

# Washington County: To receive federal funding for body and squad cameras

Posted on Wednesday, Mar 23, 2022

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**West Bend, Wis. (March 23, 2022)** - After nearly a year of collaboration and support from U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Washington County Sheriff's Office will receive a \$377,000 grant for obtaining the necessary hardware and data storage for body-worn cameras for sheriff's deputies, as well as dash cameras for squad cars.

"Funding this much-needed equipment is an example of bi-partisanship action," said County Executive Josh Schoemann. "Rather than tagging Washington County taxpayers with this expensive but necessary cost, the procurement of this earmark shares the cost with taxpayers nationwide, many of whom travel through and visit our county. I'm very proud of our team and its working relationship with Senator Baldwin, who got the Senate to pass the funding, which was ultimately signed by President Biden."

County Sheriff Martin R. Schulteis stated, "Body cameras allow the community to see exactly what the officers are doing and promote transparency with the public we serve. Cameras improve both officer performance and civilian conduct; individuals act differently when they know they are being recorded."

According to Sheriff Schulteis, there are many advantages to this technology. Body worn cameras bolster accountability. By having interactions between officers and the public recorded, both are held accountable for their actions during the encounter. Allegations of excessive force, officer misconduct and citizen complaints can be proven, or disproven, after reviewing camera footage.

Body worn cameras also record events and dialogue exactly as they happen and provide an impartial account to law enforcement and the public alike. Additionally, an area that is often overlooked is the training and development of deputies. While reviewing footage, deputies can identify areas of needed improvement including tactics, interview techniques, de-escalation, interpersonal skills, etc.

Now that the President has signed the bill, the Senate and House Appropriations Committees will provide relevant agencies with a list of projects funded as Congressionally Directed Spending requests. Agencies are then required to produce an application that recipients must complete. After the application is completed and approved by the agency, processing of the funding can begin. All equipment will be installed in 2022.