



# INSIGHTS

THE SMALL RURAL TRIBAL BODY-WORN CAMERA PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

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## Digital Evidence Survey

Attention all grantees – this week you received an email about a survey regarding BWC footage. Your answers will help us to provide technical assistance to you. Please take 10 minutes to respond to the questions. Thank you!

## Accepting BWCs in Policing Agencies

Research shows that successful body-worn camera (BWC) program implementation is significantly tied to officer buy-in, but what exactly motivates this buy-in? Overall, research findings show that officer perceptions towards the use of BWCs are generally positive, but the individual factors influencing these viewpoints require more investigation.

In the Chicago Police Department, officer surveys conducted before and after BWCs were introduced produced interesting results. When officers were exposed to BWCs prior to implementation they were more supportive of the technology. This support was largely driven by outcome-oriented concerns, such as the evidentiary value of BWC footage, which can help resolve incidents more efficiently or reduce frivolous complaints. The surrounding culture of policing is worth considering in this context because of its potential influence on officer attitudes. Oftentimes, an officer's role is characterized as the "crime fighter", which may explain their greater support for the outcome-oriented uses of BWCs.

Furthermore, results from a study that used survey data from the 2016 Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS) BWCs survey show that:

- Agencies which implemented new technologies in the past were more willing to implement BWCs in the future.
- It is important to note, however, there are potential obstacles in officer buy-in for BWCs. Among agencies that experienced increased citizen complaints for excessive use of force by officers:
  - There was decreased willingness to adopt BWCs, especially among those agencies located in states with strong police unions;
  - In agencies which said that BWCs were not necessary, there also tended to be higher percentages of complaints for excessive use of force;
  - On a broader scale, agencies located in states with strong police unions overall were more reluctant to adopt BWCs; and

- Lastly, privacy concerns comprised a significant hindrance on officer buy-in. Officers who believed BWCs would negatively affect their privacy were found to be less supportive of wearing and implementing BWCs.

Research on officer buy-in for BWCs will continue to play an important role in the overall expansion and success of BWC programs in agencies across the nation. The technology only works as well as those who operate it, highlighting the importance of ensuring that agencies not only implement BWCs, but also foster an environment wherein the technology's potential can be fully realized.

More information on the various factors that impact officer support for BWC adoption can be found [HERE](#) as well as the considerations for officer resistance to BWC implementation which is further outlined [HERE](#).



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