



# Department of Justice



## Office of Justice Programs

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Contact: Joan LaRocca  
(202) 307-0703  
[www.ojp.gov](http://www.ojp.gov)

### **Department of Justice Announces Body Armor Challenge**

WASHINGTON – The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) issued the first Department of Justice Challenge for scientists, inventors and innovators during the Safety Datapalooza at the White House earlier today. The event is part of the [Safety Data Initiative](#), a collaborative effort encouraging participants to build a range of innovative digital tools and mobile applications to enhance public and product safety.

Through it, NIJ is asking for creative ways to better determine when an officer's vest needs to be replaced. Typically replacement cycles are defined by the manufacturer's warranty. But the integrity of a vest may vary because of differences in wear and tear, exposure to weather, and other factors. Because the safety of officers is the ultimate priority, the service life of a vest should be determined based on its actual performance, not on a general warranty.

"The Office of Justice Programs is committed to exploring all avenues to expand its research initiatives. The Body Armor Challenge is a unique opportunity to further support the health and well-being of our public service officers by strengthening the reliability of their body armor," said Acting Assistant Attorney General Mary Lou Leary.

Through the Body Armor Challenge, NIJ seeks viable solutions to determine whether individual in-service body armor has maintained an acceptable level of ballistic performance to a high degree of certainty at any point during its service life and in a manner that does not render it unfit for continued use. The goal of this Challenge is to empower end users who depend on this critical safety equipment to make informed decisions based on solid scientific evidence regarding the ballistic performance of the soft body armor they use.

This is a multi-phase Challenge. Submission dates are from September 14, 2012 to December 14, 2012. Winners will be announced on March 15, 2013. Complete application instructions and rules are available on the NIJ Challenge web site at <http://www.nij.gov/funding/2012/body-armor-challenge.htm>. Competitors are encouraged to think creatively about how open data, data sharing, and crowdsourcing of data can play a role in the development, operation, and ongoing improvement of the solution. Winners of the Body Armor Challenge may have the opportunity to showcase their ideas to stakeholders participating in the Administration's Materials Genome Initiative, which speeds the discovery, delivery and manufacturing of new materials.

The Office of Justice Programs (OJP), headed by Acting Assistant Attorney General Mary Lou Leary, provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice, and assist victims. OJP has six bureaus and offices: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; the Office for Victims of Crime; and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking (SMART).