

NYC Police Foundation Creates Light Weight Vest Program for Detectives

The NYC Police foundation is footing the bill for 550 new and lightweight, custom made bullet proof vests for their detectives. Partially as a result of a fatal friendly fire incident where a NYC detective died, and partly due to the reluctance of detectives to wear bulky vests underneath business suits, the new suits come as a welcome relief to investigators.

Across the country, private non-profit foundations, private companies, available grants as well as Federal agencies, taken together, contribute millions of dollars yearly to state and municipal police departments to provide the funding needed to upgrade aging equipment, the purchase of new technology and train personnel on the proper and safe use of the equipment.

Real-Time Crime Data Stats and History Information System

In Toledo, Ohio, the city is rolling out a new, “real-time” data-driven system to help officers on different shifts and units share the latest case information. The system is called “Street Smart”. It also has a portal for officers to search “real-time” crime trend data, historical data on crimes and officer bulletins from central dispatch. The aggregation of multiple sources of real-time crime data allows officers to stay on top of any developing situations and access this data from the field, in addition to doing analytics on historical data to help ascertain risks, recurring crime patterns and locations and possible suspect information. This information system has a modest yearly cost that has already paid dividends in improved safety and situational awareness to officers and reduced crime for businesses and residents they protect.

Sources of Funds for Officer Equipment, Systems and Training

The biggest portion of external funds for police departments come from one of three grant sources: Justice Assistance grant (JAG), COPS Office grant and Homeland Security grants. However, there are other grants and loans available to police departments across the country. The USDA and US Dept. of Commerce. One or both of these provide funds for qualifying police departments to purchase the equipment, supplies and training needed to maintain a constant state of readiness and preparation, including the purchase of new vehicles, law enforcement equipment, corrections equipment, and more. The Dept. of Commerce also has funds available for qualifying departments to upgrade and overhaul aging 911 systems (e.g. NYC revamped their 911 system several years ago). The Dept. of Energy will give grants for the purchase of electric or hybrid electric vehicles for qualifying police departments.

Similar to Federal grants and loans, there are many private companies doing the same thing to further help support needy police departments. For example, rail freight companies CSX, Union Pacific and BNSF provide grants to qualifying police departments to help secure areas near where rail infrastructure exists including where their lines are operating. Large retailers in various sectors have also contributed heavily to local and state police, including Walmart, Target, have supported the police with general donations and larger insurance companies, e.g. MetLife, Blue Cross Blue Shield, and others have donated money for officer safety equipment. This targeted funding has a win-win result and benefits both private enterprise, workers, citizens and police officers.