

BJS FY 2026 Consolidated National Criminal History Improvement Program

Grants.gov Funding Opportunity Number: O-BJS-2026-172688

Application Deadlines in Eastern Time (ET):

1. Complete SF-424 and submit in Grants.gov: **September 28, by 11:59 PM ET**
 2. Submit full application in JustGrants: **October 5, by 8:59 PM ET**
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1. BASIC INFORMATION

Purpose of the Funding

The Office of Justice Programs (OJP) is committed to advancing work that furthers the U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ) mission to keep our country safe and secure and uphold the rule of law and protect the rights of American citizens. 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.

This is a notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) for the **BJS FY2026 Consolidated National Criminal History Improvement Program**. This opportunity seeks to provide grants to assist states, state court systems, territories, and federally recognized tribes under the National Criminal History Improvement Program (NCHIP), the National Criminal History Improvement Program Supplemental Funding (NCHIPSF) under the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA), and the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) Act Record Improvement Program (NARIP). Funds are used to improve the accuracy, utility, and interstate accessibility of criminal history and related records in support of national record systems and their use for name- and fingerprint-based criminal history background checks. Funding is also made available for updating the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI's) National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) with certain mental health, protection and restraining order, domestic violence conviction, and other criminal history record information which may disqualify individuals from purchasing or possessing firearms.

BJS invites applications from states, state courts, and tribes that propose projects that directly address one or more of the five (5) areas identified below. Applicants should submit one application for funding.

1. Automation and Completeness of Criminal History Records: Updating, automating, and linking arrests, fingerprints, and case outcomes from courts and prosecutors in state or tribal record systems and the FBI's Criminal History File.

Examples of allowable activities include:

- Implementing or upgrading state, local, or tribal court record systems that facilitate immediate identification of disposition records, provided that the records are made accessible for criminal history record inquiries at the state and national levels;
- Implementing improved procedures for capturing criminal history information, including complete arrest reporting and researching missing dispositions, provided that the captured data are subsequently included in relevant state and federal files;
- Capturing complete data from prosecutors and courts on misdemeanor convictions of domestic violence;

- Reducing any backlog of missing court dispositions, provided that the dispositions are made available for criminal history inquiries at the state and national levels;
- Converting manual or other non-automated criminal history records to electronic records, provided they are available for criminal history inquiries at the state and national level;
- Upgrading equipment to directly improve the availability of data where appropriate, given the level of data completeness and participation in national record systems. (The ongoing or maintenance costs associated with any such equipment are allowable only during the initial 12-month period.);
- Purchasing Livescan equipment for local agencies (1) where the funds can be justified on the basis of geographic, population, traffic, or related factors and (2) when the jurisdiction has established an Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) and either has implemented or is implementing procedures to ensure that the AFIS is compatible with FBI Next Generation Identification (NGI) standards. (The ongoing or maintenance costs associated with any such equipment are allowable only during the initial 12-month period.); and
- Ensuring compatibility with federal record systems, such as III, and implementing integrated system strategies that interface all components of the criminal justice system, including law enforcement, prosecutors, courts, and corrections, to the extent that such expenditures improve the availability of criminal record data at the national level. Any systems funded must be compatible with FBI standards for national data systems, such as NIBRS, NCIC, NICS, and NGI. However, program funds may not be used to support studies, analysis, design, or development of integrated system strategies. Funds should not be used to primarily improve law enforcement investigative capabilities associated with NGI participation (e.g., latent workstations, palm-print capture, facial recognition, and DNA capture).

2. Full Participation in NICS: Improving access to information concerning persons prohibited from possessing or receiving a firearm and transmitting relevant records to NICS. Examples of allowable activities include:

- Identifying and developing access to data on persons prohibited from firearm purchases under the Gun Control Act (18 U.S.C. § 922), as amended by the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act (P.L. 103–159);
- Participating in the FBI’s Identification for Firearms Sales program, which is a system for flagging III records for the immediate and accurate identification of convicted felons; and
- Enabling the state to serve as a point of contact (POC) under the NICS system (including related costs of equipment, software, personnel training, and development and implementation of related operating and administrative procedures). However, funds may not be used to cover ongoing costs of presale firearm background checks but may be used for costs associated with capturing dispositions in response to a specific NICS inquiry (provided that the captured

data are entered into the automated state and FBI systems, thus serving to upgrade the permanent quality of the record systems).

3. Full Participation in the Interstate Identification Index (III): Supporting participation in the III and National Fingerprint File (NFF), including adoption and implementation of the National Crime Prevention and Privacy Compact. Examples of allowable activities include:

- Paying reasonable costs associated with the adoption and implementation of the National Crime Prevention and Privacy Compact (Compact), including costs associated with state review and enactment of the Compact, and the development and implementation of procedures (including purchase of equipment and development of software) necessary to facilitate operations pursuant to Compact protocols, including those relating to participation in the FBI's NFF;
- Automating criminal record databases;
- Synchronizing records between the state and the FBI;
- Developing software and hardware necessary to enable electronic access to state records on an intrastate or interstate basis.

4. Automation and Reporting of Relevant Juvenile Records: Improving access and reporting of adult and juvenile dispositions and mental health submissions to NICS. Examples of allowable activities include:

- Implementing or upgrading state, local, or tribal court record systems that facilitate immediate identification of disposition records (including relevant juvenile records that would prohibit the purchase or possession of firearms, where permissible under state or tribal law), provided that the records are made accessible for criminal history record inquiries at the state and national levels.
- Converting juvenile records to the adult system (federal regulations allow the FBI to accept juvenile records if submitted by the state or local arresting agency).
- Replacing or updating aging juvenile record systems to ensure the timely transfer of critical information for NICS reporting, where permissible under state or tribal law.

5. Record Sealing and Expungement: Supporting efforts to seal and expunge criminal history information in accordance with state laws and policies. Examples of allowable activities include:

- Implementing or upgrading systems to automate processes for sealing and expunging criminal history information. (Note: states that have ratified or signed on to the Compact (34 U.S.C. § 40316) and wish to use these funds to automate processes for the sealing of records must ensure that such sealing occurs pursuant to a court order related to a particular subject or pursuant to a federal or state statute that requires action on a sealing petition filed by a particular record subject.)

- Paying reasonable costs to reduce or eliminate backlogs in processing expungements.

See the [Eligible Applicants](#) section for eligibility details.

Funding Details

Announcement Type	Initial
Assistance Listing Number	16.554; 16.813
Statutory Authority	NCHIP: 34 U.S.C. § 10132(c)(19) NCHIPSF BSCA: The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (P.L. 117–159) and 34 U.S.C. § 10132(c)(19) NARIP: 34 U.S.C. § 10132(c) and 34 U.S.C. § 40913
Grants.gov Opportunity Number	O-BJS-2026-172688
Expected Total Amount of Funding	\$123,000,000
Anticipated Number of Awards	56
Award Type(s)	Cooperative Agreements
Anticipated Award Amount	Up to \$2,196,429
Expected Award Period(s)	36 months starting on October 01, 2026

Key Dates and Times

NOFO Release Date	August 18, 2026
SAM.gov Registration/Renewal	Begin the process by as soon as possible
Step 1: Grants.gov Deadline	11:59 p.m. ET on September 28, 2026
Step 2: JustGrants Deadline	8:59 p.m. ET on October 5, 2026
Anticipated Notification Date	December 1, 2026

See [Questions?](#) at the end of this NOFO for agency contact information.

2. ELIGIBILITY

Eligible Applicants

The types of entities that are eligible to apply are:

Government Entities

- State governments
- Native American Tribal governments (federally recognized)

Other

- Courts

“Other” Entities Definition:

- Courts: The state central administrative office or similar entity designated by statute or regulation to administer federal grant funds on behalf of the jurisdiction’s court system.

Cost Sharing (Match) Requirement: This NOFO does **not** require cost sharing (match).

Limit on Number of Applications: Applications under which two or more entities (project partners) would carry out the federal award will be considered. Up to two applications may be submitted for each state, provided that one agency is the designated NCHIP agency/state record repository, and the other is submitted by the state court. See the [Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information on subawards.

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

3. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Statutory Authority

NCHIP: 34 U.S.C. § 10132(c)(19)

NCHIPSF BSCA: The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (P.L. 117–159) and 34 U.S.C. § 10132(c)(19)

NARIP: 34 U.S.C. § 10132(c) and 34 U.S.C. § 40913

Agency Funding Priorities

To help meet its mission, OJP may give priority consideration to applications proposing (as applicable within the scope of this NOFO) projects designed to advance the goals listed below:

- Directly supporting law enforcement operations (including immigration law enforcement operations);
- 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 priorities is one of many factors that OJP considers in making funding decisions. Receiving priority consideration does not guarantee funding.

Unallowable Activities: 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 Chapter 3.13 of the [DOJ Grants Financial Guide](#), “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.

Goals and Objectives of This Funding Opportunity

Goal 1: This funding will assist state record repositories, state courts, and tribes with developing processes and systems to make more records available to NICS, including relevant records in NCIC, criminal history information available through III, and records in the NICS Indices. Therefore, through the funded activities, BJS expects that more records (including improved quality, completeness, and timeliness) will become available in these systems.

- **Objective 1:** Provide direct financial assistance to states, state courts, and tribes to improve their criminal history record systems and related systems to support background checks, including NICS checks.

- **Objective 2:** Ensure the infrastructure connects criminal history record systems to the state record repository or appropriate federal agency record system and ensure records are accessible through the FBI record systems.
- **Objective 3:** Allow recipients to secure training and technical assistance needed to ensure that criminal history and related record systems are developed and managed to conform to FBI standards and appropriate technologies, while ensuring that contributing agencies adhere to the highest standards of practice with respect to privacy and confidentiality.
- **Objective 4:** Use systematic evaluation and standardized performance measurements and statistics to assess progress on improving national record holdings and background check systems.
- **Objective 5:** Ensure records of arrests are fingerprint-supported, linked to case outcomes, and accessible through the state record repository and FBI record systems.
- **Objective 6:** Ensure that accurate records are available for use by law enforcement, prosecutors, and courts and to protect public safety and national security.
- **Objective 7:** Automate and electronically transmit records, including relevant juvenile records permitted under state or tribal law, to state and national systems
- **Objective 8:** Permit states to identify:
 - ineligible firearm purchasers;
 - persons ineligible to hold positions involving children, elderly persons, or disabled persons;
 - persons subject to protection orders or wanted, arrested, or convicted of stalking and/or domestic violence;
 - persons ineligible to be employed or hold licenses for specified positions; and
 - persons potentially presenting threats to public safety.

For a description of how awards under this NOFO will contribute to achieving these goals and objectives, see the [Performance Reports](#) section below.

Expected Outcomes

OJP expects recipients to submit deliverables and performance reports, as described below. Read the [Application Resource Guide](#) for more information. OJP 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

Recipients do not need to submit any deliverables other than the standard items in the [Post-Award Requirements and Administration](#) section.

Performance Reports

OJP requires recipients to submit regular performance reports that communicate progress toward achieving [Program Goals and Objectives](#). Read information on [performance reporting](#).

A list of performance measure questions for this funding opportunity can be found at [NCHIP-NARIP](#).

Substantial Involvement of Federal Agency: OJP expects to make some or all awards under this NOFO as cooperative agreements, which allows OJP to have substantial involvement in carrying out the project. Read the [Application Resource Guide](#) for a discussion of this involvement and related award conditions.

4. APPLICATION CONTENTS AND FORMAT

Application Contents List

OJP will only consider applications that contain all required parts, which are marked ***Required*** below. Refer to the [DOJ Grant Application Submission Checklist](#) for application instructions.

Application Item	Submission Type
Step 1: Grants.gov	
Application for Federal Assistance: SF-424 *Required*	Online Form
Step 2: JustGrants	
Standard Applicant Information *Required*	Online Form
Proposal Abstract *Required*	Text Box
Data Requested With Application - Financial Management and System of Internal Controls Questionnaire (including Applicant Disclosure of High-Risk Status) - Agency Funding Priorities Inventory	Online Form
Proposal Narrative *Required*	Attachment
Budget *Required*	Online Form

Other Budget/Financial Attachments	Attachment
• Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable) • Consultant Rate (if applicable) • Limitation on Use of Award Funds for Employee Compensation for Awards Over \$250,000; Waiver (if applicable) • Disclosure of Process Related to Executive Compensation (if applicable)	
Memorandum of Understanding	Attachment
Additional Application Components	Attachment
• Timeline: Provide a detailed timeline, in list form, that covers all activities proposed. • 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.	

In addition to the items marked ***Required*** in the table above, the following are considered basic minimum requirement elements that are considered in the responsiveness review:

- The application is submitted by an eligible applicant.
- The application is responsive to the scope of the NOFO.

Standard Applicant Information ***Required***

Review and edit as needed the information imported from the SF-424 submitted in Grants.gov. Add ZIP codes for areas affected by the project.

Proposal Abstract ***Required***

In JustGrants, enter a proposal abstract (limited to 2,000 characters) summarizing the proposed project. As abstracts for funded projects are public, do not include any personally identifying information (e.g., staff names). The abstract should include the following information:

- The name of the applicant's proposed project.
- The purpose of the proposed project (*i.e.*, what the project will do and why it is necessary).

- Where the project will take place (*i.e.*, the service area, if applicable).
- Who will be served by the project (*i.e.*, who will be helped or have their needs addressed by the project).
- What activities will be carried out to complete the project.
- The subrecipient(s)/partner organizations or entities, if known.
- Deliverables and expected outcomes (*i.e.*, what the project will achieve).

View an example of a [proposal abstract](#).

Data Requested With Application

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

Review information on this [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.

Proposal Narrative ***Required***

Format of the Proposal Narrative

Submit the narrative as an attachment in JustGrants. The document should:

- Be double-spaced, using a standard 12-point size font.
- Have no less than 1-inch margins.
- Have numbered pages.
- Not exceed 30 pages.

If the Proposal Narrative does not follow this format, OJP may reduce the score/ranking of the application.

Sections of the Proposal Narrative

The Proposal Narrative must include the four sections listed below. If you want priority consideration, the Proposal Narrative must state which [priority\(ies\)](#) your project will advance and describe how it will do so.

1. Description of the Need (5% of application score): What critical issue or problem do you propose to address with this project? Please include:

- A brief explanation of the need, gap, or issue to be addressed by the proposed project.
- Supporting information, data, or evidence to demonstrate the need's existence, size, and impact on the target population and community.
- How the need relates to the purpose of the NOFO.

2. Project Goals and Objectives (20% of application score): How will the proposed project address the need identified and address the purpose of the NOFO? Please include:

- Project goals (goals are broad, visionary statements on what you hope to accomplish).
- Project objectives (objectives are specific outcomes you plan to achieve through project activities).
- How your project goals and objectives relate to the [goals and objectives of the funding opportunity](#).

3. Project Design and Implementation (35% of application score): How will you implement project activities that meet the project goals and objectives? Please include:

- What activities you will conduct to achieve the proposed goals and objectives.
- How you will deliver or complete those activities.
- When the activities will take place.
- Who in your organization will staff the activities, including key staff.
- Who will participate in and benefit from the activity.
- What deliverables, reports, and other items will be produced as part of the project.
- If you plan to use subrecipients to help conduct the project, please name them (if they are known) or describe how you will identify them. Please describe their role in conducting project activities.

4. Capabilities and Competencies (25% of application score): What administrative and technical capacity and expertise do you bring to successfully complete this project? Please include:

- A short description of your capacity to deliver the proposed project and meet the post-award requirements, if funded.
- A description of projects or activities your organization has conducted, or is currently conducting, that demonstrates your ability to undertake the proposed project activities.
- A summary of relevant experience of team members with key responsibilities for implementing the project.

Project Evaluations: An applicant that proposes to use award funds to conduct project evaluations must follow the guidance on [project evaluations](#).

Budget and Associated Documentation

Budget (15% of application score) ***Required***

Use the Budget Detail Worksheet (Web-Based Form) to submit the budget. Read information on [budget preparation](#) and [JustGrants Application Submission Training](#).

- List each cost needed to implement the project under the appropriate cost category.
- Clearly name and describe each cost.
- Show the computation of each cost (e.g., cost per unit, number of units, and total cost).
- Enter narrative, as needed, to explain the cost calculations and connection to your project goals, objectives, and activities.
- Include only costs that are reasonable, allocable, and necessary to implement the project. They must be allowable under the funding statute and agency requirements.¹

The following information specific to this funding opportunity will help you develop your project budget:

- Staff overtime is allowable; BJS approval is required.
- Provide details on individual tasks for each personnel position.
- Travel is allowed to attend program-specific meetings/conferences.
- The purchase or lease of vehicles is NOT allowable.
- A breakdown of budget categories per subaward/subgrant MUST be provided as additional documentation.
- A vendor's quote is required for equipment costs and contractual services.
- Maintenance costs will ONLY be covered during the initial year of a contract.

Budget/Financial Attachments

- **Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable):** If the budget includes indirect costs calculated using a current, federally approved indirect cost rate, upload your indirect cost rate agreement. Read information about [indirect costs](#).
- **Consultant Rate (if applicable):** Read information on [limits to consultant rates](#) and whether you need to request approval to exceed those limits.
- **Limitation on Use of Award Funds for Employee Compensation for Awards Over \$250,000; Waiver (if applicable):** Read information on this [limitation](#) and to determine whether you need to submit a waiver.
- **Disclosure of Process Related to Executive Compensation (if applicable):** An applicant that is a nonprofit organization may be required to make certain disclosures relating to the processes it uses to determine the compensation of its officers, directors, trustees, and key employees. Read information about this [disclosure and documentation](#) to upload.

¹ See [2 C.F.R. Part 200, Subpart E](#) and the [DOJ Grants Financial Guide](#). Read information on [unallowable costs](#) that apply to all funding opportunities.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Supporting Documents

Attach a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or letter of intent between the applicant and each of the project partner(s). Read information on what to include in an [MOU/letter of intent](#).

MOUs should be submitted as one separate attachment to the application. Unsigned draft MOUs may be submitted with the application, but you should describe in a cover page to the attachment why they are unsigned.

Additional Application Components

Attach these in JustGrants:

- **Tribal Authorizing Resolution (if applicable):** Read information on whether you may need to submit a [Tribal Authorizing Resolution](#).
- **Research and Evaluation Independence and Integrity Statement (if applicable):** Read information whether you may need to submit this [statement](#).
- **Timeline:** Provide a detailed timeline, in list form, that covers all activities proposed.

Disclosures and Assurances

Read the [disclosures and assurances](#) and complete them in JustGrants:

- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities
- Disclosure of Duplication in Cost Items (if applicable)
- DOJ Certified Standard Assurances
- DOJ Certifications
- Applicant Disclosure and Justification – DOJ High-Risk Grantees (if applicable)

5. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES

The [DOJ Grant Application Submission Checklist](#) provides instructions for how to submit your application by the [deadlines](#). [Executive Order \(E.O.\) 12372](#) (Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs) does apply to this funding opportunity: read the [Application Resource Guide](#) for details. Read OJP's policy for applicants to [request late submission](#) due to technical difficulties, severe weather, or natural or manmade disasters.

6. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

The [Application Resource Guide](#) explains the responsiveness review, review criteria, and review and selection process, including risk review, and deciding official. Refer to the [Application Contents List](#) for all required application components and other basic minimum requirement elements that are considered in the responsiveness review. The

[Proposal Narrative](#) and [Budget](#) sections of this NOFO indicates the weight of peer review criteria.

7. AWARD NOTICES

Read about the [award notification](#) process.

8. POST-AWARD REQUIREMENTS & ADMINISTRATION

Read the [Application Resource Guide](#) for more information about: standard award terms and conditions, administrative and national policy requirements, and post-award reporting requirements.

9. QUESTIONS?

NOFO Contact	Name: Stephanie Burroughs Phone: 202-307-0765 Email: AskBJS@usdoj.gov
SAM.gov Help Desk	Website: sam.gov/help Hours: 8 a.m.–8 p.m. ET, Monday–Friday (closed federal holidays)
Grants.gov Help Desk	Phone: 800-518-4726 Email: support@grants.gov Website: grants.gov/support Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (closed federal holidays)
JustGrants Help Desk	Phone: 833-872-5175 Email: JustGrants.Support@usdoj.gov Hours: 7:00 a.m.–9:00 p.m. ET, Monday–Friday and 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. ET on Saturday, Sunday, and federal holidays.