

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: Good afternoon, everybody and welcome to today's webinar, the Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor hosted by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. Your presenters today are Hope Janke, Deputy Director, National Officer Safety and Wellness Office of the Bureau of Justice Assistance; and Greg Joy, Policy Advisor for BJA.

HOPE JANKE: Thank you, Mary Jo, and welcome to BJA's Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor webinar. BJA provides a wide range of programs to law enforcement and justice agencies nationwide. The Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor is one of those programs and we're honored to have the opportunity to administer that on behalf of the Office of Justice Programs here at the Department of Justice. Now public safety agencies are encouraged to submit nominations to recognize these extraordinary acts of valor that go far above and beyond the call for duty. And Greg, who administers the Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor, or MOV as we call it here, is going to share some of the specific details with you. Since 2001, 140 public safety officers, public safety heroes have received the Medal of Valor through this program. And so with that, I'm going to turn it over to Greg.

GREGORY JOY: Hope, thank you, and for our participating guests, I'll be—we'll be conducting a high level review of some very important elements that we want to share about the Medal of Valor program. We'll be talking—taking questions later, but please don't hesitate to reach out to me at any point in the future should you have additional questions. To start, let's discuss program eligibility and time periods. Eligibility is limited to public safety officers and public safety officers are persons serving a public safety agency as a firefighter, a law enforcement officer, or an emergency services officer with or without compensation. Following each nomination submission, we will review it to confirm eligibility. And, as needed, we'll contact a nominating agency to obtain clarifications or additional information in order to resolve any nomination issues or potential eligibility questions.

The annual eligibility period runs from June 1st of the given year through the following May 31st. Each annual nomination period opens on or about May 31st and closes on July 31st. And we'll open the nomination submission period one or two days early whenever May 31st falls on a weekend. We're currently accepting nominations for the 2018-2019 Medal of Valor. And July 31st is just over a week away. So, I encourage everyone to be mindful of the closing date for nominations. Once the submission period closes, there's no ability to accept additional nominations. Going forward, we encourage public safety agencies to consider targeting incidence of valor as it occurs throughout the year as this may make it easier to be in position to submit a Medal of Valor nomination once the submission period opens. The link that you're now seeing is—that's now being shown—is to the Medal of Valor program page which contains a wealth of information about the program. On that page, there will be a separate link to the online nomination form, which is the only way to submit nominations for the Medal of Valor. After submission, the Medal of Valor system will generate a confirmation email to go to the listed nominator confirming that the nomination has been successfully received.

Nominations must be submitted by or at the direction of the employing public safety agency head or the recommending official, which was why it was marked in the system. If

the listed recommending official and nomination is not the nominee's agency head, then my office will reach out to confirm that the agency head knows of and endorses the nomination and we may seek additional information as needed. My next point comes up not too infrequently. For nominations of individuals who are part of a task force, the nominating agency remains that nominee's home agency. By way of example, if a local police or sheriff's department are part of a federal task force, then the police or sheriff's department must still be the nominating agency for their personnel. Each nomination serves to recommend a single public safety officer for a single incident. So if an agency wishes to nominate more than one officer for the same incident, they will need to submit a separate nomination for each nominee. Should an agency run into any issues while trying to submit a nomination, please contact me immediately as I or our support staff will work with you to resolve the issue. The Medal of Valor review board may recommend each year a limited number of public safety officers for the Medal of Valor. And, to be more precise, the board is normally limited to five recommendations. But, it may add a sixth under extraordinary circumstances, under exceptional circumstances. The board may consider a group of nominees to be a single incident for the purpose of making a recommendation.

Now some additional areas for consideration. Within the brief online nomination form, there are a number of items of required information and some that are optional. The program page has a link to a template that lists all such information. Although all required information is considered to be important, arguably one of the most critical parts of any nomination is the summary of valor's conduct section. The summary of valor's conduct section should describe in detail the nominee's actions and highlight the extraordinary valor of the event. In short, this is your opportunity to explain to the review board which will be considering your nomination, the incident that involves your nominee. For group nominations, it is not unusual for the summaries to be written substantially the same but they should specifically identify each nominee and clearly articulate they're individual in their collective actions. Outside the summary, if you wish to provide additional supporting documents, please contact me directly and I'll explain how to get those documents and materials to me. Now we do, on occasion, receive inquiries and nominations for incidents that occur prior to the current eligibility period. It's important to remember to be—that to be considered for the Medal of Valor, the event must occur within the current eligibility period. So nominations submitted, for instance, outside the current eligibility period are required to be withheld. Public safety agencies may submit multiple nominations. And, again, as I've mentioned a moment ago, a separate online nomination is required for each nominee.

Finally, we strongly encourage federal, state, local, and tribal public safety agencies to consider the extraordinary acts of valor performed by their personnel between June 1st of last year and this past May 31st and take this opportunity to submit nominations for the Medal of Valor. This program is a great opportunity to have distinguished service—distinguished service that your personnel recognize. So let's move on to some questions if we can.

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: All right, everybody. If you do have any questions, I'll remind you to hover over the bottom part of your screen, look for the radio button with the three dots. If you click on that, you'll see the Q&A pop up and you can go ahead and submit

your question to all panelists. While we wait to see if any questions come through, I'm going to move it to the slide with Greg's information. You can have the opportunity to go ahead and write that information down. This webinar presentation, a transcript, and the slides will be all posted to the BJA MOV page in approximately a week, give or take. So you have a great opportunity here with having both Hope and Greg at your disposal. So if there's any burning questions that you have, please submit those and we will be happy to get an answer to you. It will—we can submit, perhaps post, an unedited transcript. Even that is going to at least take 24 hours to get that posted. So, we could possibly get that posted by I would say Wednesday. "If an event occurred in July 2019, then is it eligible this period?"

GREGORY JOY: Right. That's a great—that's a great question. So the current eligibility period is actually limited to events that have taken place between June 1st of 2018 through May 31st of 2019. So, an event that occurred in 2019 will actually have to wait for the next nomination submission period. And that was a great question and I was just reminded. As I mentioned briefly in my opening, one of the things we want to suggest to public safety agencies across the nation, we recognize that you're engaged in numerous events on a daily basis and throughout the year. But one suggestion is that you might want to—such as the event someone's referencing for July, is to make a notation of those events when they occur throughout the year so that when we do approach the next nomination submission period, you'll have a collection of those events and you'll be in position better prepared to go quickly forward with submitting a nomination.

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: "Is the summary limited in word count?"

GREGORY JOY: Yes. They actually—there is a limit of 7,900 characters I believe. I don't have the precision on that. That might be slightly reduced to security but that's roughly told equating to about two pages of text. So which is why—I mentioned briefly, if you have additional information and it's not required, but it's also not unusual for an agency to wish to provide additional information beyond the summary. If you have additional information supporting your nomination, just contact me and I'll explain how to best get it to me so the board will have it available to review when they consider your nomination. One suggestion to follow up on the early question is—that might be helpful is just when you're—because you can actually copy and paste text into the system, is that you might you want to first put it into a word document so you can do a word count and then to make sure that it doesn't exceed the character limit.

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: We'll give you a minute and see if there's any other questions that come up. So it doesn't appear that we have any more questions coming in. As Greg mentioned earlier in the webinar, you may reach out to him. His telephone number and email address are listed on the slide that is showing at this time as well as the URL for the MOV page and an email box for AskMOV.

HOPE JANKE: So at this time, since we have no other questions, I would like to thank you for joining us for this afternoon's webinar and we look forward to receiving your

nominations by the end of this month or for the next nomination period as well. Thank you so much.

GREGORY JOY: Thank you, everyone.