



# Department of Justice



## Office of Justice Programs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
TUESDAY, MAY 14, 2019

CONTACT: JOAN LAROCCA, 202-307-0703  
[JOAN.LAROCCA2@USDOJ.GOV](mailto:JOAN.LAROCCA2@USDOJ.GOV)

### **THE BUREAU OF JUSTICE ASSISTANCE AWARDS \$1 MILLION TO HELP SELMA, ALABAMA, FIGHT HOMICIDES AND GANG VIOLENCE**

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Assistance awarded \$1 million to the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs to help law enforcement agencies respond to increased homicides and gang crime in the city of Selma and the surrounding area.

“A violent criminal element has established a stronghold in Selma, where it menaces citizens and poses a direct threat to law enforcement,” said Matt M. Dummermuth, Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General of the Justice Department’s Office of Justice Programs, which includes BJA. “This funding will give the brave officers who patrol the city the support they need to counter this dangerous and disturbing trend and reestablish law and order.”

The homicide rate in Selma has doubled in recent years, and gang violence is on the rise. Gang members have engaged in drug and firearms trafficking, hindered prosecutions and targeted police officers for violent attacks, luring them with false 911 calls into ambushes where they are shot at with high-powered rifles.

“This grant from our federal partners in the Department of Justice will enable us to ramp up the arrest and prosecution of a violent element in Selma that has for too long made the city unsafe. We will not rest until Selma is safe again and order is restored,” said Richard Moore, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Alabama. “Selma is known as the ‘Queen of the Black Belt’ and is now poised to once again become a vibrant community on the Alabama River. The citizens of Selma have already demonstrated that they have the will to take back their city. Our local, state and federal law enforcement partners are working tirelessly with our Project Safe Neighborhoods program, which we call ‘Weed and Seed,’ to not only eradicate violent crime in Selma but to ‘seed’ in preventive measures that will make our progress sustainable. Selma has a bright future due in part to this financial boost to law enforcement. We are very grateful.”

BJA invited the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs, an established state agency with a recognized ability to oversee emergency law enforcement situations, to apply for funding under the Emergency Federal Law Enforcement Assistance Program.

The EFLEA program allows BJA to make funds available to a state government to respond effectively to an “uncommon situation,” one that is, or threatens to become, serious or epidemic in scope and in which state and local resources are inadequate to protect the lives and property of citizens. The funding provided under this award will provide much-needed equipment for officers and overtime expenses to perform saturation patrols in high crime areas. This program supports the Department of Justice’s mission of reducing crime and supporting public safety personnel in the context of an emergency situation.

For more information about the Bureau of Justice Assistance please visit [www.bja.gov](http://www.bja.gov).

The Office of Justice Programs, directed by Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Matt M. Dummermuth, provides federal leadership, grants and resources to improve the nation's capacity to prevent and reduce crime, assist victims and enhance the rule of law by strengthening the criminal justice system. More information about OJP and its components can be found at [www.ojp.gov](http://www.ojp.gov).