



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 24, 2021

## DOJ OIG Releases Report on the Department of Justice Policy on Body Worn Cameras for Law Enforcement Officers

Department of Justice (DOJ) Inspector General Michael E. Horowitz announced today the release of a report examining the Department of Justice (DOJ) policy on body worn cameras for law enforcement officers (LEOs). Our review period covered October 2019 through January 2021.

In the past decade, DOJ has studied, supported, and promoted the use of body worn cameras through its Office of Justice Programs, which has provided over \$115 million to state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies to create or enhance their body worn cameras programs. However, the DOJ Office of the Inspector General (OIG) found that when our audit commenced in June 2020, the DOJ did not have a body worn camera program for DOJ law enforcement officers (LEOs) and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives; Drug Enforcement Administration; FBI; and U.S. Marshals Service (the Components) were generally unprepared to implement body worn camera programs. During our audit, the DOJ took several important steps to begin developing and implementing body worn camera programs.

The specific findings of our audit include:

- Until October 2019, DOJ typically did not allow the use of body worn cameras on its operations, including task force operations on which partner LEOs had body worn camera programs. In November 2019, DOJ initiated a task force officer body worn camera pilot program that proved successful.
- In October 2020, DOJ finalized a formal task force officer body worn cameras policy, officially authorizing task force officers across the country to utilize body worn cameras on certain DOJ operations. Still, DOJ LEOs generally did not own or use body worn cameras.
- On June 7, 2021, the Deputy Attorney General issued a memorandum directing the Components to develop body worn camera policies and submit those policies for review within 30 days. The DOJ OIG has not audited these policies as policy development is ongoing.

As work continues to progress, DOJ should consider the three primary areas of concern we identified during our work:

- **Policies for body worn camera use.** As DOJ drafts its interim body worn camera policy, it should employ lessons learned from its task force officer pilot program, and consider other areas such as:
  1. Body worn camera activation and deactivation requirements;
  2. Video retention requirements;
  3. Privacy concerns, including but not limited to recording members of the public, recording inside a residence, recording inside a medical facility, or recording minors, and

4. The development of policy governing the release of body worn camera footage to the public.

- **Operational costs of a body worn camera program.** As DOJ reassesses its lack of a body worn camera program for DOJ LEOs, it should identify the type of operations for which body worn cameras should be required for DOJ LEOs on DOJ operations, and using that determination, develop a forecast of costs associated with equipment purchases, video storage, and other resources, such as staffing. As the costs of a body worn camera program are significant, DOJ can use this assessment to request appropriate funding from Congress.
- **Contracting options for the purchase of body worn camera equipment and video management systems.** As DOJ works to research body worn camera programs, we recommend that DOJ coordinate with the Components, and any other DOJ agencies to whom a body worn camera program may apply, to assess the suitability of a single contract involving either multiple DOJ components or multiple federal agencies so as to leverage the purchasing power of the federal government to ensure maximum cost savings.

Today's report makes 3 recommendations to assist as DOJ develops and implements a body worn camera program. DOJ agreed with all the recommendations.

**Report:** Today's report and an interactive timeline of events is available on the OIG's website at the following link: <https://oig.justice.gov/reports/audit-department-justice-policy-body-worn-cameras>

**Video:** To accompany today's report, the OIG has released a two-minute video of the Inspector General discussing the report's findings. The video and a downloadable transcript are available at the following link: <https://oig.justice.gov/news/multimedia/video/message-inspector-general-audit-department-justice-policy-body-worn-cameras>

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