



July 04		NIJ
Solicitation		
Solving Cold Cases with DNA Revision-1, July 9, 2004		

Register with GMS:

You *must* submit your application using the Office of Justice Programs' automated Grants Management System. Paper applications will not be accepted. We suggest you begin the process as soon as possible. To start the process, go to <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/fundopps.htm>

Deadline:

Register by:
September 7, 2004
8:00 p.m.

Apply by:
September 9, 2004
8:00 p.m.

SL 0000671

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs
810 Seventh Street N.W.
Washington, DC 20531

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National Institute of Justice
<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij>

Office of Justice Programs
Partnerships for Safer Communities
<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov>

Solving Cold Cases with DNA

I. Introduction

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) is the research, development, and evaluation agency of the U.S. Department of Justice. NIJ provides objective, independent, evidence-based knowledge and tools to enhance the administration of justice and public safety. The Institute solicits proposals to inform its search for the knowledge and tools to guide policy and practice.

With this solicitation, NIJ is seeking proposals to search, evaluate, select, and conduct DNA analysis on violent crime “cold cases” (i.e., old, unsolved cases) that have the potential to be solved through DNA testing. Experience has shown that such cold case review programs can solve a substantial number of homicides and rapes. Recent advances have improved the ability of analysts to successfully use DNA from biological evidence that is old, of poor quality, or limited in quantity. These scientific advances, in addition to the availability of searchable convicted offender databases, has increased the likelihood of solving cases previously thought to be unsolvable.

Due date: The due date is listed on the cover of this announcement and on the NIJ Web site at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/funding.htm>. Extensions to the deadline are generally not granted.

Page limit: The program narrative section of your proposal must not exceed 30 double-spaced pages in 12-point font with 1-inch margins. Tables, charts, figures, appendixes, and government forms do not count toward the 30-page limit.

Reasons for rejection: NIJ may reject applications that are incomplete, do not respond to the scope of the solicitation, do not comply with format requirements, or are submitted after the deadline. No additions to the original submission are allowed.

How to submit proposals to NIJ: Complete details about how to apply for funding are in “NIJ Guidelines for Submitting Applications,” available on the NIJ Web site at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/funding.htm>.

II. Proposal Topics

The methods used for forensic DNA analysis have evolved markedly since they were first used for this purpose in the late 1980s. Although the early DNA methods provided highly powerful information, their uses were limited to evidence containing relatively large amounts of pristine DNA. In recent years, newer technologies have substantially increased the successful analysis of aged, degraded, limited, or otherwise compromised biological evidence. As a result, crime scene

samples thought to be unsuitable for testing several years ago may now yield DNA profiles. Additionally, samples that previously generated inconclusive DNA results may now be amenable to re-analysis using newer methods.

The President's DNA Initiative was announced by Attorney General John Ashcroft in March of 2003. Advancing Justice Through DNA Technology (available at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/dnainitiative/initiative.html>) includes a comprehensive national strategy to use DNA technology to solve crime and protect the innocent. The initiative proposes more than \$1 billion in funding over a 5-year period to:

- C Eliminate DNA sample backlogs.
- C Strengthen crime laboratory capacity at the State, Federal, and local levels.
- C Provide post-conviction DNA testing to protect the innocent.
- C Use DNA to identify missing persons.
- C Train the criminal justice community.
- C Stimulate more research and development in all areas of forensic science, further enhancing the ability of State and local laboratories to keep up with the burgeoning DNA analysis workload.

The remarkable success with cold case programs is due substantially to the existence of State, local, and Federal DNA databases. CODIS (Combined DNA Index System) is a software program that can link DNA profiles from crime scenes to convicted offenders and to other crime scene DNA profiles. CODIS can also aid investigations by searching a database of missing persons, which contains DNA profiles of unidentified remains and DNA profiles of relatives of those who are missing.

As an example of the power of DNA technology for solving cold cases, Kansas City police arrested a man several months ago who, over the course of 16 years, is suspected of taking the lives of 12 women. The youngest of his victims was 15. A modest grant of \$111,000 from the Department of Justice paid for forensic analyst and investigator overtime to review DNA evidence in this and other cases. The grant allowed investigators to solve 22 homicides and 9 rapes through the use of DNA evidence.

A. Solicitation objectives and requirements

Eligibility: State and units of local government are eligible to apply for funding under this solicitation. Awardees may use the funds to support the operation of regional task forces.

Qualifying offenses: Grant funds must be used for evaluation of offenses such as sexual assault, murder, and other serious offenses (such as kidnapping) where DNA evidence is

typically found and would have the greatest probative value for investigation and resolution of the crime.

Applicants are encouraged to be creative in the mechanisms they use to identify and prioritize cases. The proposed plan for the review, selection, and prioritization of cases must be clearly stated. There must be a strategy for coordinating with appropriate criminal justice entities that would be affected by these activities, as well as the victim or victim's family. Letters of intent from collaborating agencies strengthen the proposed plan. There must also be a plan of action if case review suggests that subsequent DNA testing is warranted, as well as a demonstration that there will be appropriate followup investigatory processes if a DNA match is obtained.

The following should be considered when developing the strategy for case review and selection:

- C Cases should be prioritized such that if a DNA match is made, the case can continue toward prosecution and judicial conclusion.
- C Cases should be evaluated for statute of limitation issues that might affect the ultimate ability to prosecute and resolve a case. Information about statute of limitations review should be included in the proposal.
- C When a case remains unsolved for a long period of time, evidence may be handled by more people. Furthermore, as cases age, the likelihood increases that evidence may be moved to new or remote storage locations as evidence from newer cases fills police department shelves.
- C It cannot be presumed that victims and witnesses, even if they were eager to pursue the case when it occurred, are still interested in pursuing the case. Cases should be assessed to determine whether witnesses necessary for the prosecution are still available for testimony. Additionally, the older a case is, the more difficult it may be to locate witnesses.
- C Evidence from older cases may have been submitted previously but can now be re-tested for DNA with a higher likelihood of success. For example, hair previously submitted for standard microscopic hair analysis may now be amenable to mitochondrial DNA testing.
- C Some sample types may be more likely than others to result in DNA profiles. For example, a vaginal swab from a rape kit collected more than 48–72 hours after the crime may yield a lower quantity of DNA as compared to a sample collected earlier or a stain on clothing.
- C Cases that could benefit from a review for potential DNA evidence can be identified from numerous sources. In some instances a police officer or investigator may remember an unsolved case from years ago. Other cases may be identified by coordinated,

interdepartmental efforts, victims or witnesses who have heard about the potential of DNA evidence, and laboratories taking inventory of their storage facilities.

- C Current DNA analysis techniques enable laboratories to develop profiles from biological evidence invisible to the naked eye, such as skin cells left on ligatures or weapons. Valuable DNA evidence might be available that previously went undetected in the original investigation. Laboratory personnel can also provide a valuable perspective on which evidence might yield probative DNA results.

Expected results: The result of receiving funding under this solicitation should be a demonstrated increase in the number of cold cases analyzed for DNA evidence and being closed. Success should also be measured by the percentage change in the number of cases and samples yielding DNA profiles initially thought to be unsuitable for testing, and the percentage change in the number of cases and samples previously generating inconclusive DNA results now amenable to re-analysis using new methods.

All eligible DNA analyses conducted under this award are submitted for inclusion in CODIS.

Additional information and guidance can be found in two U.S. Department of Justice publications: "Using DNA to Solve Cold Cases" (National Institute of Justice, NCJ 194197, July 2002) and "Cold Case Squads: Leaving No Stone Unturned" (Bureau of Justice Assistance, NCJ 199781, July 2003). Both are available at <http://www.ncjrs.org>. A report published by the State of California may also be useful. "A Process Evaluation of the California DNA Cold Hit Program" (July 2003) is available at http://www.oes.ca.gov/Operational/OESHome.nsf/CJPD_Documents?OpenForm

B. Allowable use of funds

Grant funds may be used for, but are not limited to, the following:

- C Personnel and necessary consultants and contractors: Staff overtime and consultant and contractor salaries are allowable under this solicitation. Individuals may include (but are not limited to) investigators, retired homicide detectives, students (such as law students), interns, crime lab personnel, coroners, medical examiners, administrative staff, and victim/witness advocates or coordinators.
- C Travel (for activities such as interviewing victims and witnesses, etc.).
- C Supplies and equipment (where necessary to complete the objectives stated in the proposal).
- C DNA testing: Applications may include requests for items related to DNA analysis where appropriate. NIJ encourages cost-effective use of funds by inclusion of a comprehensive pre-screening process. Applicants are encouraged where possible to perform DNA testing that will generate profiles with the potential to be uploaded into CODIS. DNA analysis must be performed by an accredited or certified laboratory. Each DNA analysis conducted under this

award, and each stored DNA sample that results from this award, must be maintained in accordance with the privacy requirements and restrictions on disclosure described in 42 U.S.C. section 14132(b)(3). Also each DNA analysis conducted under this award must be carried out in a forensic science laboratory that complies with Federal quality assurance standards for forensic DNA testing and is either accredited by the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors-Laboratory Accreditation Board or certified as accredited by the National Forensic Science Technology Center for compliance with Federal standards.

III. General Requirements and Guidance

This section describes the main requirements for submitting your proposal. Complete instructions are in “NIJ Guidelines for Submitting Applications,” available on the NIJ Web site at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/funding.htm>.

- A. Submit applications online:** Paper applications are not accepted. Applications must be submitted through the Office of Justice Programs’ online Grants Management System. NIJ suggests you begin the process early, especially if this is the first time you have used the system. To begin, go to <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/fundopps.htm>. There are three types of documents that can be uploaded to an application package: PDFs, Word Documents, and Text Documents.
- B. Equal opportunity for all applicants:** It is OJP policy that faith-based and community organizations that statutorily qualify as eligible applicants under OJP programs are invited and encouraged to apply for awards. Faith-based and community organizations will be considered for an award on the same basis as any other eligible applicants and, if they receive awards, will be treated on an equal basis with nonfaith-based and community organization grantees in the administration of such awards. No eligible applicant or grantee will be discriminated against on the basis of its religious character or affiliation, religious name, or the religious composition of its board of directors or persons working in the organization.
- C. Cofunding is not required:** You are not required to combine NIJ funds with other funds (for example, you do not need matching funds), but if you intend to use multiple funding sources to support your proposed effort, the budget you submit must show the other funds.
- D. Number of grants to be awarded:** The number of awards to be made depends on the availability of funds and the number and quality of applications received.
- E. When awards will be made:** The review and approval process takes about 6 months. Therefore, you should not propose to begin work until at least 6 months after the deadline on the cover of this solicitation. Also, you should not expect to receive notification of a decision

for at least 6 months after that date. Lists of awards are updated regularly and archived on NIJ's Web site at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/funding.htm>.

- F. Financial audits are required:** If your organization spends \$500,000 or more of Federal funds during the year, you will be required to submit an organization-wide financial and compliance audit report before any award is made. The audit must be performed in accordance with the U.S. General Accounting Office Government Accounting Standards and must conform to Chapter 19 of the Office of Justice Programs' *Financial Guide* (available at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/FinGuide>). You may include the costs of complying with these audits in the proposed budget submitted as part of your application. Detailed information regarding the independent audit is available in Office of Management and Budget Circular A-133 (available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars>).
- G. An environmental assessment may be required:** All award recipients must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). To ensure NEPA compliance, NIJ may require some award recipients to submit additional information.
- H. Protection of confidentiality:** Federal regulations require applicants for NIJ funding to outline specific procedures for protecting private information about individuals as part of the Privacy Certificate submitted with the application package. For complete details, see <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/funding.htm>.
- I. New requirement—DUNS number:** Beginning October 1, 2003, a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number must be included in every application for a new award or renewal of an award. The DUNS number will be required whether an applicant submits an application through the Office of Justice Programs' Grants Management System or using the government-wide electronic portal (<http://www.grants.gov>). **An application will not be considered complete until a valid DUNS number is provided by the applicant.** Individuals who would personally receive a grant or cooperative agreement from the Federal government are exempt from this requirement.

Applicants can receive a DUNS number at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711.

If you have questions, contact the Office of Justice Programs' Office of the Comptroller's Customer Service Center at 1-800-458-0786.

- J. Funds cannot be used to lobby:** Under the Anti-Lobbying Act (18 U.S.C. § 1913), grantees generally may not use funds to support the enactment, repeal, or modification of any law, regulation, or policy at any level of government. For the complete rules and regulations, see

“NIJ Guidelines for Submitting Applications” at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/funding.htm> and OJP’s *Financial Guide* at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/FinGuide>.

- K. What will *not* be funded:** Typically, NIJ *does not* fund the provision of training or work that will be funded under another specific proposal.
- L. Cost and number of awards:** The amount of each award and the number of awards made under this solicitation are contingent upon the availability of funds.
- M. Call for assistance:**
 - 1. For technical guidance about using the Grants Management System, call the hotline at 1-888-549-9901.
 - 2. For questions about this solicitation, the research being solicited, or other NIJ funding opportunities, contact the U.S. Department of Justice Response Center at 1-800-421-6770.

IV. Selection Criteria

NIJ is firmly committed to the competitive process in awarding grants. All proposals are subjected to an independent peer-review panel evaluation. External peer-review panelists consider both technical and programmatic merits. Panelists are selected based on their expertise in subject areas pertinent to the proposals.

Peer-review panelists evaluate each proposal and give their assessments to NIJ. NIJ staff then recommend to the NIJ Director which proposals are most worthy of an award. The Director makes final award decisions.

Successful applicants must demonstrate the following:

A. Understanding of the problem and its importance.

B. Quality and technical merit.

- 1. Awareness of the state of current research or technology.
- 2. Soundness of methodology and analytic and technical approach.
- 3. Feasibility of proposed project and awareness of pitfalls.
- 4. Innovation and creativity (when appropriate).

C. Capabilities, demonstrated productivity, and experience of applicants.

- 1. Qualifications and experience of proposed staff.
- 2. Demonstrated ability of proposed staff and organization to manage the effort.
- 3. Adequacy of the plan to manage the project, including how various tasks are subdivided and resources are used.

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4. Successful past performance on NIJ grants and contracts (when applicable).

D. Budget.

1. Total cost of the project relative to the perceived benefit.
2. Appropriateness of the budget relative to the level of effort.
3. Use of existing resources to conserve costs.

V. Requirements for Successful Applicants

If your proposal is funded, you will be required to submit several reports and other materials as follows:

- A. Final report:** The final report should be a comprehensive overview of the project and should include a detailed description of the project design, data, and methods; and a thorough discussion of the implications of the project findings for criminal justice practice and policy. It must contain an abstract of no more than 400 words and an executive summary of no more than 2,500 words. A draft of the final report, abstract, and executive summary must be submitted 90 days before the end date of the grant.
- B. Interim reports:** Grantees must submit quarterly financial reports, semi-annual progress reports, and a final progress report. Future awards and fund drawdowns may be withheld if reports are delinquent. Post-award reporting requirements are described in “NIJ Guidelines for Submitting Applications,” available at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/funding.htm>.
- C. Materials concerning protection of confidential information and human subjects:** Recipients of NIJ research funds must comply with Federal regulations concerning the protection of private information about individuals. Recipients also must comply with Federal regulations concerning protection of human subjects. In general, all research involving human subjects that is conducted or supported by NIJ funds must be reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board before Federal funds are expended for that research. NIJ may also ask grant recipients for additional information related to privacy and human subjects testing.

Additional general information regarding NIJ’s requirements for privacy and protection of human subjects appears in “NIJ Guidelines for Submitting Applications,” available at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/funding.htm>. Complete information about NIJ’s requirements can be found at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/humansubjects>.

- D. Performance guidelines:** NIJ collects data to comply with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), Public Law 103–62. Generally, these data are contained in a grantee’s final report (discussed in Section V of this solicitation), but NIJ may request additional information to facilitate future planning and to ensure accurate reporting to Congress and

others on the measurable results of grants. For complete details, see “NIJ Guidelines for Submitting Applications,” available at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/funding.htm>.

Tips for Submitting Your Application

1. Begin the application process early—especially if you have never used the online Grants Management System before. NIJ will not accept applications received after the closing date and time listed on the cover. To start the process, go to—
<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/fundopps.htm>.
2. Be sure your application package includes—
 - Abstract of no more than 400 words.
 - Complete budget, including detailed worksheet and narrative.
 - Program narrative.
3. Review “NIJ Guidelines for Submitting Applications” for complete instructions, available at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/funding.htm>.
4. Call for help:
 - For technical guidance about the Grants Management System, call the hotline at 1–888–549–9901.
 - For questions about this solicitation, the research being solicited, or other NIJ funding opportunities, contact the U.S. Department of Justice Response Center at 1–800–421–6770.

View or print a copy of this document from the NIJ Web site (<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/funding.htm>) or request one by calling NCJRS at 1–800–851–3420 or e-mailing askncjrs@ncjrs.org.

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NIJ provides objective, independent, evidence-based knowledge and tools to enhance the administration of justice and public safety.

NIJ is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Office for Victims of Crime.