



The U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice is seeking applications for funding research and development that can enhance the forensic uses of DNA technology. This solicitation focuses on technologies that result in faster, more robust, more informative, less costly, or less labor-intensive identification, collection, preservation, and/or analysis of DNA evidence collected from crime scenes.

This program furthers the Department's mission by sponsoring research to provide objective, independent, evidence-based knowledge and tools to meet the challenges of crime and justice, particularly at the State and local levels.

Solicitation: Forensic DNA Research and Development

Eligibility

(See "Eligibility," page 4)

Deadline

All applications are due **October 30, 2006,**
11:59 p.m. eastern time.

Contact Information

For assistance with the requirements of this solicitation, contact Lois Tully, Deputy Chief, Investigative and Forensic Sciences Division, 202-307-0694, Lois.Tully@usdoj.gov.

This application must be submitted through Grants.gov. For technical assistance with submitting the application, call the Grants.gov Customer Support Hotline at 1-800-518-4726.

Grants.gov Funding Opportunity No. 2007-NIJ-1426
SL# 000756

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Forensic DNA Research and Development

CFDA No. 16.560

Overview

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

NIJ is seeking applications for funding research and development that can enhance the forensic uses of DNA technology. This solicitation focuses on technologies that result in faster, more robust, more informative, less costly, or less labor-intensive identification, collection, preservation, and/or analysis of DNA evidence collected from crime scenes. Priority will be given to proposals focusing on the following:

- General improvements to the “front-end” of the forensic DNA analysis process.
- Physical separation of the components of a mixture.
- Body fluid/cell type identification and characterization.
- Identification and/or characterization of genetic marker systems that have the potential to reveal additional or more powerful information about the source of the biological evidence.
- Improved tools for examining aged, degraded, limited, damaged, inhibited, or otherwise compromised DNA evidence.
- Species differentiation.
- Novel methods for genetic profiling for forensic use.

Deadline: Registration

Registering with Grants.gov is a one-time process; however, if you are a first-time registrant it could take up to several weeks to have your registration validated and confirmed and to receive your user password. Start the registration process early to prevent delays that may cause you to miss the application deadline. You must complete these three steps before you are able to register: (1) Register with Central Contractor Registry (CCR), (2) Register yourself as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR), and (3) Be authorized as an AOR by your organization. For more Information, go to www.grants.gov. **Note: Your CCR Registration must be renewed once a year. Failure to renew your CCR registration may prohibit submission of a grant application through Grants.gov.**

Deadline: Application

The due date for applying for funding under this announcement is October 30, 2006, 11:59 p.m. eastern time.

Eligibility

In general, NIJ is authorized to make grants to, or enter into contracts or cooperative agreements with, States (including territories), local governments (including federally recognized Indian tribal governments that perform law enforcement functions), nonprofit organizations, profit organizations, institutions of higher education, and qualified individuals. Foreign governments or organizations are not eligible to apply.

Faith-Based and Other Community Organizations: Consistent with President George W. Bush's Executive Order 13279, dated December 12, 2002, and 28 C.F.R. Part 38, it is DOJ policy that faith-based and other community organizations that statutorily qualify as eligible applicants under DOJ programs are invited and encouraged to apply for assistance awards to fund eligible grant activities. Faith-based and other community organizations will be considered for awards on the same basis as other eligible applicants and, if they receive assistance awards, will be treated on an equal basis with all other grantees in the administration of such awards. No eligible applicant or grantee will be discriminated for or 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.

Faith-based organizations receiving DOJ assistance awards retain their independence and do not lose or have to modify their religious identity (e.g., removing religious symbols) to receive assistance awards. DOJ grant funds, however, may not be used to fund any inherently religious activity, such as prayer or worship. Inherently religious activity is permissible, although it cannot occur during an activity funded with DOJ grant funds; rather, such religious activity must be separate in time or place from the DOJ-funded program. Further, participation in such activity by individuals receiving services must be voluntary. Programs funded by DOJ are not permitted to discriminate in the provision of services on the basis of a beneficiary's religion.

Applicants are encouraged to review the Civil Rights Compliance section under "Additional Requirements" in this announcement.

Specific Information—Forensic DNA Research and Development

The goal of NIJ's forensic DNA research and development program is to harness the tremendous growth in the broader scientific fields (such as molecular biology, genetics, and biotechnology) and direct it toward the development of highly discriminating, reliable, cost-effective, and rapid forensic DNA testing methods. Forensic DNA analysis has played a crucial role in the investigation and resolution of thousands of violent crimes since the late 1980s.

Currently, short tandem repeats (STRs) are the most widely used markers for forensic DNA testing. Because of their high discriminatory power, good resolution of alleles, and the ability to rapidly process samples using multiplexed polymerase chain reaction (PCR), 13 STRs have been chosen as the core loci upon which the FBI's National DNA Index System (NDIS) has been built.

In recent years, other genetic polymorphisms, such as those found in the mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) genome and the Y chromosome, have been shown to provide effective results that can augment traditional STR data. MtDNA analysis is especially useful for cases involving extremely degraded or limited biological residues, such as skeletal remains or shed hairs. Y chromosome markers can be beneficial in resolving sexual assault cases. Single nucleotide polymorphisms, now known to be abundant throughout the nuclear genome, may become important genetic markers for the forensic scientist in the future. The emerging discipline of proteomics may include forensic applications that have not yet been explored. An increased understanding of these and other systems with potential forensic utility, as well as the continued development of advanced methods (particularly those amenable to automated and high-throughput processes) for examining biological evidence, will greatly benefit the field.

Applicants to this solicitation should demonstrate an appreciation of and general familiarity with the technologies currently used for analyzing DNA evidence. They should have an understanding of issues such as chain of custody, courtroom admissibility, degraded or limited DNA, and mixtures of DNA from multiple tissues or individuals. Applicants should also have an appreciation of the costs to implement and maintain the proposed technology, as well as the training that will be required.

NIJ strongly encourages researchers to seek guidance from or partner with appropriate State or local crime laboratories. Such associations foster a greater understanding of the issues unique to the field of forensic DNA and may strengthen the scope of the proposed research plan.

Information on projects funded under NIJ's Forensic DNA Research and Development Program can be found on www.dna.gov/research/.

Suggested areas of research: Tools and technologies that will allow faster, more reliable, more robust, more informative, less costly, or less labor-intensive identification, collection, preservation, and/or analysis of DNA evidence collected from the crime scene.

Priority will be given to proposals addressing the following needs and requirements:

General improvements to the “front-end” of the forensic DNA analysis process.

Examples include:

- Development of rapid screening methods for use at crime scenes to help assess the probative value of biological materials.
- Development of non- or minimally destructive methods for biological evidentiary sample collection.
- Development of improved tools (e.g., substrates, devices, methods) for biological evidence preservation and/or storage. The tool must effectively maintain the integrity of the sample, and efficiently and consistently release the sample for subsequent analysis.
- Development of non- or minimally destructive methods for DNA extraction.
- Development of genetic screening methods for assessing probative value of evidentiary samples. This method could help crime lab analysts focus the full DNA analysis on the most probative samples. This would in turn reduce the time currently spent on interpretation and reporting of samples that are non-probative.

Physical separation of cells (e.g., sperm cells from female epithelial cells, epithelial cells from different sources, etc.) or other components (e.g., PCR products) in mixtures from two or more individuals or sources. A method that can physically separate the various components of a mixture would benefit the overall DNA analysis method. The separation method must be successful on typical forensic samples (limited in yield, etc.) and must not reduce the efficiency of downstream DNA profiling methods.

Body fluid/cell type identification and characterization. Biological evidence is frequently a combination of various cell types/body fluids (e.g., sperm/ semen, vaginal epithelial cells/vaginal fluid, oral epithelial cells/saliva). A confirmatory method for determining the source of the components present in the biological evidence would benefit the overall DNA analysis process.

Identification and/or characterization of genetic markers that have the potential to reveal additional or more powerful information about the source of the biological evidence. An example would be genetic markers that have the potential to provide forensically useful information about physical characteristics (e.g., phenotype) of the DNA contributor.

Improved tools for examining aged, degraded, limited, damaged, inhibited, or otherwise compromised DNA evidence. Examples include:

- Development of tools to determine the condition of the DNA in order to assist crime lab analysts in selecting the appropriate DNA profiling approach.
- Development of methods to repair damaged DNA evidence to increase the likelihood of obtaining a DNA profile.
- Improvements to the methods for detection and/or removal of PCR inhibitors.
- Other methods that will maximize the success rate of the analysis of compromised DNA evidence.
- Improvements to the overall understanding of the processes and mechanisms that result in the inability to obtain a DNA profile from biological evidence.

Species Differentiation. Forensic DNA analysts would benefit from a tool that can quickly and accurately identify the species of non-human DNA evidence. The method should have sufficient sensitivity for use in forensic analysis, be able to screen for several species simultaneously, and consume minimal sample. **Note:** Proposed research focusing on non-human genetic markers for individualization (e.g., animal/plant STRs) or entomological research (e.g., for determination of time since death) will not be accepted.

Novel approaches for genetic profiling. Examples include streamlined, portable, high-throughput, more informative, more sensitive, less-susceptible to inhibition, non-PCR-based, and/or all-inclusive (e.g., DNA extraction through analysis) methods for analysis of biological evidence.

What will *not* be funded:

1. Provision of training or direct service.
2. Proposals primarily to purchase equipment, materials, or supplies. (Your budget may include these items if they are necessary to conduct applied research, development,

- demonstration, evaluation, or analysis, but NIJ does not fund proposals that are primarily to purchase these items.)
3. Work that will be funded under another specific solicitation.
 4. Proposals focusing on non-human DNA (other than that described in "Species Differentiation").
 5. Proposals that do not contain a research and/or development component or are otherwise non-responsive to the general goals of this solicitation.

Cost of proposed work: Total funding for this solicitation and the number of awards made will depend on the availability of funds and the quality of the applications. All awards are subject to the availability of appropriated funds and to any modifications or additional requirements that may be imposed by law. Approximately 8 percent of applications to NIJ's annual Science and Technology solicitations are funded. NIJ funding for an individual research and development project rarely exceeds \$500,000 annually, though total funding for projects requiring several years to complete has exceeded \$1 million or more. If feasible, NIJ recommends that applicants divide the proposed work into discrete phases, with each phase resulting in the delivery of a measurable deliverable. Applicants should try to structure the phases so that the funding required in any fiscal year will not exceed \$500,000. This will enable NIJ to fund the proposed work incrementally, depending on: the quality of the deliverable at the end of each phase, emerging priorities, and the availability of funds. However, applicants should not divide their work if it is not feasible to do so without impairing the technical and programmatic soundness of their approach. Note: Deliverables (e.g., technical reports, proof-of-concept demonstrations, prototypes, etc.) will be required at the end of each phase to enable NIJ to assess the progress of the work and make reasoned determinations as to the suitability of funding the next phase of the work.

A grant made by NIJ under this solicitation may account for up to 100 percent of the total cost of the project. See "Cofunding" under "What an Application Must Include."

Performance Measures

To assist in fulfilling the Department's responsibilities under the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), P.L. 103-62, applicants who receive funding under this solicitation must provide data that measures the results of their work. Performance measures for this solicitation are as follows:

Objective	Performance Measures	Data Grantee Provides
<p>Development of tools and technologies that will allow faster, more reliable, more robust, more informative, less costly, or less labor-intensive identification, collection, preservation, and/or analysis of DNA evidence.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Relevance to the needs of the field as measured by whether the grantee's substantive scope did not deviate from the funded proposal or any subsequent agency modifications to the scope. 2. Quality of the research as assessed by peer reviewers. 3. Quality of management as measured by whether significant interim project milestones were achieved, final deadlines were met, and costs remained within approved limits. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A final report providing a comprehensive overview of the project and a detailed description of the project design, data, and methods; a full presentation of scientific findings; and a thorough discussion of the implications of the project findings for criminal justice practice and policy. 2. Quarterly financial reports, semi-annual progress reports, and a final progress report.

How to Apply

DOJ is participating in the e-Government initiative, one of 25 initiatives included in the President's Management Agenda. Part of this initiative—Grants.gov—is a “one-stop storefront” that provides a unified process for all customers of Federal grants to find funding opportunities and apply for funding.

Grants.gov Instructions: Complete instructions can be found at http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp. If you experience difficulties at any point during this process, please call the Grants.gov Customer Support Hotline at **1-800-518-4726**.

CFDA Number: The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number for this solicitation is 16.560, titled “National Institute of Justice Research, Evaluation, and Development Project Grants,” and the Grants.gov funding opportunity number is 2007-NIJ-1426.

A DUNS number is required: The Office of Management and Budget requires that all businesses and nonprofit applicants for Federal funds include a DUNS (Data Universal Numeric System) number in their application for a new award or renewal of an award. Applications without a DUNS number are incomplete. A DUNS number is a unique nine-digit sequence recognized as the universal standard for identifying and keeping track of entities receiving Federal funds. The identifier is used for tracking purposes and to validate address and point of contact information. The DUNS number will be used throughout the grant life cycle. Obtaining a DUNS number is a free, simple, one-time activity. Obtain one by calling 1-866-705-5711 or by applying online at www.dnb.com/us. Individuals are exempt from this requirement.

What an Application Must Include

Responding to this solicitation involves a two step process. The first step involves submitting a concept paper, which will be reviewed by a panel comprised of both expert practitioners and technologists. The deadline for the concept paper is October 30, 2006, 11:59 p.m. eastern time. If the concept paper is recommended and approved, the applicant will be contacted, invited to submit a full proposal, and given a proposal deadline. Extensions to deadlines are generally not granted.

Concept Paper

A concept paper should capture the essence of the full proposal following the same format (see Full Proposal below). The main difference between the concept paper and the full proposal is that the concept papers are much shorter and do not contain detailed budgets. Though the concept paper should not include a detailed budget or management plan, the program narrative should include a staffing plan and an estimate of the funding required, summarized by phase (if applicable), and a general timeframe for completion of those phases and the project as a whole.

The concept paper must not exceed 10 double-spaced pages in 12-point font with 1-inch margins, including charts, figures, and appendixes. A short abstract must be included within the 10 pages.

Full Proposal

Proposals should include the following:

Standard Form 424

Program Narrative

The Program Narrative includes:

- a. Abstract (not to exceed 400 words).
- b. Table of contents.
- c. Main body, which includes:
 - Purpose, goals, and objectives.
 - Review of relevant literature.
 - Research design and methods.
 - Implications for policy and practice.
 - Management plan and organization.
 - Dissemination strategy.
- d. Appendixes (not counted against program narrative page limit) include:
 - Bibliography/References (if applicable).
 - List of key personnel (required).
 - Résumés of key personnel (required).
 - List of previous and current NIJ awards (required).
 - Letters of cooperation/support or administrative agreements from organizations collaborating in the project (if applicable).
 - Chart for timeline, research calendar, or milestones (required).
 - Other materials required by the solicitation.

Budget Detail Worksheet

The estimate of funding required in the concept paper and the Budget Narrative (see below) of the Full Proposal should address the full scope, duration and cost of the project.

Templates for filling out the Budget Detail Worksheet may be found through the Internet at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/Forms/budget_fillable.pdf, OJP Standard Forms & Instructions. If you have any questions, please contact the Office of the Comptroller's Customer Service Center at 1-800-458-0786.

Budget Narrative

Negotiated Indirect Rate Agreement (if applicable)

Applicants that do not have a federally negotiated indirect cost rate and wish to establish one, can submit a proposal to their "cognizant" Federal agency. Generally, the cognizant federal agency is the agency that provides the preponderance of direct federal funding. This can be determined by reviewing an organization's schedule of federal financial assistance. If DOJ is your cognizant federal agency, obtain information needed to submit an indirect cost rate proposal at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/oc/indirectcosts.htm.

Other Program Attachments

These include several forms, available on OJP's funding page at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/forms.htm.

Page limit: The program narrative section of invited full proposals must not exceed 25 double-spaced pages in 12-point font with 1-inch margins. Abstract, table of contents, charts, figures, appendixes, and government forms do not count toward the 25-page limit for the narrative section.

Cofunding: A grant made by NIJ under this solicitation may account for up to 100 percent of the total cost of the project. You must indicate whether you believe it is feasible for you to contribute cash, facilities, or services as non-Federal support for the project. Your proposal should identify generally any such contributions that you expect to make and your proposed budget should indicate in detail which items, if any, will be supported with non-Federal contributions.

Selection Criteria

Successful applicants must demonstrate the following:

Understanding of the problem and its importance.

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).

Impact of the proposed project.

1. Potential for significant advances in scientific or technical understanding of the problem.
2. Potential for significant advances in the field.
3. Relevance for improving the policy and practice of criminal justice and related agencies and improving public safety, security, and quality of life.
4. Affordability and cost-effectiveness of proposed end products, when applicable (e.g., purchase price and maintenance costs for a new technology or cost of training to use the technology).
5. Perceived potential for commercialization and/or implementation of a new technology (when applicable).

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

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.

Dissemination strategy.

1. Well-defined plan for the grant recipient to disseminate results to appropriate audiences, including researchers, practitioners, and policymakers.
2. Suggestions for print and electronic products NIJ might develop for practitioners and policymakers.

Relevance of the project for policy and practice:

Higher quality proposals clearly explain the practical implications of the project. They connect technical expertise with criminal justice policy and practice. To ensure that the project has strong relevance for policy and practice, some researchers and technologists collaborate with practitioners and policymakers. You may include letters showing support from practitioners, but they carry less weight than clear evidence that you understand why policymakers and practitioners would benefit from your work and how they would use it. While a partnership may affect State or local activities, it should also have broader implications for others across the country.

Review Process

NIJ is firmly committed to the competitive process in awarding grants. All proposals under this solicitation will be subjected to independent peer-review panel evaluations. 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 will evaluate proposals using the criteria listed above. NIJ staff then make recommendations to the NIJ Director. The Director makes award decisions.

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.

When awards will be made: All applicants, whether they are accepted or rejected, will be notified. The review and approval process takes about 10 months. You should not propose to begin work until at least 10 months after the proposal deadline on the cover of this solicitation. Also, you should not expect to receive notification of a decision for at least 10 months after that date. Lists of awards are updated regularly on NIJ's Web site at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/funding.htm.

Additional Requirements

- Civil Rights Compliance
- Confidentiality and Human Subjects Protections regulations
- Anti-Lobbying Act
- Financial and Government Audit Requirements
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance
- DOJ Information Technology Standards
- Single Point of Contact Review
- Non-supplanting of State or Local Funds
- Criminal Penalty for False Statements
- Compliance with Office of the Comptroller Financial Guide
- Suspension or Termination of Funding
- Non-profit Organizations
- Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA)
- Rights in Intellectual Property

We strongly encourage you to review the information pertaining to these additional requirements prior to submitting your application. Additional information for each can be found at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/otherrequirements.htm.

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

Final substantive 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; a full presentation of scientific findings; 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. The draft final report will be peer reviewed upon submission. The reviews will be forwarded to the principal investigator with suggestions for revisions. The author must then submit the revised final report, abstract, and executive summary by the end date of the grant. The abstract, executive summary, and final report must be submitted in both paper and electronic formats.

For program evaluation studies, the final report should include a section on measuring program performance. This section should outline the measures used to evaluate program effectiveness, modifications made to those measures as a result of the evaluation, and recommendations regarding these and other potential performance measures for similar programs. (This information will be particularly valuable to NIJ and other Federal program agencies in implementing performance measures for federally funded criminal justice programs.)

Interim reports: Grantees must submit quarterly financial reports, semi-annual progress reports, a final progress report, and, if applicable, an annual audit report in accordance with Office of Management and Budget Circular A-133. Future awards and fund drawdowns may be withheld if reports are delinquent.