

# NIJ FY 2026 Invited to Apply - Advancing the Understanding of 3D Algorithms for Firearm Identification

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Grants.gov Funding Opportunity Number: O-NIJ-2026-172787

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## **Application Deadlines in Eastern Time (ET):**

1. Complete SF-424 and submit in Grants.gov: **October 7, 2026, by 11:59 p.m. ET**
  2. Submit full application in JustGrants: **October 13, 2026, by 8:59 p.m. ET**
- 



**NIJ** | NATIONAL  
INSTITUTE OF  
**JUSTICE**  
ADVANCING JUSTICE THROUGH SCIENCE

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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 **NIJ FY 2026 Invited to Apply - Advancing the Understanding of 3D Algorithms for Firearm Identification**. This opportunity seeks applications for rigorous research and evaluation 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.

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.

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

## Funding Details

|                                  |         |
|----------------------------------|---------|
| <b>Announcement Type</b>         | Initial |
| <b>Assistance Listing Number</b> | 16.560  |

|                                         |                                                  |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Statutory Authority</b>              | Pub. L. No. 119-74, 140 Stat 5, 38; 28 USC 530C. |
| <b>Grants.gov Opportunity Number</b>    | O-NIJ-2026-172787                                |
| <b>Expected Total Amount of Funding</b> | \$500,000                                        |
| <b>Anticipated Number of Awards</b>     | 1                                                |
| <b>Award Type(s)</b>                    | Grant                                            |
| <b>Anticipated Award Amount</b>         | Up to \$500,000                                  |
| <b>Expected Award Period(s)</b>         | 36 months starting on January 1, 2027            |

## Key Dates and Times

|                                     |                                       |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>NOFO Release Date</b>            | September 30, 2026                    |
| <b>SAM.gov Registration/Renewal</b> | Begin the process as soon as possible |
| <b>Step 1: Grants.gov Deadline</b>  | 11:59 p.m. ET on October 7, 2026      |
| <b>Step 2: JustGrants Deadline</b>  | 8:59 p.m. ET on October 13, 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:

**Other:** Only the applicant that received an official invitation letter from NIJ is able and eligible to apply. Please refer to that letter for eligibility requirements. The application will only be accepted from the following:

- Houston Forensic Science Center, Inc.

**Cost Sharing (Match) Requirement:** Match is not required but see details regarding “Cofunding” here [Guidance for Applicants and Awardees](#).

## 3. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

### Statutory Authority

Pub. L. No. 119-74, 140 Stat 5, 38; 28 USC 530C.

## Agency Funding Priorities

In order to advance public safety and help meet its mission, NIJ priorities include:

- (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.

**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 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.

## Goals and Objectives of This Funding Opportunity

**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:
  - o Minimum acceptance criteria of analytical data, such as mass spectra, generated in case samples.

- o Accuracy gained from additional orthogonal testing of controlled substance samples.
- o Effectiveness of a blind verification program for technical reviews.
- o 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:
  - o Comparison of a newly developed comprehensive method to existing multi-step method(s).
  - o 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.

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

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

Recipients will be expected to deliver the following:

- **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** as described at [Post-Award Requirements for Research, Development, and Evaluation Grants](#) should be disseminated throughout the

period of performance to the extent possible. Development and delivery of interim products should be built into the Project Timeline. Author-accepted manuscripts for peer-reviewed publications derived from research funded by the award should be deposited in a publication repository designated by NIJ. A final research paper is required.

- **Research Dissemination Products** should translate the research into actionable information for policymakers and practitioners to promote change in the field. Grantees should devote equal effort to development of these products as they do scholarly products.
- **Data Sets and Associated Files and Documentation** resulting in whole or in part from their funded research must be archived to ensure the preservation, availability, and transparency of data collected. For more information on this requirement, please review the information found here: [Data Archiving](#).

## Performance Reports

OJP requires recipients to submit regular performance reports that communicate progress toward achieving [Program Goals and Objectives](#). Read information on [performance reporting](#). For NIJ's post award reporting requirements please review [Post-Award Requirements for Research, Development, and Evaluation Grants](#).

A list of performance measure questions for this funding opportunity can be found at [Performance Measures for Award Recipients](#).

# 4. APPLICATION CONTENTS AND FORMAT

## Application Contents List

The table below lists the contents of your application. Refer to the [DOJ Grant Application Submission Checklist](#) for application instructions.

| Application Item                                           | Submission Type |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Step 1: Grants.gov</b>                                  |                 |
| <a href="#">Application for Federal Assistance: SF-424</a> | Online Form     |
| <b>Step 2: JustGrants</b>                                  |                 |
| <a href="#">Standard Applicant Information</a>             | Online Form     |
| <a href="#">Proposal Abstract</a>                          | Text Box        |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <a href="#">Data Requested With Application</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial Management and System of Internal Controls Questionnaire (including Applicant Disclosure of High-Risk Status)</li> <li>Agency Funding Priorities Inventory</li> <li>Principal Investigator Contact Information</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Online Form |
| <a href="#">Proposal Narrative</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Attachment  |
| <a href="#">Budget</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Online Form |
| <a href="#">Other Budget/Financial Attachments</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)</li> <li>Consultant Rate (if applicable)</li> <li>Limitation on Use of Award Funds for Employee Compensation for Awards Over \$250,000; Waiver (if applicable)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Attachment  |
| <a href="#">Additional Application Components</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gold Standard Science</li> <li>Biographical Sketches <b>*Required*</b></li> <li>Current and Pending (Other) Support Common Forms <b>*Required*</b></li> <li>Tribal Authorizing Resolution (if applicable)</li> <li>Research and Evaluation Independence and Integrity Statement</li> <li>Letters of Support (if applicable)</li> <li>Bibliography/References</li> <li>Tools/Instruments, Questionnaires, Tables/Charts/Graphs, or Maps</li> <li>List of Individuals in the Application</li> <li>Human Subjects Protection</li> <li>Privacy Certificate</li> <li>Request to Use Incentives or Stipends</li> <li>Project Management Plan and Timeline</li> <li>Consortium/Contractual Agreements</li> <li>Data Management, Sharing, and Archiving Plan (DMSAP)</li> <li>Proof of Forensic Laboratory Accreditation including Scope</li> </ul> | Attachments |

## Standard Applicant Information

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

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.

### 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

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 18 pages.

## Sections of the Proposal Narrative

The Proposal Narrative should include the 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. 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.
- Requests for consideration under “agency funding priorities”.
- Key words, including science focus areas.

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

**3. Statement of the Problem:** 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.

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

**5. Capabilities and Competencies:** The applicant’s administrative and scientific technical capacity to successfully complete the project. The proposal should demonstrate the research team’s relevant expertise, institutional resources, and track record of completing similar projects successfully.

**6. Potential impact:** 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.

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

- If the application (including the budget) identifies any proposed noncompetitive 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.

- 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.

## Budget and Associated Documentation

### Budget

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

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.

- 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.<sup>1</sup>

### 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 request.
- **Disclosure of Process Related to Executive Compensation (if applicable):** Applicants to this funding opportunity are not required to provide this disclosure.

## Additional Application Components

Applications to NIJ NOFOs are expected to include additional research-related components (as applicable), attached in JustGrants. One of these is a required application component:

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

- **Biographical Sketch Forms *\*Required\** and Current and Pending (Other) Support Common Forms *\*Required\**:** All applicants to NIJ NOFOs are required to submit the *Biographical Sketch* common form and the *Current and Pending (Other) Support* common form (see details of the required data elements here: [NSPM-33 Implementation Guidance](#)) for all key personnel involved in the research i.e., Principal and Co-Principal Investigators, Project Directors, and any individual who contributes in a substantive way to the scientific development or execution of the project proposed or is defined as such in the NOFO. In addition to ensuring transparency, these forms help reviewers assess the qualifications, expertise, and capacity of researchers to complete the proposed work. NIJ encourages the use of SciENcv (with no preference as to available formats) to populate both forms (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sciencv/>).

A description of the other application components is found here [Guidance for Applicants and Awardees | National Institute of Justice](#).

## 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 not 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

OJP will review applications to ensure the information presented is reasonable, understandable, measurable, achievable, and consistent with the goals of the funding opportunity. In addition, OJP reviews invited applications for consistency with the invitation letter and invited applicant guidance. See the [Application Resource Guide](#) for information on the application review process, including risk review, and the deciding official.

## 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?

|                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>NOFO Contact</b>         | Name: Jillian Conte<br>Phone: 202-451-7164<br>Email: <a href="mailto:jillian.conte@usdoj.gov">jillian.conte@usdoj.gov</a><br>Hours: 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. ET, Monday–Friday                                                          |
| <b>SAM.gov Help Desk</b>    | Website: <a href="https://sam.gov/help">sam.gov/help</a><br>Hours: 8 a.m.–8 p.m. ET, Monday–Friday (closed federal holidays)                                                                                                       |
| <b>Grants.gov Help Desk</b> | Phone: 800-518-4726<br>Email: <a href="mailto:support@grants.gov">support@grants.gov</a><br>Website: <a href="https://grants.gov/support">grants.gov/support</a><br>Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (closed federal holidays) |
| <b>JustGrants Help Desk</b> | Phone: 833-872-5175<br>Email: <a href="mailto:JustGrants.Support@usdoj.gov">JustGrants.Support@usdoj.gov</a><br>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. |