

Fiscal Year 2014 Bulletproof Vest Partnership (BVP) Program Overview

The purpose of the Bulletproof Vest Partnership (BVP) Program is to reimburse states, counties, federally recognized tribes, cities, and local jurisdictions up to 50% of the cost of body armor vests purchased for law enforcement officers. Since 1999, over 13,000 jurisdictions have participated in the BVP Program, with a total of \$288 million in federal funds for the purchase of over one million vests (1,146,909 vests as of December 2013).

I. Eligible Applicants: Any recognized unit of general government (states, counties, federally recognized tribes, cities, and local jurisdictions) recognized by the U.S. Census Bureau that employs law enforcement officers. The jurisdiction's chief executive is required to complete the online registration and to provide general oversight and approval of key transactions between the BVP Program and the participating law enforcement agencies.

II. Law Enforcement Officer Definition: The term 'Law Enforcement Officer' means any officer, agent, or employee of a State, unit of local government, or federally recognized tribe authorized by law or by a government agency to engage in or supervise the prevention, detection, or investigation of any violation of criminal law, or authorized by law to supervise sentenced criminal offenders. This includes full-time, part-time, and auxiliary personnel, whether paid or volunteer.

III. Application Period: The BVP application usually opens in April and closes six weeks from the opening date. The BVP application only opens once per year.

IV. Award Process: When a BVP recipient is notified of an award amount, the funding is not dispersed until the recipient logs into the BVP website and provides receipt information for the vests. Once the payment request is made, BJA reviews the request for accuracy and completes payments on a monthly schedule.

V. Funds Usage Period: BVP funds will be available for drawdown for two years from the time of the award announcement.

VI. Small Jurisdiction Priority Funding: Current legislation places the priority on funding jurisdictions with less than 100,000 residents. Remaining funds are distributed on a pro rata basis to jurisdictions with over 100,000 residents.

VII. SWAT Vests/Tactical Armor Vest Eligibility: BVP funds can be used for tactical-level armor, but for only one vest per officer in a replacement cycle. If the agency purchases a tactical-level vest for an officer, it must be the officer's primary vest. The agency cannot then use BVP funds to purchase a regular duty vest for the same officer during the same replacement cycle.

VIII. Mandatory Wear Policy: BJA will continue the existing policy that requires a written mandatory wear policy for uniformed patrol officers in place when the FY 2014 BVP applications are submitted.

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