

[Home](#) [Newsroom](#) [Media](#) [Administration](#) [NJ's Priorities](#) [Contact Us](#)
[Press Releases](#) [Public Addresses](#) [Executive Orders](#) [Press Kit](#) [Reports](#)
[Home](#) > [Newsroom](#) > [Press Releases](#) > 2015

## Christie Administration Announces \$4 Million Statewide Body Cameras Initiative

Tuesday, July 28, 2015

Tags: [Task Forces](#)
 Stay Connected  
with Social Media

 Stay Connected  
with Email Alerts

 LIKE THIS PAGE? SHARE IT  
WITH YOUR FRIENDS.

 + SHARE [f](#) [t](#) [e](#) ...

### ***Body Camera Initiative Advances Governor Christie's Commitment to Ensure Safety of Law Enforcement and New Jersey Residents***

**Trenton, NJ** – Building on a commitment to deliver the tools to maintain strong relations and trust between New Jersey law enforcement and the residents they serve, Governor Christie and his Administration today announced important initiatives to strengthen community policing throughout New Jersey. These bold initiatives include \$4 million in funding for a statewide body cameras initiative to fully equip New Jersey State Police troopers in the field and a grant program to provide funding for local police departments to acquire body cameras on a voluntary basis.

The Governor has long-spoken about the benefits of positive engagement and outreach by police in their respective communities and supported additional measures to bolster those types of good policing practices. Through this approach, the City of Camden has made critical progress in reducing crime and making local neighborhoods safer with a community policing plan that puts more officers on the streets, employs cutting edge crime technology and places greater focus on community outreach to curb violence.

"Across the country, we've seen what happens when distrust and distance between police and their communities result in situations that can quickly spiral out of control," said Governor Christie. "In New Jersey we're doing things differently and showing how engagement and relationship-building by officers in their communities make our neighborhoods safer and our law enforcement efforts more effective. Through that same type of work together, we are now strengthening those efforts with the use of body cameras by police that will bolster trust, and better provide for the safety and protection of residents and officers alike."

Joined by representatives of law enforcement and from across New Jersey's diverse communities, Acting Attorney General John Hoffman today detailed how \$4 million in funding for body cameras will fully equip the State Police and provide \$2.5 million in grant funding to help local police purchase the equipment. In addition, Acting Attorney General Hoffman is issuing a statewide policy establishing guidance for proper use of the devices. While the aid and guidance will encourage statewide use of body cameras, the decision to acquire them is left to each local police department on a voluntary basis.

"Public confidence in our police officers is vital, and the way to maintain mutual respect and trust between law enforcement and our communities is through accountability – of police and civilians alike," said Acting Attorney General Hoffman. "In addition to helping police gather evidence, body cameras will act as an objective witness in police-involved shootings and other use of force incidents, so that truth rules the day and not emotions, agendas or personal bias. By promoting transparency and ensuring impartial investigations of these incidents, we keep America's promise of equal justice and we also help the officers who perform difficult and dangerous jobs every day."

In developing the policies and initiatives, which also include commonsense revisions to the Attorney General's directive and guidance for deadly use of force investigations, the Attorney General's Office consulted with law enforcement stakeholders, including the county prosecutors, county chiefs of detectives, New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police, National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, New Jersey Asian-American Law Enforcement Officers Association, and Policemen's Benevolent Association. The Attorney General's Office also met with advocates,

community leaders and clergy, including representatives of the NAACP, NJ Communities Forward, National Action Network, ACLU, Latino Alliance, New Jersey Institute for Social Justice, and faith-based leaders of the African-American and Muslim communities.

### **New Jersey State Police Body-Worn Cameras**

Under the plan, New Jersey State Police will purchase approximately 1,000 body cameras for state troopers. These will be the first body cameras deployed by the New Jersey State Police, and this initiative will enable the force to equip all troopers who are on the road at any given time. Currently, State Police have been using mobile video recorders in troop cars for a number of years, and the new body cameras will provide additional capacity to capture footage. The State Police will spend approximately \$1.5 million for the cameras, related equipment and upgrades to their computer system for archiving the camera footage.

"We have been videotaping our motor vehicle stops for more than 15 years through the use of in-car dashboard cameras. Those recordings have immeasurably improved our ability to supervise and have been widely used during post-stop investigations. We are currently developing division protocols for the use of body worn cameras by our uniformed members with input from our unions and guidance from Acting Attorney General Hoffman's directive," said Colonel Rick Fuentes.

### **Body-Worn Camera Assistance Program**

Additionally, the Attorney General's Office is allocating \$2.5 million in criminal forfeiture funds to assist local police departments to buy body cameras. Acting Attorney General Hoffman has authorized an offset of up to \$500 for each body camera or camera "package," including body camera and related equipment.

The decision to acquire body cameras is left to individual police departments and municipalities, but they likely will be influenced by state legislation that requires newly purchased patrol cars to be equipped with mobile video recording systems. Because the statutory requirement can be satisfied if an officer in the vehicle is wearing a body camera and because body cameras are more versatile, many police departments are expected to elect to acquire body cameras instead of dashboard cameras.

Police departments will apply for body camera assistance through their county prosecutors. Assistance available to each county will be capped at the following levels, based on total county population:

- Tier 1 counties (population up to 200,000): Cape May, Cumberland, Hunterdon, Salem, Sussex, and Warren – up to \$75,000 per county;
- Tier 2 counties (population between 200,000 – 400,000): Atlantic, Gloucester, Mercer, and Somerset – up to \$100,000 per county;
- Tier 3 counties (population between 400,000 – 600,000): Burlington, Camden, Morris, Ocean, Passaic, and Union – up to \$125,000 per county;
- Tier 4 counties (population above 600,000): Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Middlesex, and Monmouth – up to \$150,000 per county.

To encourage and guide the growing deployment of body cameras, Acting Attorney General Hoffman issued a statewide policy to promote best practices and uniformity in using the devices. The new directive establishes foundational requirements while allowing individual police departments to tailor policies to local needs.

### **Directive Providing Commonsense Changes To Strengthen Use Of Force Investigations In New Jersey**

Acting Attorney General Hoffman also issued a new directive to strengthen New Jersey's already widely respected procedures for independent and impartial investigations of all police-involved shootings and deadly force incidents in New Jersey. These commonsense changes will increase transparency and enhance public trust in law enforcement and the justice system and include:

- Strengthening Comprehensive Conflict Checks In County Prosecutor Offices Within 72 Hours Of Any Deadly Force Incident.
- Requiring Mandatory "Walling Off" Of A Municipal Police Department When An Officer Of That Force Is The Subject Of An Investigation.
- Establishing Best Practices For Grand Jury Presentations.
- Providing A Public Statement At The Conclusion Of Any Use-Of-Force Investigations Not Resulting In Prosecution.

"New Jersey already was a model in the nation because of its rules ensuring that deadly force incidents involving police are thoroughly and fairly investigated," said Director Elie Honig of the Division of Criminal Justice. "Now we're raising the bar even higher in these cases by requiring a comprehensive review to eliminate any conflicts of interest and by excluding local police from any primary role in investigating their own officers. We're also mandating best practices for related grand jury presentations."

The Body Camera Directive can be found [here](#).

The Directive on Use of Force Investigations can be found [here](#).

###

9/14/2017

Office of the Governor | Newsroom

**Press Contact:**  
Brian Murray  
Nicole Sizemore  
609-777-2600



[Contact Us](#) | [Privacy Notice](#) | [Legal Statement & Disclaimers](#) | [Accessibility Statement](#) | 

Statewide: [NJ Home](#) | [Services A to Z](#) | [Departments/Agencies](#) | [FAQs](#)  
Office of the Governor: [Home](#) | [Newsroom](#) | [Media](#) | [Administration](#) | [NJ's Priorities](#) | [Contact Us](#)

Copyright © State of New Jersey, 1996-2017  
Office of the Governor  
PO Box 001  
Trenton, NJ 08625  
609-292-6000