

# Police Body-Worn Cameras

## Scope Statement – September 13, 2021

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### Background

Body-worn cameras (BWC) are small devices that record video and audio and are capable of being worn on a person. Law enforcement agencies use BWCs to record officer interactions with the public. Between November 2020 and April 2021, the Kansas City, Missouri, Police Department deployed over 800 BWCs to officers in the six patrol divisions plus the Traffic Enforcement and Special Operations divisions.

### Why audit Police Body-Worn Cameras?

Body-worn camera videos can be used to promote transparency, increase accountability, and discourage inappropriate behaviors by both officers and the public. Many Kansas Citizens have asked the Mayor and Council for patrol officers in the Kansas City Police Department to be outfitted with BWCs. The City Council directed the City Auditor to conduct an audit of the body-worn camera program.<sup>1</sup>

### Audit objectives

Our objectives are to answer the following questions:

- Are Kansas City, Missouri, police officers using body-worn cameras in accordance with department policies?
- What recommended practices would enhance the Kansas City, Missouri, Police Department's body-worn camera policy?

### Audit methods

To address the audit objectives, we plan to:

- interview Kansas City, Missouri, Police Department staff and go on ride-alongs,
- compare the Police Department's body-worn camera policy and internal directives to recommended practices,
- review BWC data to assess whether access, supervisory review, and record retention comply with department policies, internal directives, and record retention regulations,
- watch randomly selected BWC videos to assess whether officers are using cameras in accordance with department policies, and
- compare BWC data and dispatch data to determine whether dispatched calls are recorded.

### Scope Impairment

Missouri's Sunshine Law<sup>2</sup> limits the videos that we can review for this audit. Per state statute, mobile video recordings that are part of active police investigations are closed records until the investigations become inactive. The statute also outlines other reasons some videos or parts of videos are closed or authorized to be closed records. This impairs our ability to assess officers' use of body-worn cameras in some situations and will limit conclusions we can draw about whether officers are using BWC in accordance department policies.

### Anticipated release date

We plan to issue the audit report in April 2022.

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<sup>1</sup> Resolution 200422, June 11, 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Revised Statutes of Missouri §610.100