TechBeat

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December 2019

by JTIC

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ABOUT TECHBEAT

The Justice Technology Information Center (JTIC) program has ended. You can continue to access the Compliant Product List (CPL) and information about body armor and other emerging technologies at justnet.org and policearmor.org courtesy of NIJ's new program, the Criminal Justice Testing and Evaluation Consortium (CJTEC).

TechBeat is the monthly newsmagazine of the National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center System. Our goal is to keep you up to date on technologies for the public safety community and research efforts in government and private industry.

Subscriptions:

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The National Institute of Justice is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the Office for Victims of Crime; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking.

Maryland Center for School Safety Provides Model Threat Assessment Policy

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Shortly after the February 2018 shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., and the incident at Great Mills High School in St. Mary's County, Md., in March 2018, the Maryland General Assembly passed a wide-ranging school safety package that included requiring all public school systems to implement behavioral threat assessment teams. The state's public schools weren't left to figure things out on their own, however, as the Maryland School Safety Subcabinet has created a model policy to provide guidance.

"A cross-discipline group of individuals worked together to develop the policy," says Center Director Kate Hession. "The group pulled information and gathered input from various sources, including the U.S. Secret Service, the

Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety, and the FBI. They used existing research and recognized standards of practice regarding threat assessment and management in school and workplace settings."

With the implementation of the legislation, Maryland joined neighboring Virginia in requiring schools to have a threat assessment policy. (Threat assessment is a prevention-based strategy that, in theory, means serious threats are stopped before they materialize, while less serious ones may lead to a review of a student's mental health, behavioral or academic well-being.) Virginia's policy, mandated by that Commonwealth's legislature in 2008, has been extensively tested and recognized as a best practice, and the new Maryland policy draws on it as a model. The state also used other nationwide policies, procedures and best practices to inform its model policy development, including the Salem-Keizer System and information from the U.S. Secret Service and the FBI. School systems in Florida, Kentucky and Texas also have implemented threat assessment requirements for the 2019-2020 school year, and Washington State will join them in 2020-2021.

"The state level policy outlines the components for the development of a consistent policy at the local school system level," Hession says. The model policy requirement is one of several mandated by the Maryland Safe to Learn Act of 2018, signed into law by Gov. Larry Hogan in April 2018. The Act requires all public school systems to adopt a local policy consistent with the state policy. Developing the model policy is only half the task; the Center has since added behavioral threat assessment to its training program for school resource officers and has begun providing support related to training and outreach to local school systems.

"We've received lots of positive feedback on the model policy itself and on the associated training and support," Hession says. "We aren't planning any changes to the policy at the present time, but as we continue to receive new information, lessons learned and research on threat assessments, we may make adjustments."

You can find the Maryland Model Policy here. *To read an earlier* TechBeat *article on Virginia's threat assessment model, go* here. *A recent article from* Education Week *explains the threat assessment process in detail; read it* here.

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National Criminal Justice Reference Service Provides Access to Funding, Publications

National Criminal Justice Reference Service Provides Access to Funding, Publications

With the end of the Justice Technology Information Center (JTIC) program on Dec. 31, 2019, the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS) takes over distribution of criminal justice-sensitive publications and the JTIC-produced tools, School Safe and Safeguarding Houses of Worship (SHOW).
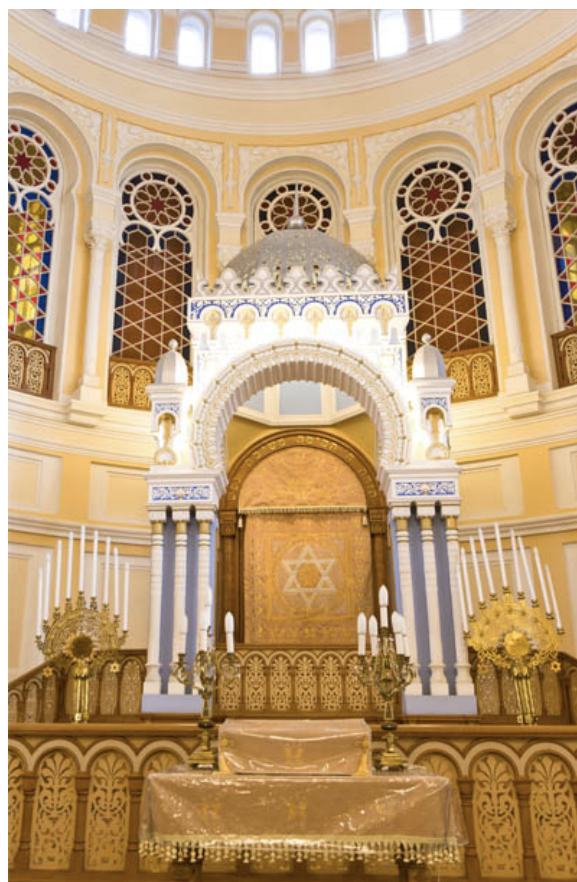
The following reports now can be obtained from NCJRS:

- *Testing of Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems for Law Enforcement Use in Indoor Tactical Missions.*
- *Selection and Implementation of Unmanned Aircraft Systems Technology for Law Enforcement.*
- *Countering the Threat of Jammers to Offender Tracking Programs.*
- *Test and Evaluation of Hand-Held Cell Phone Detection Devices.*

- *A Practical Guide for Offender Tracking Protocols.*

School Safe and SHOW, both available as fillable PDFs, help school resource officers and administrators, and local houses of worship, assess safety and develop emergency plans. To obtain any of the above from NCJRS, send an email to responsecenter@ncjrs.gov from a legitimate government agency/law enforcement agency email address (no Yahoo, Gmail, etc.).

Members of the criminal justice community who previously obtained funding information via the JUSTNET website or *JUSTNETNews* can obtain this information directly from NCJRS. NCJRS provides information on the three grant-making components of the Department of Justice: the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS); the Office of Justice Programs (OJP), which is comprised of six bureaus and program offices; and the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW). These agencies award federal financial assistance to support law enforcement and public safety activities in state, local and tribal jurisdictions; to assist victims of crime; to provide training and technical assistance; to conduct research; and to implement programs that improve the criminal, civil and juvenile justice systems. The Congressional appropriation that supports DOJ's programs and operations reflects the priorities of the President, the Attorney General and Congress.

Recommended resources include:

- **DOJ Program Plan.** The DOJ Program Plan helps applicants and grantees find funding opportunities (solicitations) that address their criminal, juvenile and civil justice needs. The DOJ Program Plan provides summary details of the funding opportunities each DOJ grant-making component is expecting to release, or has released, in the current fiscal year.

- **Listing of Current Funding Opportunities.** The table lists all open OJP funding opportunities, with links to the full text of the solicitations and to the appropriate grants system to use in applying.
- **2019 OJP Grant Application Resource Guide.** The 2019 OJP Grant Application Resource Guide provides guidance to assist applicants with preparing and submitting applications for OJP funding, as well as information that may help potential applicants decide to apply for funding.
- **DOJ Financial Guide.** The DOJ Grants Financial Guide serves as the primary reference manual to assist OJP, OVW and COPS Office award recipients in fulfilling their fiduciary responsibility to safeguard grant funds and ensure funds are used for the purposes for which they were awarded.

For more information on the above resources, visit https://www.justice.gov/grants.

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ), part of OJP, awards grants and agreements for research, development and evaluation (CFDA 16.560). NIJ funds physical and social science research, development and evaluation projects about criminal justice through competitive solicitations. The focus of the solicitations varies from year to year based on research priorities and available funding.
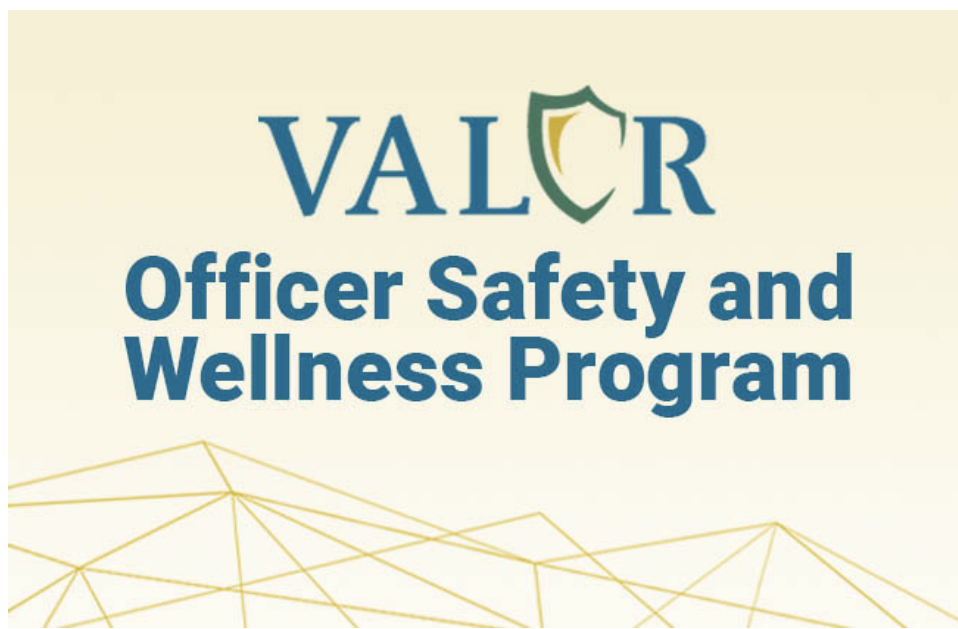
- **Forensic laboratory enhancement.** NIJ provides funding through formula and discretionary awards to reduce evidence backlogs and improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science and medical examiner services. Programs include the DNA Backlog Reduction Program (CFDA 16.471) and the Paul Coverdell Forensic Sciences Improvement Grant Program (16.472).
- **Research fellowships.** NIJ funds two fellowships through annual solicitations. The focus of the solicitations varies from year to year. Learn more about NIJ's fellowship programs here.

Guidance for NIJ applicants and awardees can be found here.

Practitioners can subscribe to Funding News from NCJRS to learn about funding opportunities, grant-related events, and more from NCJRS and federal sponsors at here.

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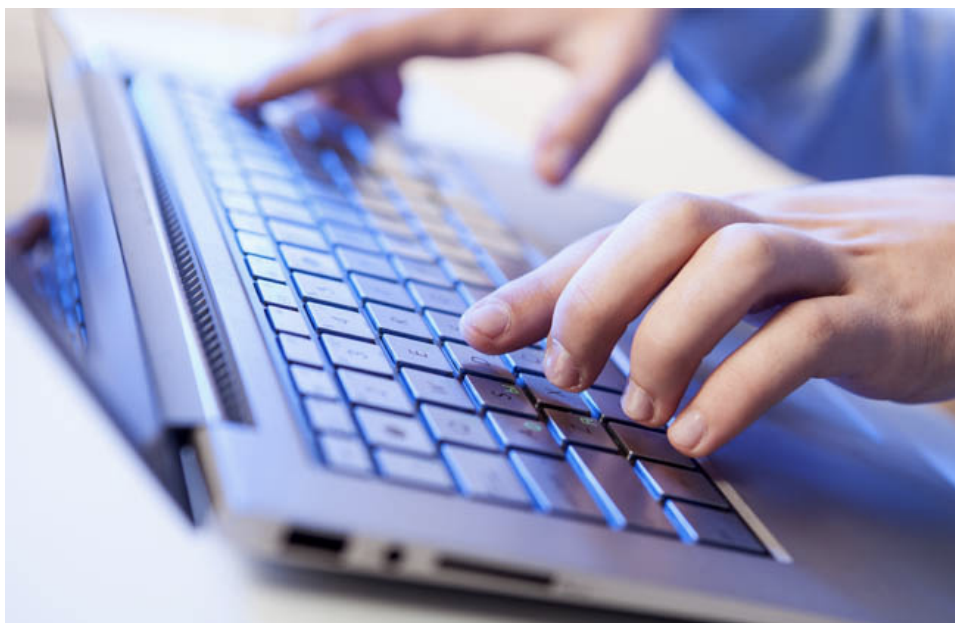*Main photo: iStock.com/LightFieldStudios*

VALOR Officer Safety and Wellness Program Offers Free E-Learning Opportunities

Bureau of Justice Assistance

The VALOR Officer Safety and Wellness Program, funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, offers a number of free e-learning programs, ranging from podcasts to videos to online training modules, click here.

Featured among those are a four-part health and wellness podcast series that addresses issues such as strength training, cardiovascular and functional fitness, and healthy meal planning. Other openly available resources include videos on sleep deprivation and warning lights, and online training on wearing, and caring for, ballistic-resistant vests. Even more resources can be accessed by registering with the VALOR Program; visit this website. Access to restricted resources is limited to sworn law enforcement professionals, and materials can be used only for training purposes.

BJA's Preventing Violence Against Law Enforcement and Ensuring Officer Resilience and Survivability (VALOR) Initiative is a suite of programs that seeks to improve the immediate and long-term safety, wellness and resilience of law enforcement officers. Its approach includes delivering no-cost training and professional education, conducting research, developing and providing resources, and establishing partnerships that benefit law enforcement officers. To learn more about the VALOR Initiative go to this website.

Community Corrections Publication Looks at Using Technology To Address Needs and Concerns

National Institute of Justice

The National Institute of Justice-funded Priority Criminal Justice Needs Initiative recently convened a workshop panel of correctional administrators and researchers to look at ways technology innovations can help community corrections agencies handle increased caseloads with diminishing resources. The resulting report, *Leveraging Technology to Enhance Community Supervision: Identifying Needs to Address Current and Emerging Concerns*, looks at two main questions: What challenges do community corrections agencies face in terms of leveraging new technologies, and how can these challenges be addressed? and What are the high-priority needs associated with leveraging technology in community corrections?

The panel agreed that technology advances can improve officer safety and skills, help agencies improve their operations, and help maintain accountability and facilitate positive

behavioral change. The report offers more detail on those key findings and includes 18 recommendations touching on technologies such as virtual reality, wearables, video analytics and location monitoring technology. The recommendations also look at research needs and identifying best practices in several areas.

The November 2019 report can be read online or downloaded as a PDF from here.

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