



BJA Fact Sheet

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BUREAU OF JUSTICE ASSISTANCE • OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS

DENISE E. O'DONNELL, DIRECTOR

Law Enforcement Congressional Badge of Bravery

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Overview

Every day, federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement officers engage in exceptional acts of bravery while in the line of duty. Often, such acts place the officers involved at personal risk of injury or loss of life—the ultimate sacrifice. To honor law enforcement officer acts of bravery, Congress passed the Law Enforcement Congressional Badge of Bravery Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-298) (the Act), creating the Federal Law Enforcement Congressional Badge of Bravery and the State and Local Law Enforcement Congressional Badge of Bravery. According to the Act, a member of Congress may present (or in the absence of Congress, the Attorney General of the United States may present in the name of Congress) a Law Enforcement Congressional Badge of Bravery to federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement officers who are recommended by either the Federal or the State and Local Law Enforcement Congressional Badge of Bravery Board. This honor is for performing acts of bravery while in the line of duty. These badges are awarded annually and will typically be jointly presented by the recipients' congressional representatives. Additional information about the Federal and the State and Local Congressional Badge of Bravery can be found at www.ojp.gov/BJA/CBOB.

Eligibility and Nomination Process

According to the Act, public safety officers must meet the following definition to be eligible for the Congressional Badge of Bravery. They must be:

A federal, state, local, or tribal law enforcement officer(s), nominated by his or her agency head, who—

- Sustained a physical injury while—
 - Engaged in the lawful duties of the individual;
 - Performing an act characterized as bravery by the agency head making the nomination; and
 - Put the individual at personal risk when the injury occurred; or
- While not injured, performed an act characterized as bravery by the agency head making the nomination that placed the individual at risk of serious physical injury or death.

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Throughout the nation, federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement officers risk their lives each day and night to keep us safe. As a long-time supporter of and partner with law enforcement agencies throughout the country, the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) is proud to assist in recognizing individual officers' commitment and courage through the administration of the Law Enforcement Congressional Badge of Bravery Program. To recognize individuals who have exhibited exceptional courage, extraordinary decisiveness and presence of mind, and unusual swiftness of action, regardless of their own personal safety, in an attempt to save or protect human life is a privilege, and we at BJA are honored to have this responsibility and to be able to give back to the law enforcement community that so freely gives to us each and every day.

KEY POINTS

- The Law Enforcement Congressional Badge of Bravery Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-298) honors federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement officers for acts of bravery in the line of duty.
- To receive the Law Enforcement Congressional Badge of Bravery, officers' agency heads must submit a nomination between December 15 and February 15 using the online Congressional Badge of Bravery application system.

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KEY POINTS (cont.)

- Under the Act, two boards were created to review nominations: the Federal Law Enforcement Congressional Badge of Bravery Board and the State and Local Law Enforcement Congressional Badge of Bravery Board.
- For more information about the Law Enforcement Congressional Badge of Bravery Award, visit www.ojp.gov/BJA/CBOB.
- For questions regarding the program, e-mail AskCBOB@usdoj.gov.

The Act provides a nomination period for both awards, which opens on or about December 15 of each year and closes on the following February 15. During this time, applications must be submitted through the online Congressional Badge of Bravery nominating system, available at www.ojp.gov/BJA/CBOB. Those selected to be recipients will be awarded a Congressional Badge of Bravery for acts of bravery that were performed during each annual period beginning on January 1 and ending on December 31.

Award Categories and Boards

The Act establishes two award categories to honor law enforcement officers, each with its own review board.

Title I: Federal Law Enforcement Officers

Establishes a seven-member Federal Law Enforcement Congressional Badge of Bravery Board that includes:

- One member jointly appointed by the majority leader and minority leader of the Senate.
- One member jointly appointed by the Speaker and minority leader of the U.S. House of Representatives.
- One member from the U.S. Department of Justice appointed by the U.S. Attorney General.
- Two members from the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association appointed by its executive board.
- Two members from the Fraternal Order of Police appointed by its executive board.

Title II: State, Local, and Tribal Law Enforcement Officers

Establishes a nine-member State and Local Law Enforcement Congressional Badge of Bravery Board that includes:

- One member jointly appointed by the majority leader and minority leader of the Senate.
- One member jointly appointed by the Speaker and minority leader of the U.S. House of Representatives.
- One member from the U.S. Department of Justice appointed by the U.S. Attorney General.
- Two members of the Fraternal Order of Police appointed by its executive board.
- One member from the National Association of Police Organizations appointed by its executive board.
- One member from the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives appointed by its executive board.
- One member from the International Association of Chiefs of Police appointed by its board of officers.
- One member of the National Sheriffs' Association appointed by its executive committee.

Congressional Badge of Bravery Office

The Congressional Badge of Bravery Office is located within the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs' Bureau of Justice Assistance. This office receives nominations from agency heads on behalf of the Federal and the State and Local Congressional Badge of Bravery Boards. BJA provides staff support that allows the Boards to carry out their duties.

Inquiries to the Congressional Badge of Bravery Office should be submitted via e-mail to AskCBOB@usdoj.gov.

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