

Patrick Leahy Bulletproof Vest Partnership (BVP) Overview

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

BVP Helpdesk: 1-877-758-3787 / Email: vests@usdoj.gov

(Updated April 2021)

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 \$522 million in federal funds for the purchase of over one million vests (1,441,013 vests as of November 2020).

From FY 2015 through FY 2020, protective vests were directly attributable to saving the lives of at least 224 law enforcement and corrections officers (based on data collected by the Office of Justice Programs). Thirty-eight 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. System for Award Management (SAM) Registration Requirement: Jurisdictions will not be able to apply for and receive FY 2021 BVP funds if they are not registered in SAM. Jurisdictions not registered with SAM are strongly encouraged to access the SAM website at <https://www.sam.gov/SAM/> as soon as possible in order to obtain information on and complete the online SAM registration process. Applicants should ensure that current bank routing and bank account information is included in the SAM.gov profile, as the banking information in the SAM at the time of application will be used to transfer reimbursement funds to your jurisdiction. For more information about renewing and updating your existing SAM registration, or registering in SAM as a new entity, please visit https://fsd.gov/fsd-gov/answer.do?sysparm_number=KB0011081. The SAM Helpdesk can be reached at 866-606-8220.

3. 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.

4. 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#h449q>.

5. 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 FY 2021 BVP.](#)

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

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. 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 2021 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.

10. Uniquely Fitted Vest Requirement: Jurisdictions receiving funding for reimbursement of body armor purchases must have in place a uniquely fitted vest requirement when the FY 2021 BVP applications are submitted. Please see the unique fit FAQ for details: https://ojp.gov/bvpbasi/bvpfaqs_applguidelines_01.htm.