



U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Justice Programs

*Bureau of Justice Assistance*

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Office of the Director

Washington, D.C. 20531

SEP 28 2015

Peter Bibring  
ACLU of Southern California  
1313 W. 8th Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Dear Mr. Bibring:

I write in response to your letter dated September 3, 2015 in which you express your concerns regarding an application from the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) for funds through the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Body-Worn Camera (BWC) Pilot Implementation Program (Pilot Program).

We appreciate ACLU's support of BJA's BWC Pilot Program as described in your letter. Your organization has been a valuable contributor to the BWC Toolkit. However, it is not our policy to discuss pending grant applications, or to make or deny grant applications for BJA grant programs based on recommendations from outside interest groups. BJA makes grant awards for competitive programs, including the BWC Pilot Program, through a process which requires that grant applications are peer reviewed by a diverse community of experts. The selection criteria for the BWC Pilot Program is described in detail in the solicitation, which can be found at <https://www.bja.gov/Funding/15BWCsol.pdf>.

The BWC Pilot Program considers body-worn cameras as one component of a comprehensive strategy to build police-community trust and uses a phased-in approach for implementation. As part of phase one, successful grantees will be required to either demonstrate that they have already actively engaged their communities in their BWC policy development, or develop a plan for doing so. Grantees will only be able to move to phase two of their projects, which includes purchase of equipment, after they have completed their BWC policy development.

The Department of Justice has not prescribed the policies that state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies must implement in order to receive federal funding for BWCs, although the department has shared research, recommendations, best practices, and existing policies through BJA's Body Worn Toolkit to assist agencies in developing policies in their communities. During the implementation of the BWC Pilot Program, we expect to see a diverse approach across the country to the development of BWC policies in response to state laws, stakeholder engagement, department oversight boards, and privacy concerns. As research develops, we hope to benefit from "lessons learned" by jurisdictions throughout the country, and expect BWC

polices will mature and evolve in response to the research, changing laws, and local community needs.

BJA will be assigning an experienced training and technical assistance provider to work with BWC grantees to ensure the grantees' programs meet the BWC pilot programs' goals. We welcome the opportunity to work with you as the training and technical assistance curriculum is developed and launched for our BWC grantees.

Thank you for sharing your concerns. We appreciate your input and look forward to further thoughts from the ACLU and other stakeholders regarding this important program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Denise E. O'Donnell". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Denise E. O'Donnell  
Director