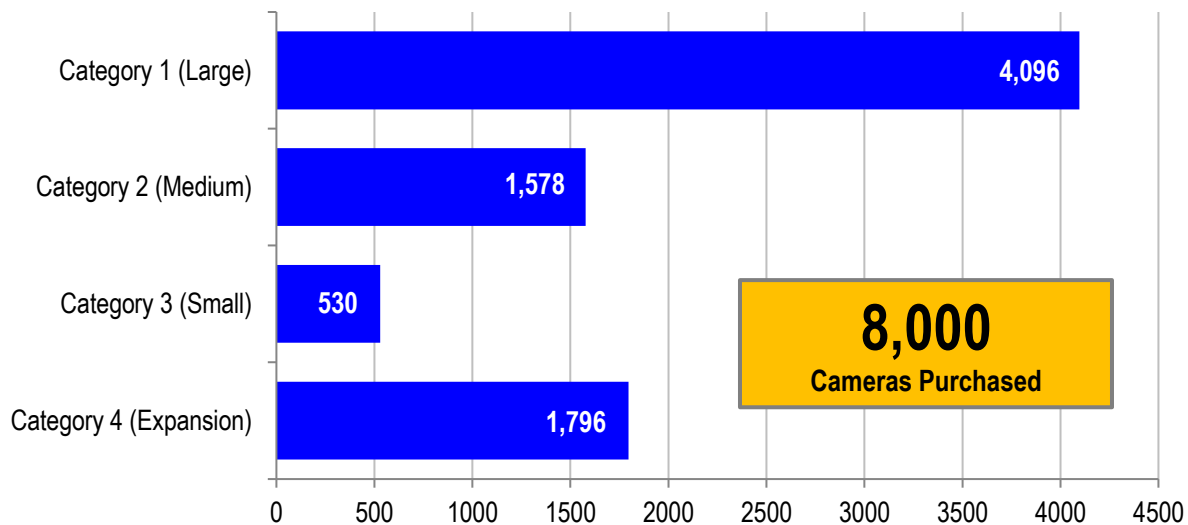
flyer/leaflet. It can target a variety of audiences, including the courts, police unions, prosecutors and public defenders, advocacy groups, the media, state and local government, or the general public.

- Nearly 80 percent of active grantees and subgrantees reported conducting outreach during at least one reporting period between October 2015 and September 2016.

For a program to move to the implementation phase, the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) must approve the agency’s policy development process regarding the use of body-worn cameras.

- Through September 2016, 42 percent of FY 2015 grantees and subgrantees have had their policy development process approved by BJA and reported on the implementation phase of their project.

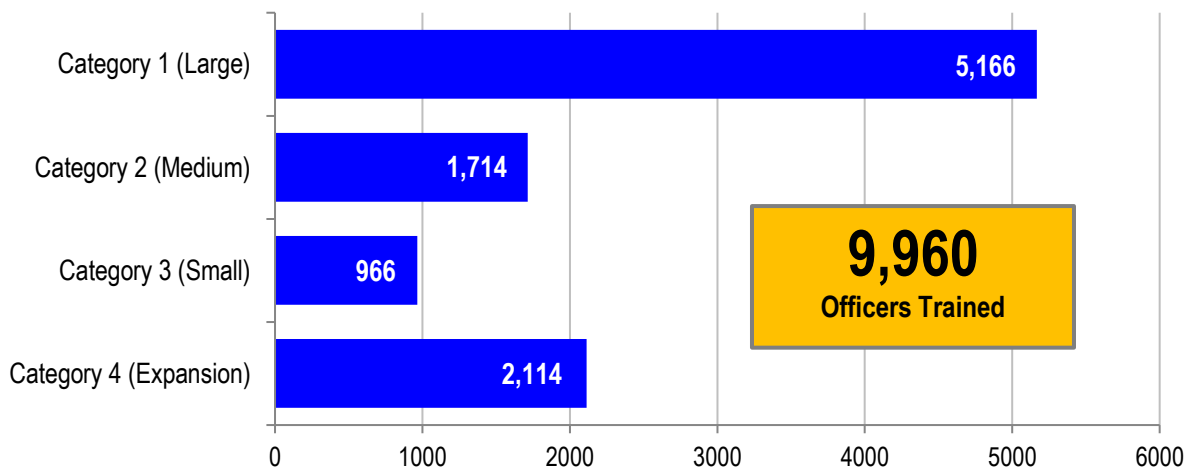
Figure 3. Number of Cameras Purchased Using BWC Program Funds by Grant Award Category—October 2015–September 2016 (n = 31)



In the implementation phase, grantees and subgrantees focus on putting their body-worn camera policies into action by purchasing and using body-worn cameras, conducting officer training, and making use of body-worn camera footage for a variety of internal and external purposes. FY 2015 grantees had some notable milestones:

- 31 grantees and subgrantees reported purchasing 8,000 body-worn cameras; 12 of those agencies were expanding existing BWC programs, while 19 agencies were establishing a new BWC program at their agency (figure 3). These agencies are expected to purchase just over 14,500 cameras over the life of the award.
- Over 5,000 officers received a body-worn camera.

Figure 4. Number of Officers Receiving Formal Training by Grant Award Category—October 2015–September 2016 (n = 60)



- Nearly 10,000 officers received training in the use of body-worn cameras (figure 4).

Figure 5. Types of Body-Worn Camera Training Conducted—October 2015–September 2016 (n = 60)⁵

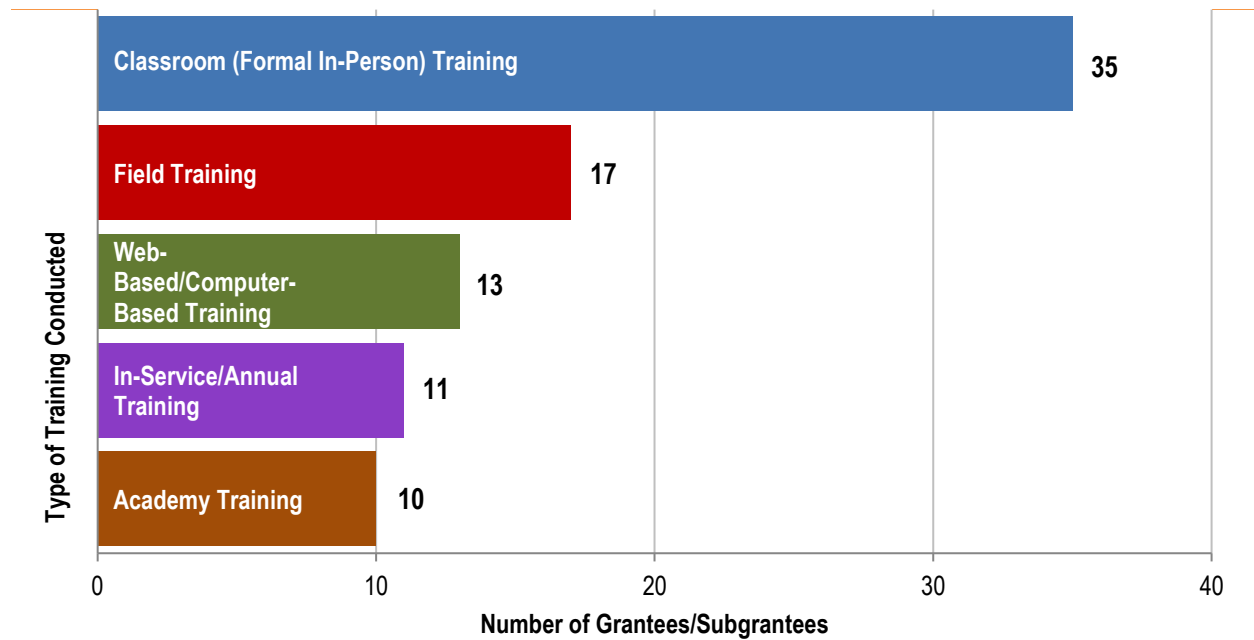
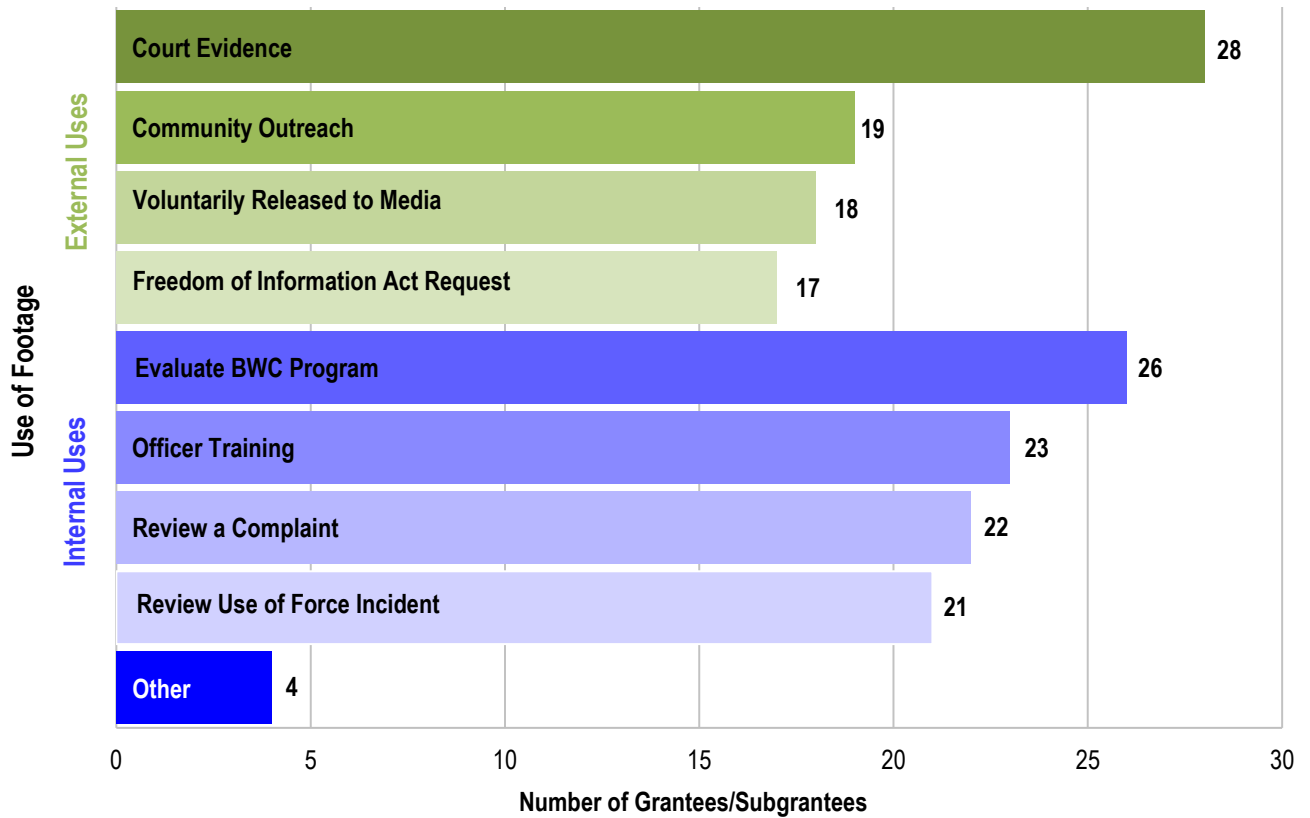


Figure 5 details the type of training grantees offered at least once between October 2015 and September 2016.

- 26 agencies (43 percent) conducted training through more than one method.
- 54 agencies (90 percent) reported that officer training is required before body-worn camera usage.

⁵ Agencies are able to select more than one response category if they offer multiple types of training.

Figure 6. Uses of Body-Worn Camera Footage—October 2015–September 2016 (n = 31)



- Agencies most often reported using footage internally to evaluate their BWC program (figure 6).
- Externally, many grantees and subgrantees reported using body-worn camera footage as evidence in court, using footage as part of their outreach efforts, and releasing the footage either voluntarily or through a Freedom of Information Act request. Releasing body-worn camera footage for external uses can help increase the transparency and accountability of a law enforcement agency, which is one of the goals of the BWC grant program.

Table 2. Internal Data Tracking and Analysis for BWC Grant Program—October 2015–September 2016

	Number of Agencies	Percentage
Track program data at least monthly (n = 26)*	23	88%
Conduct analysis to inform program decision making at least monthly (n = 29)*	25	86%
Conducting an evaluation of their BWC program (n = 31)	14	45%

*Responses of “Not Applicable” were excluded.

- 23 of 26 agencies responded that they tracked “program activity, progress, or performance using a database or spreadsheet” at least once a month (table 2).
- 25 of 29 agencies responded that they “conducted analysis to inform decision making in regard to their program” at least once a month.

- 14 of 31 agencies (45 percent) reported that either they or a research partner are conducting an evaluation of their BWC program.

Conclusion

During the first year of the BWC program, grantees and subgrantees reported progress on achieving program goals. Through September 2016, 42 percent of FY 2015 grantees and subgrantees have had their policy development process approved by BJA; 8,000 body-worn cameras were purchased; and nearly 10,000 officers received body-worn camera training. These numbers are all expected to increase over time as more agencies obtain BJA approval of their policy development process and move into the implementation phase of their project.