



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

Body Worn Camera/Dashboard Camera Grant Program Announcement

June 8, 2021

Version 2

I. New Recording Equipment Requirements

Public Act 20-1 of the July 2020 Special Session, *An Act Concerning Police Accountability*, expands the requirement regarding the use of body-worn recording equipment (“body cameras”) and dashboard cameras with a remote recorder (“dashboard cameras”) among sworn members of law enforcement units and members of those units who perform police duties.^{1,2}

Pursuant to Public Act 20-1 Section 19, beginning July 1, 2022 all sworn members of law enforcement units and members of those units who perform police duties are required to use body cameras while interacting with the public in their law enforcement capacity and to use dashboard cameras in each police patrol vehicle used by any of the officers it employs.³

II. A New Grant-in-aid Program for Municipalities

Public Act 20-1 Section 20 authorizes the State Bond Commission to issue \$4,000,000.00 in general obligation bonds to the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) for providing grants-in-aid to municipalities for related equipment and service purchases by municipalities. The section also requires OPM to distribute grants-in-aid during Fiscal Years 2021 and 2022.

Since 2016, following enactment of Public Act 15-4 and several subsequent public acts, OPM has administered the Body Worn Recording Equipment Grant Program to provide grants-in-aid to law enforcement agencies for approved expenses incurred as a result of equipment purchases.⁴ With enactment of Public Act 20-1, OPM is creating a new grant program based on the new statute. The new title is the Body Worn Camera and Dashboard Camera Grant Program (“BWC-DC Grant Program.”)

A. Eligible Costs

Public Act 20-1 Section 20 requires OPM to provide, within available resources, grants-in-aid to eligible municipalities for costs associated with:

- i. The purchase of body cameras for use by the sworn members of such municipality's police department or for use by constables, police officers or other persons who perform criminal law enforcement duties under the supervision of a resident state trooper serving such municipality;
- ii. Digital data storage devices and equipment or one year of digital data services; and
- iii. A first-time purchase by such municipality of one or more dashboard cameras or the replacement of one or more dashboard cameras purchased prior to December 31, 2010, with one or more dashboard cameras with a remote recorder.

For further clarification on item ii. above, one year of digital services will only be funded if purchased in conjunction with new recording equipment.

B. Minimal BWC Technical Specifications and Automatic Activation

Pursuant to Public Act 20-1 Section 20, the body and dashboard cameras must adhere to guidelines maintained by the Commissioner of Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) and the Police Officer Standards and Training Council. The technical specifications, last revised December 16, 2020, appear on the DESPP website.⁵

To be eligible for reimbursement under the BWC-DC Grant Program, equipment must be purchased that, when triggered, it has an automatic activation feature that can be utilized either using the equipment itself or a separate accessory.

C. Percent of Reimbursement for Costs Associated with Purchases

Pursuant to Public Act 20-1 Section 20, distressed municipalities (as defined by Section 32-9p of the Connecticut General Statutes) shall be reimbursed for up to 50% of expenses, subject to OPM's approval, incurred as a result of purchases of body cameras, digital data storage devices or services, and dashboard cameras.⁶ Non-distressed municipalities are eligible to receive up to 30% of the above expenses, also subject to OPM's approval. Public Act 20-1 Section 20 enables OPM to prescribe additional technical or procurement requirements as a condition. This program may not be used to replace any equipment reimbursed under the "Excessive Use of Force" body-worn recording equipment reimbursement program.

III. Program Eligibility, Submission Process, and Deadlines

The new BWC-DC Grant Program is prioritizing available funds to help reimburse the costs of municipalities that did not participate in the former Body-worn Recording Equipment Grant Program.⁷ In the future, subject to public acts and available funding, OPM may revise the specifications of the BWC-DC Grant Program, including developing additional phases. Information on future phases and revised specifications of OPM's BWC-DC Grant Program will be posted the program's website.⁸

Municipalities not granted reimbursement for body cameras, dash cameras, or both under OPM's former program are eligible to receive reimbursement for new purchases of body cameras, dash cameras, or both under the new BWC-DC Grant Program. For example, if a municipality was not granted reimbursement for any equipment under the former program, it would be eligible for reimbursement for new purchases of body cameras and dash cameras. Moreover, if a municipality received reimbursement under the former program for only body cameras, it would be eligible under the new program to receive reimbursement for dash cameras but not body cameras. (The same logic applies to a municipality granted reimbursement for only dash cameras under the former program.) A reminder that municipalities are also able to receive one year of digital services if purchased in conjunction with new recording equipment

The BWC-DC Grant Program, like the prior program, will use a reimbursement process. For a municipality to be considered for reimbursement, required submissions must be received and approved by OPM. Application requests will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis subject to available funding. All activities and purchases, with checks dated by the assigned deadline, must be made prior to submission of an application to OPM under the grant program.

After all activities and purchases have been completed, eligible municipalities should submit the following to OPM:

- i. The application signed by the signatory authority of the municipality,
- ii. The Authorized Signature form (signed by the signatory authority of the municipality and attested to by the town clerk or legal office), and
- iii. Certification of Compliance with General Notice 20-08 to be signed by the Chief of Police and all copies of invoices and cancelled checks.

OPM will provide grant-in-aid for purchases made between July 31, 2020 (the day the legislation was signed into law) and December 30, 2021. Applications from Phase 1 municipalities must be received by OPM by March 31, 2022.

IV. Capital Lease Packages

To be eligible for reimbursement for lease packages, equipment must be purchased as a “capital lease” (i.e. the vendor leases the equipment to the municipality, which owns the equipment at the end of the lease agreement), not an “operating lease” (the vendor retains ownership of the equipment and it is returned at the end of the lease agreement).

The capital lease agreement must be no more than five years in length. Moreover, the municipality shall satisfy the terms of the capital lease agreement. If the capital lease agreement is terminated before its expiration, the municipality shall notify OPM and may be subject to a prorated reimbursement.

To apply for reimbursement under the BWC-DC Grant Program for lease packages, the municipality shall submit: the capital lease agreement, documents demonstrating completed payment for the first year of the agreement, and other application documents posted on OPM’s website.

For approved applications, the BWC-DC Grant Program will reimburse 50% of eligible expenses for distressed municipalities, and 30% of eligible expenses for non-distressed municipalities, of the total cost of the capital lease agreement, provided the amount of reimbursement is equal to or greater than the municipality’s first-year expenses under the agreement.⁹ Please note that, as covered under II (A) of this announcement, only the first year of digital data services, purchased in conjunction with new recording equipment, are eligible for reimbursement.

At the end of the capital lease agreement, the municipality may trade in the equipment to the vendor.

Because reimbursement for capital lease agreements has not been permitted in prior iterations of this grant program, OPM will review applications on a case-by-case basis to determine eligibility. As with all applicants for the BWC-DC Grant Program, OPM stands ready to assist with questions and review documents through the process.

V. Procurement

The Connecticut Department of Administrative Services (DAS) has indicated support for pursuing a procurement process with manufacturers of the body and dashboard camera equipment that law enforcement agencies may elect to purchase under this grant program. DAS is exploring a procurement process with the goal of providing law enforcement agencies with favorable pricing and options in the purchase of equipment. This procurement option is being developed as a benefit to law enforcement agencies. Agencies would not be required to participate in the procurement process in order to participate in the BWC-DC Grant Program. Please monitor OPM’s BWC-DC Grant Program website for more information.

VI. Contact information

For more information on the BWC-DC Grant Program, please contact Nichole Howe, Associate Accountant, at nichole.howe@ct.gov or (860) 418-6443. Interested parties are encouraged to contact Ms. Howe prior to making purchases for assistance regarding the BWC-DC Grant Program.

https://portal.ct.gov/OPM/CJ-About/CJPPD-Grants-Portal/BC_PAB_Grant_Template

¹ By law and under Public Act 20-1, “law enforcement unit” means any state or municipal agency or department (or tribal agency or department created and governed under a memorandum of agreement) whose primary functions include enforcing criminal or traffic laws; preserving public order; protecting life and property; or preventing, detecting, or investigating crime.

² Public Act 20-1 is available by following this link:

https://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/cgabillstatus/CGAbillstatus.asp?selBillType=Bill&bill_num=6004&which_year=2020

³ Pursuant to Public Act 20-1 Section 19, a “police patrol vehicle” includes “any state or local police vehicle *other than* an administrative vehicle in which an occupant is wearing body-worn camera equipment, a bicycle, a motor scooter, an all-terrain vehicle, an electric personal assistive mobility device, as defined in subsection (a) of section 14-289h, or an animal control vehicle.

⁴ OPM’s website on the Body-worn Recording Equipment Grant Program is available at https://portal.ct.gov/OPM/CJ-About/CJPPD-Grants-Portal/BWRE_Grant_Template.

⁵ The DESPP website listing Minimal BWC Technical Specifications is available at <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DESPP/files/BWC-Technical-Committee-Recommendations-for-Minimal-Specifications-FINAL-20201216.pdf>

⁶ “Distressed municipality,” as defined in Section 32-9p under the Connecticut General Statutes. A list of distressed municipalities is available on the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development website here: https://portal.ct.gov/DECD/Content/About_DECD/Research-and-Publications/02_Review_Publications/Distressed-Municipalities.

⁷ For a list of municipalities with pending and approved applications, please visit OPM’s website: <https://portal.ct.gov/OPM/CJ-Body-Cameras/CJ-Body-Cameras/List-of-Pending-and-Approved-Applications>.

⁸ OPM’s website on the Body-worn Recording Equipment Grant Program is available at https://portal.ct.gov/OPM/CJ-About/CJPPD-Grants-Portal/BWRE_Grant_Template.

⁹ The reimbursement rate follows policy in Public Act 20-1 of the July 2020 Special Session, *An Act Concerning Police Accountability*.