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# BJA's Justice Today



BUREAU OF JUSTICE ASSISTANCE • OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS

DENISE E. O'DONNELL, DIRECTOR

September 2015

## In the Spotlight

### Sexual Assault Kit Initiative Grant

On September 10, 2015, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and the New York County District Attorney's Office (DANY) jointly [announced](#) grant awards made under BJA's 2015 Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI). Through SAKI, BJA has partnered with DANY to expand the number of sites receiving training and technical assistance and resources to address untested sexual assault kits. Together, BJA and DANY will provide \$79 million in funding to address the backlog of unsubmitted and untested sexual assault kits. Vice President Joe Biden and Attorney General Loretta Lynch attended this event. Visit BJA's [SAKI](#) page for more information about this program.



*Vice President Biden &  
Attorney General Loretta Lynch  
speaking at the joint press conference*

## News You Can Use

### Smart Policing Initiative Criminology Webinar

The [Smart Policing Initiative](#) (SPI), a BJA collaborative consortium with CNA and 31 local law enforcement agencies, is presenting a webinar on October 14, 2015, from 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. EDT. Hosted by Scott Decker, the webinar, "[Criminology 102 Webinar: Busted Myths](#)," will discuss commonly held myths about crime and criminal behavior, and explore the issues these myths create through the presentation of empirical research evidence and data.



### The Impact of Body-Worn Cameras on a Prosecutor

BWCs have the ability to provide accurate and reliable evidence that may help resolve investigations without factual disputes. In this month's *TTA Today Blog*, the National District Attorneys Association's Kay Chopard Cohen discusses BWCs and the significant impact they can have on a prosecutor's office. The *TTA Today Blog* is published by the [BJA National Training and Technical Assistance Center](#) (NTTAC). Read the post [here](#).

### De-Escalation Training

On September 2–3, 2015, BJA Director Denise E. O'Donnell and BJA staff visited the Seattle Police Department to learn about the department's work in training officers in tactical de-escalation techniques. The Seattle Police Department has developed strong and impactful training for all officers that emphasizes respect and dignity while ensuring officer safety. Both the training



## DID YOU KNOW?

### Body-Worn Camera Award Announcement

Attorney General Loretta Lynch announced on September 21, 2015, that BJA's [Body-Worn Camera \(BWC\) Pilot Implementation Program](#) has awarded grants totaling more than \$23.2 million to 73 local and tribal agencies in 32 states. Launched in May 2015, the pilot program's purpose is to expand the use and explore the impact of BWCs. This funding includes \$19.3 million to purchase BWCs, \$2 million for training and technical assistance, and \$1.9 million to examine the impact of BWC use. The grants build on President Obama's proposal to purchase 50,000 BWCs for law enforcement agencies within 3 years. The awards were announced during the White House's Champions of Change event, which was also attended by Vice President Biden and honored law enforcement officers and young people who are leading efforts to improve relationships in their communities. Visit the [Body-Worn Camera Toolkit](#) for more information about this program.



*Vice President Joe  
Biden*

## FEATURED PROGRAM

Elder Abuse Guide

and the information learned about the program will serve to inform and contribute to current and future work done through BJA.

### VERA Safe Alternatives to Segregation Initiative

BJA Director Denise E. O'Donnell addressed the inaugural meeting of the Advisory Council for the Vera Institute's [Safe Alternatives to Segregation Initiative](#) (SASI) on September 28–29, 2015, in Washington, DC. Vera is partnering with three state corrections departments and three local jail systems to reduce their reliance on segregated housing through the advancement of safe and effective alternatives. The advisory council will provide guidance and mentoring to the sites.



### Analyzing Your Violent Crime Problem Webinar

Michigan State University, School of Criminal Justice, a BJA Smart Suite [Research Practitioner Fellows Academy](#), hosted the "Analyzing Your Violent Crime Problem" webinar on September 23, 2015 at 3 p.m. EDT. This webinar was designed to support jurisdictions participating in the Violence Reduction Assessment Tool (VRAT).

### Free Crime Prevention Publications

October is [Crime Prevention Month](#). The National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC), home of McGruff the Crime Dog®, offers a variety of resources free of charge to law enforcement and other crime prevention practitioners. Topics range from simple crime prevention tips to financial fraud. Recent publications include [Protecting Our Assets: Keeping Our Communities Safe from Financial Fraud](#) (the 2013-2014 Crime Prevention Month Kit) and [United for a Stronger America: Citizens' Preparedness Guide](#). Some resources can be found online on the NCPC [Resources page](#), and some are available for the cost of shipping. For a list of available publications, contact Simone Greene [here](#).



### Arizona Tribal Consortium Shares Criminal Intelligence Database

In May 2015, a five-tribe law enforcement consortium in Maricopa County, Arizona, successfully used BJA funding and Regional Information Sharing Systems (RISS) technology to establish a tribal specific multiagency criminal intelligence database, "Tribal RISS7." The primary goal of the "Tribal Law Enforcement Consortium of Arizona" (TLECA) is to establish better information sharing between the tribes, especially in the area of criminal intelligence. TLECA consists of Gila River Indian Community, the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, Tohono O'odham Nation, Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation, and the Ak-Chin Indian Community. To learn more about RISS, visit the [website](#).

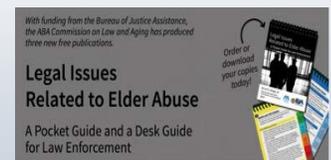


### Mental Health Courts Publications Released

The Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center released the [Handbook for Facilitators](#), a companion resource to [Developing a Mental Health Court: An Interdisciplinary Curriculum](#). *Developing a Mental Health Court* is a free online curriculum for individuals or interdisciplinary groups interested in starting, improving, or simply learning about mental health courts. The curriculum and the *Handbook for Facilitators* were developed with support from BJA and in partnership with the National Center for State Courts, National GAINS Center, National Judicial College, and Center for Court Innovation. Visit BJA's website to learn more about the [Mental Health Courts Program](#).



The *Legal Issues Related to Elder Abuse* pocket guide is still available at no cost to U.S. law enforcement agencies. Designed to fit in an officer's pocket or equipment case, this guide alerts law enforcement officers to the warning signs of a variety of forms of elder abuse. Supply is limited. Once depleted, this popular guide will no longer be available in hard copy. If you have not already obtained copies, consider ordering them now. Order forms are available [here](#). Electronic copies can also be downloaded from the BJA [website](#).



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## Grants & Funding

No BJA FY 2015 competitive grant solicitations are currently open. Visit our [Funding Page](#) to stay up-to-date on upcoming BJA solicitations.

Don't forget to visit [OJP's Funding Resource Center](#), where you'll find OJP funding opportunities, an overview of OJP's grant process, and more!

Funding Resource Center

## In Focus This Month

### Crime Analysis Funding and Training

BJA Director Denise E. O'Donnell spoke at the International Association of Crime Analysts annual training conference on September 22, 2015, in Denver, Colorado. She discussed BJA's efforts in criminal justice and the agency's involvement with the field of [crime analysis](#). Close to 500 attendees from various countries and around the nation attended.

BJA is committed to supporting sound crime analysis practices and procedures, and in helping to increase the capacity of crime justice agencies to effectively employ crime analysis in their missions. To this end, BJA funds guidance, training, and technical assistance in support of state, local, and tribal criminal justice agencies across the nation. BJA's [NTTAC](#) provides training and technical assistance upon request, and BJA also currently provides funds to the [International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training](#) (IADLEST) to provide executive-level training on crime analysis and to the [Institute for Intergovernmental Research](#) (IIR), which is funding three pilot sites to increase their crime analysis capabilities and plans to develop a crime analysis implementation guide/toolkit. Learn more at BJA's [Crime Analysis page](#).

## Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program

The Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) [website](#) has been updated with new Fact Sheets and Checklists of Required Documents to assist agencies, survivors, and injured officers as they file for PSOB benefits. Enacted in 1976, the PSOB Program provides death, disability, and education benefits to those eligible for the program. Visit the [PSOB website](#) to apply for these federal benefits for law enforcement officers, firefighters, and other first responders killed or catastrophically disabled in the line of duty. For questions regarding these new resources or the PSOB Program, call the PSOB Office at 888-744-6513 (toll-free) or 202-307-0635.



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