

NIJ FY25 Research and Evaluation for the Testing and Interpretation of Physical Evidence in Publicly Funded Forensic Laboratories

Total Amount To Be Awarded Under This Funding Opportunity: \$1,500,000.

Anticipated Award Ceiling: Maximum dollar amount for each award to be determined by the requirements of the research proposed in applications selected for award, up to the full dollar amount anticipated to be awarded under this notice of funding opportunity (NOFO).

Anticipated Period of Performance Duration: To be determined by the period of performance of awarded applications. Successful applicants will be expected to complete the work proposed within a five-year (60-months) period of performance.

Funding Opportunity Number: O-NIJ-2025-172604

Deadline to submit SF-424 in Grants.gov: **June 03, 2026, by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time**
Deadline to submit application in JustGrants: **June 10, 2026, by 8:59 p.m. Eastern Time**



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ADVANCING JUSTICE THROUGH SCIENCE

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BASIC INFORMATION

The [U.S. Department of Justice](#) (DOJ), [Office of Justice Programs](#) (OJP), [National Institute of Justice](#) (NIJ) is accepting applications for funding in response to this notice of funding opportunity (NOFO).

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Agency Name | U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs National Institute of Justice |
| NOFO Title | NIJ FY25 Research and Evaluation for the Testing and Interpretation of Physical Evidence in Publicly Funded Forensic Laboratories |
| Announcement Type | Initial |
| Funding Opportunity Number | O-NIJ-2025-172604 |
| Assistance Listing Number | 16.560 |

Executive Summary

This funding opportunity seeks proposals for research and evaluation studies to produce practical knowledge that can improve the examination and interpretation of physical evidence in forensic science laboratories. Specifically, NIJ seeks applications for rigorous research and evaluation projects that will:

- Identify and inform the forensic community of best practices through the evaluation of existing and emerging laboratory protocols; and/or
- Have a direct and immediate impact on laboratory efficiency and assist in making laboratory policy decisions.

Please see the [Eligible Applicants](#) section for the eligibility criteria.

OJP is committed to advancing work that furthers DOJ's mission to uphold the rule of law, to keep our country safe, and to protect civil rights. OJP provides federal leadership, funding, and other critical resources to directly support law enforcement, combat violent crime, protect American children, provide services to American crime victims, and address public safety challenges, including human trafficking and the opioid crisis. OJP supports DOJ's commitment to [Gold Standard Science](#) and [scientific integrity](#).

Key Dates and Times

| | |
|--|--|
| Funding Opportunity Release Date | May 01, 2026 |
| SAM.gov Registration/Renewal | Recommend beginning process by May 05, 2026, and no later than May 22, 2026. |
| Step 1: Grants.gov Application Deadline | 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on June 03, 2026 |
| Step 2: JustGrants Application Deadline | 8:59 p.m. Eastern Time on June 10, 2026 |

Funding Details

Total Amount To Be Awarded Under This Funding Opportunity: \$1.5 million.

Anticipated Number of Awards: up to 7 awards. To be determined by the number of applications received and their merit.

Anticipated Award Ceiling: To be determined by the requirements of the research proposed in grants selected for award. Applicants are encouraged to propose budgets that match the research activities proposed, up to the full dollar amount anticipated to be awarded under this NOFO.

Note: Applicants may propose a budget that is less than the anticipated award ceiling amount. The budget should be reasonable to conduct the proposed project and be within the applicant's capacity to manage.

Anticipated Period of Performance Start Date: January 1, 2027.

Anticipated Period of Performance Duration: 60 months.

Availability of Funds

This funding opportunity, and awards under this funding opportunity, are subject to the availability of funding and any changes or additional requirements that may be imposed by the agency or by law. In addition, nothing in this NOFO is intended to, nor does it, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States or its departments, agencies, entities, officers, employees, agents, or any other person.

Statutory Authority

Title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (sections 201 - 203); the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (sections 231-235); Pub. L. No. 119-4, Div. A, secs. 1101(a)(2) and 1301(4), 139 Stat. 9, 10-11, 17; Pub. L. No. 118-42, 138 Stat 25, 147; 28 USC 530C.

Agency Contact Information

For assistance with the requirements of this funding opportunity:

OJP Response Center

Phone: 800-851-3420 or 202-353-5556 (TTY for hearing-impaired callers only)

Email: OJP.ResponseCenter@usdoj.gov

Hours of operation: 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time (ET) Monday–Friday

For assistance with **SAM.gov** (registration/renewal):

SAM.gov Help Desk

Web: [SAM.gov Help Desk \(Federal Service Desk\)](#)

Hours of operation: 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. ET Monday–Friday, except on federal holidays

For assistance with **Grants.gov** (registration, submission of the Application for Federal Assistance SF-424):

Grants.gov Customer Support Hotline

Phone: 800-518-4726, 606-545-5035

Email: support@grants.gov

Web: [Grants.gov Customer Support](#)

Hours of operation: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, except on federal holidays

For assistance with **JustGrants** (registration, submission of full application):

JustGrants Service Desk

Phone: 833-872-5175

Email: JustGrants.Support@usdoj.gov

Hours of operation: 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. ET Monday–Friday and 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. ET on Saturday, Sunday, and federal holidays.

For procedures related to unforeseen technical issues beyond the control of the applicant that impact submission by the deadlines, see [Experiencing Technical Issues Preventing Submission of an Application \(Technical Waivers\)](#).

Resources for Applying

[OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#): Referred to as the Application Resource Guide throughout the NOFO, this resource provides guidance to help applicants for OJP funding prepare and submit their applications.

[JustGrants Application Submission Training Webpage](#): Offers helpful information and resources on the grant application process.

Note: If this NOFO requires something different from any guidance provided in the [Application Resource Guide](#), the difference will be noted in this NOFO and the applicant should follow the guidance in this NOFO.



ELIGIBILITY

Eligible Applicants

The types of entities that are eligible to apply for this funding opportunity are listed below:

- **Government Entities**
 - State governments
 - County governments
 - City or township governments
 - Special district governments
 - Native American Tribal governments (federally recognized)
 - Native American Tribal governments (other than federally recognized)
- **Educational Organizations**
 - Public and state-controlled institutions of higher education
 - Private institutions of higher education
- **Nonprofit Organizations**
 - Nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), other than institutions of higher education
 - Nonprofits that do not have a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education
- **For-Profit Organizations**
 - Organizations other than small businesses
 - Small businesses
- **Other**
 - Federal agencies
 - Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs)
 - University Affiliated Research Centers (UARCs)
 - Other units of local government

State Government: For the purposes of this NOFO, “state” means any state of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Small Businesses: Small business grants may be awarded to companies meeting the size standards established by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) for most industries in the economy. Sole proprietorships should apply under the Doing Business As (DBA) name and Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) rather than as an individual.

“Other” Entities Definition:

- **Other Units of Local Government:** For the purposes of this notice of funding opportunity, other units of local government include towns, boroughs, parishes, villages, or other general purpose political subdivisions of a state.
- **Federal Agencies:** Federal agencies are eligible to apply. (Any award made to a federal agency will be made as an inter-agency reimbursable agreement.) Applications from Federal agencies should be submitted as “Applicant Type (X: Other)” under the agency’s UEI, rather than by the PI as an Individual.

- **Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs):** FFRDCs are public-private partnerships that conduct research and development for the United States Government. Under Federal Acquisition Regulation § 35.017, FFRDCs are operated by universities and corporations to fulfill certain long-term needs of the government that "...cannot be met as effectively by existing in-house or contractor resources." A current list of FFRDCs can be found [here](#). Applications from FFRDCs should be submitted as "Applicant Type (X: Other)" under the center's UEI, rather than by the PI as an Individual.
- **University Affiliated Research Centers (UARCs):** UARCs are strategic United States Department of Defense (DoD) research centers associated with universities. UARCs are formally established by the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering (USD(R&E)) to ensure that essential engineering and technology capabilities of particular importance to the DoD are maintained. A list of UARCs can be found [here](#). Applications from UARCs should be submitted as "Applicant Type (X: Other)" under the center's UEI, rather than by the PI as an Individual.

Limit on Number of Applications

An applicant may submit more than one application if each application proposes a different project in response to the NOFO.

Applications under which two or more entities (project partners) would carry out the federal award will be considered. However, only one entity may be the applicant for the NOFO; any others must be proposed as subrecipients. See the [Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information on subawards. The applicant is expected to conduct the preponderance of the work proposed.

An entity may be proposed as a subrecipient in more than one application.

Cost Sharing/Match Requirement

See "Cofunding" paragraph under the "Program Description" section.



PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

General Purpose of the Funding

Under this NOFO, NIJ seeks proposals for research and evaluation studies to produce practical knowledge that can improve the examination and interpretation of physical evidence in forensic science laboratories. Specifically, NIJ seeks applications for rigorous research and evaluation projects that will:

- Identify and inform the forensic community of best practices through the evaluation of existing and emerging laboratory protocols; and/or
- Have a direct and immediate impact on laboratory efficiency and assist in making laboratory policy decisions.

The intent of this program is to direct the findings of this research and evaluation toward the identification of the most efficient, accurate, reliable, and cost-effective methods for the identification, analysis, and interpretation of physical evidence for criminal justice purposes. Projects should address the challenges and needs of the forensic science community, including, but not limited to, the operational needs developed by Forensic Science Research and Development Technology Working Group (R&D TWG) meetings. More information can be found on [NIJ's website](#). Additional research needs of the forensic science community can be found at the National Institute of Standards and Technology's (NIST) [Organization of Scientific Area Committees \(OSAC\) website](#).

NIJ seeks proposals that include robust, creative, and multi-pronged dissemination strategies that include strategic partnerships with organizations and associations that are best equipped to ensure that research findings lead to changes in policies and practices. Applicants are encouraged to propose multidisciplinary research teams to build on the complementary strengths of different methods and areas of subject matter expertise.

In the case of partnerships that will involve the use of federal award funds by multiple partnering agencies to carry out the proposed project, only one entity/partnering agency may be the applicant (as is the case with any application submitted in response to this NOFO); any others must be proposed as subrecipients. The applicant is expected to conduct the preponderance of the work proposed.

Specific Information

This funding opportunity seeks applications for research and evaluation studies to produce practical knowledge that has the potential to improve the examination and interpretation of physical evidence in forensic science laboratories.

NIST, through its OSAC and partnership with NIJ, has also been working with practitioners in various forensic science disciplines to produce process maps that identify key decision points in the forensic evidence examination process. The process maps may help identify additional research needs of the forensic science community. An additional resource is the [NIST Public Data Repository \(PDR\)](#) that includes a wide variety of data related to forensic science.

Proposals are expected to identify the focus areas (e.g., forensic science discipline[s]) intended to benefit from the project. The focus areas should be listed in the keywords on the title page. Some examples are listed below. Where available, links have also been provided to sites containing additional information.

- [Bloodstain pattern analysis](#)
- [Digital/multimedia evidence](#)
- [DNA](#) and [forensic biology](#)
- [Forensic anthropology](#) and [forensic odontology](#)
- [Forensic crime scene analysis](#)
- [Forensic toxicology](#)
- [Firearms and toolmark identification](#)
- [Fire debris analysis and arson scene investigations](#)
- [Latent print](#)
- [Medicolegal death investigation, including forensic pathology](#)
- [Questioned documents](#)
- [Seized drugs](#)
- [Shoeprint/tire tread examination](#)
- [Trace evidence](#) (also consult <https://www.nist.gov/topics/forensic-science/materials-trace-subcommittee>)
- [Wildlife forensics](#)

The following are not within the scope of this NOFO, and will not be reviewed:

- Applications that are not responsive to the purposes of this specific funding opportunity. This includes:
 - Proposals that do not contain a research component.
 - Proposals that do not propose assessing current lab processes, evaluating an emerging method(s) or instrument(s), or otherwise do not respond to the specific goals of this NOFO.
 - Proposals that do not clearly address criminal justice concerns in the United States.
- Applications primarily to purchase equipment, materials, or supplies, or to contract or purchase training, validation, or other services that will complete the majority of the proposed research project. (A budget may include these items if they are necessary to conduct research, development, demonstration, evaluation, or analysis.)
- Work that will be funded under another specific funding opportunity.
- Proposals with the sole purpose of processing or analyzing casework samples.
- Costs associated with conducting conferences. A conference is a symposium, seminar, workshop, or any other organized and formal meeting, whether conducted face-to-face or via the internet, where individuals assemble (or meet virtually) to exchange information and views or explore or clarify a defined subject, problem, or area of knowledge, whether or not a published report results from such a meeting. A meeting where a gathering discusses general matters as part of a normal course of doing business is not considered a conference. Funds may be used to attend conferences for the purposes of dissemination of research findings.

In accordance with Gold Standard Science (GSS) as described in [Executive Order 14303](#), the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy [Memorandum](#) providing guidance on implementing GSS, and the Department of Justice's [GSS webpage](#), applicants for NIJ funding should include within their application a clear statement of commitment to complying with the principles and tenets of GSS.

Applicants should refer to [Application Contents, Submission Requirements, and Deadlines: Budget Detail Form](#) for information on allowable and unallowable costs that may inform the development of their project design.

Agency Funding Priorities

In order to advance public safety and help meet its mission, NIJ will provide priority consideration to applicants that propose (as applicable within the scope of this funding opportunity) projects designed to advance the goals listed below. Applicants seeking priority consideration should specify in the proposal narrative (and in the budget detail form, if applicable) which of the following goal(s) the project is intended to advance and how it will do so:

- (a) Directly supporting law enforcement operations (including immigration law enforcement operations);
- (b) Combatting violent crime;
- (c) Supporting services to American citizens;
- (d) Protecting American children; and
- (e) Supporting American victims of trafficking and sexual assault.

Note: Addressing these priority areas is one of many factors that NIJ considers in making funding decisions. Receiving priority consideration for one or more priority areas does not guarantee a funding award.

Unallowable Uses of Funds

The following are certain unallowable costs and certain activities that are out of the program scope and will not be funded.

1. Out of program scope is any program or activity, at any tier that, directly or indirectly, violates (or promotes or facilitates the violation of) federal immigration law (including 8 U.S.C. § 1373) or impedes or hinders the enforcement of federal immigration law—including by failing to comply with 8 U.S.C. § 1373, give access to DHS agents, or honor DHS requests and provide requested notice to DHS agents.
2. Out of program scope is any program or activity, at any tier that violates any applicable Federal civil rights or nondiscrimination law. This includes violations that – (1) indirectly violate the law, including by promoting or facilitating violations; or (2) unlawfully favor individuals in any race or protected group, including on a majority or minority, or privileged or unprivileged, basis, within a given area, population, or sector.
3. As specified in the [DOJ Grants Financial Guide](#), in Chapter 3.13 “Unallowable Costs” (“Legal Services for Aliens”), any obligations of funds, at any tier, under this award to provide (or to support the provision of) legal services to any removable alien or any alien otherwise unlawfully present in the United States shall be unallowable costs for purposes any award made under this notice, but the foregoing shall not be understood to apply — (1) to legal services to obtain protection orders for victims of crime; or (2) to

immigration-related legal services that may be expressly authorized or required by any law, or any judicial ruling, governing or applicable to the award.

Program Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Assessing Existing Laboratory Protocols — Improve the understanding of scientific rationale underpinning existing laboratory processes.

Objective 1.1: Generate research and evaluation of existing laboratory schemes and methods to determine possible improvements, including:

- Minimum acceptance criteria of analytical data, such as mass spectra, generated in case samples.
- Accuracy gained from additional orthogonal testing of controlled substance samples.
- Effectiveness of a blind verification program for technical reviews.
- Implementation of software and statistical methods used for the interpretation of DNA mixtures.

Goal 2: Evaluating Emerging Methods — Assess the implementation and value of emerging laboratory processes.

Objective 2.1: Generate research to compare emerging methods to those currently used to accomplish the same purpose in publicly funded forensic laboratories. These evaluations should consider factors such as accuracy, reliability, cost, and analysis time. Examples of such projects include:

- Comparison of a newly developed comprehensive method to existing multi-step method(s).
- Comparison of methodology or instrumentation new to the laboratory or field to currently used instrumentation in order to investigate the degree to which it improves outcomes, such as accuracy, reliability, cost, analysis time, etc.

Proposals should employ a scientific approach to determine how to assess the testing and processing of physical evidence. These approaches should take into consideration general variables, such as accuracy, reliability, cost-effectiveness, and efficiency, and make clear which of these aspects may need improvement. Every effort should be made to validate the research using actual casework samples. If this is not possible, applications should describe barriers preventing the use of casework samples and detailed methodology for creating realistic proxy samples.

NIJ also strongly encourages applicants to include a statistician or quantitatively trained evaluator on the project team to ensure that rigorous testing measures are employed. Areas that may benefit from such expertise include, but are not limited to, research design (e.g., experimental design, planning sample size or sampling designs, designing data collection methods), selection and application of appropriate statistical methods, and how to use software to perform data analyses. Such associations foster a greater understanding of the testing and validation issues unique to the field of forensic science and may strengthen the scope of the proposed application.

Information on this program (including previously funded projects) can be found [here](#).

To foster collaboration between emerging forensic science researchers and forensic science laboratories, as well as to ensure the direct applicability of the results of this research to lab practice, non-publicly funded laboratory applicants must demonstrate a partnership with a forensic science laboratory that is currently accredited by an independent accrediting or certifying forensic science organization. Publicly funded forensic science laboratories include state, regional, county, municipal, and tribal agencies.

To assist researchers in identifying appropriate practitioner collaborators, NIJ has developed a site for labs to indicate their interest in participating in research. Interested labs and researchers are encouraged to visit [NIJ's website](#) for more information.

How Awards Will Contribute to Program Goals/Objectives

Awards will support rigorous research and evaluation projects to identify, and disseminate information on, the most efficient, accurate, reliable, and cost-effective methods for the identification, analysis, and interpretation of physical evidence for criminal justice purposes. NIJ expects to fund projects that will (1) identify and inform the forensic community of best practices through the evaluation of existing and emerging laboratory protocols, and/or (2) have a direct and immediate impact on laboratory efficiency and assist in making laboratory policy decisions.

Expected Outcomes: Deliverables and Performance Measures

To achieve the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity, NIJ has identified expected deliverables that must be produced by a recipient. NIJ has also identified performance measures (pieces of data) that will indicate how a recipient is achieving the performance goals and objectives previously identified. Recipients will need to collect and report this performance measure data to NIJ.

NIJ will measure success by reviewing a recipient's submission of performance reports and data and the extent to which project implementation reflects progress toward the goals and objectives of this NOFO.

Deliverables

Award recipients will be expected to develop and submit the deliverables listed below in the course of implementing their proposed project.

Technical Summary. Any recipient of an award under this NOFO will be expected to submit a Technical Summary by the end of the award project period. Additional information on NIJ's final research report requirements is found here [Post-Award Requirements for Research, Development, and Evaluation Grants](#). Additionally, grantees under this NOFO will be expected to include all methods, standard operating procedures (SOPs), and validation summaries resulting from these awards in an appendix of the Technical Summary or indicate where these items are publicly available. All such summaries, SOPs, and methods produced as a result of each award under this NOFO may be made publicly available by NIJ.

Scholarly Products. NIJ expects scholarly products to result from each award under this NOFO, taking the form of one or more published, peer-reviewed, scientific journal articles, and/or (if appropriate) conference presentations, book chapter(s) or book(s) in the academic press, technological prototypes, patented inventions, or similar scientific products. Awardees are encouraged to publish their research using open access options. Grant funds may be used for

costs associated with open access publication. NIJ expects that there will be an equal effort to make the research findings accessible to practitioner and policymaker audiences.

Required Data Sets and Associated Files and Documentation. NIJ requires grant recipients to archive each data set resulting in whole or in part from their funded research. This ensures the preservation, availability, and transparency of data collected through its grant funded research projects. It also supports the discovery, reuse, reproduction, replication, and extension of funded studies by other scientists.

At the end of the award period, grant recipients must archive data according to the Data Management, Sharing and Archiving Plan (DMSAP) approved by NIJ and in a manner that is consistent with the applicable human subjects protection and privacy regulations. Archiving data derived from an NIJ funded grant is mandatory. That requirement may not be unilaterally modified or waived. (Grant recipients are strongly encouraged to submit data sets no later than 90 days prior to the end of the award period of performance.) For interim publications, the subset of data used to create the findings must be deposited in an appropriate repository at the time of publication.

NIJ's principal data repository is the [National Archive of Criminal Justice Data](#) (NACJD). NIJ recognizes that data from research in the natural sciences and engineering may not be appropriate in file type or field of study for archiving at NACJD. To fulfill their data archiving requirement and maximize the visibility of this data to the relevant communities, NIJ encourages these grantees to archive their data at a repository appropriate to their field of study. Regardless of the primary data repository used, *all NIJ-funded* projects must provide study-level information to NACJD. That information will include a project abstract and link to the publicly accessible data location. More information on NIJ's data archiving requirements is found here [Data Archiving](#).

Performance Measures

NIJ will require each award recipient to submit regular performance reports that communicate progress toward achieving the goals and objectives identified in [Program Goals and Objectives](#). Applicants can visit [OJP's performance measurement page](#) at ojp.gov/performance for more information on performance measurement activities.

A list of performance measure questions for this funding opportunity can be found below.

| Objective | Performance Measure | Data Recipient Provides |
|---|---|---|
| Conduct research in science, technology, engineering, and/or mathematics that has clear implications for criminal or juvenile justice policy and practice in the United States. | Quality of the research as demonstrated by the scholarly products that result, in whole or in part, from work funded under the NIJ award, such as published, peer reviewed, scientific journal articles, and/or (as appropriate for the funded project) law review journal articles, book chapter(s) or book(s) in the academic press, technological prototypes, patented inventions, or similar scientific products. | <p>Author accepted manuscripts for peer reviewed publications deposited in an NIJ designated repository.</p> <p>List of citation(s) to all scholarly products that resulted, in whole or in part, from work funded under the NIJ award.</p> <p>If applicable, each data set that resulted, in whole or in part, from work funded under the NIJ award.</p> |
| | Relevance to the needs of the field as measured by whether the project's substantive scope did not deviate from the funded project or any subsequent agency-approved modifications to the scope. | Semi-annual and final performance reports, and products of the work performed under the NIJ award (including, at minimum, a final technical summary). |
| | Number of fielded technologies as a result, in whole or in part, of work funded under the NIJ award. (A technology is defined as a tool to include, for example, test methods, software, hardware, etc. A fielded technology is one that remains in use at the conclusion of the grant or agreement.) | Description of all technologies fielded as a result, in whole or in part, of work funded under the NIJ award. |

Funding Instrument

NIJ expects to make awards under this funding opportunity as grants. See the “[Administrative, National Policy, and Other Legal Requirements](#)” section of the [Application Resource Guide](#) for a brief discussion of important statutes, regulations, and award conditions.

Cost Sharing/Match Requirements

The following paragraph (on “Cofunding”) expressly modifies the “[Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement](#)” provisions in the Application Resource Guide. The applicant is to follow the guidance in the following paragraph instead of the guidance stated under the “Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement” heading in the OJP Grant Application Resource Guide.

Cofunding: An award made by NIJ under this NOFO may account for up to 100% of the total cost of the project. The application should indicate whether it is feasible for the applicant to contribute cash, facilities, or services as non-federal support for the project. The application should identify generally any such contributions that the applicant expects to make, and the proposed budget should indicate in detail which items, if any, will be supported with non-federal contributions. If a successful application proposes a voluntary match amount, and OJP approves the budget, the total match amount incorporated into the approved budget becomes mandatory and subject to audit



APPLICATION CONTENTS, SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS, AND DEADLINES

This NOFO contains all the information needed to apply for this funding opportunity. The application for this funding opportunity is submitted through web-based forms and attachments in Grants.gov and JustGrants through the steps that follow.

Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and SAM.gov Registration

To submit an application, an applicant must have an active registration in the [System for Award Management \(SAM.gov\)](#). SAM.gov assigns entities a unique entity identifier (UEI) that is required for the entity to apply for federal funding. Applicants will enter their UEI with their application. Award recipients must then maintain an active UEI for the duration of their award's period of performance.

First-time Registration: Entities registering in SAM.gov for the first time will submit information about their entity type and structure, financial information (such as dates of the fiscal year, banking information, and executive compensation), entity points of contact, and other information. The information is reviewed and verified by SAM.gov, and then a UEI is issued. This process may take several weeks, so entities considering applying for funding should begin the registration process as soon as possible.

Renewing an Existing Registration: Entities must renew their SAM.gov registration every 12 months to keep it active. If an entity does not renew their SAM.gov registration, it will expire. An expired registration can delay or prevent the submission of an application for funding in Grants.gov and JustGrants.

Applicants are encouraged to start the SAM.gov registration or renewal process **at least 30 days prior to the application's Grants.gov deadline**. Applicants who fail to begin the registration or renewal process at least 10 business days prior to the Grants.gov deadline may not be able to complete the process in time and will not be considered for a technical waiver that allows for late submission.

For Small Businesses: In addition to SAM.gov registration, a small business applicant may need to obtain an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The person applying for an award should submit the EIN value as the Tax Identification Number (TIN) during the SAM.gov registration process. The applicant should not submit their Social Security Number. For additional information, including the steps to obtain an EIN, see the IRS [Apply for an Employer Identification Number \(EIN\) online](#) webpage.

Submission Instructions: Summary

Applications must be submitted to DOJ electronically through a two-step process that begins in Grants.gov and is completed in JustGrants. See [Basic Information: Key Dates and Times](#) for the Grants.gov and JustGrants application deadlines.

- **Step 1:** The applicant must submit the required [Application for Federal Assistance SF-424](#) by the Grants.gov deadline.
- **Step 2:** The applicant must submit the full application, including attachments, through JustGrants by the deadline (see [JusticeGrants.usdoj.gov](#)).

Submission Step 1: Grants.gov Submission of SF-424

Access/Registration

If the applicant does not already have a Grants.gov account, they will need to register for this opportunity in Grants.gov. Applicants should follow the Grants.gov [Quick Start Guide for Applicants](#) to register, create a workspace, assign roles, submit an application, and troubleshoot issues.

Submission of the SF-424

Applicants will begin the application process in Grants.gov with the submission of the SF-424, which collects the applicant's name, address, and UEI; the funding opportunity number; and proposed project title, among other information. The SF-424 must be signed by the Grants.gov Authorized Organizational Representative for the applicant.

See the [Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information on completing the SF-424.

Section 8F – Applicant Point of Contact: Please include the name and contact information of the individual **who will complete the application in JustGrants**. JustGrants will use this information (i.e., email address) to assign the application to this user in JustGrants.

Section 19 – Intergovernmental Review: This funding opportunity is not subject to [Executive Order \(E.O.\) 12372](#) (Intergovernmental Review). Applicants should answer section 19 by selecting, "Program is not covered by E.O. 12372."

An applicant should submit the SF-424 as early as possible and recommended not later than 48 hours before the Grants.gov deadline. If an applicant fails to submit the SF-424 in Grants.gov by the deadline, they will be unable to submit their application in JustGrants.

Once the first part of the application has been successfully submitted in Grants.gov, the Grants.gov Workspace status will change from "In Progress" to "Submitted." Applicants will also receive a series of four Grants.gov email notifications. Refer to the [DOJ Application Submission Checklist](#) for additional details.

If an applicant needs to update information in the SF-424 after it is submitted in Grants.gov, they can update the information as part of their JustGrants submission (see [Application Contents, Submission Requirements, and Deadlines: Standard Applicant Information](#)). They do not need to submit an update in Grants.gov.

Submission Step 2: JustGrants Submission of Full Application

Access/Registration

For first-time JustGrants applicants, once the application is received from Grants.gov, DOJ will send an email (from DIAMD-NoReply@usdoj.gov) to the email address listed in Section 8F of the SF-424 with instructions on how to create a JustGrants account. This email should arrive within 24 hours after confirmation from Grants.gov of the SF-424 submission.

Creating and setting up a JustGrants account consists of three steps:

1. Follow the instructions in the email to first confirm who will be the Entity Administrator (the person who manages which staff can access JustGrants on behalf of the applicant).
2. Log in to JustGrants and confirm the information in the Entity Profile.
3. Invite other individuals who will serve as the Application Submitter and the Authorized Representative for the applicant to register for JustGrants.

These steps should be completed in JustGrants as early as possible and recommended not later than 48 hours before the JustGrants deadline. Once registered in JustGrants, the Application Submitter will receive a link in an email to complete the rest of the application in JustGrants. Applicants can find additional information on JustGrants registration in the [DOJ Grant Application Submission Checklist](#).

Preparing for Submission

Some of the required sections of the application will be entered directly into JustGrants, and other sections will require documents to be uploaded and attached. Therefore, applicants should allow enough time before the JustGrants deadline to prepare, enter, and upload all the requirements of the application.

Applicants may save their application in the system and add to or change the application as needed prior to hitting the “Submit” button at the end of the application in JustGrants. After the application deadline, no changes or additions can be made to the application. **OJP recommends that applicants submit the complete application package in JustGrants at least 48 hours prior to the JustGrants deadline.**

For additional information, including file name and type requirements, see the “How To Apply” section in the [Application Resource Guide](#).

Standard Applicant Information

The Standard Applicant Information section of the JustGrants application is pre-populated with the SF-424 data submitted in Grants.gov. The applicant will need to review the Standard Applicant Information in JustGrants and can make whatever edits are needed. Within this section, the applicant will need to add ZIP codes for areas affected by the project; confirm their Authorized Representative; and confirm the organization’s unique entity identifier, legal name, and address.

Proposal Abstract

A proposal abstract (no more than 2,000 characters) summarizing the proposed project must be completed in the JustGrants web-based form. The text from abstracts will be made publicly available on the OJP.gov and USASpending.gov websites if the project is awarded, so this section of the application should not contain any personally identifiable information (e.g., the name of the project director).

The abstract should be in paragraph form without bullets or tables and written in the third person (e.g., they, the community, their, themselves, rather than I or we). The abstract should include the following information:

- The goals, objectives, and research questions to be addressed.
- The research design and methods.
- Work products to be produced and a plan for disseminating those products.

Data Requested With Application

Financial Management and System of Internal Controls Questionnaire (including Applicant Disclosure of High-Risk Status)

The Financial Management and System of Internal Controls Questionnaire helps OJP assess what financial management and internal control systems the applicant has in place, whether these systems would be sufficient to maintain a funding award, and the associated potential

risks of an applicant as part of the pre-award risk assessment process. Every OJP applicant (other than an individual applying in their personal capacity, not representing an applicant organization) is required to complete the web-based form in JustGrants. See the [Application Resource Guide: Financial Management and System of Internal Controls Questionnaire \(including Applicant Disclosure of High-Risk Status\)](#) for additional guidance on how to complete the questionnaire.

Agency Funding Priorities Inventory

Applicants seeking priority consideration under the [Agency Funding Priorities](#) section should answer the inventory questions in their entirety in the web-based form in JustGrants.

Principal Investigator Contact Information

To facilitate administrative processes associated with application review and post review activities, applicants are requested to enter the name of the Principal Investigator for the application project, as well as their contact information.

Proposal Narrative

Format of the Proposal Narrative: The Proposal Narrative will be submitted as an attachment in JustGrants. The attached document should not exceed 18 numbered pages, of which a minimum of nine (9) pages should be dedicated to Project Design and Implementation. If the Proposal Narrative does not comply with these restrictions, NIJ may consider such noncompliance in peer review and in final award decisions. Tables, charts, and graphs can be created in legible font smaller than 12-point. They will count toward the 18-page limit if embedded in the text of the Proposal Narrative as opposed to being attached in an appendix. Applicants should carefully weigh the comparative benefit of embedding a table, chart, or graph in the narrative as opposed to attaching it as an appendix, in helping a reviewer understand the proposal.

Sections of the Proposal Narrative: The Proposal Narrative should include the following sections.

a. Title Page (not counted against the proposal narrative page limit)

The title page should include:

- Project title.
- Submission date.
- Funding opportunity number.
- Principal Investigator (and any co-principal investigators).
- Unique author identifier (e.g., ORCID, Researcher ID, Scopus Author ID), if available.
- Key words, including forensic science focus areas.
- Contact information (that is, name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address) for both the applicant and the principal investigator.

b. Resubmit Response (if applicable) (not counted against the proposal narrative page limit.)

If an applicant is resubmitting an application presented previously to NIJ, but not funded, the applicant should indicate this. A statement should be provided, no more than two

pages, addressing: (1) the title, submission date, and NIJ-assigned application number of the previous application, and (2) a brief summary of revisions to the application, including responses to previous feedback received from NIJ.

c. Table of Contents and Figures (not counted against the proposal narrative page limit)

d. Main Body

1. Statement of the Problem

The statement of the problem should address the need for research in this area. Applicants should discuss current gaps in data, research, and knowledge and to answer questions relevant to current policy and practice needs and public interests. It is not uncommon for multiple problems to exist simultaneously (for example, there may be a criminal justice problem affecting public safety, a current technical challenge/need identified by forensic practitioners, as well as a scientific/technology gap between the current state of the art and a desired solution), and applicants should discuss each of these clearly and justify the importance of the separate issues. As part of this discussion, applicants should present a review of previous literature and discuss previous research related to these problems.

This section should also introduce the purpose, goals, and objectives of the proposed project.

The statement of the problem should:

- Explain the importance of the problem or critical barrier to progress in the field proposed.
- Explain how the proposed project may improve forensic practice through scientific knowledge and/or technical capability. Describe how concepts, methods, technologies, or services that drive the forensic science field will be changed if the proposed aims are achieved.

2. Project Design and Implementation (This section should account for a minimum of nine (9) pages of the main body of the narrative.)

Applicants should provide a detailed description of the strategies to implement this research project and address the research questions. Design elements should follow directly from the research project's goals and objectives and address the program-specific information noted in the NOFO. Applicants should describe the research methodology and analysis plan in detail and demonstrate the validity and usefulness of the data they will collect. Applicants should consider the rigor and soundness of the methodology and analytical and technical approaches for the proposed research and address the feasibility of the proposed project and potential challenges or problems in carrying out the activities.

This section should:

- Concisely state the goals of the proposed research.
- Describe the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project. Describe the experimental design and methods proposed and how they will achieve robust and unbiased results.

Include how the data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted as well as any resource sharing plans, as appropriate.

- Power and Effect Size: Use power analyses to describe the range of effect sizes detectable by the study. Address relevant features of the analytic plan, such as the model(s) to be tested, the extent of multiple testing, and what significance level would be used for testing. Include all appropriate parameters. If the study design requires separate analysis of subject groups, provide power analyses for each category. If there is a plan to test for environment effects, address the power for detection of these effects.
- Data Analyses: Provide a thorough plan for data analyses. Include: analytical approaches to be used and their justification; plans for quality control analyses; methods to control for possible confounding effects; how false positive rates will be controlled in light of multiple testing; etc. If there is a plan to analyze the data obtained with earlier data, or to perform comparisons to determine success, describe your strategy for that process.

3. Potential Impact

Applicants should describe the potential impact of the research and how it may inform or improve criminal or juvenile justice-related policy, practice, or theory in the United States. The applicant should include a discussion of the proposed dissemination plan to produce scholarly products and to make information available to broader interested audiences, such as criminal justice practitioners or policymakers. This should include the applicant's intentions as it regards dissemination of interim findings and other knowledge products.

The Potential Impact section should do the following:

- Summarize the expected outcome(s), including the impact that the results of the proposed research will exert on the discipline(s) involved.
- Explain the criminal justice significance of the proposed study.
- Explain how the application challenges and seeks to shift current forensic practice paradigms.

4. Capabilities and Competencies

This section should describe the experience and capabilities of the applicant organization, key personnel, and any proposed subgrantees (including consultants) that the applicant will use to implement and manage this effort and the federal funds under this award, highlighting any previous experience implementing projects of similar scope, design, and magnitude. Applicants should address:

- Experience and capacity to work with the proposed data sources in the conduct of similar research efforts.
- Experience and capacity to design and implement rigorous research and data analysis projects.
- Experience producing and disseminating meaningful deliverables.

Applicants should also outline the management plan and organization that connects to the goals and objectives of the project. Among other factors, that plan should include a description of the anticipated level of effort of key personnel.

The Capabilities/Competencies section should include the following:

- Facilities and other resources: Describe how the scientific environment in which the research will be done contributes to the probability of success (e.g., institutional support, physical resources, and intellectual rapport). In describing the scientific environment in which the work will be done, discuss ways in which the proposed studies will benefit from unique features of the scientific environment or subject populations or will employ useful collaborative arrangements. If there are multiple performance sites, describe the resources available at each site.
- Equipment: List major items of equipment already available for this project and, if appropriate identify location and pertinent capabilities.
- Key personnel profiles: Describe each key personnel's role in the project and why the individual is well-suited for that role. The relevant factors may include aspects of past training; previous experimental work on this specific topic or related topics; technical expertise; collaborators or scientific environment; and/or past performance in this or related fields. Key personnel are defined as all individuals who contribute in a substantive, meaningful way to the scientific development or execution of the project, whether or not salaries are requested. For the purposes of this NOFO, "key personnel" means the Principal Investigator, all co-Principal Investigators, and all other significant contributors. Consultants should be included if they meet this definition. A biosketch, curriculum vitae, or resume for every person indicated as key personnel shall be included with the application.
 - Principal investigator (PI) profile should be listed first.
 - The remaining key personnel profiles should be listed in alphabetical order. Although alphabetical order is preferred, it is not required. However, be aware that these profiles will appear in the application in the order provided by the applicant. Therefore, peer reviewers will see them in the order presented. Those with a postdoctoral role should be included if they meet the definition of key personnel.
- Other significant contributors (OSCs): OSCs are those individuals who commit to contribute to the scientific development or execution of the project, but do not commit any specified measurable effort (i.e., person months) to the project. These individuals are typically presented at effort of "zero person months" or "as needed." Individuals with measurable effort may not be listed as OSCs. Consultants should be included if they meet the OSC definition.

5. Appendices (not counted against the proposal narrative page limit) include:

- List of other agencies, organizations, or funding sources to which this application has been submitted (if applicable).
- Any table/charts/graphs supporting the program narrative.
- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the publicly funded laboratory(ies), if applicable, that provide the proof of accreditation.

6. Plan for Collecting the Data Required for This NOFO's Performance Measures

Note: An applicant is **not** required to submit performance data with the application. Rather, performance measure information is included to provide notice that award

recipients will be required to submit performance data as part of each award's reporting requirements.

NIJ will require award recipients to submit performance measure data in quarterly financial reports, semi-annual and final performance reports, and the technical summary report in JustGrants. For more information on NIJ post award reporting requirements, please see [Post-Award Requirements for Research, Development, and Evaluation Grants](#).

Budget and Associated Documentation: Budget Detail Form

The applicant will complete the JustGrants budget detail form. The form collects the individual costs under each cost category needed to implement the proposed project. Applicants should ensure that the name/description of each cost is clear and provide the detailed calculation (e.g., cost per unit and number of units) for the total cost. Applicants should enter additional narrative, as needed, to fully describe the cost calculations and connection to the project goals and objectives (including, if applicable, describing connections to NIJ priority goals)

Budget proposals/narratives should include the funding needed to implement the proposed activities. In preparing their budget proposals, applicants should consider what types of costs are allowable, if awarded funding. Costs are allowable when they are reasonable, allocable to, and necessary for the performance of the project funded under the federal award and when they comply with the funding statute and agency requirements, including the conditions of the award and the cost principles set out in [2 C.F.R. Part 200, Subpart E](#) and the [DOJ Grants Financial Guide](#).

If the applicant is proposing a project that reasonably could be conducted in discrete phases, with each phase resulting in completion of one or more significant, defined milestones, then NIJ strongly recommends that the applicant structure the application — specifically including the narrative, expected scholarly products, timelines/milestones, and budget detail worksheet and budget narrative — to clearly define each phase. (This is particularly the case if the applicant proposes a project that will exceed — in cost or the length of the period of performance — the amount or length of time anticipated for an individual award (or awards) under this NOFO.) Given limitations on the availability to NIJ of funds for awards for research, development, and evaluation, this information will assist NIJ in considering whether partial funding of applications would be productive. (If, in FY 2025, NIJ elects to fund only certain phases of a proposed project, the expected scholarly products from the partial-funding award may, in some cases, vary from those described above.)

Proposals that include equipment purchases should include a discussion of how federally funded equipment is proposed to be used after the funded work has been completed and/or the project period has ended. Note that OJP may issue specific equipment disposition instructions in appropriate circumstances.

Costs Associated With Language Assistance and Access: If an applicant proposes a program or activity that would deliver services or benefits to individuals, the costs of taking reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to those services or benefits for individuals with limited English proficiency may be allowable in specific grant programs. Costs to provide reasonable accommodation and facilitate language access for individuals who are deaf or hard

of hearing may also be allowable in specific grant programs. See the [Application Resource Guide](#) for information on costs associated with language assistance.

For additional information about how to prepare a budget for federal funding, see the [Application Resource Guide](#) section on “[Budget Preparation and Submission Information](#)” and the technical steps to complete the budget form in JustGrants in the [Complete the Application in JustGrants: Budget](#) training.

Budget and Associated Documentation: Budget/Financial Attachments

Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable): An applicant with a current, federally approved indirect cost rate agreement should upload it as an attachment in JustGrants.

Indirect costs are costs of an organization that are not readily assignable to a particular project but are necessary for the operation of the organization and the performance of the project. Examples of costs usually treated as indirect include those incurred for operation and maintenance of offices or workspaces and salaries of administrative or support staff. The requirements for the development and submission of indirect cost proposals and cost allocation plans are listed in Appendices III–VII of 2 C.F.R. Part 200. A non-federal applicant should follow the guidelines applicable to its type of organization. See the [DOJ Grants Financial Guide](#) and the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information on indirect cost rate agreements.

Consultant Rate (if applicable): OJP has established maximum rates for consultants; see the “Listing of Costs Requiring Prior Approval” section of the [DOJ Grants Financial Guide](#) for more information. If an applicant proposes a rate for a consultant on their project that is higher than the established maximum rate and receives an award, then the award recipient must submit a document requesting approval for the rate and cannot incur costs at the higher rate without prior OJP approval. The award recipient must provide justification for why the proposed rate is higher than the established maximum rate, such as why the rate is reasonable and consistent with that paid for similar services in the marketplace.

Limitation on Use of Award Funds for Employee Compensation for Awards Over \$250,000; Waiver (if applicable): If an applicant proposes to hire employees with federal award funds, for any award of more than \$250,000, the recipient may not use federal funds to pay total cash compensation (salary plus cash bonuses) to any employee of the recipient at a rate that exceeds 110 percent of the maximum annual salary payable to a member of the federal government’s Senior Executive Service (SES) at an agency with a Certified SES Performance Appraisal System for that year. Applicants may request a waiver from this requirement by submitting the appropriate form. See the [Application Resource Guide](#) for information on the “Limitation on Use of Award Funds for Employee Compensation for Awards over \$250,000; Waiver.”

Disclosure of Process Related to Executive Compensation (if applicable): This notice of funding opportunity expressly modifies the Application Resource Guide by not incorporating its “Disclosure of Process Related to Executive Compensation” provisions. Applicants to this funding opportunity are not required to provide this disclosure.

Additional Application Components

The applicant should attach the additional requested documentation listed below in JustGrants.

Gold Standard Science: Applicants for NIJ funding should include within their application a clear statement of commitment to complying with the principles and tenets of Gold Standard Science (GSS) as described in [Executive Order 14303](#), the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy [Memorandum](#) providing guidance on implementing GSS, and the Department of Justice's [GSS webpage](#).

Biosketches, Curriculum Vitae or Resumes (REQUIRED): Provide biosketches, curriculum vitae, or resumes of all key personnel. These should not exceed five (5) pages per person. For the purposes of this NOFO, “key personnel” means the Principal Investigator, all co-Principal Investigators, and all other significant contributors (see Capabilities/Competencies under Proposal Narrative). Reviewers use these pages in part to address the “Capabilities/Competencies” review criterion. NIJ encourages use of the SciENCv standard format biosketch (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sciencv/>).

Current and Pending (Other) Support: List of other agencies, organizations, or funding sources to which this application has been submitted or that are currently supporting the researcher. NIJ encourages use of the SciENCv “NSF Current and Pending (Other) Support” standard format (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sciencv/>).

Tribal Authorizing Resolution (if applicable): An application in response to this NOFO may require inclusion of Tribal authorizing documentation as an attachment. If applicable, the applicant will upload the Tribal authorizing documentation as an attachment in JustGrants. See the [Application Resource Guide](#) for information on Tribal authorizing resolutions.

Research and Evaluation Independence and Integrity Statement (if applicable): If an application proposes research (including research and development) and/or evaluation, the applicant must demonstrate research/evaluation independence and integrity, including appropriate safeguards, before it may receive award funds. The applicant will upload documentation of its research and evaluation independence and integrity as an attachment in JustGrants. For additional information, see the [Application Resource Guide](#).

Letters of Support (if applicable): A letter of support is from an entity or individual that knows the applicant's work. The letter tends to speak to the applicant's capacity to implement their proposed project for the benefit of the community. It differs from an MOU in that the entity is not committing staff, services, or supplies to help the applicant to implement the project. Applicants should include, for each named supporting entity, a signed letter of support that outlines the supporting entity's reasons for supporting the project. **Letters of support should also be included as necessary to demonstrate the support of external consortium participants and collaborators included in the grant application.**

Each letter of support may include descriptions of the following:

- Relationship between the applicant entity and the supporting entity.
- Need for and benefits that would be gained from the project.
- Applicant's capacity to complete the proposed project.
- Acknowledgment that de-identified data derived from, provided to, or obtained through an award funded by NIJ will be archived by the grant recipient with the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data (NACJD), or other data repository at the conclusion of the award.

Letters of support should be signed and submitted as separate attachments to the application in JustGrants.

Bibliography/References: Provide a bibliography of any references cited in the Proposal Narrative.

Tools/Instruments, Questionnaires, Tables/Charts/Graphs, or Maps: Any tools/instruments, questionnaires, tables/charts/graphs, or maps pertaining to the proposed project that are supplemental to such items included in the main body of the narrative.

List of Individuals in the Application: To assist NIJ in assessing actual or apparent conflicts of interest (including such conflicts on the part of prospective reviewers of the application), provide a complete list of the individuals named or otherwise identified anywhere in the application (including in the budget or in any other attachment) who will or may work (or advise or consult) on the proposed research, development, or evaluation project. Applicants should use the [“Proposed Project Staff, Affiliation, and Roles”](#) form available on the NIJ webpage to prepare this list. If the application (including the budget) identifies any proposed non-competitive agreements that are or may be considered procurement "contracts" (rather than subawards), for purposes of federal grants administrative requirements, the applicant also must list the entities with which the applicant proposes to contract.

Human Subjects Protection: All recipients of NIJ funds are required to comply with Department of Justice regulations at 28 CFR Part 46 (Protection of Human Subjects). Applicants should submit the [Protection of Human Subjects Assurance form](#) (or IRB determination letter, if obtained) as a separate attachment. For further guidance, go to [Human Subjects Protection](#). Note: Final Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval is not required at the time an application is submitted.

Privacy Certificate: Applicants for NIJ funding must submit a Privacy Certificate regardless of whether the project involves the collection of identifiable data. It should be submitted as a separate attachment. For further guidance, go to [Confidentiality and Privacy Protections](#) and [Privacy Certificate Guidance](#).

Request To Use Incentives or Stipends: Applicants proposing to use incentives, or stipend payments, as part of their research project design must submit an approval request as a separate attachment. The requirements are described at [Participant Support Costs and Incentives](#).

Project Timeline: Provide a timeline listing key activities, milestones, and deliverables, and the months or quarters during which they will take place.

Management Plan: Provide a management plan that connects to the goals and objectives of the project, including the project management structure, approach, and strategies. Among other factors, that plan should include a description of the anticipated level of effort of key personnel.

For applications designating multiple PIs, a leadership plan must be included. For applications designating multiple PIs, all such individuals must be assigned the PI role in the Key Personnel Profile narrative, even those at organizations other than the applicant organization. A rationale for choosing a multiple PI approach should be described. The governance and organizational structure of the leadership team and the research project should be described, including communication plans, process for making decisions on scientific direction, and procedures for

resolving conflicts. The roles and administrative, technical, and scientific responsibilities for the project or program should be delineated for the PIs and other collaborators.

Proof of Forensic Laboratory Accreditation including Scope: Acceptable types of documentation of current accreditation include: an electronic (scanned) copy of the current accreditation certificate(s), a digital photograph of the current accreditation certificate(s), or a letter from the accrediting body that includes the certificate number. Additionally, if a certificate references another document that contains key information on the type or scope of the accreditation, **provide a copy of that supplemental documentation.** Independent accrediting or certifying organizations may include the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors/Laboratory Accreditation Board (ASCLD-LAB), Forensic Quality Services (FQS), the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA), ANSI National Accreditation Board (ANAB), or other appropriate accrediting bodies. Applicants should list the name of their accrediting body in the key words on the title page.

Consortium/Contractual Agreements: Explain the programmatic, fiscal, and administrative arrangements to be made between the applicant organization and the consortium organization(s).

Data Management, Sharing, and Archiving Plan (DMSAP): Applications must include a plan describing how they will comply with NIJ data archiving requirements. The plan should be no more than two pages in length. It should be attached as a separate attachment and labeled “Data Management, Sharing, and Archiving Plan (DMSAP)”.

The DMSAP should identify how the applicant will document and manage study data and prepare it for archiving. It should include the applicant’s approach to making the subset of data associated with interim scholarly products available at the time of publication. Additionally, it should describe the expected level of effort required to meet archiving requirements.

The plan should describe the:

- Types of data expected (both qualitative and quantitative), including any associated metadata and data standards to be used.
- Management of data during the project, including data security and integrity.
- Plans to prepare files and documentation necessary for others to use for secondary analysis and to review and reproduce the project’s findings after the project’s completion.
- Location where pertinent data files and documentation will be archived.

All plans must be consistent with OJP confidentiality and privacy requirements of 34 U.S.C. § 10231(a) and 28 CFR Part 22. See [Confidentiality and Privacy Protections](#).

The National Archive of Criminal Justice Data (NACJD) is NIJ’s principal data repository and is the preferred repository for social science data. However, NACJD is not equipped to accept many of the data types produced in the natural sciences (e.g., sequence data, spectra, images, video). NIJ encourages that data of this nature be archived at a repository appropriate to the field of study, and that a DOI or another persistent link be assigned. In this case, the DMSAP should refer to submission of only basic project information to NACJD along with a DOI link to the data in a publicly available repository elsewhere. See <https://nij.ojp.gov/funding/data-archiving#alternate-data-repositories> for further guidance.

Note that recipients are strongly encouraged to submit required full-project data sets at least 90 days before the end of the period of performance.

Disclosures and Assurances

The applicant will address the following disclosures and assurances.

Disclosure of Lobbying Activities: JustGrants will prompt each applicant to indicate if it is required to complete and submit a lobbying disclosure under 31 U.S.C. § 1352.

The applicant is required by law to complete and submit a lobbying disclosure form (Standard Form/SF-LLL) if it has paid or will pay any person to lobby in connection with the award for which it is applying AND this application is for an award in excess of \$100,000. This disclosure requirement is not applicable to such payments by an Indian Tribe, Tribal organization, or any other Indian organization that are permitted by other federal law.

Lobbying means (for this requirement) influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress. See 31 U.S.C. § 1352; 28 C.F.R. part 69. Note: Most applicants do not engage in activities that trigger this disclosure requirement.

An applicant that is not required by law (31 U.S.C. § 1352) to complete and submit a lobbying disclosure, should enter “No.” By doing so, the applicant is affirmatively asserting (under applicable penalties) that it has nothing to disclose under 31 U.S.C. § 1352 with regard to the application for the award at issue.

Disclosure of Duplication in Cost Items: To ensure funding coordination across grantmaking agencies, and to avoid unnecessary or inappropriate duplication of grant funding, the applicant must disclose if it has any pending applications for federal funding, including pending applications for subawards of federal funds, for the same project and the same budget items included in this proposal. Complete the JustGrants Applicant Disclosure of Duplication in Cost Items form. See the [Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information.

DOJ Certified Standard Assurances: Review and accept the DOJ Certified Standard Assurances in JustGrants. See the [Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information.

DOJ Certifications: Review the DOJ document [Certifications Regarding Lobbying; Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters; Drug-Free Workplace Requirements; Coordination with Affected Agencies](#). An applicant must review and sign the certification document in JustGrants. See the [Application Resource Guide](#) for more information.

Applicant Disclosure and Justification – DOJ High-Risk Grantees (if applicable): If applicable, submit the DOJ High-Risk Disclosure and Justification as an attachment in JustGrants. A DOJ high-risk recipient is an award recipient that has received a DOJ high-risk designation based on a documented history of unsatisfactory performance, financial instability, management system or other internal control deficiencies, noncompliance with award terms and conditions on prior awards, or that is otherwise not responsible. See the [Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information.

Submission Dates & Times

Refer to [Basic Information: Key Dates and Times](#) for the submission dates and times.

Applicants should submit their applications as early as possible and recommended not later than 48 hours before the deadlines. To be considered timely, the full application must be submitted in JustGrants by the JustGrants application deadline. Applicants will use the Certify and Submit feature in JustGrants to confirm that all required application components have been entered, which includes identifying the Authorized Representative for the applicant. Once the application is submitted, the Application Submitter, Authorized Representative, and Entity Administrator receive a confirmation email.

An applicant will receive emails after successfully submitting application components in Grants.gov and JustGrants and should retain all emails and other confirmations received from the SAM.gov, Grants.gov, and JustGrants systems.

Experiencing Technical Issues Preventing Submission of an Application (Technical Waivers)

If an applicant misses a deadline due to unforeseen technical issues with SAM.gov, Grants.gov, or JustGrants, the applicant may request a waiver to submit an application after the deadline. OJP will only consider requests to submit an application via alternative methods or after the deadline when the applicant can document that there is a technical issue with a government system that was beyond their control and that prevents submission of the application via the standard process prior to the deadlines. Issues resulting from circumstances within the applicant's control, such as failure to begin the SAM.gov, Grants.gov, or JustGrants registration and application process in sufficient time, will not be considered.

Requests and documentation must be sent to the OJP Response Center at OJP.ResponseCenter@usdoj.gov. Applicants should follow these steps if they experience a technical issue:

- 1. Contact the relevant help desk to report the issue and receive a tracking number.**

See [Basic Information: Contact Information](#) for the phone numbers, email addresses, and operating hours of the SAM.gov, Grants.gov, and JustGrants help desks. Reports of technical issues to the help desk must occur **before** the application deadline.

If an applicant calls the help desk and experiences a long wait time, they can also email the help desk to obtain a tracking number. Tracking numbers are generated automatically when an applicant emails the applicable service desk, and for this reason, long call wait times for support do not relieve the applicant of the responsibility of getting a tracking number.

2. If an applicant has technical issues with SAM.gov or Grants.gov, the applicant must contact the OJP Response Center at OJP.ResponseCenter@usdoj.gov within 24 hours of the Grants.gov deadline to request approval to submit after the deadline. The applicant's request will need to include:

- A description of the technical difficulties experienced (provide screenshots if applicable).
- A timeline of the applicant's submission efforts (e.g., date and time the error occurred, date and time of actions taken to resolve the issue and resubmit, and date and time support representatives responded).
- An attachment of the complete grant application and all the required documentation and materials (this serves as a "manual" submission of the application).
- The applicant's unique entity identifier (UEI).
- Any SAM.gov, Grants.gov, and JustGrants Service Desk tracking/ticket numbers documenting the technical issue.

3. If an applicant has technical issues with JustGrants that prevent application submission by the deadline, the applicant must contact the OJP Response Center at OJP.ResponseCenter@usdoj.gov within 24 hours of the JustGrants deadline to request approval to submit after the deadline. See step 2 for the list of information the applicant must provide as part of its request.

As a reminder: The waiver request will not be considered unless it includes documentation of attempts to receive technical assistance to resolve the issue prior to the application deadline. OJP will review each waiver request and the required supporting documentation and notify the applicant whether the request for late submission has been approved or denied. An applicant that does not provide documentation of a technical issue (including all information previously listed), or that does not submit a waiver request within the required time period, will be denied.

For more details on the waiver process, OJP encourages applicants to review the "Experiencing Technical Issues" section in the [Application Resource Guide](#).



APPLICATION REVIEW

Responsiveness (Basic Minimum Requirements) Review

NIJ screens applications to ensure they meet the basic minimum requirements (BMR) prior to conducting the merit review. Following are the basic minimum requirements for this funding opportunity. If NIJ determines that an application does not include these elements, it will not proceed to merit review and will not receive any further consideration.

- The application is submitted by an eligible applicant.
- The application is responsive to the scope of the NOFO, in that the proposal aligns with NIJ's expectations regarding what award recipients will achieve and how those achievements will contribute to the program goals and objectives as articulated in the How Awards Will Contribute to Program Goals/Objectives section of this NOFO.
- The following application elements are included:
 - SF-424 (Grants.gov)
 - Proposal Narrative (JustGrants)
 - Budget detail form, which includes the budget items, their calculations, and explanation (JustGrants)
 - Biosketches, Curriculum Vitae or Resumes for all key personnel (the principal investigator, all co-principal investigators, and all other significant contributors.).
 - Proof of Forensic Laboratory Accreditation including Scope

Applicants whose application fails to meet the BMR are provided notice (including an appropriate point of contact for questions) within a few weeks after the submission due date.

Merit Review Criteria

Peer Review Criteria

Applications that meet the basic minimum requirements will be evaluated for technical merit by peer reviewers based on how the proposed project/program addresses the following criteria:

- **Statement of the Problem (5%):** The applicant should clearly articulate the research problem, its significance to the criminal justice field, and demonstrate a thorough understanding of existing knowledge gaps. The statement should establish why this research is needed now and how it addresses a critical issue.
- **Project Design and Implementation (40%):** The strength of how the applicant will implement activities, including the soundness of the project design and how the activities align to the stated goals and objectives. The proposal should present a rigorous research methodology, realistic timeline, and clear connection between proposed activities and expected outcomes.
- **Capabilities and Competencies (15%):** The applicant's administrative and scientific technical capacity to successfully complete this project. The proposal should demonstrate the research team's relevant expertise, institutional resources, and track record of completing similar projects successfully.
- **Potential Impact (25%):** The applicant should describe how the research findings will provide actionable knowledge to criminal justice practitioners and policymakers. The

proposal should articulate clear dissemination strategies and explain how the research will advance the field or inform practice and policy.

- **Budget (15%):** Completeness and cost effectiveness. The budget should be detailed, reasonable, and clearly justified, with all costs directly supporting the proposed research activities and demonstrating efficient use of federal funds.

Programmatic and Financial Review Criteria

After the peer review, applications undergo additional programmatic and financial reviews. NIJ staff may reach out to applicants during the programmatic or financial review if a submitted form is incomplete or needs to be updated. Note that NIJ staff are not authorized to provide information on peer review scores or comment on programmatic, risk, or budget/financial reviews while the merit review is in progress.

In addition to BMR and peer review criteria, other important considerations for NIJ include geographic coverage, strategic priorities, available funding, past performance, and the extent to which the budget detail form accurately explains project costs that are reasonable, necessary, and otherwise allowable under federal law and applicable federal cost principles. If cost sharing/match is not required for this opportunity, applicants will not receive higher consideration by proposing a voluntary match contribution in their budget.

Risk Review

Pursuant to the Part 200 Uniform Requirements, before award decisions are made, OJP also reviews information related to applicant risk. OJP assesses whether an applicant with one or more prior federal awards has a satisfactory record of performance, integrity, and business ethics, including by (among other things) checking whether the applicant is listed in SAM.gov as excluded from receiving a federal award.

Depending on the severity and nature of the risk factors, the risk assessment may result in the removal of an applicant from consideration or selection for award, or it may result in additional post-award conditions and oversight for an awarded applicant.

In addition, if OJP anticipates that an award will exceed \$250,000 in federal funds, OJP also must review and consider any information about the applicant that appears in the non-public segment of the integrity and performance system accessible through SAM.gov.

Important Note on Responsibility/Qualification Data (formerly FAPIIS): An applicant may review and comment on any information about its organization that currently appears in SAM.gov and was entered by a federal awarding agency. OJP will consider such comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in SAM.gov, in its assessment of the risk posed by the applicant.

Selection Process

Applications submitted under this NOFO that meet the basic minimum requirements will be evaluated for technical merit by a peer review panel(s) in accordance with OJP peer review policy and procedures using the review criteria listed above. All final award decisions will be made by the Director of the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), who may take into account not only peer review ratings and NIJ staff recommendations, but also other factors as indicated in the above section. For additional information on the application review process, see the [Application Resource Guide](#).



AWARD NOTICES

Federal Award Notices

For successful applicants, JustGrants will send a system-generated email to the Application Submitter, Authorized Representative, and Entity Administrator with information on accessing their official award package in JustGrants. The award package will include key information (such as funding amount and period of performance) as well as award conditions that must be followed. The Authorized Representative for the entity should accept or decline the award within 45 days of the notification. See the [Application Resource Guide](#) for information on award notifications and instructions.

Applicants not selected for an award will receive notification after all award recipients have been notified. OJP also provides unsuccessful applicants with a summary of peer reviewer comments.

Future Funding Opportunities

NIJ may, in certain cases, provide additional funding in future years to awards made under this funding opportunity through continuation awards. When making continuation award decisions, NIJ will consider, among other factors, OJP's strategic priorities, a recipient's overall management of the award, and the progress of the work funded under the award.

Applications submitted under this FY 2025 funding opportunity may be funded in future fiscal years, dependent on, among other considerations, the merit of the applications and the availability of appropriations.



POST-AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION

Reporting

All award recipients under this funding opportunity will be required to submit the following reports and data:

- Quarterly financial reports.
- Semi-annual and final performance reports.
- A technical summary.
- Data sets and associated files and documentation derived from the award.
- Final financial reports.
- If applicable, an annual audit report in accordance with the Part 200 Uniform Requirements or specific award conditions.

See the [Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information on specific post-award reporting requirements, including performance measure data and the method for submitting reports in OJP's online systems. Also see [Post-Award Requirements for Research, Development, and Evaluation Grants](#). Future awards and fund drawdowns may be withheld if reports are delinquent, and in appropriate cases, OJP may require additional reports.

Performance Measure Reporting

Award recipients will report performance measure data in their quarterly financial reports and semi-annual and final performance reports submitted in JustGrants. Applicants selected for an award will receive further guidance on post-award reporting processes.

Program- and Award-Specific Award Conditions

OJP includes various conditions on its awards. These may include program-specific conditions, which typically apply to all recipients of a funding opportunity, and award-specific conditions, which are included to address recipient-specific issues (e.g., programmatic, or financial risk). Recipients may view all conditions, and actions required to satisfy those conditions, in the award package in JustGrants.

Administrative, National Policy, and Other Legal Requirements

If selected for funding, in addition to implementing the funded project consistent with the OJP-approved application, the recipient must comply with all award conditions and all applicable requirements of federal statutes and regulations, including the applicable requirements referred to in the assurances and certifications executed in connection with award acceptance. For additional information on these legal requirements, see the "Administrative, National Policy, and Other Legal Requirements" section in the [Application Resource Guide](#).

Civil Rights Compliance

If a successful applicant accepts funding from OJP — as a recipient of OJP funding — that award recipient must comply with certain federal civil rights laws that prohibit the award recipient from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, or disability in how it delivers its program's services or benefits and in its employment practices. The civil rights laws that may be applicable to the award include, but are not limited to, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the nondiscrimination provisions of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of

1968, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. These and other federal civil rights laws are discussed in greater detail on OJP's [Legal Overview—FY 2025 Awards](#) webpage under the “Civil Rights Requirements” section. Additional resources are available from the [OJP Office for Civil Rights](#).

Compliance with Federal civil rights and nondiscrimination laws is material to the government's decision to make any award and payment under this program, including for purposes of the False Claims Act, and each recipient will be required to certify (in its acceptance of the conditions of the award) that it does not operate any programs (including any such programs having components relating to diversity, equity, and inclusion) that violate any applicable Federal civil rights or nondiscrimination laws.

See OJP's [Partnerships with Faith-Based and Other Neighborhood Organizations webpage](#) for specific information for faith-based organizations applying under this NOFO.

Financial Management and System of Internal Controls

Award recipients and subrecipients (including recipients or subrecipients that are pass-through entities) must, as described in the Part 200 Uniform Requirements set out at 2 C.F.R. § 200.303, comply with standards for financial and program management. See the [Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information.

Information Technology Security Clauses

An application in response to this NOFO may require inclusion of information related to information technology security. See the [Application Resource Guide](#) for more information.

Other Reporting Requirements

Applicants and recipients are required to notify OJP if you know that you or any of your organization's principals for the award transaction are presently excluded or disqualified (*i.e.*, debarred or suspended) or otherwise meet any of the criteria in 2 C.F.R. 180.335. Recipients must comply with requirements in 2 C.F.R. Part 180, as implemented by DOJ in 2 C.F.R. Part 2867, which, among other things, require recipients to check certain information sources and, in some cases, notify the federal awarding agency prior to the agency awarding federal funds via contracts or subawards.

If a recipient's award includes a federal share of more than \$500,000 over the period of performance of the award, then the award (per 2 C.F.R. 200.113) will include a condition that may require the recipient to report and maintain certain information (relating to certain criminal, civil, and administrative proceedings) in SAM.gov. See the [Reporting Requirements page](#) for more information.



OTHER INFORMATION

Information Regarding Potential Evaluation of Programs and Activities

OJP may conduct or support an evaluation of the projects and activities funded under this NOFO. For additional information on what should be included in the application, see the [Application Resource Guide](#) section “Information Regarding Potential Evaluation of Programs and Activities.”

Freedom of Information and Privacy Act

See the [Application Resource Guide](#) for important information on the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. §§ 552 and 552a).

Applicants are advised not to include any unnecessary personally identifiable information, sensitive law enforcement information, or confidential financial information with the application.

Provide Feedback to OJP

See the [Application Resource Guide](#) for information on how to provide feedback to OJP.



APPLICATION CHECKLIST

NIJ FY25 Research and Evaluation for the Testing and Interpretation of Physical Evidence in Publicly Funded Forensic Laboratories

This application checklist has been created as an aid in developing an application. For more information, reference the [“OJP Application Submission Steps”](#) in the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) and the [DOJ Application Submission Checklist](#).

SAM.gov Registration/Renewal

- Confirm that your entity’s registration in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov) is active through the NOFO period. Submit a new or renewal registration in SAM.gov, if needed (see [Application Resource Guide](#)).

Grants.gov Registration

- Acquire an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and a Grants.gov username and password (see [Application Resource Guide](#)).
- Acquire AOR confirmation from the E-Business Point of Contact (E-Biz POC) (see [Application Resource Guide](#)).

Grants.gov Opportunity Search

- Search for the funding opportunity in Grants.gov using the opportunity number, assistance listing number, or keyword(s).
- Access the funding opportunity and application package (see Step 7 under [“OJP Application Submission Steps”](#) in the [Application Resource Guide](#)).
- Sign up for Grants.gov email notifications (optional) (see [Application Resource Guide](#)).

Funding Opportunity Review and Project Planning

- Review all sections of the NOFO.
- Confirm your entity is eligible to receive funding (see [Eligibility: Eligible Applicants](#)).
- Confirm your proposed budget is within the allowable limits (see [Basic Information: Funding Details](#)), includes only allowable costs (see [Application Contents, Submission Requirements, and Deadlines: Budget Detail Form](#)), and includes cost sharing if applicable (see [Eligibility: Cost Sharing/Match Requirement](#)).
- Review the performance measures for this funding opportunity and confirm you will be prepared to collect and report on this data (see [Program Description: Performance Measures](#)).
- Review the [“Legal Overview—FY 2025 Awards”](#) in the [OJP Funding Resource Center](#) and confirm you are prepared to follow the requirements.
- Read OJP policy and guidance on conference approval, planning, and reporting under “Listing of Costs Requiring Prior Approval” in the [DOJ Grants Financial Guide](#) or see the [Application Resource Guide](#).

Submission Step 1: Grants.gov

After registering with SAM.gov submit the SF-424 in Grants.gov.

- Complete and submit the SF-424 by the deadline.
- Confirm Section 8F of the SF-424 lists the name and contact information of the individual **who will complete the application in JustGrants**.

- Confirm that, within 48 hours of your submission in Grants.gov, you receive four (4) Grants.gov email notifications:
 - A submission receipt
 - A validation receipt
 - A grantor agency retrieval receipt
 - An agency tracking number assignment
- If no Grants.gov receipt and validation email is received, or if error notifications are received, contact the OJP Response Center at 800-851-3420 or 202-353-5556 (TTY for hearing-impaired callers only), or Grants.gov Customer Support Hotline at 800-518-4726, 606-545-5035, or support@grants.gov regarding technical difficulties (see the [Application Resource Guide](#) section on “[Experiencing Unforeseen Technical Issues](#)”).
- Confirm that, within 24 hours after receipt of confirmation emails from Grants.gov, the individual listed in Section 8F of the SF-424 receives an email from JustGrants with login instructions.

Submission Step 2: JustGrants

- Complete the following information:
 - Entity and User Verification (first-time applicants)
 - Standard Applicant Information
 - Proposal Abstract
 - Financial Management and System of Internal Controls Questionnaire (see [Application Resource Guide](#))
 - Agency Funding Priorities Inventory
 - Principal Investigator Contact Information
- Upload the Proposal Narrative. *
- Complete the budget detail form. *
- Upload Biosketches, Curriculum Vitae or Resumes. *
- Upload other budget/financial attachments, as applicable.
- Upload additional application components, as applicable.
 - Gold Standard Science
 - Tribal Authorizing Resolution (if applicable)
 - Letters of Support
 - Research and Evaluation Independence and Integrity Statement
 - Bibliography/References
 - Tools/Instruments, Questionnaires, Tables/Charts/Graphs, or Maps
 - List of Individuals in the Application
 - Human Subjects Protection
 - Privacy Certificate
 - Proof of Forensic Laboratory Accreditation including Scope *
 - Request to Use Incentives or Stipends
 - Consortium/Contractual Arrangements
 - Data Management, Sharing, and Archiving Plan (DMSAP)
 - Project Timeline
 - Management Plan

- Complete the required disclosures and assurances:
 - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities and submission of SF-LLL, if prompted by the system
 - Disclosure of Duplication in Cost Items
 - DOJ Certified Standard Assurances
 - Applicant Disclosure and Justification – DOJ High-Risk Grantees
- Complete the required DOJ Certification on Lobbying; Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters; Drug-Free Workplace Requirements; Coordination with Affected Agencies.

****Note: Items designated with an asterisk must be submitted for an application to meet the basic minimum requirements review. If OJP determines that an application does not include the designated items, it will neither proceed to peer review nor receive further consideration.***

JustGrants Review, Certification, and Application Submission

- Address any validation errors displayed on screen after attempted submission, then return to the “Certify and Submit” screen to submit the application.
- Note the confirmation message at the top of the page. Users will also receive a notification in the “bell” alerts confirming submission.
- If you do not receive an application submission confirmation email or validation from JustGrants, or if you receive an error notification, please contact the JustGrants Service Desk at 833-872-5175 or JustGrants.Support@usdoj.gov. See the [Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information.