



# BJA Fact Sheet

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BUREAU OF JUSTICE ASSISTANCE • OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS

DENISE E. O'DONNELL, DIRECTOR

## Officer Safety Initiatives

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### A National Concern

Every line-of-duty death is tragic. Every line-of-duty injury is concerning. In recent years, our nation has observed a shocking increase in felonious assaults on officers. Over the past decade, there has been an average of 58,930 assaults a year on officers, resulting in 15,404 injuries.<sup>1</sup> Regrettably, on average, one law enforcement death occurs every 60 hours.<sup>2</sup>

Each loss of a hero in law enforcement results in longstanding ramifications for the family and law enforcement agency survivors, and each loss chips away at the public's confidence in the safety of our communities. Protecting our officers is imperative—it requires a holistic approach that prepares officers through tactical training and continues to promote and maintain officers' mental, emotional, and physical health.

The safety of our nation's officers is a top priority for the U.S. Department of Justice. In 2011, the Attorney General released the Officer Safety Toolkit to share resources with federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement leaders in an effort to promote officer safety. These resources include training, deconfliction services, and funding information. Since its release, thousands of print and electronic copies have been distributed. It is available online at [www.valorforblue.org](http://www.valorforblue.org).

### Officer Safety Resources for Law Enforcement Leaders

The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) is committed to officer safety. It has coordinated with the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office), federal law enforcement agencies, and national police organizations to develop a comprehensive officer safety portfolio to provide state, local, and tribal governments with quality training, technical assistance, and resources that assist law enforcement leaders in their efforts to (1) prevent violent encounters and train their officers to survive them, if they occur; (2) provide critical information to improve officers' awareness of potentially violent situations and their ability to respond appropriately to critical events; (3) identify potential danger and shield their officers from injury; (4) reduce overall violence in their communities; (5) bring greater awareness, leadership, and focus to improving officers' health and wellness; and (6) support their officers, their officers' families, and their agencies and communities if a tragic event does occur.

The resources described below are available to all law enforcement agencies online at [www.bja.gov/ProgramDetails.aspx?Program\\_ID=103](http://www.bja.gov/ProgramDetails.aspx?Program_ID=103).

### MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Throughout the country, public safety officers watch over our neighborhoods and work to make communities safer. BJA respects these officers' devotion and their willingness to place themselves in danger to protect our nation's citizens. We owe these officers, their families, and their agencies a tremendous debt of gratitude. BJA is proud to administer its officer safety portfolio, which provides law enforcement executives and their officers with resources in tactical training and overall wellness. Through these programs, it is BJA's hope that line officers, law enforcement executives, and other stakeholders will be able to access the information and tools they need to increase their knowledge of and capacity for officer safety.

### KEY POINTS

- The Attorney General's Officer Safety Toolkit shares resources with federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement leaders to promote officers' safety. It can be accessed at [www.valorforblue.org](http://www.valorforblue.org).
- Through BJA's comprehensive officer safety programs, state, local, and tribal law enforcement executives and officers receive quality training, technical assistance, and resources to help them prepare for and prevent violent attacks.
- These officer safety programs are designed to assist law enforcement leaders in:

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<sup>1</sup> National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, "Law Enforcement Facts," obtained September 25, 2015, from [www.nleomf.org/facts/enforcement/](http://www.nleomf.org/facts/enforcement/).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

## KEY POINTS (cont.)

- (1) Preventing violent encounters, and teaching their officers how to survive violent encounters if they occur.
  - (2) Providing critical information on how to improve officers' awareness of situations they may encounter and how to respond appropriately to critical events.
  - (3) Identifying potential danger and shielding their officers from injury.
  - (4) Reducing overall violence in their communities.
  - (5) Bringing greater awareness, leadership, and focus to improving officers' health and wellness.
  - (6) Supporting their officers, their families, and their agencies should a tragic event occur.
- Information about programs listed in this fact sheet can be accessed at [www.bja.gov/ProgramDetails.aspx?Program\\_ID=103](http://www.bja.gov/ProgramDetails.aspx?Program_ID=103).

## Preventing, Surviving, and Responding to Violent Encounters

### VALOR

[www.valorforblue.org](http://www.valorforblue.org)

BJA's Preventing Violence Against Law Enforcement and Ensuring Officer Resilience and Survivability (VALOR) Program is a U.S. Attorney General initiative that provides, through BJA, training and technical assistance as well as detailed analyses of past attacks on officers to state, local, and tribal law enforcement professionals throughout the nation. VALOR examines violent encounters to determine what happened, how the incidents may have been prevented, and what skills officers will need to better survive similar attacks.

VALOR offers web-based and in-person training and resources. Officers learn about "The Deadly Mix" framework (the officer, the offender, and the circumstances that brought them together) and learn techniques for identifying possibly armed subjects and recognizing indicators that a violent attack may be imminent. They also learn about emerging threats, and de-escalating potentially threatening encounters. To date, the program has trained thousands of officers and interviewed more than 200 officers involved in events where shots were fired. The program also creates outreach materials and revises training curricula so that all VALOR trainings are current and reflect real-world scenarios.

### Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training

[www.alerrt.org](http://www.alerrt.org) or [www.bja.gov/ProgramDetails.aspx?Program\\_ID=106](http://www.bja.gov/ProgramDetails.aspx?Program_ID=106)

The Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (ALERRT) Program, administered by Texas State University (TSU) in partnership with BJA, prepares officers to safely and effectively handle active-shooter situations. Since 2002, ALERRT has trained nearly 60,000 law enforcement professionals throughout the nation. In 2012, BJA's VALOR Program partnered with TSU and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to continue to provide this training nationally.

### Destination Zero

[www.nleomf.org/programs/destination-zero](http://www.nleomf.org/programs/destination-zero)

BJA, under VALOR and its partnership with the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, launched Destination Zero to examine and highlight officer safety and wellness programs that law enforcement agencies have implemented. The goal is to highlight programs that could serve as models for other agencies seeking to implement similar programs. As a part of Destination Zero, the National Officer Safety and Wellness awards are presented in conjunction with National Police Week. Agencies with successful and/or promising officer safety and wellness programs may apply to be considered for an award under one of four categories: General Officer Safety, Officer Traffic Safety, Officer Wellness, and Most Comprehensive Program that was Strategically Implemented.

### Center for Task Force Leadership and Integrity

[www.ctfli.org](http://www.ctfli.org)

The Center for Task Force Leadership and Integrity (CTFLI) is an online training and resource center. CTFLI's restricted-access web site addresses the various needs of law enforcement officers, commanders, and executive leaders involved in the administration and operation of task forces on officer safety, operations planning, risk management, and other topics.

### Prevention of Violence Against the Police

[www.theiacp.org/violenceagainstthepolice](http://www.theiacp.org/violenceagainstthepolice)

BJA, in partnership with the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), supports the Prevention of Violence Against the Police program to address how felonious assaults against law enforcement can be prevented. The program develops and disseminates resources and information to assist in preventing violence against law enforcement.

## **RISSafe**

[www.riss.net/Resources/RISSafe](http://www.riss.net/Resources/RISSafe)

RISSafe is a nationwide law enforcement deconfliction system designed to ensure officers remain safe during planned police operations, such as raids or undercover operations. Without this deconfliction, the potential for conflicts increases between agencies or officers unknowingly working in close proximity to each other, which may interfere with cases or, worse, create a situation where officers or citizens could be unintentionally hurt or killed. RISSafe is accessible 24/7/365 and is available to all law enforcement agencies. Since its inception, over one million operations have been entered and more than 341,000 conflicts have been identified. Currently, 29 RISSafe Watch Centers are operational, 21 of which are operated by organizations other than Regional Information Sharing Systems (RISS), such as fusion centers and High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTAs).

## **Shielding Officers from Injury and Promoting Wellness**

### **Bulletproof Vest Partnership**

[www.ojp.gov/bvpbasi](http://www.ojp.gov/bvpbasi)

The Bulletproof Vest Partnership (BVP) Program assists law enforcement agencies in acquiring soft body armor for their personnel. Bullet- and stab-resistant vests are instrumental to officer survival. Law enforcement should never have to police our communities without the protection of a bullet-resistant vest. Body armor has saved the lives of more than 3,000 officers. BJA provides funds to state, local, and tribal jurisdictions to help purchase vests. In support of the Attorney General's Officer Safety Initiative and the Mandatory Wear Policy requirement for the BVP Program, IACP, in partnership with BJA, can provide its Body Armor Model Policy and position paper at no cost. Jurisdictions must first be registered with the BVP Program.

### **Reducing Officer Injuries: Developing Policy Responses**

[www.theiacp.org/reducingofficerinjuryproject](http://www.theiacp.org/reducingofficerinjuryproject)

Funded by BJA, the Reducing Officer Injuries project worked to identify and document the causes and magnitude of officers' injuries as well as bring awareness to the importance of officer wellness. A first-of-its-kind study reviewed all officer injuries occurring within 18 participating agencies over a one-year period, and made policy and training recommendations based on the findings. The project provides training and information on how agencies can track their officers' injuries and use the data to determine the need for policy or procedural changes to help reduce officer injuries. Additionally, the project brings awareness to wellness topics such as the importance of nutrition by providing resources that law enforcement can use to improve wellness.

### **Blue Courage**

[www.bluecourage.com](http://www.bluecourage.com)

Blue Courage is a transformational process that focuses on the personal development of law enforcement. Law enforcement is a physically, mentally, and emotionally demanding profession. It is imperative that officers have resources to help them be aware of and manage these demands. Blue Courage addresses personal challenges many officers face, such as issues with cynicism, identity, judgment, integrity, leadership, and stress management. It provides a two-day leadership development workshop designed for all levels within an agency that addresses topics such as nobility of policing, respect, foundations of courage, practical wisdom, and health and wellness.

### **Officer Safety and Wellness Group**

[www.cops.usdoj.gov/Default.asp?Item=2603](http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/Default.asp?Item=2603)

The Officer Safety and Wellness Group, a partnership between COPS and BJA, focused on reducing officer deaths and addressing officer wellness issues. It held several meetings to discuss and contribute to the creation of officer safety and wellness tools and resources. It encourages adoption of cultures of safety and wellness in our nation's law enforcement agencies. Topics discussed included: Officer Deaths and Injuries from Gunfire, Psychological Health and Suicide, Leadership and Creating a Culture of Wellness, and Motor Vehicle Operations and Reducing Officer Deaths and Injuries.

## Supporting Officers, Their Survivors, and Their Agencies

### **The Executive Sessions on Police Leadership for the 21st Century**

The Executive Sessions on Police Leadership for the 21st Century is a series of meetings hosted by BJA, the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), and St. Petersburg College (Florida) to discuss cultural changes happening in law enforcement. Law enforcement leaders discuss how to create a culture of safety within their organizations that encompasses tactical fitness as well as their officers' mental and physical health and wellness.

### **The BJA Executive Session on Police Leadership**

[www.bjaexecutivesessiononpoliceleadership.org](http://www.bjaexecutivesessiononpoliceleadership.org)

The BJA Executive Session on Police Leadership was created to develop new thinking to help create police leaders uniquely qualified to meet the challenges of a changing public safety landscape. This effort engaged experienced police chiefs in documenting their own paths and invited leaders to participate in various audio and video forums to tell their stories and discuss the future of policing and police leadership.

Challenges examined for tomorrow's leaders included: Collaboration and Trust, Community Building, Organization of the Future – integrated model, Work of Policing (eight discussion videos), Leadership Development, Experiential Learning – The Learner's Marketplace (with topics including health and wellness), and Training.

### **In Harm's Way: Law Enforcement Suicide Prevention**

<http://policesuicide.spcollege.edu>

In Harm's Way focuses on law enforcement suicide prevention training and support. It aims to decrease suicide among law enforcement by increasing the probability that officers contemplating suicide will seek help from mental health professionals. It provides training and resources for officers and agencies. Examples of resources include a law enforcement suicide prevention toolkit with downloadable templates of materials to assist in presenting a suicide prevention training in an agency, reducing the stigma of requesting help, and encouraging officers to support one another.

### **Preventing Law Enforcement Officer Suicide**

To order CD-ROM: <https://ncjrs.gov/App/Publications/Abstract.aspx?ID=246399>

*Preventing Law Enforcement Officer Suicide* is a CD-ROM developed by IACP, with BJA support, that provides information regarding suicide prevention, including guidance for agencies on how to develop an officer suicide prevention program.

### **A Guide to Occupational Health and Safety for Law Enforcement Executives**

[www.bja.gov/publications/perf\\_le\\_occhealth.pdf](http://www.bja.gov/publications/perf_le_occhealth.pdf)

*A Guide to Occupational Health and Safety for Law Enforcement Executives* stresses the importance of providing occupational health and safety programs in law enforcement agencies. The result of a collaboration between BJA and PERF, this guide suggests a three-step approach for police executives to use when establishing health and wellness programs.

### **Public Safety Officers' Benefits**

[www.psob.gov](http://www.psob.gov)

A unique effort of the U.S. Department of Justice; local, state, tribal, and federal public safety agencies; and national organizations, the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program provides death and education benefits to survivors of fallen law enforcement officers, firefighters, and other first responders, as well as disability benefits to officers catastrophically injured in the line of duty. The BJA PSOB Office is honored to review the claims submitted on behalf of our nation's fallen and catastrophically disabled public safety heroes and their loved ones.

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