

This is Justice Today, a radio program of the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. We're here at a meeting at the Office of Justice Programs and we're interviewing Steve Edwards. Steve is a Senior Policy Advisor for Law Enforcement for the Bureau of Justice Assistance, a part of the structure of the Office of Justice Programs, talking about an issue near and dear to my heart- Officer Safety - being a former police officer. Steve, you have a program called VALOR which is basically education and training, giving greater awareness as to alert law enforcement officers of potential acts of violence and potential threats, correct?

That's correct Len and good morning. Our VALOR Program has become very successful over the last two years. We've trained somewhere in the neighborhood of 8,000 police officers. We have an online exposure on valorforblue.com. This is a program designed to reawaken police officers, line officers and administrators on violence and the threats of violence and how they can mitigate some of these concerns that they have in the street. What we found is this program has reawakened officers from the days of their academy experience and it's a very intense--it's a very intense program that just has had rave reviews. And we've offered this nationally this past two years and we're very excited about this program.

As a former police officer I understand that you can get complacent in the day to day activities of your job where from the academy start out very aware of all those potential dangers surrounding you, and after five or six years on the force you no longer have that sense of awareness when you're approaching that car, when you're walking into a building. I would imagine VALOR is trying to reeducate them in terms of being sure that they understand what's around and what the potential threats are.

That is correct. And what we've also found is that officers that have not had, to say, this reeducation or awakening to these concerns have had rave reviews about the program. It's free to departments, that's one of the outstanding qualities of it. It also has let officers know about emerging concerns in the field and I think that's been helpful. I think the idea of this training--it's a two-day training, there is a train a trainer program as well. But the two-day training for officers is just one of those things that we believe has helped this year, reduce violence against police.

And violence has gone down and I think a big part of that is officer training and a big part of that is the efforts of the Bureau of Justice Assistance.

We believe that to be true. BJA, we're very proud of that. We're proud of that for OJP in general and, you know, we're excited about moving forward.

We've been interviewing Steve Edwards, Senior Policy Advisor for Law Enforcement for the Bureau of Justice Statistics, part of the Office of Justice Programs structure. This is Justice Today, a radio program of the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice.