

Patrick Leahy Bulletproof Vest Partnership (BVP) Overview

BVP Website: <https://www.ojp.gov/program/bulletproof-vest-partnership/overview>

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The purpose of the Patrick Leahy 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 \$548 million in federal funds for the purchase of over 1.4 million vests.

Since FY 2015, protective vests were directly attributable to saving the lives of at least 272 law enforcement and corrections officers (based on data collected by the Office of Justice Programs). Thirty-nine of those vests were purchased, in part, with BVP funds.

1. 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.

2. 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 tribes 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, part-time and auxiliary personnel, whether paid or volunteer.

3. 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. The BVP website has user guides and checklists for each step of the BVP application process: <https://www.ojp.gov/program/bulletproof-vest-partnership/program-resources#h449g>.

4. Award Process: When a BVP recipient is notified of an award amount, the funds are not disbursed until the recipient logs into the BVP site and provides the receipt information for the vests. Once the payment request is made, BJA reviews the request for accuracy and completes payments on a monthly schedule. BVP funds will be available for drawdown for two years from the time of the award announcement. [A current SAM registration is required to apply for BVP funds.](#) Jurisdictions are also required update their ACH banking in SAM.

5. Small Jurisdiction Priority Funding: Current legislation allocates funds first to jurisdictions with less than 100,000 residents. Please see the [BVP legislation for details](#).

6. Vest Requirements: In order to qualify for this reimbursement, body armor must comply with the most current National Institute of Justice [JTIC - Ballistic Armor Compliant Product List](#) (NIJ) body armor standards, as of the date the body armor was ordered.

7. 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.

8. Mandatory Wear Policy: BJA will continue the existing policy that requires a written mandatory wear policy for uniformed patrol officers in place when BVP applications are submitted. There are no requirements regarding the nature of the policy other than it **specify when mandatory wear is required** for uniformed officers on duty. Please see the [Mandatory Wear FAQs](#) for details.

9. Uniquely Fitted Vest Requirement: Jurisdictions receiving funding for reimbursement of body armor purchases must have in place a uniquely fitted vest requirement when BVP applications are submitted. Please see the unique fit FAQ for details: https://ojp.gov/bvpbasi/bvpfaqs_applguidelines_01.htm.