



National Institute of Justice

S o l i c i t a t i o n

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Evaluation of the Comprehensive Indian Resources for Community and Law Enforcement (CIRCLE) Project

APPLICATION DEADLINE:
June 23, 2000

Evaluation of the Comprehensive Indian Resources for Community and Law Enforcement (CIRCLE) Project

I. Introduction

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) is soliciting proposals to conduct a participatory evaluation of the Comprehensive Indian Resources for Community and Law Enforcement (CIRCLE) Project, a U.S. Department of Justice initiative designed to empower Native American Communities to more effectively fight crime, violence, and substance abuse. NIJ, in its role as the research and development agency of the U.S. Department of Justice, has developed this solicitation with its partner agencies on the CIRCLE Project, the Office of Tribal Justice (OTJ), the other program offices and bureaus of the Office of Justice Programs (OJP), the Office of Community-Oriented Policing Services (COPS), and the tribes participating in the CIRCLE Project—the Oglala Sioux Tribe, the Northern Cheyenne Tribe, and Zuni Pueblo. The U.S. Attorneys in the districts where the sites are located in South Dakota, Montana, and New Mexico have also assisted in the development of this solicitation. Representatives of these entities are members of the CIRCLE Project Evaluation Subcommittee. NIJ chairs this subcommittee.

II. Background

A critical U.S. Department of Justice priority is to assist tribal governments in building comprehensive and effective law enforcement and public safety systems to provide the foundation for healthy communities. To support tribal efforts, Attorney General Reno is leading the Department in building partnerships at the Federal, State and local levels to provide assistance to tribal governments, to enhance tribal judicial systems, and to improve public safety and the quality of life in tribal communities. The Department is committed to working together with Indian tribes to support these endeavors as part of the Federal trust responsibility to support Indian tribes as sovereign governments.

While crime rates are falling throughout the rest of the nation, they are rising in Indian Country. The Bureau of Justice Statistics reported in 1999, based on an analysis using the National Crime Victim Survey, that American Indians experience per capita rates of violence that are more than twice those of the U.S. resident population. Rates of violence in every age group are higher among American Indians than that of all other races. The BJS analysis reports further that nearly a third of all American Indian victims of violence are between the ages of 18 and 24. This group experienced the highest per capita rate of violence of any racial group considered by age—about 1 violent crime for every 4 persons of this age. At least 70% of the violent victimizations experienced by American Indians are committed by persons not of the same race—a substantially higher rate of interracial violence than experienced by white or black victims. Such high levels of violence combined with the Federal government's trust responsibilities led the U.S. Department of Justice to implement the CIRCLE Project.

A. Description of the CIRCLE Project

The CIRCLE Project is a three-year, Federal initiative designed to empower American Indian communities to more effectively fight crime, violence, and substance abuse. The goal of CIRCLE is to assist communities in addressing local problems in a comprehensive way through effective planning and appropriate funding. Similar to other U.S. Department of Justice comprehensive community initiatives, such as Weed and Seed and Tribal Strategies Against Violence, the Department hopes to work with other Federal agencies and private partners to go beyond law enforcement to develop appropriate resources to create safe and healthy communities in Indian Country. The Department is providing significant financial and technical assistance to the participating tribal governments. This support is meant to enhance prevention efforts and help tribes to ensure the

accountability and management of offenders through effective community policing services, criminal investigation, prosecutorial, tribal court and probation services, as well as detention and alternative sentencing programs.

The CIRCLE Project is based on two key principles: first, the CIRCLE tribal communities will play the lead role, with assistance from the Federal government, in developing and implementing crime, violence, and drug control efforts. This principle is based on the understanding that the most effective solutions to the problems faced by tribal communities are likely to come from within the communities themselves, rather than being imposed by the Federal government. The second key principle is that the problems to be addressed require a comprehensive approach that incorporates coordinated and multi-disciplinary efforts.

The CIRCLE Project will complement and support the President's Indian Country Law Enforcement Improvements Initiative (see "How to Apply" section below for how to obtain additional information regarding this initiative) to promote effective law enforcement and public safety in Indian communities. This initiative is a cooperative effort between the U.S. Department of the Interior and the U.S. Department of Justice. In fiscal year 2000, the Justice Department will provide \$91,500,000 for tribal police officer salaries, equipment and training, construction of detention facilities, juvenile justice programs, tribal courts, and Federal law enforcement efforts.

Through the CIRCLE Project, participating tribes will be given special consideration for technical assistance and training related to strategy development and implementation, and are eligible to apply for funding for law enforcement, tribal courts, detention facilities, and youth programs. Several agencies in the U.S. Department of Justice will work in partnership to make technical assistance and funding available to this comprehensive program. Partner agencies include the Office of Tribal Justice (OTJ), the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) and its bureaus and program offices, and the Office of

Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS). The U.S. Attorneys in the districts where the sites are located will also play a major role in the CIRCLE Project, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) will contribute to the CIRCLE Project through the Indian Country Law Enforcement Initiative.

Participating tribes have prepared a single strategy and application for assistance from participating agencies in the U.S. Department of Justice. In addition to the simplified application process, the reporting and monitoring process is being streamlined. Each participating tribe has been assigned a primary contact with the department that is responsible for coordinating with all the participating Justice agencies regarding grant administration and technical assistance. The U.S. Department of Justice will also assist the tribes in identifying potential funding from other Federal agencies.

B. Organization of the CIRCLE Project

The overall management of the CIRCLE Project in the U.S. Department of Justice is coordinated through the CIRCLE Project Committee. The CIRCLE Project grants awarded to the three sites are managed by the Corrections Program Office, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice with collaboration from all the Federal CIRCLE Project partners. The CIRCLE Project Evaluation Subcommittee is a component of the CIRCLE Project Committee. This subcommittee is chaired by the National Institute of Justice and includes representation from the Federal CIRCLE Project partners and the CIRCLE Project sites. The CIRCLE Project Evaluation Subcommittee is responsible for managing all facets of the CIRCLE Project Evaluation.

III. Areas of Research Required

A. Substance of the Evaluation

This evaluation will focus on the development, implementation, and outcomes of the CIRCLE

S o l i c i t a t i o n

Project at the three CIRCLE Project sites: Oglala Sioux Tribe, Northern Cheyenne Tribe, and Zuni Pueblo including:

- The development of the CIRCLE Project in the U.S. Department of Justice including the streamlined application, reporting, and monitoring processes and the assessment of these processes by the three CIRCLE Project sites. This portion of the evaluation should cover both the fiscal and program aspects of the process.
- The implementation of the CIRCLE Project including:
 - The development and use of the comprehensive strategy.
 - The coordination of the individual components of the CIRCLE Project at each site.
 - The integration of the elements of the CIRCLE Project into each tribe's comprehensive strategy for crime control and prevention.
- The outcomes of the CIRCLE Project including: the utilization and effectiveness of the technical assistance and training provided to the CIRCLE Project sites (both outside technical assistance to tribe and tribe to tribe technical assistance); the effects of the CIRCLE Project on relations between and among tribal sites; the effectiveness of the CIRCLE Project in helping to create safer communities.

Suggested research questions that could be asked to help address these implementation and outcome issues include:

- Were the CIRCLE Project funds used to help achieve the original goals developed by each tribe?
- Did the various elements of the community communicate effectively the goals they wanted to achieve in terms of community improvements?

- To what extent did collaboration occur within the tribe, and among the tribe and other Federal, State, and local agencies?
- How has the comprehensive nature of the CIRCLE Project contributed to improving how the tribes respond to crime, delinquency, victims, and substance abuse?
- How have differences in tribal culture, physical environment, service delivery, breadth and depth of participation in planning activities, traditional and non-traditional governmental structures, and any other factors affected the development and evolution of the CIRCLE Project?
- How has the CIRCLE project contributed to the creation of safer communities?
- How has the CIRCLE Project affected the community's ability to heal; for example, in helping to reduce victimization within the tribe and between the tribe and outsiders?
- How has the CIRCLE Project improved services to crime victims?
- How has the CIRCLE Project improved the tribe's responses to youth crime and delinquency?

Applicants should note that this list is not meant to be exhaustive.

The CIRCLE Project consists of individual programmatic elements incorporated into an overall tribal community safety strategy. These components are described in the CIRCLE Project Program Guidance and Application Kit for FY 1999 and FY 2000, and in the individual strategies developed by each tribe as described in their FY 1999 proposals to participate in the CIRCLE Project. See the "How to Apply" section below for instructions on how to obtain access to these documents. Applicants have the option of highlighting an evaluation of a specific component of each tribe's CIRCLE Project as part of the CIRCLE evaluation. Applicants are also encouraged to propose innovative methods and measures to assess the outcomes of the CIRCLE Project.

B. Evaluation Strategy

Research and program evaluation in Indian Country has been criticized for returning little practical information or resources to the people who are the focus of the study. Meetings and focus groups with tribal practitioners and researchers in Indian Country have revealed a strong interest in research and evaluation efforts that are guided by members of the community, respectful of tribal values and customs, and geared toward practical application and local utilization of findings.

NIJ is therefore soliciting a participatory evaluation of the CIRCLE Project. The goal of this approach is to make the evaluation more responsive and appropriate to people's needs and real life contexts. This will be accomplished by involving stakeholders in the design, implementation, and interpretation of the study. The evaluation will be structured to include an evaluation team member at each of the tribal sites for the duration of the evaluation. This design will facilitate involvement with tribal stakeholders at each site. Applicants are asked to address how this participatory evaluation will be operationalized for the CIRCLE Project. Examples of elements to be addressed include:

- The coordination of the various elements of the evaluation: the development of the CIRCLE Project, cross site analysis, and site specific analysis.
- The process that will be used to consult with and involve all CIRCLE Project stakeholders on a range of evaluation issues. Stakeholders are defined inclusively for purposes of the CIRCLE Project to include a broad range of participants from each site as well as the Federal agencies involved. Applicants should provide specific examples on both the process and substance of stakeholders' involvement.
- The process that will be used to provide feedback to the sites and the CIRCLE Project Evaluation Subcommittee.
- Strategies that will be used to maintain the integrity of the evaluation in this participatory context including a statement

about the role(s) of the evaluator in a participatory evaluation.

C. Special Considerations, Requirements and Products

Applicants should take the following special considerations into account when developing their proposals for this evaluation.

- Representative statistical data about American Indians are difficult to acquire and interpret. Applicants are encouraged to make use of the statistical data available at the tribal sites for the purposes of this evaluation.
- Applicants are encouraged to involve the faculty and/or students of tribal colleges in this evaluation.
- Applicants must include information in their proposal that addresses their qualifications to conduct this evaluation including knowledge about, and experience in, conducting research in Indian Country, especially in the regions and cultural groupings represented by the CIRCLE Project tribes. Applicants must also demonstrate their experience conducting participatory evaluations.
- Applicants should include funds in their budget to travel to two CIRCLE Project cluster meetings per year. These meetings are held at alternating CIRCLE Project sites.
- The final products of this evaluation must include a report on the implementation and outcomes of the CIRCLE Project at each site, a cross-site evaluation report, and a report on the development of the CIRCLE Project.

IV. How to Apply

Those interested in submitting proposals in response to this solicitation must complete the required application forms and submit related required documents. (See below for how to obtain application forms and guides for completing

S o l i c i t a t i o n

proposals.) Applicants must include the following information/forms to qualify for consideration:

- Standard Form (SF) 424—application for Federal assistance
- Assurances
- Certifications Regarding Lobbying, Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements (one form)
- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities
- Budget Detail Worksheet
- Budget Narrative
- Negotiated indirect rate agreement (if appropriate)
- Names and affiliations of all key persons from applicant and subcontractor(s), advisors, consultants, and advisory board members. Include name of principal investigator, title, organizational affiliation (if any), department (if institution of higher education), address, phone, and fax
- Proposal abstract
- Table of contents
- Program narrative or technical proposal
- Privacy certificate
- References
- Letters of cooperation from organizations collaborating in the research project
- Résumés
- Appendixes, if any (e.g., list of previous NIJ awards, their status, and products [in NIJ or other publications])

Proposal abstract. The proposal abstract, when read separately from the rest of the application, is meant to serve as a succinct and accurate description of the proposed work. Applicants must concisely describe the research goals and objectives, research design, and methods for achieving the goals and objectives. Summaries of past accomplishments are to be avoided, and proprietary/confidential information is not to be included. Length is not to exceed 400 words. Use the following two headers:

Project Goals and Objectives:

Proposed Research Design and Methodology:

Page limit. The number of pages in the “Program Narrative” part of the proposal must not exceed 30 (double-spaced pages).

Due date. Completed proposals **must be received** at the National Institute of Justice by the close of business on June 23, 2000. Extensions of this deadline will not be permitted.

Award period. This solicitation is for the first 18 month phase of a four year evaluation. Applicants should submit a detailed budget for the first 18 month phase of the evaluation with summary budget information projected for the subsequent phases. This summary budget information for subsequent phases of this evaluation should be generally based on the funds that are currently available for this first 18 month phase. Applicants should present a program narrative that covers the entire four year evaluation with detailed time-line information for the first 18 month phase.

Number of awards. NIJ anticipates supporting one grant under this solicitation.

Award amount. An award totaling up to \$270,000 will be made available for this first 18 month phase of the CIRCLE Project Evaluation.

Applying. Two packets need to be obtained: (1) application forms (including a sample budget worksheet) and (2) guidelines for submitting proposals (including requirements for proposal writers and requirements for grant recipients). To receive them, applicants can:

- Access the Justice Information Center on the web: <http://www.ncjrs.org/fedgrant.htm#NIJ>
or the NIJ web site:
<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/funding.htm>

These web sites offer the NIJ application forms and guidelines as electronic files that may be downloaded to a personal computer.

- Request hard copies of the forms and guidelines by mail from the National Criminal Justice Reference Service at 800–851–3420 or from the

S o l i c i t a t i o n

Department of Justice Response Center at 800-421-6770 (in the Washington, D.C., area, at 202-307-1480).

- Request copies by fax. Call 800-851-3420 and select option 1, then option 1 again for NIJ. Code is 1023.
- Applicants are also invited to request the following background materials from the Department of Justice Response Center including:
 - CIRCLE Project Program Guidance and Application Kit for FY 1999 and FY 2000;
 - FY 1999 CIRCLE Project proposals from Zuni Pueblo, Northern Cheyenne Tribe and Oglala Sioux Tribe;
 - "Report of the Executive Committee for Indian Country Law Enforcement Improvements," October, 1997
 - Selected references on participatory evaluation methods; and
 - Selected information on the Zuni Pueblo, Northern Cheyenne Tribe, and Oglala Sioux Tribe.

Guidance and information. Applicants who wish to receive additional guidance and information may contact the U.S. Department of Justice Response Center at 800-421-6770. Center staff can provide assistance or refer applicants to an appropriate NIJ professional. Applicants may, for example, wish to discuss their prospective research topics with the NIJ professional staff.

Send completed forms to:

Evaluation of the Comprehensive Indian Resources for Community and Law Enforcement (CIRCLE) Project
National Institute of Justice
810 Seventh Street N.W.
Washington, DC 20531
[overnight courier ZIP code 20001]

SL000417

NIJ is streamlining its process to accommodate the volume of proposals anticipated under this and other Crime Act solicitations. Researchers can help in a significant way by sending NIJ a nonbinding letter of intent by May 31, 2000 date. The Institute will use these letters to forecast the numbers of peer panels it needs and to identify conflicts of interest among potential reviewers. There are two ways to send these letters. You can reach NIJ by Internet by sending e-mail to *tellnij@ncjrs.org* and identifying the solicitation and section(s) you expect to apply for. You can write a letter with the same information to Evaluation of the Comprehensive Indian Resources for Community and Law Enforcement (CIRCLE) Project, 810 Seventh Street N.W., Washington, DC 20531. Help us help you.

For grant and funding information, contact:
Department of Justice Response Center
800-421-6770

For more information on the National Institute of Justice, please contact:

National Criminal Justice Reference Service
Box 6000
Rockville, MD 20849-6000
800-851-3420
e-mail: askncjrs@ncjrs.org

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