Beat: Technology

OBAMA ADMINISTRATION WILL FUND POLICE BODY CAMERA PROJECT

CAMERAS RECORD INTERACTION WITH PUBLIC

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USPA NEWS - The Obama administration began a program Friday to assess the effectiveness of having officers wear body cameras that can record interactions with the public.

The Justice Department announced it is providing $20 million to police departments for body cameras, the first installment in a three-year program budgeted at $75 million.
"Body-worn cameras hold tremendous promise for enhancing transparency, promoting accountability and advancing public safety for law enforcement officers and the communities they serve," Attorney General Loretta Lynch said.
White House spokesman Josh Earnest said the program will help jurisdictions with the purchase of 50,000 body-worn cameras and provide evaluations of how well the program works.
Civil rights advocates demand that officers be required to wear cameras in the wake of a series of police killings, including one in Baltimore that triggered riots.

Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake said she would launch a body-camera pilot program. The American Civil Liberties Union and other attorneys have expressed privacy concerns for both the officers wearing the cameras and people filmed by police. Earnest said there's not a lot of data on the effectiveness of body cameras.
"Some of the funds from the Department of Justice will go toward actually studying the impact of body-worn cameras," Earnest said.
Of the $20 million grant announced Friday, the Justice Department said $17 million will be devoted to "the purchase of body-worn cameras, $2 million for training and technical assistance and $1 million for the development of evaluation tools to study best practices."

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