

## **Bulletproof Vest Partnership (BVP) Overview (Updated March 2018)**

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 \$447 million in federal funds for the purchase of over one million vests (1,312,281 vests as of January 2018).

**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 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.

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

**IV. 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.

**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 allocates funds first to jurisdictions with less than 100,000 residents.

**VII. 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.

**VIII. 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.

**IX. 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 2018 BVP applications are submitted.

**X. Uniquely Fitted Vest Requirement:** The BVP Reauthorization Act of 2015 included a provision that states that preference should be given to BVP recipients that provide armor vests to law enforcement officers that are uniquely fitted for such officers, including vests uniquely fitted to individual female law enforcement officers. This provision is applicable to FY 17 BVP awards moving forward. Please see the BVP Reauthorization Act of 2015 amendment for reference: <https://www.congress.gov/114/plaws/publ155/PLAW-114publ155.pdf>.

In the BVP Program, “uniquely fitted vests” means protective (ballistic or stab-resistant) armor vests that conform to the individual wearer to provide the best possible fit and coverage, through a combination of: 1) correctly-sized panels and carrier, determined through appropriate measurement, and 2) properly adjusted straps, harnesses, fasteners, flaps, or other adjustable features. The requirement that body armor be “uniquely fitted” does not necessarily require body armor that is individually manufactured based on the measurements of an individual wearer. In support of the Office of Justice Programs’ efforts to improve officer safety, the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) International has made available the *Standard Practice for Body Armor Wearer Measurement and Fitting of Armor* ([Active Standard ASTM E3003](#)) available at no cost. The [Personal Armor Fit Assessment checklist](#), is excerpted from ASTM E3003.

In addition, a certification section has been added to the 2018 application (in the BVP system) stating the jurisdictions and law enforcement agency are aware of and will comply with this fitted vest requirement.