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Office of Justice Programs  
*National Institute of Justice*



NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE

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

**U.S. Department of Justice**  
**Office of Justice Programs**  
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The National Institute of Justice is the research, development, and evaluation agency of the U.S. Department of Justice. NIJ's mission is to foster and disseminate knowledge and tools derived from objective and rigorous scientific research to inform efforts to promote safety and advance justice.

The National Institute of Justice is a program office of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the Office for Victims of Crime; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking.

# Preface: Meeting NIJ's Priorities in Fiscal Year 2023



I am honored to present this report highlighting the accomplishments of the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) in fiscal year (FY) 2023.

When I was sworn in as NIJ director in May 2022, NIJ was just beginning its busy grant season, solicitations were closing, and we were establishing peer review panels. NIJ funded some important research out of that process; however, FY 2023 was the year we were able to further focus on priorities that are important to me in promoting impactful research.

Chief among those priorities is to *foster rigorous and inclusive research that informs efforts to promote safer communities and more equitable justice systems*. Every FY 2023 research and evaluation solicitation alerted applicants that NIJ would give special consideration to applicants whose proposed methodologies included meaningful engagement with people who have professional expertise in the topic of study as well as those who have experienced the justice system. Two FY 2023 awards that exemplify the call for inclusive research are:

- An evaluation of San Gabriel Valley Crisis Assistance Response and Engagement, a program piloting a co-responder model in six municipalities in Los Angeles County. Researchers will establish a community advisory board composed of individuals with lived experience of the mental health, homelessness, and crisis systems.
- A study using quantitative data and personal narratives to learn if ad hoc defense delivery systems are more or less likely than structured defense delivery systems to provide people who cannot afford an attorney with counsel.

I invite you to watch my video “[Inclusive Research: Engaging With the People Closest to the Issue](#).”

*It is also essential that NIJ supports research that identifies and mitigates biases in both the topic of study and the research process itself.* Through the longstanding W.E.B. Du Bois fellowship program, NIJ has funded research on racial equity for many years, and FY 2023 was no exception. In one exemplary project, researchers will develop and test a method to assess the nature and extent of bias in 911 call handling. Other newly funded research projects align with this priority, including an evaluation of a community-led, countywide pre-arrest juvenile diversion initiative designed to reduce racial disparities in youth referrals to the juvenile justice system.

Prior to these FY 2023 awards, NIJ has had a long history of funding research that looks at equity in the criminal justice system. In FY 2023, one such grantee published “[The Only Thing Constant Is Change: Temporal Analyses of Racial/Ethnic Sentencing Disparities](#)” in the *American Journal of Criminal Justice* based on work done under an FY 2020 award.

*Another priority is to ensure that the evaluations we fund include robust implementation fidelity components. Doing so enables us to assess not just whether something works but why and how.* Following are two newly funded projects that address this priority:

- Researchers will work with Neighborhood Defender Service of Detroit and the Wayne County Indigent Defense Services Department to conduct a mixed-methods evaluation of Detroit’s holistic defense model. The evaluation will leverage the existing random assignment of felony cases in Wayne County, Michigan, to estimate the causal impact of holistic practices.
- Researchers will evaluate the implementation and impact of Florida’s Risk Protection Order Law, including examining disparities in implementation across jurisdictions and identifying facilitators and barriers to implementation.

The article “[The Safe Communities Safe Schools Model: An Assessment of Model Implementation and Outcomes](#),” published by NIJ in FY 2023 and based on a prior year award, shows what we can learn from implementation science. Researchers examined schools’ readiness to implement, the degree to which the model was implemented as intended, the feasibility of schoolwide implementation, and how variations in implementation affect school safety outcomes.

*Finally, research has little utility unless it is translated into actionable information that promotes change in the field.* NIJ’s research should never just sit on a shelf, whether physical or virtual. What we learn needs to be shared with those who can use it to impact the goals of safety, equity, and justice. This is no small task. At the 2023 NIJ Research Conference, we dedicated the opening plenary session to discussing the tremendous impact of three key bodies of NIJ-funded research: DNA for case clearances and wrongful convictions, body armor standards, and spatial analyses of crime. A [summary and video of the plenary session](#) are available.

In FY 2023, NIJ also continued to release products describing research findings in straightforward language for ready action, including:

- [Five Things About Teen Dating Violence](#)
- [Five Things About Reentry](#)
- [Fighting the Uphill War Against Illicit Drugs and Overdose Deaths: Detecting Emerging Designer Drugs and Opioid Analogs](#)
- [Synthesizing Knowledge on Equity and Equity-Based School Safety Strategies](#)

I’m excited about these essential research investments, the knowledge they will build, and, most importantly, the ways in which they will inform efforts to promote safer communities and more effective and equitable justice for all.



Nancy La Vigne, Ph.D.  
Director  
National Institute of Justice

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# About the National Institute of Justice

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) is the research, development, and evaluation agency of the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). We are dedicated to improving knowledge and understanding of crime and justice issues through science. NIJ's mission is to foster and disseminate knowledge and tools derived from objective and rigorous scientific research to inform efforts to promote safety and advance justice. NIJ is committed to supporting the development of rigorous and independent research that crosses scientific disciplines and leverages the expertise of both researchers and those working within the criminal and juvenile justice systems and those who provide services to victims of crimes. Investments in science allow us to better understand the challenges facing the U.S. criminal justice system and to develop and test effective solutions.

NIJ's work is conducted primarily through competitive extramural grants, agreements with other federal agencies, and contracts. By providing these funds, NIJ continues to support high-quality research on public safety and the fair and efficient administration of justice by supporting researchers and disseminating evidence and practical solutions responding to the challenges of crime and justice.

NIJ also engages with other federal and private sector science agencies to develop technology solutions that leverage investments and infrastructure, thereby increasing the impact of NIJ's finite resources and quickening the pace of introducing solutions to the field.

As a science agency, NIJ generates high-quality research that is rigorous and inclusive and embraces technology. NIJ seeks to promote research with mixed-methods approaches that capture both numbers and narratives. The numbers are important because they are empirical evidence, but without the narratives of the people closest to the issues, research fails to grasp the context. To be truly inclusive, research must recognize inequity in the criminal justice system and be intentional in examining structural inequalities that may generate disparate outcomes based on gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual identity, or citizenship status. Infusing evaluation research with a strong implementation science component strengthens the understanding and interpretation of research findings. NIJ strives to communicate these findings to help practitioners, ensuring that research evidence is translated into actionable information promoting change in the field.

# Understanding, Preventing, and Reducing Crime

NIJ supports research and evaluation across a wide variety of criminal and juvenile justice issues — focusing on the causes and correlates of crime.

NIJ supported research under the following topics in fiscal year (FY) 2023.

## Research and Evaluation on Firearms Violence and Mass Shootings

In FY 2023, NIJ continued to expand its research portfolio on firearms violence and mass shootings. Under the solicitation “[Research and Evaluation on Firearms Violence and Mass Shootings](#),” NIJ sought to fund research and program evaluation projects that inform efforts to prevent and reduce intentional, interpersonal firearms violence and mass shootings in the United States. NIJ was interested specifically in research or evaluation of Extreme Risk Protection Order Laws (known as “red flag laws”) and research on the sources of firearms used in crimes and the sources’ relationship to shootings and gun-related violence. Under this solicitation, NIJ made five awards totaling \$4.18 million, \$3.2 million of which was transferred from BJA. Using these funds, researchers will:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of Extreme Risk Protection Orders in Colorado.
- Evaluate, using mixed methods, the impacts and implementation of Florida’s Risk Protection Order Law from 2018 to 2023.
- Examine the role of law enforcement in implementing Extreme Risk Protection Orders.
- Explore how survivor perspectives and priorities are reflected in the use and implementation of Extreme Risk Protection Orders.
- Analyze the efficacy of Extreme Risk Protection Orders laws in preventing mass public shootings, defined as completed or intended gun violence carried out by aggressors who target (or intend to target) individuals at public locations within a 24-hour period.

## Research and Evaluation on Violent Crime and Firearm Violence in the Community

NIJ seeks to fund projects to understand community violence, including firearm violence, and evaluate policies and legislation. In FY 2023, under the solicitation “[NIJ FY22 Research and Evaluation on Violent Crime and Firearm Violence in the Community](#),” NIJ provided \$1.39 million for the study “What Works To Reduce Violent Gun Crime in Focused Deterrence Initiatives? Estimating the Effect of Services and Enforcement in Facilitating Desistance Among Prolific Violent Offenders in Tampa.”

Focused deterrence is one of the most promising evidence-based approaches, but gaps remain in understanding the generalizability of such programs and the mechanisms underlying them. This prevents us from maximizing focused deterrence in reducing violence. This study will provide new policy-relevant evidence on interventions across contexts and different manifestations as well as the mechanisms that underly the effects.

## Dissemination Highlight

### ***Podcast: Driving Down Gun Violence***

Three scholars from NIJ’s Law Enforcement Advancing Data and Science (LEADS) Scholars Program who serve in different law enforcement agencies discuss their experiences with identifying and implementing evidence-based interventions to reduce gun violence.

[Access the two-part podcast.](#)

## Research and Evaluation on Domestic Radicalization and Violent Extremism

NIJ sought applications for rigorous projects to develop a better understanding of domestic radicalization and advance evidence-based strategies for effective intervention and prevention.

The NIJ FY 2023 solicitation “[Research and Evaluation on Domestic Radicalization and Violent Extremism](#)” sought research in four focus areas:

- Research to inform terrorism prevention efforts.
- Research on the role of communications in promoting and countering unlawful extremist content.
- Research on disengagement, deradicalization, and reintegration into society of individuals incarcerated for terrorism-related offenses.
- Evaluations of programs and practices to prevent acts of terrorism.

In FY 2023, NIJ funded five projects totaling \$4.10 million. Researchers will:

- Use an existing big-data project — Frames of Misinformation, Extremism, and Conspiracism — to measure and examine violent extremist and accelerationist discourse related to unlawful acts (e.g., unlawful threats, evidence of illegal activity) using social media posts from platforms known to host concentrations of extremist material.
- Investigate the prevalence and consequences experienced by state legislators, mayors, and staff of exposure to domestic terrorism – including threats of harm and actual violence –carried out by diffused extremist networks, and develop policy innovations and best practices for enhancing the security of and reducing turnover among subnational elected officials and staff.

- Develop a national survey to provide valid and reliable estimates of support for violent extremism, identify individual-level characteristics that explain such support, and locate clusters of support at the county level across the country.
- Seek to understand elements of mis-, dis-, and mal-information campaigns, including:
  - The characteristics of high-profile events that are more likely to trigger online campaigns.
  - Network patterns associated with online campaign clusters, dissemination pathways, and the technical characteristics of more vulnerable platforms.
  - The common characteristics of organizations and other actors engaged in such campaigns.
  - Key themes and linguistic features of such campaigns.
- Update and expand the Profiles of Individual Radicalization in the United States (PIRUS) database to include the judicial outcomes of U.S. international and domestic terrorism prosecutions.

### Dissemination Highlight

#### ***Assessing Risk of Terrorist Acts by Looking at Location Data and Demographic and Social Characteristics***

In domestic terrorism investigations, as in conventional policing, location matters. Although the location of the terrorist violence itself is critical, the places where a terrorist lives and plans violent acts can also represent vital evidence. Much of the research regarding location has relied on models that predict how a single factor can increase or decrease the terrorism risk in a particular location. However, the risks are based on multiple, interacting factors rather than a single variable.

With that in mind, a research team funded by NIJ applied two advanced analytical tools for interpreting location data: risk terrain modeling and conjunctive analysis. Combining these tools' analytical powers offers promise for enhancing predictions of where future terror-related activity is likely to occur. However, the relatively small number of terrorist attacks in the United States makes it difficult to collect enough data to assess the risk. By combining data from multiple categories, this study aimed to generate findings of greater significance to law enforcement and intelligence agencies as well as the research community. A significant implication of this research is that the methodology can be used to advise community members, in addition to law enforcement, about possible locations of terrorist acts.

[Access the article.](#)

## Research and Evaluation on Violence Against Women

NIJ strives to support objective knowledge development and validated research tools to reduce violence against women, investing more than \$150 million over 40 years. NIJ's

Violence Against Women and Family Violence Research and Evaluation Program covers a broad range of topics. This includes public health and safety topics, criminal justice challenges (including the availability of legal and victim support services), the effectiveness of prevention and intervention programs, and the impact of such crimes over time.

In FY 2023, NIJ released the solicitation “[Research and Evaluation on Violence Against Women](#)” to invite projects examining domestic and family violence, homicide and other forms of violent death, intimate partner violence, rape, sex trafficking, sexual assault, stalking, and teen dating violence — along with the associated criminal justice system responses, procedures, and policies.

NIJ funded one award for \$2 million in resources that were transferred to NIJ from the DOJ Office on Violence Against Women. The Positive Adolescent Interpersonal Relationships Study will explore how marginalized social groups, specifically youth of color and LGBTQ+ youth, are affected by adolescent relationship abuse and how unique protective and risk factors may shape those experiences. The study team will convene an expert panel and a youth advisory board to create a three-wave annual longitudinal survey to examine the chronicity, severity, and trajectories of abuse in the context of positive youth development and socio-ecological factors.

## Dissemination Highlights

### ***Gender-Based Violence and American Indian and Alaska Native Communities***

In November 2022, NIJ and the NIJ-funded Violence Against Women Research Consortium hosted a webinar where researchers presented their findings on:

- ◆ The scope and context of missing Native American persons cases in Nebraska.
- ◆ Estimates from a national large-scale survey of violence against women and men who self-identified as American Indian or Alaska Native.

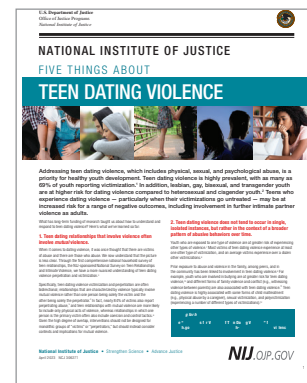
[Access the recording and transcript of the webinar.](#)

### ***Five Things About Teen Dating Violence***

Addressing teen dating violence — which includes physical, sexual, and psychological abuse — is a priority for healthy youth development. Teen dating violence is highly prevalent, with as many as 69% of youth reporting victimization. Lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth are at higher risk for dating violence compared to heterosexual youth.

Teens who experience dating violence — particularly when their victimizations go untreated — may be at increased risk for a range of negative outcomes, including further intimate partner violence as adults.

What has long-term research taught us about understanding and responding to teen dating violence? Read “[Five Things About Teen Dating Violence](#)” to find out.



## Research and Evaluation on School Safety

NIJ has funded numerous initiatives to evaluate school safety practices that range from preventing tragic incidents like school shootings to promoting a positive school environment.

In FY 2023, NIJ invited proposals under the solicitation “[Research and Evaluation on School Safety](#)” for projects in two areas: studies on the root causes and consequences of school violence and on the effectiveness of school safety approaches authorized under the STOP School Violence Act.

NIJ funded two awards for a total of \$1.7 million, which was transferred from BJA.

The first of the two studies will document the curricula content, delivery, and reach of the National Association of School Resource Officers training. The training is designed to build participant knowledge and skills, and the evaluation will assess changes in participants’ perceptions and how they use what they learn in the field.

In the second study, researchers will extend an ongoing longitudinal quantitative study (funded by NIJ in FY 2020) on “Violence Against Teachers in the 50 Largest U.S. School Districts: Predictors, Consequences, and School Responses.” The study’s primary goals are to:

- Investigate potential variations in the trajectories of teacher victimization by students.
- Document short- and long-term negative consequences of teacher victimization.
- Understand the moderating effects of various factors, such as perceived degree of procedural justice, to examine how school administrators handle incidents.
- Understand the reasons for variations in teachers’ satisfaction with their schools’ handling of their victimization.

### Dissemination Highlight

#### ***The Safe Communities Safe Schools Model: An Assessment of Model Implementation and Outcomes***

School administrators and researchers have long sought to identify the impact of bullying and school climate on threats to school safety. This article presents the findings from a randomized controlled trial evaluation of the implementation of the Safe Communities Safe Schools (SCSS) model. Results from the study indicate that 46 of the 60 schools that applied for the program had sufficient initial readiness to implement it. However, the model yielded limited impacts on school climate, safety, behavioral and mental health indicators, and academic outcomes.

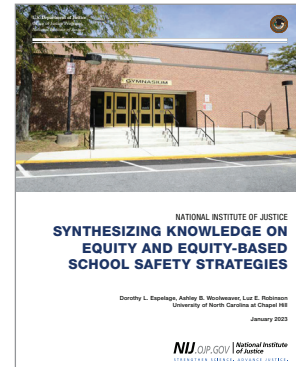
[Access the article.](#)

## Dissemination Highlight

### ***Synthesizing Knowledge on Equity and Equity-Based School Safety Strategies***

In a January 2023 NIJ report, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill researchers offer their perspectives on what we know about racial and ethnic equity issues in schools and how to effectively incorporate equity approaches into comprehensive school safety strategies. The authors offer several recommendations for creating school environments that are inclusive and equitable and note the need for evaluation of these approaches.

[Access the report.](#)



## Research and Evaluation of Trafficking in Persons

NIJ continues to build upon its research and evaluation efforts to better understand, prevent, and respond to trafficking in persons in the United States. With the FY 2023 solicitation “[Research and Evaluation of Trafficking in Persons](#),” NIJ sought proposals for research projects addressing three priority areas: human trafficking victim assistance, forced criminality, and estimation of the prevalence of human trafficking. NIJ funded three awards for a total of \$2.45 million in resources that were transferred from OVC.

Under these awards, researchers will:

- Better understand available housing services for victims of human trafficking, challenges experienced by community-based organizations in developing such services, and examples of best practices in providing housing to this population, based on the experience of human trafficking survivors and service providers.
- Conduct a multimethod, multisite program evaluation of three service models used by grantees of the California Office of Emergency Services’ Human Trafficking Victim Assistance program: Comprehensive Service Model, Coordinated Care Service Model, and Housing First Service Model.
- Increase the knowledge on forced criminalization of trafficking victims by developing a brief screening tool for forced criminality, investigating vacatur records, and interviewing trafficking survivors as well as criminal justice and service provider stakeholders to better understand forced criminality and barriers to identifying and supporting victims.



## Dissemination Highlights

### ***Mechanisms of Recruitment Into Sex Trafficking Operations: A Systematic Review***

This article, published in *Global Crime*, presents the results of an NIJ-funded systematic review of the global literature on recruitment into sex trafficking. This review reveals a need for more targeted research on the initial recruitment phase of sex trafficking as well as more research into traffickers and their tactics.

[Access the article.](#)

### ***Podcast: Understanding, Preventing, and Responding to Human Trafficking***

Human trafficking is an issue without a simple solution, but research on this problem is both helping victims and developing tools and information to better understand, prevent, and respond to trafficking.

[Access the podcast.](#)

### ***“Flexibility and Consistency”: Qualitative Insights on Valuable Skills for Providers Working With Survivors of Child Sex Trafficking***

NIJ-funded researchers published findings from an exploratory study to better understand the strategies and techniques that social workers, administrators, and staff at Love146 — an organization dedicated to stopping human trafficking — use to facilitate engagement and healing among the children and youth who experience sex trafficking. From this study, three distinct themes emerged: the importance of using a trauma-informed approach, the need for service providers to establish trust with the youth they serve, and the importance of persistence in service delivery.

[Access the article in the \*Journal of Evidence-Based Social Work\*.](#)

## Research and Evaluation on Hate Crimes

In FY 2023, NIJ released the solicitation “[Research and Evaluation on Hate Crimes](#),” seeking proposals for research that informs efforts to prevent and combat hate crimes, including school-based hate crimes, and their effects.

NIJ was particularly interested in research into how to improve hate crime prevention and reporting and address the needs of victims and their communities.

NIJ granted three awards for a total of \$2.35 million, \$2 million of which was transferred from BJA and \$349 thousand from the DOJ Community Relations Service. Funded research projects include:

- A study of how community-based organizations and their cross-agency coordination with government can innovatively and proactively reduce hate crimes.
- An evaluability assessment of the Not In Our Town Hate and Bias Action Teams model.

- A multisite study of the development and implementation of hate crime task forces. The study will incorporate the voices of hate crime survivors, as both participants and research collaborators, to assess diverse perspectives on promising practices for improving hate crime reporting and prevention and achieving survivor-defined justice.

## Dissemination Highlight

### ***Using Research To Improve Hate Crime Reporting and Identification***

While it is known that hate crimes are underreported, the reasons for low reporting rates are complex and it is difficult to assess the extent to which the actual incidence of hate crimes is underestimated, much less what might be done to improve our measurement of them. Adding to that complexity is that different state statutes and law enforcement agencies have different definitions of what constitutes a hate crime, further complicating the task of identifying hate crimes and harmonizing data collection and statistics.

A recent series of research initiatives supported by NIJ is helping to narrow this critical knowledge gap and illuminate a better path forward. The study findings fill in vital details on the causes of hate crime underreporting, including:

- ◆ Hate crime victims' reluctance to engage with law enforcement.
- ◆ Victims' and law enforcement agencies' inability to recognize certain victimizations as hate crimes.
- ◆ A large deficit in hate crime reporting by law enforcement agencies of all sizes.
- ◆ Variation in hate crime definitions across jurisdictions.

[Learn more in an article published by NIJ.](#)

## **Evaluation of the Office of Justice Programs' (OJP) Community-Based Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative Projects**

The [Community Based Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative \(CVIPI\)](#) is a premier OJP effort for which NIJ plays an important role. The FY 2023 NIJ solicitation "[Community-Based Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative \(CVIPI\) Research, Evaluation, and Associated Training & Technical Assistance Support](#)" included four categories:

- Training and technical assistance to support evaluation capacity and researcher-practitioner partnerships.
- Training and technical assistance to support violent crime problem analysis in jurisdictions not funded under the FY 2022 or FY 2023 OJP CVIPI solicitations.
- Site-based evaluation of programs funded under the FY 2022 and FY 2023 OJP CVIPI solicitations.
- Other community-based violence research and evaluation projects.

NIJ funded seven awards for a total of \$11.33 million in resources transferred from BJA. Funded projects include:

- Establishment of a new NIJ Community Violence Intervention Research and Evaluation Training and Technical Assistance Center.
- Training and technical assistance provision to community-based organizations and local government units to reduce violence using community- and data-driven problem analyses and strategic plan development.
- Evaluation of the New Orleans Community Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative.
- Evaluation, using an action research approach, of Boston’s Community-Based Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative, which intervenes with those returning from incarceration who are at the highest risk for future violence.
- Additional information about the causes and consequences of violence by continuing a 28-year longitudinal study, the Northwestern Juvenile Project.
- Developing and testing a model for evaluating ecosystem approaches to preventing violence in at-risk populations in Boston.
- Implementation and outcome evaluation of the new Office of Violence Prevention in St. Louis, Missouri, which is organizing a “cohort” of wraparound service providers and violence interruption workers.

## Research on the Abuse, Neglect, and Financial Exploitation of Older Adults

In FY 2023, NIJ released the solicitation “[Research on the Abuse, Neglect, and Financial Exploitation of Older Adults](#)” to fund research and evaluation projects in four areas:

- Evaluation of programs to prevent, intervene in, or respond to the abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation of older adults (age 60 and above).
- Research on individuals who abuse older adults.
- Research on polyvictimization in older adults.
- Research on fraud and financial exploitation of older adults.

NIJ made one award for \$1.5 million — \$100,000 of which was transferred from the DOJ Civil Division to NIJ — to study a diverse population of older adults’ exposure to abuse, both in-person and technology-facilitated. The population includes representative samples of racial and ethnic groups, sexual and gender minority populations, and geographically diverse populations.

## Dissemination Highlight

### ***Podcast: Defining and Studying Elder Abuse Polyvictimization***

Former NIJ Social Science Analyst Yunsoo Park shares her knowledge about elder abuse, a widespread issue in the United States and around the world, particularly polyvictimization — the experience of different types of abuse and maltreatment. As much as 11% of community-residing older adults experienced some form of abuse or mistreatment in the past year. Park discusses risk factors, difficulties in defining and studying elder abuse polyvictimization, and strategies for intervention and prevention.

[Access the podcast.](#)

## Research on Immigration and Crime

While NIJ did not release a solicitation for research on immigration and crime in FY 2023, research funded in prior years continues to produce results, as demonstrated by the following publications in peer-reviewed journals:

- [Race, Ethnicity, Psychological Factors, and COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), *Psychology, Health & Medicine*
- [Immigrant Status and Neighborhood Context on Perceptions of Police Procedural Justice](#), *Social Science Quarterly*
- [Does Racial Discrimination Matter: Explaining Perceived Police Bias Across Four Racial/Ethnic Groups](#), *Policing: An International Journal*
- [Procedural Justice, Neighbourhood Context, and Domestic Violence Reporting Intention Among Subgroups of Immigrants](#), *Policing and Society*
- [Immigrant Organizations and Neighborhood Crime](#), *Crime and Delinquency*

# Law Enforcement and Policing

NIJ has been a leader in developing and advancing research evidence on policing. This commitment is embodied in a long history of sponsored research on officer safety, police technologies, operations and interventions, officer accountability mechanisms, and strategies to build trust between law enforcement and the community.

## Research and Evaluation on Policing

In FY 2023, NIJ released the solicitation “[Research and Evaluation on Policing Practices, Accountability Mechanisms, and Alternatives](#).” It sought proposals for projects examining the impact on an array of police performance outcomes, including:

- Police accountability practices.
- The shifting and sharing of police functions.
- Police training.
- Police officer health and wellness programs.

NIJ granted nine awards for a total of \$7.61 million. Researchers will conduct:

- A rigorous, longitudinal, mixed-methods study assessing the impact of adverse childhood experiences, mental health conditions, and traumatic experiences on police turnover.
- A process, adaptation, and outcome evaluation of San Gabriel Valley Crisis Assistance Response & Engagement, a program piloting a co-responder model in six Los Angeles County municipalities.
- A randomized controlled trial of co-response for mental health service calls to the police in Fort Collins, Colorado.
- An impact evaluation of a law enforcement training program, Effective Youth Interactions, across 21 police departments in Contra Costa County, California.
- A mixed-methods research project that leverages automated vehicle locator and body-worn camera data to analyze police patrol activity and police-citizen interactions in Kansas City, Missouri.
- A mixed-methods study assessing the impact of station dog programs on agency member well-being, agency cohesion, staffing retention, and police-community relations.

- A two-phase study to understand internal affairs officers and their tasks related to citizen complaint investigations.
- A multiphase investigation into contemporary practices in first-line supervision.
- An examination of police executives' impact on accountability mechanisms and outcomes.

## Dissemination Highlights

### ***Supporting Law Enforcement and Prosecution of Opioid-Related Overdose Deaths***

In 2021, the United States recorded the highest number of drug overdose deaths in a 12-month period. Synthetic opioids, including illicit fentanyl, were involved in 66% of these deaths. The Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office developed the Heroin Involved Death Investigation (HIDI) Protocol to support a safe, coordinated, and rapid response to active drug overdose death scenes. The protocol sends alerts to law enforcement investigators if the medical examiner suspects a death is related to opioid use or overdose. These alerts notify law enforcement of potential dangers (e.g., lethal drugs) and facilitate protection of the scene and collection of evidence.

Researchers funded by NIJ found the HIDI Protocol to be an innovative, collaborative system of data protection, collection, and flow, and identified several opportunities for improvement. They believe the HIDI Protocol could be implemented successfully in other communities with slight modifications.

[Access the article.](#)

### ***Foundational Elements and Structure for the National Law Enforcement Accountability Database***

On May 22, 2022, President Biden signed Executive Order 14074 — Advancing Effective, Accountable Policing and Criminal Justice Practices To Enhance Public Trust and Public Safety. Section 5 establishes a National Law Enforcement Accountability Database. In FY 2023, NIJ funded a study to investigate the feasibility of the database's data requirements.

[Access the report.](#)

## Research and Evaluation in Safety, Health, and Wellness in the Criminal Justice System

In FY 2023, NIJ provided \$754,209 to assess the development and implementation of the Intake Booking Diversion program for individuals presenting with mental illness.

A growing body of research suggests that the arrest and incarceration of individuals with mental illness fails to improve treatment or recidivism outcomes and puts other incarcerated people and correctional officers at risk of harm. At the same time, first-responding officers often have few practical alternatives to arrest when responding to mental health crisis calls. Co-responder models, which pair mental health professionals with officers to improve de-escalation and diversion to treatment at the point of arrest, show promise but are largely unstudied. NIJ has funded a formative process evaluation of the newly developed co-responder model known as the Intake Booking Diversion program.

## Law Enforcement Advancing Data and Science (LEADS) Program

NIJ continues to sponsor and expand the Law Enforcement Advancing Data and Science (LEADS) program. It supports the professional development of law enforcement officers and civilians who engage in research and champions the integration of proven policies and practices within and between agencies. NIJ LEADS scholars are pioneers in the evidence-based policing movement.

Through FY 2023, the LEADS program was supported as part of the NIJ-funded Criminal Justice Requirements and Resources Consortium. In FY 2023, NIJ released the solicitation [“Support for the Law Enforcement Advancing Data and Science Scholars Program”](#) for future support, which included the combined activities under the two previous awards. NIJ awarded \$1 million to:

- Implement a revised LEADS scholar application and review process.
- Support training, education, and professional development for LEADS scholars and their agencies.
- Facilitate professional connections, information sharing, and work dissemination.
- Expand visibility of the program in the field.

In FY 2023, NIJ supported 10 sworn law enforcement scholars, three civilian scholars, and three academic scholars.

### Sworn officers

- Captain Kevin Townsend, Riverside (California) Police Department
- Special Agent Erik Halvorson, U.S. Department of Energy (Colorado)
- Lieutenant Kimberly Alan, Madison (Wisconsin) Police Department



- Lieutenant Kelly Robbins, Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) Police Department
- Captain Ryan Manley, Fayetteville (North Carolina) Police Department
- Chief Philip Lukens, Alliance (Nebraska) Police Department
- Lieutenant Jennifer Mitsch, Cincinnati (Ohio) Police Department
- Assistant Chief Curtis Cheeks III, High Point (North Carolina) Police Department
- Lieutenant Andrew Graham, City of Tuttle (Oklahoma) Police Department
- Captain William White, Tulsa (Oklahoma) Police Department

#### **Civilians**

- Joe Treviño, criminalist III, New York City (New York) Police Department
- Leslie Taylor, program manager, Broward County (Florida) Sheriff's Office
- Ashleigh Wojslawowicz, research manager, Charleston County (South Carolina) Department of Public Safety

#### **Academics**

- Brandon del Pozo, assistant professor, Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University (Rhode Island)
- Ian Adams, assistant professor, University of South Carolina (South Carolina)
- Lisa Barao, assistant professor, Westfield State University (Massachusetts)

[Review bios of all the LEADS scholars.](#)

## **Advancing Effective, Accountable Policing and Criminal Justice Practices To Enhance Public Trust and Public Safety**

On May 25, 2022, President Biden signed [Executive Order 14074 — Advancing Effective, Accountable Policing and Criminal Justice Practices To Enhance Public Trust and Public Safety](#). In response to section 13(d), in FY 2023, NIJ provided \$650,000 to conduct a study of facial recognition technology, other technologies using biometric information, and predictive algorithms, with a particular focus on law enforcement's use of such practices. The study assesses how such technologies and algorithms are used and any privacy, civil rights, civil liberty, accuracy (including sensitivity and specificity), or disparate impact outcomes are related to their manner of use.

## **Responding to the Death in Custody Reporting Act**

NIJ is leading research to inform efforts to reduce deaths in custody pursuant to the [Death in Custody Reporting Act of 2013](#). To examine the link between agency policies and

practices and deaths in custody, NIJ commissioned two studies. The first study summarizes what is known from the research literature and available data and provides the foundation for additional information collection and analyses. The resulting report, [\*Literature Review and Data Analysis on Deaths in Custody\*](#), was transmitted to Congress in January 2023.

The second study is a multiyear national-level review and analysis of policies, practices, and available data addressing deaths in custody along with in-depth case studies at multiple sites and agency types. Researchers' interim report is pending release. This interim report describes findings from an environmental scan and secondary analyses of existing data, including what is known about arrest-related deaths, deaths that occur in jails and prisons, and the policies, programs, and practices that may reduce these deaths. The report also provides policy and practice recommendations to encourage action by agencies and other stakeholders to increase safety and reduce deaths.

In the second study's next phase, researchers are conducting 10 case studies with law enforcement agencies, jails, and prisons across the United States. Activities include interviews with key stakeholders, document reviews of policies and practices, and administrative data collection and review. Sites are selected based on volume and types of deaths, innovative programs or policies, reporting practices, and region of the country. The case studies will be combined with the interim report into a final report to Congress.

## Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grants

The FY 2023 appropriation for the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program included 268 Congressionally directed grants. Although OJP's Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) manages the JAG Program, the award and management of the congressionally directed grants are distributed to the OJP program office that best matches the grant's purpose to ensure the most efficient grant management. In FY 2023, NIJ was selected to manage two JAG grants because they include research and evaluation.

- **A Comprehensive/Holistic Public Safety Approach: Using Research, Analysis, and Evaluation of Problem Nature Codes in the City of Minneapolis for Alternative Response Development**  
NIJ awarded \$2.5 million for continued research, analysis, and evaluation of Problem Nature Codes. The work continues a comprehensive approach to public safety to ensure that law enforcement can prioritize response to public safety emergencies while building alternatives that require more specialized training and a more holistic community-based approach.
- **Data and Dashboards: Research and Enhancements To Ensure Mecklenburg County's Criminal Justice System Is a Leader in Data-Driven Decision Making**  
NIJ awarded \$1 million for data-driven decision-making, effective programming, and interagency collaboration to reduce criminal justice involvement and strengthen community well-being in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. A researcher-practitioner project will examine the county's trends in criminal offending and population change over several decades. The project will present a data-informed narrative that tells the story of past criminal trends and explains the nature of criminal offending in this community.

## NIJ Compliance Testing Program for Body Armor

The NIJ Compliance Testing Program (CTP) is a body armor certification program to ensure that the body armor purchased and used by U.S. law enforcement and correctional agencies performs according to minimum performance requirements to protect against common handgun and rifle threats. Since 2009 — when the NIJ CTP began accepting armor submissions — through September 30, 2023, over 1,900 unique models of ballistic-resistant body armor have been submitted for compliance testing.

Approximately 37.4% of the body armor models submitted for certification testing have failed to pass NIJ's performance standards. In FY 2023, 74 armor models were tested at the accredited ballistics laboratories recognized by NIJ; 38 models passed and 36 failed. These numbers are a sober reminder of how important it is to have performance standards like NIJ's and an effective quality assurance program like the NIJ CTP to keep officers safe.

Use of NIJ-certified body armor is ubiquitous among U.S. law enforcement and corrections agencies, and many agencies outside the United States use NIJ standards and NIJ-certified armor. Currently, the NIJ's Compliant Products List (CPL) includes over 400 models of ballistic-resistant body armor that meet NIJ's program requirements. Notably, BJA's Leahy Bulletproof Vest Partnership (BVP) requires that armor purchased by state and local agencies with BVP funds must be on the NIJ compliant list. Since 1999, BVP has awarded \$573 million in federal funds to more than 13,000 jurisdictions to purchase nearly 1.5 million vests.

Industry participation in the NIJ CTP is voluntary, although it is recognized by manufacturers as the standard in body armor quality assurance. At the end of 2023, the NIJ CTP had 80 participants worldwide, with 130 manufacturing facilities at 69 locations inside the continental United States and 61 locations outside it. The NIJ CTP also recognizes body armor quality management system requirements called BA 9000, which are optional quality assurance requirements to which manufacturers can choose to certify manufacturing locations. Currently, 17 BA 9000-certified manufacturing locations are operated by 16 NIJ CTP participants, representing 222 models (56%) of the CPL-listed ballistic resistant body armor.

To ensure that NIJ-certified body armor continues to perform as expected, the NIJ CTP conducts follow-up inspection and testing (FIT) including periodic retesting and inspection. If an armor unit fails testing, the NIJ CTP can issue an advisory notice to suspend it from NIJ's list or a safety notice to permanently remove the model. In FY 2023, the NIJ CTP issued advisory notices for 12 armor models and a safety notice for one model.

## Updating the NIJ Body Armor Standard

NIJ published its first performance standard for ballistic-resistant police body armor in 1972. In FY 2023, NIJ continued to develop *NIJ Standard 0101.06, Ballistic Resistance of Body Armor*. The [seventh revision, 0101.07](#), released in early FY 2024, includes improved test methods and procedures — particularly for body armor designed for female wearers. With the release of this standard, NIJ has updated the body armor protection levels that incorporate additional rifle threats faced by U.S. law enforcement. The updated protection levels are available in [Specification for NIJ Ballistic Protection Levels and Associated Test Threats, NIJ Standard 0123.00](#).

# Corrections and Reentry

Ensuring the care, support, and safety of adults and juveniles under correctional supervision is an essential component of a just and equitable system of justice. NIJ is committed to supporting research and evaluation on issues that have an impact on individuals under correctional supervision, corrections agencies and personnel, and people exiting correctional confinement, as well as the communities, institutions, and families to which they return.

## NIJ Support for Implementation of the First Step Act

NIJ continues to support the DOJ implementation of the First Step Act (FSA) of 2018. The FSA mandates the development and implementation of a risk and needs assessment system for use with each person in the custody of the Federal Bureau of Prisons (FBOP). In March 2023, NIJ released the report [2022 Review and Revalidation of the First Step Act Risk Assessment Tool](#), which documents the third statutorily mandated review and validation of the FBOP's risk assessment tool, the Prisoner Assessment Tool Targeting Estimated Risk and Needs (PATTERN). Findings will inform future improvements to the tool, along with measures to continue to mitigate any unintended biases.

Additionally, and with funding from FBOP, NIJ awarded a \$7.8 million contract for a comprehensive review of restrictive housing practices within the federal prison system. This assessment responds to the FSA, which requires “ongoing research and data analysis ... on evidence-based recidivism reduction programs.” ([See 18 U.S.C. § 3631 \(b\)\(3\)\(A\)-\(C\).](#)) Preliminary findings are expected in 2026.

## Research and Evaluation on Jails

In FY 2023, NIJ released the solicitation “[Research and Evaluation on Jails](#)” to inform efforts to improve outcomes for people confined to jails, their families, their communities, and jail personnel. NIJ requested proposals for rigorous research to examine all aspects of jail systems. Key priorities include:

- Improving reentry outcomes for people confined in jails and minimizing the negative impact of jail incarceration on the families of these individuals and their communities.
- Optimizing workforce development for jail personnel.
- Enhancing jail operations and practices.

Under this solicitation, NIJ funded three awards for a total of \$1.66 million. Of this amount, approximately \$600,000 in Second Chance Act funds were used to support the awards.

In one project, researchers will systematically evaluate the efficacy of money bail. Researchers will leverage a longstanding researcher-practitioner partnership with the Palm Beach County (Florida) Criminal Justice Commission, drawing on data from a randomized controlled trial, county- and state-level administrative statistics, and qualitative interviews.

In a second study, researchers will conduct a systematic, nationwide assessment of jail policies and practices focused solely on reentry and community engagement. The proposed 42-month study will provide the first nationally representative insight into the reentry policies and practices used by jails nationwide to assist people leaving jail incarceration, whether pretrial or post-sentence. Findings will provide foundational knowledge for the field and direction for future research.

In the third study, researchers will conduct a randomized controlled trial with 300 currently employed jail officers to evaluate HeartMath, a comprehensive resiliency-based intervention that is emotion-focused and designed to reduce stress and improve officer well-being. Researchers will partner with the Leon County Sheriff's Office in Tallahassee, Florida.

### Dissemination Highlight

#### ***The Overlooked Role of Jails in the Discussion of Legitimacy: Implications for Trust and Procedural Justice***

Correctional facilities are responsible for maintaining a safe and orderly environment. Jails in particular face unique challenges in fulfilling that goal because their populations are fluid and conditions can be relatively chaotic. For jail staff, a critical tool for maintaining safety and order is the legitimacy of the jail and its staff in the eyes of its population. Legitimacy, in this context, is an incarcerated individual's belief that officers are motivated to listen to and follow an agency's directives out of both a sense of responsibility to that agency and to its authority over the larger community.

[Learn more in an article by NIJ staff](#) that appeared in *Corrections Today*, the magazine of the American Correctional Association.

## Research and Evaluation on Correctional Culture and Climate

The fundamental mission of corrections agencies is to maintain a safe, humane, and secure environment for both staff and incarcerated individuals. To achieve that mission, agencies need to recruit and retain staff. They also need to promote and sustain improvements in their organizational cultures, operations, and programs. In late FY 2023, NIJ released the solicitation "[Research and Evaluation on Correctional Culture and Climate](#)" for projects that inform our understanding of the impact of agencies' culture and climate on achieving their mission.

Under this solicitation, NIJ made four awards for a total of \$3.6 million, \$1.4 million of which was transferred from the FBOP.

One project aims to expand understanding of how correctional culture and climate affect the well-being and safety of incarcerated people and staff — and to identify effective strategies for improving both. Researchers will conduct a mixed-methods evaluation of the climate fostered by prison-based dedicated housing units that blend therapeutic community and cognitive behavioral therapy principles. These cognitive communities try to create healthy prosocial cultures that foster personal growth and safe settings.

In a second project, researchers will study the impact of policy changes designed to improve officer wellness (i.e., alternative scheduling and revised disciplinary process) on a large correctional agency's culture and climate. The study will assess baseline culture and climate, conduct an implementation study to assess policy adoption, and examine the policies' impacts.

In a third project, researchers will conduct a process and impact evaluation of body-worn cameras (BWCs) on correctional culture and climate in five state prisons. Researchers will look at the steps for implementing BWCs, the cameras' effects on the correctional climate (as measured by staff and resident surveys and administrative data), and the cameras' influence on organizational processes and efficiencies (as measured by the time and resources expended to investigate uses of force and infractions).

Finally, in a fourth project, researchers will study the impact of correctional officer procedural justice training on facility climate in a jail setting. All deputies in a medium-sized jail will receive procedural justice training, but implementation will be phased to allow for random assignment. A random sample of half of the officers will receive the training a year before the remaining officers to allow the research team to assess the impact of the training.

Also in FY 2023, BJA released a [related solicitation](#) to provide training, technical assistance, and resources to correctional institutions in support of transforming prison cultures, climates, and spaces.

## Dissemination Highlights

### ***Expungement: Criminal Records as Reentry Barriers***

Research has long established that individuals reentering the community after completing their criminal sentences face immediate challenges such as unstable housing options and discouraging job prospects. These can pose significant barriers to successful reentry, in that poor prospects for stable housing and steady work heighten the risk of recidivism, fueling the cycle of justice system involvement.

Often overlooked, however, is the significant reentry barrier posed by an individual's criminal record. A permanent record can thwart efforts to address the other, seemingly more immediate, needs. Expunging a criminal record can open the door to a second chance. But even where the law allows and the justice system machinery enables some degree of criminal record clearing, barriers persist.

[Access the article.](#)

## Dissemination Highlights

### ***Five Things About Reentry***

Reentry is the process by which a person in correctional confinement prepares for release and transitions back into the community. The reentry process is a continuum that includes:

- ◆ Risk and needs assessment at intake.
- ◆ Programming, treatment, and educational attainment during incarceration.
- ◆ Case planning for release.
- ◆ Post-release supervision and reintegration.

It is essential to understand how research can inform each stage, increasing the odds that people returning home can successfully remain in their community.

[Learn more about what we know about reentry from decades of research.](#)

[Watch a short video of NIJ Director La Vigne discussing evidence-based strategies for successful reentry.](#)

### ***Assessing the Costs of Virtual Reality Job Interview Training in Prisons***

In an article in the *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, NIJ-funded researchers published their estimates on the cost of implementing Virtual Reality Job Interview Training (VR-JIT) in a prison. Researchers found VR-JIT may be an affordable tool, costing less than \$45 per person compared to at least \$1,400 per person for other prison educational programs.

[Access the article.](#)



# Administration of Justice

NIJ sponsors criminal court research and court-based program evaluations to identify tools, programs, and policies that meet criminal justice goals, including fair and equitable treatment of victims and defendants, public safety, and cost efficiency.

## Research and Evaluation on Sentencing and Resentencing

In FY 2023, NIJ released the solicitation “[Research and Evaluation on Sentencing and Resentencing](#)” to seek proposals for rigorous projects on the impact of sentencing and resentencing policies and prison release frameworks on individuals, communities, and public safety. NIJ made two awards for a total of \$1.03 million.

In one project, researchers will examine the impact of back-end prison release discretion on time served and prison population size. The project aims to understand the drivers of prison population growth over the 1980-2010 period and the more recent period of decline from 2010 through 2020. The research will focus on the relationship between back-end release discretion and time served, with a specific examination of prison release system features, such as parole release and good time accrual.

In the second project, researchers will examine the variation of resentencing and “second look” sentencing models, which allow for reevaluating a person’s sentence after a significant period of incarceration and determining if that sentence is still necessary or could be reduced. The researchers will assess the model’s use in five jurisdictions, with a focus on employing it for youth and emerging adults serving lengthy sentences. The project’s purpose is to better understand the resentencing decision process, the role of various parties in resentencing, and the factors that impact decision-making.

### Dissemination Highlight

#### ***Courtroom Communities: Criminal Case Processing and Sentencing Reform***

The “courtroom community” describes the entity within the court system responsible for implementing formal rules of operation and developing additional informal rules. Based on a theory of organizational dynamics, the courtroom community framework provides a better understanding of felony court decision-making, processing, and outcomes. In recent years, the concept has been used to analyze the implementation of sentencing guidelines, mandatory minimums, and highly punitive sentencing policies to better understand how court adaptation affects the outcomes of legal and policy changes. This *NIJ Journal* article highlights the critical need to consider the courtroom community when developing and implementing criminal justice reform.

[Access the article.](#)

## Engagement With the Office for Access to Justice — 60 Years After Gideon v. Wainright

In FY 2023, NIJ continued discussions with the DOJ's Office for Access to Justice (ATJ) to explore areas of mutual interest and potential collaboration. ATJ's mission is to ensure access to the promises and protections of our civil and criminal legal systems for all communities. ATJ is charged with the planning, development, and coordination of the implementation of access to justice policy initiatives of high priority to the DOJ and executive branch, including in the areas of criminal indigent defense and civil legal aid.

ATJ assisted NIJ in developing the FY 2023 solicitation “[Research and Evaluation on the Administration of Justice: Advancing Access to Justice 60 Years After Gideon](#),” under which NIJ funded two awards for a total of \$1.63 million.

In one project, researchers will work with Neighborhood Defender Service of Detroit and the Wayne County (Michigan) Indigent Defense Services Department to conduct a mixed-methods evaluation of Detroit's holistic defense model. Leveraging the existing random assignment of felony cases in Wayne County, the evaluation will estimate the causal impact of holistic practice.

In the other project, researchers will collect qualitative and quantitative data on indigent defense services in five jurisdictions that recently created a staffed public defender office or a managed assigned counsel program. These study sites include rural, suburban, and urban legal systems across four states. Researchers will look to answer three questions:

- Are ad hoc defense delivery systems more or less likely to provide indigent people with counsel than structured defense delivery systems such as defender offices and managed assigned counsel programs?
- Does replacing an ad hoc system with a structured system affect case outcomes, both for indigent defendants and all other criminal defendants in the local legal system?
- Are the changes associated with the introduction of structured defense delivery systems equally distributed across defendants with different demographic characteristics?

## Dissemination Highlight

### ***Gideon at 60: A Snapshot of State Public Defense Systems and Paths to System Reform***

*Gideon v. Wainwright* established the Sixth Amendment right to counsel for indigent persons charged with felonies in state courts, which was later extended to misdemeanors and delinquency proceedings in juvenile court. Researchers Marea Beeman and Claire Buetow conducted a national review of the public defense service models in state, local, and tribal adult trial-level criminal cases. The report addresses the prevalence of different models, factors contributing to how jurisdictions select models, and outcomes associated with each model. Findings are based on review and synthesis of publicly available material, including research reports, law review articles, government agency websites, and news accounts — as well as interviews with 17 subject matter experts.

[Access the report](#) and read “[60 years After Gideon v. Wainwright: Bridging the Gap in Access to Justice](#),” an op-ed by NIJ Director La Vigne and ATJ Director Rachel Rossi, which appeared in *The Hill*.

## **W.E.B. Du Bois Program of Research on Reducing Racial and Ethnic Disparities in the Justice System**

NIJ launched the W.E.B. Du Bois Program in 2000 to support quantitative and qualitative research that advances knowledge regarding the intersections of race, crime, violence, and the administration of justice. The program supported scholarly research until 2018, when the program was paused. NIJ was pleased to relaunch this program in late FY 2021. In FY 2023, NIJ funded three awards for a total of \$1.83 million under the solicitation “[W.E.B. Du Bois Program of Research on Reducing Racial and Ethnic Disparities in the Justice System](#).”

In one project, researchers will develop a method to assess the extent of bias in 911 call handling. The research team will include investigators with specialties in criminology, public health, nursing, linguistics, racial disparities, public policy, and social work. Through partnerships with those with lived experience on both sides of 911 calls, the team will develop audio vignettes based on real calls with varying key characteristics to serve as proxies to assess issues of disparity, discrimination, and bias. A second phase will explore intervention implementation and evaluation on a broader scale and the compounding of effects in encounters with the criminal justice system.

In the second project, researchers will conduct a five-year, mixed-methods process and outcome evaluation of Pennsylvania’s 8th Edition Sentencing Guidelines. The project’s goals include summarizing the change process preceding guideline implementation, assessing the guidelines’ impacts on sentencing outcomes and racial and ethnic disparities, and determining stakeholders’ perceptions of the guidelines and change processes.

The third project is a practitioner-researcher partnership that will include a multidisciplinary team of correctional practitioners; a diversity, equity, and inclusion advisory board comprised of social justice scholars and individuals who have experienced criminal justice involvement; and a national expert in objective prison classification. This team will collaborate with

the Massachusetts Department of Correction to examine the magnitude and drivers of racial and ethnic disparities in their Objective Point Base Classification System, facilitate system adjustments to reduce observed tool bias and disparities, and pilot adjustments to evaluate their differential (or equitable) impact on custody level placements and access to programming — both of which impact incarceration length.

[View the full list of W.E.B. Du Bois awardees.](#)

## Implementation of the Evidenced-Based Policymaking Act

In FY 2023, NIJ continued to support DOJ’s efforts to implement the [Foundations of Evidence-Based Policymaking Act \(Public Law 115 – 435\)](#). NIJ supports 15 of the 20 significant evaluations cited in the Department’s [FY 2024 Annual Evaluation Plan](#), which was developed in FY 2023. In addition:

- Angela Moore, an NIJ senior social science analyst, met regularly with the DOJ advisor for evaluation to inform DOJ’s implementation of the Act. Moore also represents NIJ on the Interagency Council on Evaluation Policy and the working group that is developing DOJ evaluation policy.
- NIJ scientists participated in DOJ’s FY 2024 Strategic Objective Review through which the Justice Management Division assesses progress toward achieving the [DOJ Strategic Plan: FYs 2022-2026](#) objectives.
- NIJ scientists helped develop [DOJ’s Learning Agenda](#), which addresses important evidence gaps related to the Department’s strategic goals. Former NIJ Social Science Analyst Yunsoo Park played a leading role in addressing the Learning Agenda questions “Which criminal justice processes and victim service programs are most effective in addressing the needs of crime victims across different settings or contexts? Which best address the needs of underserved and hard-to-reach communities? What are the barriers to accessing these programs, and do they disproportionately affect traditionally unserved/underserved populations?” Park also helped develop an implementation plan to address these questions while providing a template for the plan to address other Agenda questions.

## Tribal Crime and Justice

NIJ supports projects promoting activities between scientists and tribal governments or organizations that address criminal, juvenile, and tribal justice issues most relevant to tribal partners. By promoting engagement between researchers and tribal nations, citizens, and stakeholders, NIJ increases its capacity to conduct rigorous projects in Indian country and Alaska Native villages as well as other tribal communities and settings.

## Not Invisible Act Commission

NIJ staff served on the [Not Invisible Act of 2019 Commission](#), a cross-jurisdictional advisory committee composed of law enforcement, tribal leaders, federal partners, service providers, family members of missing and murdered individuals, and survivors. The commission made recommendations to:

- Improve intergovernmental coordination and establish best practices for state, tribal, and federal law enforcement.
- Bolster resources for survivors and victims' families.
- Combat the epidemic of missing persons, murder, and trafficking in American Indian and Alaska Native communities.

In FY 2023, the commission completed field hearings and subject matter expert engagements and drafted the report [Not One More: Findings and Recommendations of the Not Invisible Commission](#). The report was, as required by the statute, transmitted to the Department of Interior and DOJ for response on November 1, 2023.

NIJ's Christine Crossland, senior social science analyst, was the federal co-chair of the Commission's Subcommittee 2: Policies & Programs — Reporting and Collecting Data on Missing, Murdered, and Trafficked Persons.

[Read more about the Commission.](#)

## Support for Missing and Unidentified Native Americans and Alaska Natives

The [National Missing and Unidentified Persons System \(NamUs\)](#) offers powerful technology and forensic services to resolve missing and unidentified person cases. Through targeted outreach and awareness efforts, NIJ strives to ensure that tribal agencies and leaders are aware of NamUs. NamUs participated in several tribal engagements, providing training and technical assistance to users who may report, track, or update cases.

In one example, NamUs team members attended the 2023 DOJ Office on Violence Against Women's Tribal Consultation held in Tulsa, Oklahoma, August 8-10, 2023, to hear testimony from tribal leaders and their representatives. The NamUs case specialist did a lunchtime overview presentation about NamUs and the services it offers.

NamUs also supported tribal communities through participation in tribal-related events and trainings, including:

- U.S. Attorney's Office Southern District, California, Savanna's Act Forum
- Gila River Indian Community Missing Persons Identification Project

In addition, the NamUs program provided an overview of its services to:

- 1st Annual United States Indian Police Academy Instruction and Training for Tribal and Bureau of Indian Affairs Law Enforcement
- 25th Navajo Nation Council Health, Education & Human Services Committee Meeting
- 18th Annual Government-to-Government Tribal Consultation

In addition to the support and services that the NamUs team provides, the database also tracks cases that involve American Indian/Alaska Native case data. In FY 2023, there were:

- 255 missing persons cases created.
  - In 44 percent (112) of those cases, the missing person was enrolled in or affiliated with a tribe.
  - In 23 percent (57) of those cases, the missing person's primary residence was on tribal land.
  - In 26 percent (66) of those cases, the person went missing from tribal lands.
- 35 unidentified persons cases created.
  - In 25 percent (9) of those cases, the unidentified person was found on tribal land.
- 11 unclaimed persons cases created.
  - In 1 case, the unclaimed person was found on tribal land.

This data includes cases in which American Indian/Alaska Native is selected singularly or in any combination in race/ethnicity within Missing or Unclaimed Person entries, and singularly or in combination with up to three other race/ethnicities selected within Unidentified Person entries.

## Dissemination Highlight

### ***Missing Native American Persons: Nebraska Study Details Scope of Problem, Urges Culturally Sensitive Research and Better Access to Justice***

For law enforcement, social service agencies, and families, identifying and finding missing persons is challenging. The difficulties may be exacerbated among Native American communities by jurisdictional issues and the lack of policies and coordination between tribal and nontribal law enforcement agencies — as well as racial misclassification when entering the cases into databases.

NIJ-funded researchers analyzed data on reported missing persons cases in Nebraska, identified the prevalence and context of missing Native American persons, and engaged Native American communities directly in missing persons research and solutions. Engaging Native American community members and leaders in research is a critical component of involving these communities in addressing the persistently high percentage of missing Native American women and children. This Nebraska study could light the way for other states with significant Native American populations to examine the scope and nature of the issue and articulate possible partnership-driven solutions.

[Access the article.](#)



# Forensic Science

Forensic science is the application of sciences such as physics, chemistry, biology, computer science, and engineering to matters of law. NIJ's forensic science research and development program supports basic and applied research as well as technology development and seeks to enhance and expand forensic methods and increase the knowledge to guide forensic science policy and practice.

## Dissemination Highlight

### ***Podcast: Building More Reliable Forensic Sciences***

The scientific basis for several aspects of forensic evidence was first questioned by the 2009 report [\*Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States: A Path Forward\*](#), which had an immediate impact on law enforcement, crime labs, courtrooms, and the broader scientific community.

David Stoney, chief scientist and head of Stoney Forensic in Chantilly, Virginia, and Greg Dutton, program manager and physical scientist with NIJ, discuss the concerted effort in many fields — ballistics, trace evidence, fingerprints, and more — to improve the science underlying forensic evidence in the wake of the 2009 report.

[Access the two-part podcast.](#)

## Research and Development in Forensic Science for Criminal Justice Purposes

In FY 2023, NIJ released the research solicitation “[Research and Development in Forensic Science for Criminal Justice Purposes](#).” It sought proposals for rigorous basic and applied research and development projects. It invited discrete, specific, and circumscribed projects that increase knowledge to guide and inform forensic science policy and practice or lead to the production of useful materials, devices, systems, or methods with potential forensic applications.

Under this solicitation, NIJ granted 32 awards totaling \$15.4 million, \$9 million of which was transferred from BJA. The following are summaries of four of those awards ([see the full list of awards on NIJ.ojp.gov](#)):

■ **Developmental Validation of a Novel Multi-Analyte Recovery Method for Trace Biological Samples**

There is an urgent need for the ability to recover multiple substances from trace biological samples, which requires forensic scientists to target and analyze an entire suite of molecular substances of interest simultaneously, extracting DNA without destroying other vital trace substances. While short tandem repeat genotyping determines an individual's DNA profile, a DNA profile can also be obtained by analyzing messenger RNA or proteins from body fluids, and the analysis of drug metabolites can help determine cause of death and time since death. This award builds on prior NIJ-funded research to develop a novel method for highly efficient recovery of DNA and RNA from trace biological samples that is also nondestructive to proteins and metabolites. This project will validate the new method according to the Scientific Working Group's guidelines on DNA Analysis Methods. The proposal team will work with forensic science practitioners to ensure new protocols align with existing workflows.

■ **Quantifying the Strength of Support in Fingerprint Casework Comparisons**

Latent print examiners report their conclusions about whether a pair of fingerprints originated from the same source in broad categories: source identification, source exclusion, or inconclusive. Recent research has shown a mismatch between reported conclusions and the actual strength of the evidence, potentially leading to overstatement. This project seeks to quantify the strength of support, in terms of a likelihood ratio, for latent print comparisons across the range of conclusions. The researchers will calibrate the conclusion scale against the distribution of examiners' responses to benchmarks so that the method could be adopted into casework and generalized to other forensic pattern comparison disciplines.

■ **Mechanics of Retinal Hemorrhage in Abusive Head Trauma**

Pediatric abusive head trauma cases account for one-third of all child abuse deaths yet are among the most challenging to investigate. Both abusive and accidental head trauma can cause injuries such as retinal hemorrhage. By investigating the mechanics of retinal hemorrhage, this project will quantify the forces that cause such trauma, providing a foundation to differentiate accidental versus intentional damage.

■ **An Image Analysis Framework for Objective Color Interpretation of Seized Drug Tests**

Color testing continues to be the most common seized drug screening method, providing the advantages of low cost, rapid results, and simple visual interpretation. However, limitations from human factors, interferences, and manual interpretation and recording of results often lead to user error and unreliable results. This project will use a software platform for image processing and objective color interpretation. This will produce more reliable results by decreasing variability from human factor considerations that may impact interpretation and subjectivity, and it will permit the storage of data for traceability, recall, and review while requiring minimal changes to current workflows.

## Dissemination Highlights

### ***Podcast: To Catch a Drug***

NIJ Physical Scientist Frances Scott discusses novel psychoactive substances. She describes what they are, explores current research in the field, and explains the research's practical impact for law enforcement and policymakers.

[Access the podcast.](#)

### ***Fast Screening of Gunshot Residue Aims To Modernize Practice***

Analysis of gunshot residue can provide valuable investigative information. But traditional methods of detection present persistent concerns regarding the speed of analysis, the accuracy of results, and applicability to new ammunition types. There is a critical need to develop methods that can improve the speed and accuracy of gunshot residue testing. Gunshot residue comprises organic and inorganic components, but current methods using scanning electron microscopy and energy dispersive spectroscopy only analyze the inorganic components and require expensive laboratory instrumentation and hours to scan a single sample.

NIJ-supported researchers found that two screening techniques — electrochemical detection and laser-induced breakdown spectroscopy — were quicker than current tests, identifying both organic and inorganic residues with 92%-99% accuracy. Moreover, the techniques are practically nondestructive of the samples, allowing follow-up validation with confirmatory techniques.

[Access the article.](#)

### ***The Emerging Field of Firearms Audio Forensic Science***

Professor Robert Maher received a cold call asking if he could match a gun that was allegedly used in a crime to an audio recording of a gunshot from the crime scene. From his desk at his Montana State University office, his initial reaction was “I really don’t think that is possible.” But after hanging up, he considered what he had read and realized there was not enough data to answer that question properly. We just don’t know if it is possible. Thus began his research into gunshot acoustics that has spanned eight years and three NIJ grants. This article discusses Maher’s work in firearms audio forensic science.

[Access the article.](#)

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

In FY 2023, NIJ released the solicitation “[Research and Evaluation for the Testing and Interpretation of Physical Evidence in Publicly Funded Forensic Laboratories](#)” to invite applications for studies to produce practical knowledge that can improve physical evidence examination and interpretation in forensic science laboratories.

NIJ funded the following five awards for a total of \$1.93 million, \$1 million of which was transferred from BJA:

### ■ [Evaluation of the Luxon Ion Source for Rapid Screening in Forensic Laboratories](#)

Forensic toxicology laboratories are facing increased workloads with new and ever-changing drugs in samples, but funding and workforce numbers are not keeping up. Labs can improve efficiency by implementing new technology such as direct mass spectrometry for drug screening. This project will evaluate one type of direct mass spectrometry, the Luxon Ion Source®, on its ability to meet community standards. In collaboration with the North Carolina State Crime Laboratory, researchers will analyze case samples to compare workflows for time, cost-efficiency, and screening and confirmation results.

### ■ [Analytical Challenges With Proliferating THC Analogues](#)

Lab-created THC analogs — close cousins to the original drug — are easily created from CBD and delta-9 THC. The biomarkers for these analogs, which would indicate exposure and use, are unknown. In conjunction with the Washington, D.C., Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, researchers will assess presumptive testing interferences of emerging THC analogs and validate a method to confirm and quantify their presence. Expected outcomes include:

- Understanding drug testing interferences in presumptive analyses.
- Identifying emerging analogs through monitoring of commercial e-liquids.
- Developing an analytical method for emerging THC analogs for public health and public safety stakeholders.

### ■ [Pivoting Headspace Ethanol Analysis To Accommodate Modern Day Scenarios](#)

Forensic science laboratories have used helium, a nonrenewable gas, as a carrier gas for gas chromatography, including blood alcohol analysis — arguably the most common analytical test requested in forensic toxicology laboratories. A global helium crisis has significantly impacted its availability, leaving laboratories scrambling to find alternative approaches. This project will develop and validate two helium-free methods for blood alcohol analysis and compare them to existing helium methodologies.

■ **New Age Therapeutics: Development and Validation of an Analytical Workflow for the Analysis of Psychedelics in Biological Matrices**

Depression affects over 264 million individuals worldwide. Since 2018, researchers have made advancements in new treatments, including medicinal applications of psychedelics, for treatment-resistant depression. In response, legislatures are addressing reforms regarding psychedelic compounds, including medical applications, decriminalization, and legalization. Legislative changes may require forensic laboratories to develop and validate new analytical workflows to identify and quantify these psychedelic compounds for cases of driving under the influence of drugs and for post-mortems. Researchers will develop and validate a workflow in whole blood and other biological matrices and investigate the stability and prevalence of these psychedelic compounds.

■ **Study of Factors Influencing Mass Spectral Data Comparison**

Forensic laboratories' capacity to identify seized drugs is considered a mature discipline. However, standardizing data interpretation across laboratories is an ongoing effort. Analytical techniques, like gas chromatography-mass spectrometry — frequently used in seized-drugs analysis — involve subjective interpretation of the data, introducing variability in the findings. This study aims to understand trained analysts' decision-making processes and help establish standardization for data comparison. Using a survey and eye-tracking technology, the researchers will investigate analysts' priorities when comparing data, analyze whether a focus on specific spectral characteristics allows more or less accuracy, and identify factors affecting quality determination. The outcomes will help ensure consistent and standardized practices across forensic laboratories and provide an empirical basis for drafting standards for comparison and acceptance criteria.

[See the full list of awards made under this program since FY 2014.](#)

## Forensic Technology Center of Excellence

NIJ's Forensic Technology Center of Excellence is an established leader in the advancement of forensic science. Its expertise in forensic science, combined with its objectivity and ability to include representatives from justice program stakeholders nationwide, allows the center to deliver practical and valuable solutions to the forensic science community, thereby bridging the gap between researchers and practitioners. In FY 2023, NIJ provided an additional \$2.2 million to support this work.

In FY 2023, the center hosted 20 [webinars](#) and released 20 episodes of the [JustScience podcast](#), six [publications](#), new entries to the [Scene Investigation Video Vignettes](#), and updates to the [Trace Evidence Collection Mobile App](#).

See the [2023 Forensic Technology Center of Excellence's Annual Metrics Report](#) and Infographic to learn more about the center's accomplishments.

## Research Forensic Library

Forensic science practitioners cannot always access the latest scientific research literature. In FY 2023, NIJ awarded \$300,000 in supplemental funding to support the continued development and operation of the [Research Forensic Library](#), a national service to identify and make available open-access scholarly literature relevant to the forensic science research and practitioner communities. This funding will help:

- Maintain an online library infrastructure to support the identification and management of research publications, citations, databases, foundational literature, reference materials, and other primary and secondary source materials.
- Identify and implement ways to disseminate research findings and best practices, providing access to forensic science and other scientific literature.

## Center for Advanced Research in Forensic Science

The Center for Advanced Research in Forensic Science, funded by the National Science Foundation and NIJ, conducts interdisciplinary and innovative research to address the needs of the forensic science laboratory community. The center brings leaders together in state-of-the-art research laboratories, specialized facilities, and institutes across the nation to solve forensic science's most complex problems.

[Learn more about the center.](#)

# Supporting Victims of Crime

NIJ's research continues to support victims' rights, identify evidence-based practices to prevent revictimization, and develop and disseminate essential victims' resources, including evaluation of the services and programs designed to meet their needs.

## Research and Evaluation of Services for Victims of Crime

In collaboration with the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), NIJ released the FY 2023 solicitation "[Research and Evaluation of Services for Victims of Crime](#)," seeking proposals in three areas:

- Evaluation of programs that provide services for victims of crime.
- Research on supporting victims of community violence.
- Research on the financial costs of crime victimization.

NIJ awarded \$659,300, which was transferred from OVC, for an outcome evaluation of the Houston (Texas) Police Department's Domestic Abuse Response Team. Many law enforcement agencies nationwide have started to introduce co-responder models for addressing intimate partner violence and connecting victims with support and services. Although this approach has increased in popularity, little is known about its effectiveness in reducing revictimization and the escalation of violence or increasing service utilization. The study is a two-phased implementation and fidelity assessment and outcome evaluation of an innovative co-responder program implemented by the Houston Police Department in 2021.

### Dissemination Highlight

#### ***Evaluating Victim Services Text and Chat Hotlines: Technology Helps Reach Underserved Populations***

Chat and text lines can be lifelines for victims of crime and trauma. For a Texas program in a community with a large, underserved Latino population, chat lines and text lines show promise for helping more clients in more ways than conventional phone hotlines alone. In an ongoing, multiphase study, researchers are assessing how the program has helped victims.

In FY 2023, NIJ published an article detailing how an NIJ-funded research team is evaluating SAFeline, a program that delivers services to victims of sexual assault and exploitation, intimate partner violence, human trafficking, and child abuse and neglect. In the study's first phase, researchers found that more than 5 out of 6 users of the SAFeline chat and text services reported they were helpful (84.1%). Similar numbers of users reported that hotline staff were knowledgeable about community-based resources (85.3%) and shared that they were satisfied with the amount of time hotline staff spent chatting or texting with them (82.9%).

[Access the article.](#)



## Dissemination Highlight

### ***Helping Crime Victim Legal Clinics Help Their Clients by Defining and Measuring for Successful Outcomes***

We know lawyers can help victims of crime, but we're still learning what successful legal victim representation looks like in various cases.

New research supported by NIJ identifies a model process to help victim legal clinics refine their operations to best help clients. The study also offers a roadmap for evaluating whether and how case outcomes benefit their clients in meaningful ways.

[Learn more in an article published by NIJ.](#)

### **Meeting the Ongoing, Urgent, Unmet Needs of Uvalde Residents After the Robb Elementary School Shooting**

In FY 2023, NIJ provided \$1 million, which was transferred from OVC, to complete the third phase of a research program to identify and address the unfulfilled needs of the victims of the Robb Elementary School shooting. Researchers will apply the knowledge to better inform responses by community officials following future incidents, both in Uvalde and nationwide.

# Juvenile Justice

NIJ collaborates closely with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) to support high-quality, rigorous research, evaluations, and statistical analyses related to juvenile justice and the prevention of and responses to juvenile delinquency and victimization. This research provides information about the risk and protective factors that contribute to or deter a youth's involvement in the juvenile justice system. It also helps the field understand adolescent behaviors, system responses, and the interventions that are most likely to promote positive youth outcomes.

## Research on Juvenile Justice Topics

In FY 2023, and in collaboration with OJJDP, NIJ released the solicitation “[Research on Juvenile Justice Topics](#),” inviting proposals for studies to advance understanding in three priority areas:

- Research and evaluation of legislative and administrative policy changes affecting youth involved in the justice system.
- Research to assess dual-system youth data capacity and service delivery across juvenile justice and child welfare systems.
- Analysis of the valid court order exception.

NIJ funded three projects in FY 2023 for a total of \$3.86 million, which was transferred from OJJDP. Under these awards, researchers will:

- Build on the work and recommendations of the OJJDP-funded Dual Status Youth Design Study to produce in-depth assessments of child welfare and juvenile justice system and data structures and capacity across the nation. They will analyze best practices for improving experiences and outcomes among youth who come in contact with both systems.
- Evaluate the implementation and initial impact of a community-led, countywide pre-arrest juvenile diversion initiative — Caring Connections for Youth — intended to reduce disparities between Black and white youth referred to the juvenile justice system.
- Examine the impact of Oklahoma's legislative and administrative juvenile justice policy reforms that led to a system of community-based alternative services to youth incarceration with a focus on high-risk youth who have traditionally been held in secure facilities.

## Dissemination Highlight

### ***Juvenile Recidivism: An Examination of State Measurement Strategies***

In the *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, NIJ-funded researchers published findings from a study that combined reviews of state publications and statutes with communications with juvenile justice agency representatives to create an updated accounting of current practices for measuring reoffending by youth. There remain wide variations in the type of system contact assessed and the follow-up period used. Continued improvements in measurement will enable stakeholders to better compare across systems, programs, and states.

[Access the article.](#)

## National Juvenile Justice Data Analysis Program

NIJ manages the National Juvenile Data Analysis Program in partnership with OJJDP. The program conducts secondary analysis of existing datasets, produces empirical information on juvenile justice topics, and disseminates that information to diverse audiences in various formats. While NIJ did not provide additional funding in FY 2023, the program continues to manage the OJJDP statistical briefing book and other statistical publications.

## Dissemination Highlight

### ***Juvenile Court Statistics, 2020***

This publication, published in partnership with OJJDP and produced under an award for administration of the National Juvenile Court Data Archive, provides an overview of 2020's juvenile court statistics and includes national estimates of:

- Delinquency cases, detailing counts and trends, case rates, age at referral, gender, and race.
- Delinquency case processing, detailing information on referral, detention, intake decision, waiver, adjudication, dispositions for out-of-home placement and probation, and case processing by various categories.
- Petitioned status offense cases, with information on counts and trends, case rates, age at referral, gender, race, source of referral, detention, adjudication, dispositions, and case processing.

[Access the report.](#)

## Dissemination Highlight

### ***Statistical Briefing Book***

OJJDP's Statistical Briefing Book is funded under the National Juvenile Justice Data Analysis Program and provides online information about offending by and against youth and about youth involved in the juvenile justice system. It provides timely and reliable statistical answers to the most frequently asked questions from policymakers, the media, and the public.

[Explore the Statistical Briefing Book.](#)

## Youth Mentoring Research and Evaluation

NIJ's FY 2023 solicitation "[Youth Mentoring Research and Evaluation](#)" invited proposals for rigorous research and evaluation on youth mentoring programs to address two priority areas: barriers for justice-involved youth in accessing mentoring services and mentoring programs that serve such youth.

NIJ funded two awards for a total of \$2.25 million, which was transferred from OJJDP.

In one project, researchers will conduct a participatory mixed-methods policy assessment and implementation and outcome evaluation of four geographically and socio-politically diverse credible messenger mentoring programs. Researchers will evaluate political and social factors, program implementation, and immediate and intermediate outcomes for youth who are mentored in schools, communities, and detention facilities.

In the other project, researchers will partner with Credible Messenger Mentoring Movement (CM3), a nonprofit organization that reviews and refines practices that enable their mentors and the community-based organizations that employ and support them to effectively carry out the CM3 model. The project has three complementary goals:

- Strengthen CM3's mechanisms to identify, support, and build the capacity of CM3 mentors.
- Generate evidence to inform CM3's evolving logic model, theory of change, implementation guide, and the practices of other credible messenger mentor programs with similar target populations.
- Develop data collection guidelines and instruments.

## National Study Examining Interpersonal Violence Experienced by Young Adults

In FY 2023, NIJ sought proposals for a nationally representative, longitudinal study examining long-term trajectories of risk for, experiences with, and recovery after experiencing interpersonal violence among young adults who do and do not attend college. Under the solicitation “[National Study Examining Interpersonal Violence Experienced by Young Adults](#),” NIJ made one award for \$1 million, \$500 thousand of which was transferred from OVC. Researchers will examine the extent and consequences of interpersonal violence among college-aged persons, particularly the differences between those who do and do not attend college in terms of the victimizations they experience and the violence they perpetrate.

## Longitudinal Research on Delinquency and Crime

In FY 2023, NIJ provided \$1.37 million to extend data collection for the Rochester Youth Development Study and its intergenerational extension, the Rochester Intergenerational Study. These data collections have produced numerous works on risk and protective factors for delinquency and offending. However, the richness of these data has not been fully tapped. Additional data collection efforts can enable a more thorough understanding of these factors across the life course, with direct implications for prevention and interventions.

# Improving the Criminal and Juvenile Justice Systems

## National Missing and Unidentified Persons System

The National Missing and Unidentified Persons System ([NamUs](#)) is a national information repository that assists state and local law enforcement, medical examiners and coroners, allied professionals, and the public with resolving missing, unidentified, and unclaimed persons cases. It is a web-based system that provides resources at no cost. NamUs also provides DNA analysis services to coroners and medical examiners to aid in the identification of persons. Through a partnership with the FBI, NamUs has used fingerprints to help identify numerous previously unidentified persons nationwide.

NamUs has criminal justice users in all 50 states and is a collaborative system that bridges the communication gap among stakeholder communities to foster enhanced information-sharing and case support. As of September 2023, NamUs housed over 54,000 missing, unidentified, and unclaimed persons cases. More than 37,000 cases housed in NamUs have been resolved.

Through targeted outreach, NIJ strives to ensure that tribal agencies and leaders are aware of and understand how to use NamUs. Learn more in the “[Support for Missing and Unidentified Native Americans and Alaska Natives](#)” section.

In FY 2023, NIJ provided an additional \$5.5 million to continue operation of NamUs, \$2.4 million of which was transferred from BJA.

## CrimeSolutions

[CrimeSolutions](#) is a repository of research evidence to help practitioners and policymakers. It assists in practical decision-making and program implementation by gathering information on justice-related programs and practices and reviewing evaluations and meta-analyses according to standard criteria. Program and practices rated and posted by CrimeSolutions also populate the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention’s [Model Programs Guide](#) and [National Mentoring Resource Center](#).

In FY 2023, 34 programs and six practices received ratings based on a CrimeSolutions review.

Reviews and ratings are performed under a contract. In FY 2023, both NIJ and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention provided funding to the CrimeSolutions program (\$570,000 and \$450,000, respectively).

## Criminal Justice Requirements and Resources Consortium

In FY 2018, NIJ funded the Criminal Justice Requirements and Resources Consortium to help drive innovation in criminal justice research by informing practitioners, policymakers, industry providers, federal agencies, and NIJ of emerging problems and opportunities.

Recognizing that research innovation also comes from within criminal justice agencies, the consortium continued supporting the Law Enforcement Advancing Data and Science (LEADS) program in FY 2023. [Learn more about LEADS in the Law Enforcement and Policing](#) section.

While NIJ did not provide additional funding in FY 2023, the consortium continued its work using prior year funds.

In FY 2023, the consortium published four reports:

- [Reducing Deaths in Law Enforcement Custody: Identifying High-Priority Needs for the Criminal Justice System](#)
- [Cryptocurrency and Blockchain Needs for Law Enforcement](#)
- [Improving Employment Outcomes for the Federal Bureau of Prisons' Returning Citizens](#)
- [Indigent Defense Environmental Scan](#)

The consortium held seven workshops in FY 2023, which typically yield final published reports within a year:

- Reducing Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Technical Violations of Supervision, October 2022
- Using Data and Data Management in Law Enforcement, April 2023
- Drones: Countering an Emerging Threat to Correctional Security, April 2023
- Alternatives to Youth Incarceration, June 2023
- Police Response to Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, July 2023
- Improving the Identification of and Response to Victims of Elder Mistreatment, August 2023
- Incorporating Lived Experience to Improve Community Supervision Outcomes, August 2023



## Criminal Justice Testing and Evaluation Consortium

The Criminal Justice Testing and Evaluation Consortium (CJTEC) uses research-based methodologies to enhance the capabilities of law enforcement, courts, and corrections agencies. It acts as an honest broker for criminal justice practitioners, providing objective and rigorous testing and evaluation of technologies, policies, and practices.

In FY 2023, NIJ provided \$3.5 million for continued support of these activities under the competitive solicitation “[Criminal Justice Technology Testing and Evaluation Center](#).”

In FY 2023, CJTEC published the following reports:

- [Contraband and Drones in Correctional Facilities](#)
- [A Landscape Report on Measuring Community Sentiment and Perceptions of Safety and Law Enforcement Performance](#)
- [Monitoring Technologies for Community Supervision](#)
- [Alcohol and Drug Monitoring for Community Supervision](#)
- [Location Tracking Systems for Community Supervision](#)
- [Smartphone Applications for Community Supervision](#)

CJTEC also administers [NIJ’s compliance testing and standards development programs](#).

# Building the Nation's Criminal Justice Research Infrastructure

In FY 2023, NIJ continued to develop the infrastructure necessary to build and sustain research that advances forensic science methods. NIJ is committed to providing the latest in NIJ-funded research findings and data to enable the research community to advance forensic methodologies and technologies and nurture the next generation of researchers that will move the field forward.

## National Criminal Justice Reference Service

Established in 1972, the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS) is a federally funded resource offering justice- and drug-related information to support research, policy, and program development worldwide. NIJ and the other components of OJP contribute funding to administer NCJRS and submit resources to the collection.

In FY 2023, [1,236 NIJ-funded resources were added to NCJRS](#).

## National Archive of Criminal Justice Data

The National Archive of Criminal Justice Data (NACJD) facilitates and encourages research in criminal justice through the sharing of data resources. NACJD provides computer-readable data for the study of crime and the criminal justice system, technical assistance in selecting both data collections and the computer hardware and software for effective data analysis, and training in quantitative social science research to facilitate secondary analysis of criminal justice data.

NACJD routinely receives statistical data from DOJ agencies, including BJS, NIJ, OJJDP, and the FBI.

In FY 2023, NACJD added 73 NIJ-supported entries to the database. [Access a list of all datasets from NIJ-funded research](#).

This work is funded under an interagency agreement that is managed by BJS. In FY 2023, NIJ provided \$1.2 million to that award.

## Center for Enhancing Research Capacity at Minority Serving Institutions

NIJ is dedicated to building and enhancing research capacity across disciplines and encouraging research collaborations with scholars at minority serving institutions. In late FY 2023, NIJ released a solicitation, “[Center for Enhancing Research Capacity \(CERC\) at Minority Serving Institutions \(MSIs\)](#),” that sought applications for the development, operation, and management of a center to enhance research capacity in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) — including the social and behavioral sciences — in

minority serving institutes. The purpose is to better address the challenges of promoting public safety and equitable justice for all.

The center will:

- Build and enhance research infrastructure across disciplines.
- Encourage research collaborations with scholars.
- Enable and support research and development.
- Strengthen sustainability and continuity.

NIJ will make awards under this solicitation in FY 2024.

## NIJ Graduate Research Fellowship Program

In FY 2023, NIJ brought back the Graduate Research Fellowship Program after a two-year hiatus. It supports doctoral students engaged in research that advances NIJ’s mission, with the goal of increasing the pool of scholars engaging in research that addresses the challenges of U.S. crime and justice, particularly at the state and local levels.

NIJ made 24 awards for a total of \$2.62 million under the “[Graduate Research Fellowship](#)” solicitation, \$367,000 of which was transferred from OJJDP and \$283,000 from OVC.

[See a list of all awards made under this program since 2000.](#)

### Dissemination Highlight

#### ***Podcast: A Leg Up: NIJ’s Graduate Research Fellowship Program***

NIJ Director Nancy La Vigne joins the Justice Today podcast to interview Dr. Marie Garcia, director of NIJ’s Office of Criminal Justice Systems and a former NIJ graduate research fellow. They discuss the application process, Marie’s experience as a fellow while at Temple University, and advice for future applicants.

[Access the podcast.](#)

## Research Assistantship Program

The [NIJ Research Assistantship Program](#) offers highly qualified doctoral students the opportunity to work across NIJ offices and program areas and obtain practical, applied research experience. Through this research-focused professional development opportunity, NIJ provides funds to the students’ home universities for compensation, training, and other professional development expenses. NIJ welcomes applicants from all academic disciplines who wish to connect their research to the criminal justice field. This unique assistantship helps scholars learn and contribute to the breadth and depth of NIJ’s science research.

In 2023, NIJ provided \$295,000 for this program and welcomed two new research assistants.

## Science and Technology Policy Fellows

One of NIJ's goals is to increase the number of scientists who understand crime and justice challenges and engage in related research. The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Science and Technology Policy Fellowship program helps NIJ accomplish that goal. In FY 2023, NIJ provided \$300,000 to support a second year for two AAAS fellows to work with NIJ.

## Support for the Committee on Law and Justice of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine

NIJ has long supported the Committee on Law and Justice of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. In FY 2023, NIJ awarded the National Academies \$250,000 to continue their work informing public policy interventions that:

- Support the fair and impartial administration of justice for all Americans.
- Restore trust in the justice system.
- Support the reduction of crime and recidivism.

The committee will provide NIJ with a continuous mechanism for objective, transparent, and rigorous processes to sort through scientific issues and controversies associated with criminal justice policies, programs, and practices.

## Graduate Research Internships in Forensic Science and Criminal Justice Contexts

In FY 2023, NIJ joined the National Science Foundation's new effort to strengthen the STEM workforce and support criminal justice research. The agencies invited proposals under the NSF-NIJ INTERN program, which allows graduate students to explore nonacademic research internships in forensic science and other criminal justice fields. The internships offer students experiential training in professional environments beyond most academic programs, while giving potential employers access to future STEM talent.

[Learn more about the program.](#)

# Highlights of Dissemination

NIJ accomplishes our mission through the “Listen, Learn, Inform” model — we “listen” to the needs of the field; “learn” ways to meet those needs by funding research, development, and evaluation projects; and then “inform” the field of what we learned. NIJ informs the field through development of publications and other products to give policymakers and practitioners the best available evidence to make decisions and build knowledge that advances both science and practice.

## Articles and Publications

The *NIJ Journal* features articles to help criminal justice policymakers and practitioners stay informed about new developments. It presents research-based information that can help policy decisions, improve public safety, and promote the efficient and equitable administration of justice. In 2023, NIJ published [Issue No. 284](#), which focused on justice systems.

NIJ regularly publishes [articles](#) that summarize the results of completed research projects spanning the social, physical, and forensic sciences, communicating findings to practitioners and policymakers. In 2023, NIJ released 20 articles.

NIJ also places articles in prominent trade magazines that serve critical audiences. In 2023, NIJ placed 12 articles in trade association publications.

NIJ also produced a variety of publications and other reports, along with videos ranging from short interviews to recorded webinars.

In FY 2023, work funded in whole or in part by NIJ resulted in the publication of 403 scholarly products, including peer-reviewed articles by NIJ grantees. Scholars cited NIJ-funded products in peer-reviewed journals 6,774 times.

## Podcasts

OJP’s *Justice Today* podcast explores cutting-edge research and practices and offers an in-depth look at what OJP components are doing to meet today’s biggest public safety challenges. In FY 2023, NIJ contributed 15 episodes.

Science is at the heart of justice, and NIJ fosters and disseminates knowledge and tools derived from objective and rigorous research to inform efforts to promote safety and advance justice. In the podcast episodes below, NIJ scientists describe how research impacts criminal justice.

- The Role of Mass and Social Media in Radicalization to Extremism
- Shedding Light on Assault
- Driving Down Gun Violence, Parts 1 and 2

- To Catch a Drug
- Building More Reliable Forensic Sciences, Parts 1 and 2
- Defining and Studying Elder Abuse Polyvictimization
- Estimating Age of Death from Subadult Remains, Parts 1 and 2
- Understanding, Preventing, and Responding to Human Trafficking
- A Leg Up: NIJ's Graduate Research Fellowship Program
- Vaping: It's Not What You Think
- Progressing From Evidence to Action
- Meeting People Where They Are To Improve Institutional Culture

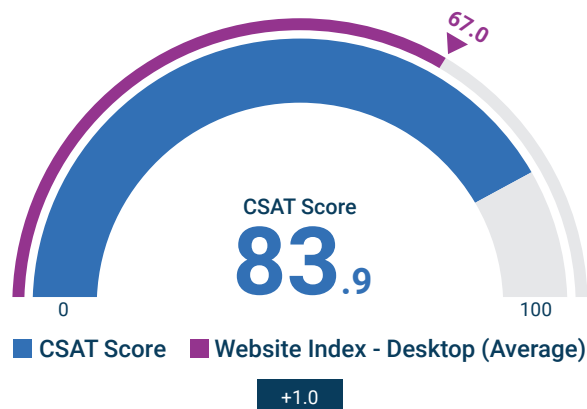
[Access these and all Justice Today episodes contributed by NIJ.](#)

## NIJ.ojp.gov: Tracking Customer Satisfaction

Executive Order 12862 “Setting Customer Service Standards” requires all executive departments to “survey customers to determine ... their level of satisfaction with existing services.” To meet the requirements of this order, NIJ elicits, analyzes, and reports on feedback from visitors to NIJ.ojp.gov using the American Customer Satisfaction Index service provided by the Federal Consulting Group.

In FY 2023, NIJ received feedback from 461 users of NIJ.ojp.gov. The site’s customer satisfaction score was 83.9, which is one point higher than in the previous fiscal year and 16.9 points higher than the average score for over 100 websites using the same method to measure satisfaction (see exhibit 2).

### Exhibit 1. NIJ Customer Satisfaction Score



## NIJ Subscriber Lists

NIJ offers multiple options for subscribing to information as it becomes available. At the close of FY 2023, 114,530 people had subscribed to one or more email lists. Exhibit 3 shows the number of subscribers on each list.

### Exhibit 2. Subscribers to NIJ Mailing Lists

NAME	SUBSCRIPTIONS
Funding Opportunities and Updates	60,093
CrimeSolutions	49,605
Event and Training Updates	40,723
Publication and Multimedia Updates	32,926
NIJ Journal	27,655
Policing and Law Enforcement	22,807
Forensic Science	20,499
School Safety	18,864
Data Science	18,858
Corrections	18,405
Courts	18,202
Juvenile Justice	16,913
Advancing Science: Newsletter From the NIJ Director	5,075

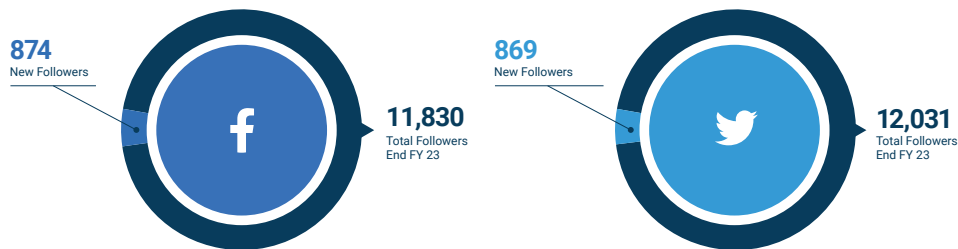


## Social Media

In FY 2023 NIJ continued to be active on social media channels. We were more active on major channels than in FY 2022 and saw our audience grow. See Exhibit 4 for details and information on top posts.

### Exhibit 3: NIJ's Social Media Presence

#### How Many People Connected With NIJ on Social Media?



#### How Many People Saw NIJ's Social Media Posts?

##### Facebook

**305**  
Total Posts

**63,381**  
Impressions

**224**  
Average Reach Per Post  
FY 23

##### Top 3 Facebook Posts

**1** Article: The Slow but Steady March Towards a More Reliable Forensic Science

**1,068** Reached  
**33** Engagements

**2** Commemorative Event: Forensic Science Week - Trace Evidence FTCOE App

**863** Reached  
**79** Engagements

**3** Program: LEADS Scholars Selection Announcement

**797** Reached  
**176** Engagements

##### Twitter

**842**  
Total Posts

**418,424**  
Impressions

**498**  
Average Reach Per Post  
FY 23

##### Top 3 Twitter Posts

**1** Program: LEADS Scholars Selection Announcement Thread

**22,539** Reached  
**508** Engagements

**2** Commemorative Event: Second Chance Month

**10,244** Reached  
**114** Engagements

**3** Grantee Report: Recruiting Women into Policing

**6,380** Reached  
**146** Engagements

#### How Did People Engage With NIJ on Social Media?

##### Facebook

**2,607**  
Total Interactions FY 23

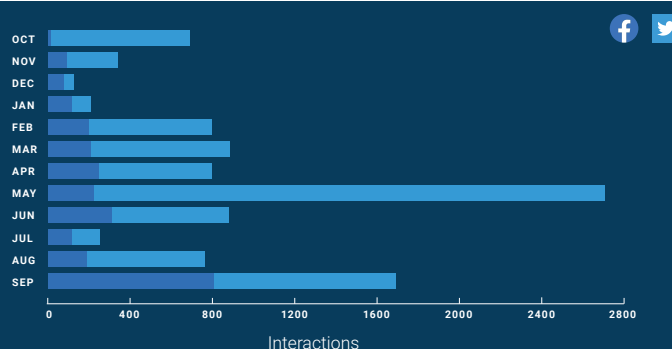
**3.8%**  
Engagement Rate

##### Twitter

**10,045**  
Total Interactions FY 23

**2.4%**  
Engagement Rate

##### Interactions by Month



# Conferences and Events

## NIJ and Grantee-Hosted Events

NIJ, in cooperation with its grantees, hosted webinars and other national events.

### ***NIJ Research Conference Returns***

May 23-25, 2023

In FY 2023, NIJ hosted the 2023 National Research Conference — the first NIJ research conference in 12 years. The event highlighted key priorities of NIJ Director Nancy La Vigne to build evidence that promotes safety, equity, and justice for all. Held in May, this three-day event in Arlington, Virginia, attracted more than 540 researchers, practitioners, advocates, and other attendees.

The conference’s “Evidence to Action” theme reflected NIJ’s efforts to ensure that the field learns about research, trusts the findings, and is inspired to make evidence-informed changes to improve their policies and practices. The conference was opened by Attorney General Merrick Garland, who affirmed how the work of NIJ and its grantees informs work across the U.S. Department of Justice.

Review a [summary of the conference](#) along with summaries and videos of the plenary sessions:

- [Embodying Evidence to Action: Tracking the Impact of Three Key NIJ Research Investments](#)
- [What Works in De-Escalation Training](#)
- [The Importance of Inclusive Research](#)
- [Using Science To Enhance Equity](#)
- [Looking Beyond Recidivism: New Research on Well-Being in Prisons and Jails From the National Institute of Justice](#)
- [Research on the Mounting Problem of Correctional Officer Stress](#)

Access podcast episodes featuring speakers from the conference:

- [Progressing from Evidence to Action](#)
- [Meeting People Where They Are To Improve Institutional Culture](#)

## ***NIJ Forensic Science Research and Development Symposium***

February 14, 2023

NIJ is committed to improving the practice of forensic science and strengthening its impact through the support of research and development, rigorous technology evaluation and adoption, effective knowledge transfer and education, and comprehensive dissemination of best practices and guidelines to agencies dedicated to combating crime. NIJ partnered with the Forensic Technology Center of Excellence to host the annual NIJ Forensic Science Research and Development Symposium.

[Read more about the symposium and access on-demand recordings.](#)

## ***Graduate Research Symposium and Poster Session***

September 20, 2023

In FY 2022, the NIJ-funded Forensic Technology Center of Excellence hosted the inaugural NIJ Forensic Science Graduate Research Symposium during National Forensic Science Week. In FY 2023, the center combined the graduate symposium with the National Forensic Science Week Student Research Poster Session to provide a platform for undergraduate students, graduate students, and early career scientists to present their research to a broad audience.

[Learn more about the symposium and poster session.](#)

## ***NIJ Day at the American Society of Criminology Annual Meeting***

November 17-18, 2023

In FY 2023, NIJ once again hosted an “NIJ Day” at the American Society of Criminology’s annual meeting. NIJ grantees and staff presented research on school safety, youth gun and group violence, labor trafficking, violence against women, the relationship between immigration status and crime, and an evaluation of Project Safe Neighborhoods.

## ***Reaching Out to the Field at Major Events***

NIJ leadership and staff attended and participated in 19 major criminal justice and research events throughout FY 2023. These events are an opportunity to meet practitioners and researchers, present on NIJ research, listen to the needs of the field, and disseminate products.

## ***American Association for the Advancement of Science Annual Meeting***

May 2-5, 2023

The annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) brings together thousands of scientists, engineers, educators, policymakers, and journalists from around the world to discuss recent developments in science and technology. NIJ attends this meeting and sponsors a booth to engage with the community and to recruit applicants for NIJ-AAAS Science and Technology Policy Fellowship program.

This event is an excellent way to reach researchers who are unfamiliar with NIJ but interested in learning more about the various research activities, resources, funding opportunities, and fellowship opportunities available. NIJ Physical Scientist Greg Dutton attended and spent time at the NIJ-sponsored booth discussing our forensic science research program.

### ***American Academy of Forensic Sciences Annual Meeting***

February 13-18, 2023

The American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS) is a multidisciplinary professional organization that provides leadership to advance science and its application to the legal system. The theme of its 2023 annual meeting was “Science Works.” NIJ has been a consistent presence, and many attendees each year are NIJ grantees familiar with NIJ resources for the forensic science community.

At the 2023 event, NIJ staff spent time at the NIJ-sponsored booth speaking with attendees. NIJ Director Nancy La Vigne took part in an [interview with AAFS TV](#), which was shown at the event for all attendees. During the interview, she promoted NIJ’s [Forensic Science Strategic Research Plan, 2022-2026](#), encouraged research in publicly funded forensic laboratories, highlighted the NIJ’s investments in forensic science, and commented on forensic scientists’ current and future challenges.

### ***American Correctional Association 2023 Congress of Correction***

August 10-13, 2023

The American Correctional Association’s Congress of Correction allows NIJ to reach key correctional and law enforcement administrators and staff. Attendees comprise individuals and organizations, both domestic and international, involved in all facets of corrections, including adult and juvenile institutions, community corrections, juvenile justice, health care, probation, and parole.

At the 2023 event, Marie Garcia, director of NIJ’s Office of Criminal Justice Systems, spoke about NIJ’s corrections portfolios and the NIJ director’s priorities.

Popular NIJ resources presented at the OJP-sponsored booth included [Emerging Relevance of Neuroscience in Corrections](#), [Five Things About Reentry](#), and [Desistance From Crime: Implications for Research, Policy, and Practice](#).

### ***American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors 2023 Annual Meeting***

April 30-May 4, 2023

The American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors’ annual conference brings together federal, state, local, and private crime laboratory directors for training, networking, and educational presentations. It is an important gathering for U.S. and global operators of forensic laboratories — key constituencies for NIJ.

NIJ provided popular resources to attendees, including the [NIJ Forensic Science Research Strategic Plan](#), [National Best Practices for Improving DNA Laboratory Process Efficiency](#), and [The Impact of NIJ Forensic Science Research and Development](#).

NIJ Office of Investigative and Forensic Sciences Director Lucas Zarwell presented on NIJ's forensic science research and development programs.

### ***Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences 2023 Annual Meeting***

March 14-18, 2023

The Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences promotes criminal justice education, research, and policy analysis within the discipline of criminal justice for both educators and practitioners.

At the academy's 2023 meeting, NIJ Director Nancy La Vigne joined OJP Assistant Attorney General Amy Solomon and other OJP component heads on the panel "Federal Priorities on Evidence-Based Criminal Justice Reform: Perspectives From the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs Leadership Team."

Director La Vigne provided remarks during the keynote address. Other NIJ staff participated in panels, including:

- NIJ Senior Science Advisor Angela Moore and Senior Social Science Analyst Christine Crossland presented the workshop, "Unlocking the Mysteries: Securing Funding and Support from DOJ's Two Science Agencies" with BJS Deputy Director Kevin Scott.
- NIJ Senior Social Science Analyst Linda Truitt chaired the panel, "NIJ's Drugs and Crime Research: Drug Surveillance, Internet Markets, Drug-Related Violent Crime, and Data-Led Enforcement."
- NIJ Social Science Research Analyst Kaitlyn Sill chaired the panel, "Latest Findings From the National Juvenile Justice Data Analysis Program."

Popular resources from NIJ included information on the Graduate Research Fellowship and [Five Facts About Mass Shootings in K-12 Schools](#).

### ***All Rise Annual Conference***

June 26-29, 2023

Since 1995, All Rise — formerly the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP) — has convened the only national conference for treatment court professionals. Attendance includes a wide array of public health and public safety leaders working to expand treatment for people impacted by substance use and mental health disorders. Prior to the 2023 conference, NADCP officially rebranded their name and logo to All Rise, which is the training, membership, and advocacy organization for justice system innovation addressing substance use and mental health.

Attendees are a good audience for promoting OJP programs and research relating to treatment courts. The NIJ-sponsored booth was visited by various attendees, including judges, coordinators of mental health and drug programs, public defenders, prosecuting attorneys, and probation officers. There were several queries regarding mental health treatment courts being separated from drug treatment courts. Other interests included funding for mental health, drug treatment, juvenile, and veterans' courts. Popular NIJ

resources included the [Drug Treatment Courts flier](#) and the *NIJ Journal* article “[NIJ’s Courts Research: Examining Alternatives to Incarceration for Veterans and Other Policy Innovation.](#)”

### ***32nd Session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice***

May 22-26, 2023

The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) is the governing body of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. The commission coordinates with other United Nations (U.N.) bodies with specific mandates in the areas of crime prevention and criminal justice and is the preparatory body to the U.N. Crime Congresses. The commission’s annual session is sponsored by the Institutes of the U.N. Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme Network (PNI), which consists of the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime and other interregional and regional institutes around the world, as well as specialized centers. NIJ is one of these 18 entities and is the only site in the United States.

NIJ Principal Deputy Director Jennifer Scherer and Director of the NIJ Office of Criminal Justice Systems Marie Garcia attended. Garcia participated in a workshop on enhancing the functioning of the criminal justice system, delivering the presentation, “Examining Access to Justice: Research and Evaluation on Public Defense and Problem-Solving Courts.” Scherer provided remarks on behalf of the PNI network during the Committee of the Whole, the legislative body of the CCPCJ that includes all assembly member states.

### ***Community Based Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative (CVIPI) Grantee Conference***

February 14-16, 2023

This event brought together federal grantee organizations to implement initiative-related activities. NIJ Director La Vigne moderated a plenary titled “Researchers and Community Stakeholders: Working Together to Reduce Community Violence While Advancing Social Justice and Equity.”

NIJ’s Barbara Kelley, senior social science analyst, and Jennifer Grotper, social science analyst, presented to the grantee organizations attending. These included community-based organizations, research partners, district attorney and county probation offices, and public health organizations, among others.

### ***Emerging Researchers National Conference in STEM***

February 9-11, 2023

This conference focuses on undergraduate and graduate students who participate in programs funded by the National Science Foundation Human Resource Development Unit, including underrepresented minorities and persons with disabilities. The conference helps students enhance their science communication skills and better understand how to prepare for global science careers.

NIJ had the opportunity to interact with young researchers, who are often unaware of NIJ's work. Visitors to the NIJ-funded booth showed interest in programs, fellowships, grant opportunities, research priorities, and resources. Attendees were particularly intrigued by the Graduate Research Fellowship, the W.E.B. Du Bois Fellowship, and the AAAS Science and Technology Policy Fellowship.

Gregory Dutton, physical scientist in NIJ's Office of Investigative and Forensic Science, spent time at the booth discussing NIJ's research and opportunities.

### ***FBI Hate Crime Statistics Symposium: Meeting With State and Local Law Enforcement Partners To Improve Hate Crime Data Collection***

August 11, 2023

NIJ Social Science Research Analyst Kaitlyn Sill participated in this inaugural FBI event along with state and local law enforcement partners responsible for collecting crime data, including hate crime data. Representatives from the FBI's Criminal Justice Information Services, DOJ's Civil Rights Division, the Office of Justice Programs, and DOJ's leadership offices — as well as representatives from over 100 uniform crime reporting programs from over 40 states and the District of Columbia — discussed the importance of accurate hate crime reporting.

The symposium addressed various aspects of hate crime data, including collection, analysis, and interpretation. Participants also explored improving reporting mechanisms, better supporting victims, and implementing preventive measures.

### ***International Association of Chiefs of Police Annual Conference and Expo***

October 15-18, 2022

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) annual conference, the IACP Annual Conference and Exposition, brings together thousands of dedicated professionals from federal, state, county, local, and tribal agencies, including police chiefs, senior law enforcement officials, and researchers from across the globe.

At the October 2022 event, NIJ Director La Vigne took part in the panel “The Need for Evidence in Police Reform: Perspectives from the Research Advisory Committee.”

NIJ Physical Scientist Joel Hunt participated in the panel “Cyber Security: Embracing the Future — How Technology Will Transform Law Enforcement.” The discussion highlighted current and over-the-horizon technologies, and methods to integrate each to maximize efficiency, support operations, and safeguard the public, while maintaining the freedom and rights of those we are sworn to protect.

### ***International Conference on Forensic Nursing Science and Practice***

September 27-30, 2023

The International Association of Forensic Nurses (IAFN) conference seeks to put state-of-the-art science into action and create best practices for forensic nursing. IAFN represents an important constituency for NIJ and other OJP components, as the organization develops, promotes, and disseminates information internationally about forensic nursing science. IAFN members are actively involved with OJP research and programs and often are consulted on forensic nursing and sexual assault.

Popular NIJ resources at the IAFN conference included [Using Science To Enhance Equity](#) and [National Best Practices for Sexual Assault Kits: A Multidisciplinary Approach](#).

### ***International Association of Crime Analysts Conference***

August 29-September 1, 2023

The International Association of Crime Analysts (IACA) advances the crime analysis field by providing criminal justice professionals with information, training, networking, and support. The annual IACA conference informs crime analysts' decision-making and practices by sharing current and emerging research evidence. Conference presenters disseminate knowledge so that criminal justice practitioners can transform evidence into action.

At the 2023 event, Tamara Herold and Elizabeth Groff presented at the general session, and NIJ and IACA once again joined forces to include an NIJ Research Track. [View the conference agenda](#) for all NIJ-funded research presentations.

### ***International Symposium on Human Identification Annual Conference***

September 18-23, 2023

For 35 years, the International Symposium on Human Identification (ISHI) has provided a forum for forensic practitioners to share information about the latest DNA technologies. Conference attendees are involved in all aspects of DNA typing and come from state, federal, and local crime laboratories and abroad; parentage and testing laboratories; academic institutions; governmental research agencies; and policy think tanks.

The ISHI conference is an excellent venue to promote NIJ programs and research.



## ***National Conference on Juvenile Justice***

March 19-22, 2023

The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Justice’s 2023 National Conference on Juvenile Justice explored gaps in services, new and improved practices, and cutting-edge research while motivating participants to explore positive case outcomes for youth involved in the delinquency system. Featured topics included alternatives to detention, trauma-informed justice, crossover youth, deep-end youth, teen dating violence, domestic sex trafficking of minors, alternatives to shackling, racial and ethnic disparities, school pathways to the justice system, brain science, child development, mental health, juvenile and family treatment drug courts, LGBTQ issues in the juvenile justice system, and unaccompanied minors in immigration. Most conference attendees were judges; however, attendees also included attorneys, probation officers, academics, and nonprofit organizations.

The conference featured NIJ-sponsored research. The panel “10 Juvenile Justice Trends You Should Know About — And How To Stay Current” from the National Center for Juvenile Justice highlighted national trends in youth arrests, delinquency cases, and residential placement population, as well as addressing racial and ethnic fairness, involvement of girls in the juvenile justice system, experiences of LGBTQ+ youth, and increases in mental health challenges reported by youth.

NIJ sponsored a booth in conjunction with OJJDP. Most visitors were familiar with both agencies and selected a variety of the available resources. Several NIJ and OJJDP staff were in attendance, including Kaitlyn Sill, NIJ social science research analyst; TeNeane Bradford, OJJDP associate administrator; and Ransom Washington Jr., OJJDP program manager.

## ***Pittcon 2023***

March 18-22, 2023

Pittcon is an annual conference encompassing a wide range of applied chemical and biological analysis. Since 2018, NIJ has organized a Forensic Science Symposium to highlight researchers’ work and reach future applicants.

In FY 2023, NIJ partnered with Pittcon to organize the 6th annual symposium, where NIJ-funded researchers presented the results of their work. This conference track, organized by NIJ Physical Scientists Gregory Dutton and Frances Scott, included two invited symposia, two organized contributed sessions, and a poster session — with over 30 presenters in total. NIJ staff also were available at the booth. Most booth visitors were unfamiliar with NIJ and wanted to learn more about various research activities, resources, and funding and fellowship opportunities.

## ***Police Executive Research Forum 2023 Annual Meeting***

July 17-19, 2023

The Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) provides a forum for executive-level law enforcement to discuss issues in policing and criminal justice, research, and policy. Since its founding in 1976, PERF has identified best practices on fundamental issues such as reducing police use of force, developing community policing and problem-oriented policing, using technology to deliver police services to the community, and evaluating crime-reduction strategies. PERF strives to advance professionalism in policing and to improve the delivery of police services through the exercise of strong national leadership, public debate of police and criminal justice issues, and research and policy development.

NIJ Director Nancy La Vigne provided remarks. Popular NIJ resources included *NIJ Journal* No. 284: [Justice Systems](#), [Five Facts About Mass Shootings in K-12 Schools](#), and [Persistence of Touch DNA for Analysis](#).

## ***Public Safety Symposium, New York State, Division of Criminal Justice Services***

September 26-28, 2023.

This symposium brings together criminal justice professionals and practitioners, service providers, advocates, researchers, and policymakers, for learning about the latest research evidence and training on evidence-based practices.

NIJ Director La Vigne presented the keynote address to open the conference. NIJ Executive Science Advisor Janine Zweig presented a session on “The Domestic Radicalization and Violent Extremism Research Portfolio at the National Institute of Justice.”

## ***United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Open-Ended Intergovernmental Expert Group Meeting on Reducing Reoffending***

September 2023

NIJ Social Science Analyst Kyleigh Clark-Moorman participated in a virtual meeting to discuss the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime’s model strategies on reducing reoffending. The meeting was hosted by Japan and involved intergovernmental experts from around the world, including Canada, Nigeria, the Netherlands, and Russia.

# Appendix: Financial Data

## Exhibit 4. Funds Made Available Pursuant to P.L. 117-328

FY 2023

Type of Funds	Enacted Amount
<b>Research, Evaluation, and Statistics (RES)</b>	
Research, Development, and Evaluation Programs (NIJ “Base” Appropriation)	\$21,300,000
Research on School Safety (formerly Research on School Violence)	\$1,000,000
Research and Evaluation on Domestic Pathways to Terrorism (Domestic Radicalization Research)	\$7,500,000
Violence Against American Indian/Alaskan Natives at Extraction Sites (new program)	\$1,000,000
Research on Gun Violence Prevention (new program)	\$1,000,000
School-Based Hate Crimes (new program)	\$1,200,000
Law Enforcement Response to Opioid Overdoses (new program)	\$1,000,000
<b>Total Research, Evaluation, and Statistics (RES) Programs</b>	<b>\$34,000,000</b>
<b>Research, Evaluation, and Statistics Set-Aside (RESS)*</b>	<b>\$26,147,540</b>
<b>Transfers</b>	
First Step Act (transfer from FBOP)	\$10,000,000
Research and Evaluation on Violence Against Women (VAW) (transfer from OVW)	\$2,500,000
<b>Total Transfers</b>	<b>\$12,500,000</b>
<b>State and Local (S&amp;L) Law Enforcement Assistance</b>	
National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs)	\$3,500,000
<b>Total State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance</b>	<b>\$3,500,000</b>
<b>Total Enacted</b>	<b>\$76,147,540</b>
<b>Carry-Forward, Reimbursable Agreements (RA), and Intra-Agency Agreements (IAA)</b>	
Carry-Forward Funds	\$20,979,496
Reimbursable Agreements (RA)	\$15,644,974
Intra-Agency Agreements (IAA)	\$54,379,238
<b>Total Carry-Forward, Reimbursable Agreements, and Intra-Agency Agreements</b>	<b>\$91,003,708</b>
<b>TOTAL FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>\$167,151,248</b>
<b>Assessments</b>	
Management and Administration (M&A) Assessment — 7.9%	\$(4,052,573)
Section 215 Research, Evaluation, and Statistics Set-Aside Assessment — 2%	\$(70,000)
<b>Total Assessments</b>	<b>\$(4,122,573)</b>
<b>TOTAL FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES AFTER ASSESSMENTS</b>	<b>\$163,028,675</b>

\*In FY 2023, 2% of OJP’s program budget was set aside to augment research, evaluation, and statistics to assess existing programs to ensure their alignment with administration priorities, such as officer safety and crime reduction. These funds are split between NIJ and the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

**Exhibit 5: Allocation of Funds**

Type of Activity	Subcategory	Percentage	FY 2023 Amount
<b>Social Science</b>	Research and Evaluation	41.2%	\$68,818,227
	Technical Assistance	0.0%	\$ —
<b>Science and Technology</b>	Research and Development	1.7%	\$2,840,425
	Technology Assistance/Test and Evaluation	4.3%	\$7,175,000
<b>Investigative and Forensic Science</b>	Technology Transition and Knowledge Transfer	1.5%	\$2,500,000
	Research and Development	12.1%	\$20,168,072
	Training and Technical Assistance	2.7%	\$4,441,870
<b>Dissemination/Outreach/Program Support</b>		5.8%	\$9,772,106
<b>Total</b>		<b>69.2%</b>	<b>\$115,715,700</b>
OJP Management and Administration		2.4%	\$4,052,573
Section 215 Set-Aside for Research and Statistics		0.0%	\$70,000
Carryover (including reimbursements)		28.3%	\$47,312,974
<b>Total</b>		<b>30.8%</b>	<b>\$51,435,547</b>
		<b>100.0%</b>	<b>\$167,151,247</b>

**Exhibit 6: Solicitations**

FY 2023 Solicitation	Number of Awards	Value of Awards
Innovations in Measuring Community Perceptions Challenge	0	\$ —
NIJ FY23 Invited to Apply — Byrne Discretionary Community Project Funding/Byrne Discretionary Grants Program	2	\$3,500,000
NIJ FY23 Funding Recommendation for Invited Application — Proposed Supplement to a Competitively Awarded Grant to Fund the Measuring the Impact of Victim Services: Developing the Victim Outcome and Satisfaction Survey Instrument and Platform Study	1	\$99,900
NIJ FY23 Funding Recommendation for Invited Application — NIJ FY 2022 Invited to Apply — Operation of the Secretariat of SC 37 under JTC 1 of ISO/IEC	1	\$57,425
NIJ FY23 Funding Recommendations for Continuation of Noncompetitive Awards to Invited Applications — American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Science and Technology Policy Fellows (STPF)	1	\$300,000
FY 2023 Funding Recommendation for Invited Application — FY 2023 Invited to Apply — NIJ FY22 Research and Evaluation on Violent Crime and Firearm Violence in the Community	1	\$1,392,265

FY 2023 Solicitation	Number of Awards	Value of Awards
NIJ FY23 Invited to Apply — University of Texas at Austin Developing More Effective Services and Programs for Victims of Mass Shootings	1	\$1,000,000
NIJ FY23 Invited to Apply — Support Activities Under Section 13(d) of Executive Order 14074	1	\$650,000
NIJ FY23 Invited to Apply — Funding Support for the Operations of the Committee on Law and Justice of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine	1	\$250,000
NIJ FY23 Invited to Apply — Assessing the Effectiveness of the Second Chance Act Grant Program: Evaluation of the Quality and Effectiveness of Technical Assistance Provided to Second Chance Act Grantees	1	\$320,000
NIJ FY23 Invited to Apply — Funding to Support the Research and Development in Forensic Science for Criminal Justice Purposes Program	2	\$738,402
NIJ FY23 Invited to Apply — Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development: Social Development Sub-study (ABCD: SD)	1	\$1,900,000
NIJ FY 2023 Invited to Apply — Forensic Technology Center of Excellence (FTCOE)	1	\$2,500,000
NIJ FY 2023 Invited to Apply — NIJ Multisite Impact and Cost-Efficiency Evaluation of Veterans Treatment Courts	1	\$1,500,000
FY2022 Funding Recommendations for Research on Child Maltreatment in Youth Serving Organizations	1	\$1,497,815
NIJ FY23 Research and Evaluation on Correctional Culture and Climate	0	\$ —
NIJ FY23 Research and Evaluation on Policing Practices, Accountability Mechanisms, and Alternatives	9	\$7,613,060
NIJ FY23 Criminal Justice Technology Testing and Evaluation Center	1	\$3,500,000
NIJ FY23 Support for the Law Enforcement Advancing Data and Science Scholars Program	1	\$1,000,000
NIJ FY23 Youth Mentoring Research and Evaluation	2	\$2,245,277
NIJ FY23 Research on Juvenile Justice Topics	3	\$3,962,281
NIJ FY23 Community-Based Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative (CVIPI) Research, Evaluation, and Associated Training and Technical Assistance Support	7	\$11,333,452
NIJ FY23 Tribal-Researcher Capacity-Building Grants	0	\$ —
NIJ FY23 Research and Evaluation on Sentencing and Resentencing	2	\$1,028,484
NIJ FY23 Research and Evaluation on Hate Crimes	3	\$2,348,932
NIJ FY23 Research and Evaluation on School Safety	2	\$1,697,322
NIJ FY23 Research and Evaluation on Jails	3	\$1,658,672

<b>FY 2023 Solicitation</b>	<b>Number of Awards</b>	<b>Value of Awards</b>
NIJ FY23 National Study Examining Interpersonal Violence Experienced By Young Adults	1	\$1,000,000
NIJ FY23 Research and Evaluation on the Administration of Justice: Advancing Access to Justice 60 Years After Gideon	2	\$1,629,358
NIJ FY23 Research and Evaluation on Violence Against Women	1	\$1,996,357
NIJ FY23 Research and Evaluation on Domestic Radicalization and Violent Extremism	5	\$4,109,127
NIJ FY23 Research and Evaluation on Trafficking in Persons	3	\$2,451,783
NIJ FY23 Research and Evaluation on Firearms Violence and Mass Shootings	5	\$4,147,564
NIJ FY23 Research and Evaluation for the Testing and Interpretation of Physical Evidence in Publicly Funded Forensic Laboratories	5	\$1,928,846
NIJ FY23 Graduate Research Fellowship	24	\$2,624,800
NIJ FY23 Research on the Abuse, Neglect, and Financial Exploitation of Older Adults	1	\$1,499,885
NIJ FY23 Research and Evaluation of Services for Victims of Crime	1	\$659,300
NIJ FY23 Research and Development in Forensic Science for Criminal Justice Purposes	33	\$15,401,881
NIJ FY23 W.E.B. Du Bois Program of Research on Reducing Racial and Ethnic Disparities in the Justice System	3	\$1,830,810
<b>Total</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>\$91,372,998</b>

