



RESEARCHER-PRACTITIONER PARTNERSHIPS IN THE BUREAU OF JUSTICE ASSISTANCE BODY-WORN CAMERA POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

Michael D. White, PhD
Kathleen E. Padilla, MS
Michaela Flippin
Charles M. Katz, PhD

December 07, 2017



This project was supported by Grant No. 2015-DE-BX-K002 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Office for Victims of Crime, and the SMART Office. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Contents

Executive Summary	5
Introduction	7
Methods	9
Results.....	11
Key Outcomes	13
Conclusion.....	15
References.....	17

This page is intentionally blank

Executive Summary

Law enforcement agencies funded through the US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Body-Worn Camera (BWC) Policy and Implementation Program (PIP) are not required to collaborate with research partners as part of their grant award. Nevertheless, a number of agencies indicated in their grant proposals that they would partner with outside researchers to conduct process or impact (or both) evaluations. In fact, 31 of the 189 agencies (16 percent) funded in FY 2015 and FY 2016 reported they would engage with a research partner during their grant period. To better understand these partnerships, the Arizona State University research team developed a survey to capture information about the proposed researcher-practitioner partnerships. The survey was delivered to agency points of contact (POCs) via their assigned subject matter expert on the CNA training and technical assistance team. The survey captured information in six general areas: the research partner, research questions, research design, outcomes, current status of the research, and whether the findings have been published. Of the 31 agencies that were sent a survey, eighteen agencies (58 percent) reported a researcher partnership (representing 10 percent of all funded agencies in FY 2015 and FY 2016). Among the 18 responding agencies, we found a high degree of consensus on the research questions they planned to address, with most focusing on the effects of BWCs on various citizen-, officer-, and workplace-related behaviors; officer accountability; and evidentiary value. The majority of sites plan to use a quasi-experimental design with multiple outcomes of interest. The most common outcomes include citizen complaints, use of force incidents, citizen perceptions, and evidentiary outcomes (e.g., complaint disposition, court outcomes). The vast majority of partnerships are ongoing, regardless of their PIP grant status.

This page is intentionally blank

Introduction

Police body-worn cameras (BWCs) have emerged as a mechanism that many police leaders, policymakers, advocacy groups, and researchers believe can enhance community trust in the police and improve police accountability (White, 2014). Since 2015, the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) has awarded nearly \$60 million in grant funding to more than 250 law enforcement agencies to deploy BWCs (Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2017). Though there are no definitive counts of the number of law enforcement agencies across the United States that have deployed BWCs, experts estimate that nearly all police departments will adopt the technology within the next three to five years (Capps, 2015).

Academic research has played a central role in the diffusion of BWCs in policing. Early research studies in Rialto, California (Ariel et al., 2015), Mesa, Arizona (Mesa Police Department, 2013), Phoenix, Arizona (Katz et al., 2014), and Orlando, Florida (Jennings et al., 2015) demonstrated that BWCs could generate reductions in both citizen complaints and police use of force. Other studies have shown BWCs can enhance prosecution outcomes (Morrow et al., 2016), and that the technology is supported by both police officers (Jennings et al., 2014; Gaub et al., 2016) and citizens (Sousa et al., 2015; White et al., 2017). Though recent studies have produced mixed findings regarding BWC effects on use of force, complaints, and other outcomes (Grossmith et al., 2015; Ariel et al., 2016; Yokum, et al., 2017), the body of literature on BWCs is largely positive, and ongoing research will play an important role in the technology's continued diffusion.

Law enforcement agencies funded through the BJA BWC Policy and Implementation Program (PIP) are not required to collaborate with research partners as part of their grant award. Nevertheless, a number of agencies indicated in their grant proposals that they would partner with outside research entities to conduct process or impact (or both) evaluations. In fact, 31 of the 189 agencies (16 percent) funded in FY 2015 and FY 2016 reported in their proposal to the PIP program that they would engage with a research partner during their grant period.

This page is intentionally blank

Methods

Researchers at Arizona State University (ASU) sought to better understand how PIP grant-funded agencies are collaborating with research partners. The ASU team distributed a research partner survey to all 31 FY 2015 – 2016 agencies that indicated their intention to engage with a research partner. The surveys were delivered to agency points of contact (POCs) via their assigned subject matter expert on the CNA training and technical assistance (TTA) team. The survey captured information in six general areas: research partner, research questions, research design, outcomes, current status of the research, and whether the findings have been published.

Twenty-five of the 31 (81 percent) returned a survey. Based on supplementary information, the authors completed surveys for 3 additional grantees (in Chicago, Los Angeles, and Washington, DC; with n=28, or 90 percent). Of the 28 respondents, 10 agencies indicated that they were not currently engaged with a research partner. The remaining 18 agencies (see Table 1) are currently working with a research partner, and the key aspects of their researcher- practitioner partnerships are described in the next section.

Table 1. Summary of Agency Characteristics

Agency	Researcher	Research design	Frequency of contact	Current status	Published results?
FY 2015 Grantees					
<i>Akron (OH)</i>	Kent State University	Quasi-experiment	As needed/bimonthly	Ongoing	No
<i>Albuquerque (NM)</i>	Arizona State University	Quasi-experiment	As needed	Ongoing	No
<i>Chicago (IL)</i>	University of Illinois at Chicago	Quasi-experiment	N/A	Ongoing	No
<i>Greenville (SC)</i>	University of South Carolina	Quasi-experiment	As needed	Ongoing	No
<i>Rochester (NY)</i>	Rochester Institute of Technology	Quasi-experiment	Monthly	Ongoing	No
<i>Washington, DC</i>	The Lab @ DC; University of Michigan; Yale	Randomized	N/A	Completed	No
<i>Wichita (KS)</i>	Wichita State University	Unsure	As needed/every few months	Ongoing	No
FY 2016 Grantees					
<i>Birmingham (AL)</i>	University of Alabama at Birmingham	Quasi-experiment	Monthly	Ongoing	No
<i>Camden County (NJ)</i>	New York University	N/A	No contact	Completed	Yes
<i>Chattanooga (TN)</i>	University of Tennessee Chattanooga	Randomized	As needed/monthly	Ongoing	No

<i>Denver (CO)</i>	OMNI Institute	Quasi-experiment	Met in August	Ongoing	No
<i>Escondido (CA)</i>	Criminal Justice Research Division (SANDAG)	Experimental/quasi-experiment	TBD	Ongoing	No
<i>Miami Dade (FL)</i>	Weston Researchers Associates, LLC	Quasi-experiment	Quarterly	Ongoing	No
<i>New Castle (DE)</i>	University of Texas at Austin	Quasi-experiment	No contact since completion	Ongoing	No
<i>Newark (NJ)</i>	Rutgers University	Quasi-experiment	As needed/monthly	Ongoing	No
<i>Santa Fe College (FL)</i>	Consultant	N/A	Irregular	Completed	No
<i>Woodstock (GA)</i>	Woodstock PD	N/A	Weekly	Ongoing	No
<i>Los Angeles (CA)</i>	Justice & Security Strategies, Inc.	Quasi-experiment	Weekly	Ongoing	No

Results

Research Partners

Of the 18 respondents who are actively engaged with researchers, 12 (67 percent) have partnered with a university. The remaining 7 have partnered with non-academic research entities such as the OMNI Institute, the Criminal Justice Research Division (SANDAG), Weston Research Associates, LLC, Justice & Security Strategies Inc., and The Lab @ DC (located in the Office of the Mayor).

We also asked respondents to describe how frequently they interact with their research partner. Six of these agencies (33 percent) reported meeting with their research partner “as needed,” with the remaining reporting contact weekly (n=2), monthly (n=2), quarterly (n=1), irregularly (n=3), or having had no contact since the beginning of the project (n=4).

We were also interested in the rigor of the research designs employed in the TTA program. A majority of the agencies (n=11; 61 percent) reported reliance on a quasi-experimental research design. The remaining 7 agencies reported a randomized design (n=2), or a mixed method design combining quasi-experimental and experimental designs (n=1).¹

Research Questions

The eighteen respondents were also asked to specify their research questions. Below we have identified common themes among the responses.

General Effects of BWCs on Citizens and Officers:

Most of the responding agencies (14 out of 18; 78 percent) identified the effects of BWCs on the perceptions and behavior of citizens and officers as the primary research interest.² This includes questions about citizen complaints against police, citizen behavior during encounters with police, perceptions of BWCs and police officers, and views of police legitimacy. Additionally, 11 of the 18 agencies (61 percent) are investigating officer-related effects including officer perceptions of BWCs, the effect of BWCs on productivity, officer use of force, and officer injuries. Some specific questions include the following:

- What are the effects of BWCs on citizen complaints?
- What are public perceptions of BWCs and police officers in general?
- What are the effects of BWCs on police officer use-of-force incidents?
- How do officers perceive BWCs?
- What are the effects of BWCs on calls for service or reported crime?

¹ A handful of respondents were unsure about the type of research design being employed (n=4).

² Of the 18 agencies, 3 claimed there were no research questions being studied. One other agency stated that their research partner was not conducting any research, but rather an evaluation and therefore did not list any research questions.

- Are officers treating people with dignity and respect?
- Will BWCs make police officers more productive and proactive?
- How do police officers use the BWCs?
- What is the impact on their behavior?
- What are the implications for police legitimacy, police behavior, and police services?

Policy and Technology:

Six of the 18 responding agencies (33 percent) specified questions related to operational and policy-related aspects of the technology, including accountability. These included concerns about the positioning of the BWC on individual officers, victim advocate access to videos, evidence backlogs, integration with other technology in the department, and who would have input in the BWC policy development process. Some specific questions include the following:

- How are BWC policies integrated with critical incident management policies?
- Do agencies and officers comply with BWC policy and accountability systems?
- What are measurable long-term accountability outcomes?
- Will there be temporal patterns in calls, predicting the timing of use-of-force issues during an event?
- What are some of the pros and cons regarding BWC positioning on officers?
- How are privacy concerns addressed?
- How can advanced video analytics be used to assist in reviewing footage?

Evidentiary Value:

Six of the 18 agencies (33 percent) identified questions related to potential court and evidentiary outcomes. These included when the district attorney's office would be provided with evidence, and the impact on complaint resolution (and time to resolution). Additionally, agencies acknowledged the challenge associated with managing different perceptions of released BWC video. Some specific questions include the following:

- What are the effects of BWCs on internal affairs investigations?
- Will the DA's office be provided with DME for all cases in which BWC evidence is available?
- What are the effects of BWCs on complaint resolution time?
- What kind of explanations will be provided for how discordant perceptions develop?
- How will BWCs affect charges filed, guilty pleas, and guilty verdicts for both felony and misdemeanor cases?
- Will BWCs reduce expenses related to cases settled in litigation?

Key Outcomes

A total of 15 agencies identified specific outcomes of interest (83 percent; the other 3 agencies did not identify outcomes). All 15 indicated multiple outcomes, and the most common included use of force, citizen complaints, citizen perceptions, and evidentiary and investigative outcomes. Table 2 shows the general categories of outcomes, and more specific descriptions are provided below.

Table 2. Outcomes of Interest

Agency	Complaints/ force	Officer percepti ons	Citizen perceptions	Assaults on officers/ officer safety	Evidentiary/ investigative	Reduced law suits	Other
FY 2015 Grantees							
<i>Akron (OH)</i>	X		X				
<i>Albuquerque (NM)</i>	X				X		X
<i>Chicago (IL)</i>	X	X	X	X	X		
<i>Greenville (SC)</i>	X		X				X
<i>Rochester (NY)</i>	X	X	X				
<i>Washington, DC</i>	X						X
<i>Wichita (KS)</i>					X		X
FY 2016 Grantees							
<i>Birmingham (AL)</i>	X		X		X	X	
<i>Camden County (NJ)</i>			X				X
<i>Chattanooga (TN)</i>	X	X			X		
<i>Denver (CO)</i>	X		X		X		X
<i>Escondido (CA)</i>							X
<i>Miami Dade (FL)</i>							X
<i>New Castle (DE)</i>	X		X		X		X
<i>Newark (NJ)</i>	X	X		X	X		
<i>Santa Fe College (FL)</i>		X		X			
<i>Woodstock (GA)</i>							X
<i>Los Angeles (CA)</i>	X			X			X

Specific outcomes of interest include the following:

- Reduction of citizen complaints
- Reduction of police officer use of force incidents
- Changes in the volume of arrests or field interviews
- Improved public perceptions of BWCs and police officers in general
- Improved police officer perceptions of BWCs
- Reduction in prevalence of assaults on police officers
- Changes in officer and investigator capacities to deal with major crimes
- Increased perceptions of police officer safety
- Greater evidentiary clarity during internal affairs investigations
- Reduction of lawsuits brought against individual officers and the department
- Increased community input on policy recommendation
- Policy and protocol that balances officer and citizen privacy with BWC technology and capabilities
- Improved quality of BWC video based on placement on officers' body

Current Status

We also asked about the current status of the researcher-practitioner partnership. Of the 18 agencies, 14 (78 percent) indicated that the partnership is still ongoing. As such, a majority of the agencies (94 percent) have not yet released or published results. Many of the researcher-practitioner partnerships are continuing beyond the PIP grant period. A majority of the agencies (67 percent) indicated their research partner would be willing to participate in conference calls or workshops to engage with other researchers working with BJA PIP sites.

Conclusion

Of the 179 agencies participating in the FY 2015–2016 BJA BWC PIP, approximately 10 percent (n=18) are actively engaged with a research partner. Most of the agencies are employing quasi-experimental research designs to investigate a wide range of research questions and outcomes. A majority of the researcher-practitioner partnerships are continuing beyond the PIP grant period, as the studies are ongoing.

This page is intentionally blank

References

- Ariel, B., Farrar, W. A., & Sutherland, A. (2015). The effect of police body-worn cameras on use of force and citizens' complaints against the police: A randomized controlled trial. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 31(3), 509–535.
- Ariel, B., Sutherland, A., Henstock, D., Young, J., Drover, P., Sykes, J., ... Henderson, R. (2016). Wearing body cameras increases assaults against officers and does not reduce police use of force: Results from a global multi-site experiment. *European Journal of Criminology*, 13(6), 744–755.
- Bureau of Justice Assistance. (2017). *BWC sites*. Retrieved October 24, 2017 from <http://bwctta.com/bwc-sites>.
- Capps, L. E. (2015). Police body-worn cameras: An overview. *The Police Chief*, 82(2), 52–54.
- Gaub, J. E., Choate, D. E., Todak, N., Katz, C. M., & White, M. D. (2016). Officer perceptions of body-worn cameras before and after deployment: A study of three departments. *Police Quarterly*, 19(3), 275–302.
- Grossmith, L., Owens, C., Finn, W., Mann, D., Davies, T., & Baika, L. (2015). Police, camera, evidence: London's cluster randomised controlled trial of body worn video. London, England: U.K. College of Policing.
- Hudson, David. (2014). Building trust between communities and local police. The White House Blog. Retrieved from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2014/12/01/building-trust-between-communities-and-local-police>
- Jennings, W. G., Fridell, L. A., & Lynch, M. D. (2014). Cops and cameras: Officer perceptions of the use of body-worn cameras in law enforcement. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 42, 549–556.
- Jennings, W. G., Lynch, M. D., & Fridell, L. A. (2015). Evaluating the impact of police officer body-worn cameras (BWCs) on response-to-resistance and serious external complaints: Evidence from the Orlando Police Department (OPD) experience utilizing a randomized controlled experiment. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 43(6), 480–486.
- Katz, C. M., Choate, D. E., Ready, J. T., and Nuño, L. (2014). *Evaluating the Impact of Officer Worn Body Cameras in the Phoenix Police Department*. Phoenix, AZ: Center for Violence Prevention & Community Safety, Arizona State University.
- Mesa Police Department. (2013). *On-officer body camera system: Program evaluation and recommendations*. Mesa, AZ: Author.
- Morrow, W. J., Katz, C. M., & Choate, D. E. (2016). Assessing the impact of police body-worn cameras on arresting, prosecuting, and convicting suspects of intimate partner violence. *Police Quarterly*, 19(3), 303–325.

- President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing. (2015). *Final report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing*. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.
- Sousa, W. H., Miethe, T. D., & Sakiyama, M. (2015). Body worn cameras on police: Results from a national survey of public attitudes. *University of Nevada Las Vegas: Center for Crime and Justice Policy*.
- White, M.D. (2014). *Police officer body-worn cameras: Assessing the evidence*. Office of Justice Programs: U.S. Department of Justice.
- White, M. D., Gaub, J. E., & Todak, N. (2017). Exploring the potential for body-worn cameras to reduce violence in police-citizen encounters. *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*. DOI: 10.1093/police/paw057
- Yokum, D., Ravishankar, A., & Coppock, A. (2017). *Evaluating the Effects of Police Body-Worn Cameras: A Randomized Controlled Trial*. Washington, DC: The Lab@ DC, Executive Office of the Mayor.