

SPECIAL NOTICE

The operational requirements referenced in this solicitation were updated on January 20, 2015. The updated operational requirements are available at <http://www.nij.gov/topics/forensics/pages/forensic-operational-requirements.aspx>.

To assist applicants in completing their proposals, NIJ has made FAQs available for this funding opportunity. Visit <http://nij.gov/funding/pages/solicitation-qa.aspx#sl0011> for questions and answers to help prepare your application.

For further assistance with any other requirements of this solicitation, please contact forensic.research@usdoj.gov.



The [U.S. Department of Justice](#) (DOJ), [Office of Justice Programs](#) (OJP), [National Institute of Justice](#) (NIJ) is seeking applications for funding of basic or applied research and development in forensic science for criminal justice purposes. This program furthers the Department's mission by sponsoring research to provide objective, independent, evidence-based knowledge and tools to meet the challenges of criminal justice, particularly at the State and local levels. NIJ's Forensic Science Technology Working Group (TWG) assists in identifying and prioritizing operational needs and requirements of the field. The operational requirements discussed at the FY 2014 meeting may be found at the following link and are intended to facilitate your proposal development: www.nij.gov/topics/forensics/pages/fy14-twg-operational-requirements.aspx

Research and Development in Forensic Science for Criminal Justice Purposes

Eligibility

In general, NIJ is authorized to make grants to, or enter into contracts or cooperative agreements with, States (including territories), units of local government (including federally recognized Indian tribal governments as determined by the Secretary of the Interior), nonprofit and for-profit organizations (including tribal nonprofit or for-profit organizations), institutions of higher education (including tribal institutions of higher education), and certain qualified individuals. For-profit organizations must agree to forgo any profit or management fee. NIJ may also enter into interagency agreements with Federal entities in appropriate cases. Foreign governments, foreign organizations, and foreign institutions of higher education are not eligible to apply.

NIJ welcomes applications that involve two or more entities, however, one eligible entity must be the applicant and the other(s) must be proposed as subrecipient(s). The applicant must be the entity with primary responsibility for conducting and leading the research. If successful, the applicant will be responsible for monitoring and appropriately managing any subrecipients or, as applicable, for administering any procurement subcontracts that would receive federal program funds from the applicant under the award.

An eligible applicant may submit more than one application, as long as each application proposes a different project in response to the solicitation. (Applicants should also review and consider the "Duplicate Applications" note under [How to Apply](#) in Section D. Application and Submission Information.) Subrecipients may be part of multiple proposals.

NIJ may elect to make awards for applications submitted under this solicitation in future fiscal years, dependent on the merit of the applications and on the availability of appropriations.

For additional eligibility information, see Section [C. Eligibility Information](#).

Deadline

Applicants must register with Grants.gov prior to submitting an application. All applications are due to be submitted and in receipt of a successful validation message in Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. eastern time on April 8, 2015.

All applicants are encouraged to read this [Important Notice: Applying for Grants in Grants.gov](#).

For additional information, see [How to Apply](#) in Section D. Application and Submission Information.

Contact Information

For technical assistance with submitting an application, contact the Grants.gov Customer Support Hotline at 800-518-4726 or 606-545-5035, or via e-mail to support@grants.gov. The Grants.gov Support Hotline hours of operation are 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, except federal holidays.

Applicants that experience unforeseen Grants.gov technical issues beyond their control that prevent them from submitting their application by the deadline must e-mail the NIJ contact identified below **within 24 hours after the application deadline** and request approval to submit their application. Additional information on reporting technical issues is found under "Experiencing Unforeseen Grants.gov Technical Issues" in the [How to Apply](#) section.

For assistance with any other requirements of this solicitation, contact forensic.research@usdoj.gov. General information on applying for NIJ awards can be found at www.nij.gov/funding/Pages/welcome.aspx. Answers to frequently asked questions that may assist applicants are posted at www.nij.gov/funding/Pages/faqs.aspx.

Grants.gov number assigned to this announcement: NIJ-2015-3985

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Research and Development in Forensic Science for Criminal Justice Purposes

(CFDA No. 16.560)

A. Program Description

Overview

With this solicitation, NIJ seeks proposals for basic or applied research and development projects that will: (1) increase the body of knowledge to guide and inform forensic science policy and practice or (2) result in the production of useful materials, devices, systems, or methods that have the potential for forensic application. The intent of this program is to direct the findings of basic scientific research, research and development in broader scientific fields applicable to forensic science, and ongoing forensic science research toward the development of highly discriminating, accurate, reliable, cost-effective, and rapid methods for the identification, analysis, and interpretation of physical evidence for criminal justice purposes. The operational needs and requirements discussed at NIJ's FY 2014 Forensic Science Technology Working Group (TWG) meeting may be found at the following link and are intended to assist you in your proposal development: www.nij.gov/topics/forensics/pages/fy14-twg-operational-requirements.aspx

Authorizing Legislation: Title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (sections 201 and 202); Homeland Security Act (sections 231-233); Department of Justice Appropriations Act, 2015; 28 U.S.C. 530C.

Program-Specific Information

This solicitation seeks applications for funding to support basic or applied research and development forensic science projects. For the purposes of this solicitation, the following definitions apply:

- **Forensic**—Of, relating to, or used in legal proceedings or argumentation.¹
- **Science**—The observation, identification, description, experimental investigations, and theoretical explanation of natural phenomena.²
- **Basic research**—A systematic study directed toward fuller knowledge or understanding of the fundamental aspects of phenomena and of observable facts without specific applications towards processes or products in mind. Basic research may include activities with broad applications in mind.³ (For the purposes of this solicitation, basic research must include activities with broad application to forensic sciences related to the criminal justice system.)

¹ The definition of "forensic" is taken from *Webster's II New Riverside University Dictionary*.

² The definition of "science" is taken from *Webster's II New Riverside University Dictionary*.

³ Definition is taken from: OMB Circular A-11, Preparation, Submission, and Execution of the Budget, Section 84—Character Classification (Schedule C).

- **Applied research**—A systematic study to gain knowledge or understanding necessary to determine the means by which a recognized and specific need may be met.⁴ (For the purposes of this solicitation, the specific need(s) being met must relate to the improvement of forensic science services for criminal justice purposes.)
- **Development**—The systematic application of knowledge or understanding, directed toward the production of useful materials, devices, and systems or methods, including design, development, and improvement of prototypes and new processes to meet specific requirements.⁵ (For the purposes of this solicitation, the development of forensic technologies and methods should assist in answering questions posed in criminal investigations or increase crime laboratory capacity to meet the demand for forensic science services.)

Proposals are expected to identify the forensic science discipline(s) intended to benefit from the project. **The forensic science discipline(s) should be listed in the key words on the title page.** Some of the forensic science disciplines are listed below (where available, links have also been provided to sites containing additional information).

- DNA and forensic biology (www.dna.gov, www.cstl.nist.gov/strbase, www.swgdam.org).
- Forensic crime scene analysis (www.swgstain.org).
- Forensic anthropology and forensic odontology (www.swganth.org).
- Controlled substances (www.swgdrug.org).
- Fire debris analysis and arson scene investigations (www.ncfs.ucf.edu/twgfex).
- Firearms and toolmark identification (www.swggun.org).
- Latent print (www.swgfast.org).
- Shoeprint/tire tread examination (www.swgtread.org).
- Questioned documents (www.swgdoc.org).
- Trace evidence (www.swgmat.org).
- Forensic toxicology (www.swgtox.org).
- Medicolegal death investigations, including forensic pathology (www.swgmddi.org).

NIJ will also accept proposals that include an examination of human factors as they relate to one of the forensic science disciplines listed above. Such proposals must relate directly to the forensic examiner and/or the identification, testing, collection, and interpretation of physical evidence.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

Goals, Objectives, Deliverables, and Expected Scholarly Products

NIJ's Research and Development in Forensic Science for Criminal Justice Purposes Program is intended to meet the following goals and objectives. Proposals should address at least one of these goals. Proposed projects that address more than one goal should be separated into discrete phases that clearly identify the goal to be addressed by each phase (additional information regarding the phasing of proposals can be found in Section [B. Federal Award Information](#)).

- **Fundamental/Basic Research Goal:** Improve the understanding of the accuracy, reliability, and measurement validity of forensic science disciplines. Applicants may refer to “*Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States: A Path Forward*, National Research Council of the National Academies, The National Academies Press, February 2009”⁶ to review research recommendations put forth by the Committee. To achieve this goal, projects should meet at least one of the following objectives:
 - Conduct basic scientific research in the physical, life, and cognitive sciences that is designed to increase the knowledge underlying forensic science disciplines intended for use in the criminal justice system. For the purposes of this objective, basic research studies proposed must include activities with broad application to forensic sciences related to the criminal justice system; proposals should describe the anticipated impact of the study on one or more forensic science disciplines.
 - Perform studies that examine the degree of accuracy and reliability of methods used by forensic scientists to achieve a more complete understanding of the scientific basis of forensic evidence and the interpretation of that evidence. Studies also may examine various processes within forensic methods, from the initial acceptance and examination of evidence for its probative value and quality, to the final interpretation of forensic results, including assessment of error rate.
 - Conduct research studies designed to further the understanding of quantifiable measures of uncertainty in the conclusions of forensic analyses, regardless of the sources of uncertainty. Studies should seek to establish limits of reliability and accuracy that forensic methods can achieve with respect to varying conditions of forensic evidence.
 - Develop new approaches to forensic analysis, including quantitation of analyses that are currently qualitative in nature (e.g., in the development of quantitative studies related to friction ridge analysis or other impression and pattern evidence).
- **Applied Research Goal:** Increase knowledge or understanding necessary to guide criminal justice policy and practice related to the forensic sciences. To achieve this goal, projects should meet at least one of the following objectives:
 - Perform applied research to increase knowledge of physical evidence and/or its behavior. Examples include, but are not limited to, the study of fluid transfer and fluid dynamics of certain biological fluids (e.g., blood) to increase understanding of patterns deposited at crime scenes; the examination of chemical properties of evidence for the purpose of identifying source materials; studies of the behavior of

⁶ www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/228091.pdf

chemical compounds of forensic interest in biological systems; research to better understand aged, degraded, limited, damaged, inhibited, or otherwise compromised physical evidence (e.g., studies on the effect of environmental factors on physical evidence; studies to increase the overall understanding of the processes and mechanisms that result in the inability to obtain analytical results from evidence).

- Perform evaluation studies of technologies that are expected to have application to forensic sciences in criminal justice settings. The purpose of an evaluation must be to test a new, modified, or previously untested technology to determine whether it is effective for forensic science application. Proposals for evaluation studies should systematically use scientific methods to measure efficiency, implementation, and utility of the technology being evaluated. The primary intent of a proposed evaluation study must be to generate new knowledge or contribute to the knowledge in the forensic scientific literature. Furthermore, knowledge gained from an evaluation study should be applicable to sites other than the one(s) being evaluated. An evaluation study should result in a report suitable for publication and dissemination to guide criminal justice policy and/or practice related to the forensic sciences. The results of an evaluation study should contribute to **generalizable knowledge that can be applied beyond a particular program/geography and can inform other researchers, practitioners, and/or policymakers.**
- **Development Goal:** Produce novel and useful materials, devices, systems, or methods that have the potential for forensic application for criminal justice purposes. For development projects, proposals should demonstrate potential for increased quality of result and/or decreased time/cost for forensic analyses as compared to current standard practices. In order to achieve this goal, projects should meet at least one of the following objectives:
 - Improve the “front end” of the forensic analysis processes. Examples include, but are not limited to, the development of improved methods for detection and identification of evidence at crime scenes, the development of improved screening methods to help assess the probative value of physical evidence (i.e., onsite presumptive and/or confirmatory analysis of evidence), the development of improved means to remotely detect forensic evidence at a crime scene to overcome scene hazards and prevent evidence contamination, the development of nondestructive or minimally destructive methods for evidentiary sample identification and/or collection, and the development of improved tools or methods for evidence preservation and/or storage.
 - Develop instrumental systems to improve analysis throughput and the reliability, reproducibility, selectivity, and/or sensitivity of current methods used in crime laboratories for forensic analysis.
 - Develop tools or methods that can separate the various components of a mixture. The separation method must be successful on typical forensic samples (limited in yield, etc.) and must not reduce the efficiency of downstream forensic methods. Examples of mixtures include, but are not limited to, cells from different sources (e.g., sperm cells from female epithelial cells, epithelial cells from different sources), products of DNA processes (e.g., polymerase chain reaction (PCR) products in mixtures from two or more individuals), and trace materials.

- Develop improved tools for examining aged, degraded, limited, damaged, inhibited, or otherwise compromised physical evidence. Examples include, but are not limited to, the development of tools to determine the condition of the evidence to assist crime laboratory analysts in selecting the appropriate analytical approach, the development of methods to repair damaged evidence (without compromising sample integrity) to increase the likelihood of obtaining an analytical result, improvements to the methods for detection and/or removal or remediation of substances that inhibit the success of analysis, or other methods that will maximize the success rate of the analysis of compromised evidence.
- Develop novel approaches to forensic science methods for analysis and interpretation. Examples include streamlined, portable, high-throughput, more informative, more sensitive, less susceptible to inhibition, and other novel methods for analysis of physical evidence for criminal justice purposes.
- Develop novel approaches and/or enhance current approaches to interpret forensic data derived from physical evidence, including an assessment of the significance of association. This may include development of databases (comprehensive, searchable, easily accessible, secure databases for use in determining the statistical strength of analytical results obtained from evidence found at crime scenes) and/or analyses that provide quantitative measures and statistical evaluation of forensic evidence.

In addition to required data sets, a draft and final summary overview of research results, interim and final progress and financial reports,⁷ NIJ expects scholarly products to result from each award under this solicitation, taking the form of one or more published, peer-reviewed, scientific journal articles, and/or (if appropriate) law review journal articles, book chapter(s) or book(s) in the academic press, technological prototypes, patented inventions, or similar scientific products.

Some projects may be chosen for technology evaluation or technology transition activities. More information, including examples of previous workshops and evaluations, can be found through the following links: www.nij.gov/topics/forensics/lab-operations/Pages/workshops.aspx and www.forensiccoe.org/KT/techtransfer.aspx.

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

Information on NIJ's forensic science research and development programs (including previously funded projects) can be found at: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/topics/forensics/welcome.htm.

New Investigator Opportunities

NIJ is interested in funding new investigators in forensic science research as it pertains to NIJ's mission. Proposals whose principal investigator and any co-principal investigator(s) are defined as "new investigators" may, in appropriate circumstances, be given special consideration in award decisions.

⁷ See "Federal Award Administration Information" ("General Information About Post-Federal Award Reporting Requirements") section of this solicitation, below, for additional information.

To be considered a “new investigator” for purposes of this solicitation, one of the two sets of criteria below must be demonstrated and the applicant should identify the principal investigator(s) as “new investigator(s)” on the title page of the proposal:

- The investigator must have received, no earlier than April 1, 2011, an initial appointment in the United States to a full-time junior faculty position at a university or to an equivalent full-time staff scientist position in a research institution; hold such a full-time appointment at the time of application submission; and must never have received NIJ funding for a research project, other than a Graduate Research Fellowship program grant. (Typically, the appropriate faculty rank is that of Assistant Professor, although some institutions may use a different title to designate junior faculty status.)
- The investigator must be an established researcher who has not successfully competed for NIJ funding as a principal investigator, co-principal investigator, or collaborative researcher in the past 10 years. The investigator must hold a full-time appointment in the United States to a faculty position at a university or an equivalent position as a scientist on the staff of a research institution at the time of application submission.

In the case of a grant application that involves more than one investigator, **all investigators must meet the definition of “new investigator” in order for the application to be considered as one from a “new investigator.”**

Innovative Areas of Research Opportunities

NIJ is interested in funding innovative research in developing fields, as applied to the forensic sciences. Proposals that contribute to the following national research initiatives may be given special consideration in award decisions:

- **Nanotechnology:** Nanotechnology is the understanding and control of matter at dimensions between approximately 1 and 100 nanometers (nm), where unique phenomena enable novel applications. Encompassing nanoscale science, engineering, and technology, nanotechnology involves imaging, measuring, modeling, and manipulating matter at this length scale⁸. The National Nanotechnology Initiative is a U.S. Government research and development initiative to understand and control matter at the nanoscale, intended to revolutionize technology and industry to benefit society. NIJ is interested in funding proposals that employ nanotechnology to advance the forensic science disciplines. Information on the National Nanotechnology Initiative can be found at: www.nano.gov/
- **Microbiome:** Microscopic study of the human body has shown that microbial cells outnumber human cells by about ten to one. Until recently though, this abundant community of human-associated microbes remained largely unstudied. The National Institutes of Health Common Fund Human Microbiome Project (HMP) was established to study the human microbiome⁹. There are many applications to studying the microbiome for forensic purposes. A well-known application is the estimation of time since death by recording the change in the microbiome over a known period of time; however, the study of the microbiome for other forensic purposes is encouraged. NIJ is interested in funding proposals investigating the microbiome for forensic applications beyond postmortem

⁸ www.nano.gov/sites/default/files/pub_resource/2014_nni_strategic_plan.pdf

⁹ www.commonfund.nih.gov/hmp/overview

interval (i.e., time since death) determination. Such applications may be related to trace evidence, cause of death, or human identification, among others. Information on the National Institutes of Health Human Microbiome Project can be found at: www.commonfund.nih.gov/hmp/index

- **Fatal Head Trauma:** The BRAIN Initiative is a “research effort to revolutionize our understanding of the human mind...”¹⁰. NIJ is interested in funding proposals investigating the human brain for forensic applications. Such applications may include cause of death determination, pediatric head trauma assessment, or sudden and unexplained death in infant and adults. Information on the BRAIN Initiative can be found at: www.whitehouse.gov/share/brain-initiative

B. Federal Award Information

Total funding for this solicitation and the number of awards made will depend on the availability of funds, the quality of the applications, and other pertinent factors. In fiscal year 2014, NIJ provided over \$20 million in grants to fund research and development projects related to forensic science, including DNA. NIJ funding for an individual research or development project rarely exceeds \$500,000 annually, although total funding for projects requiring multiple years to complete has exceeded \$1 million in some cases. In FY 2014, the average forensic science research and development award was approximately \$206,808 per year, and the average project period was 2 years.

To allow time for, among other things, any necessary post-award review, modification, and clearance by OJP of the proposed budget, applicants should propose an award start date of January 1, 2016.

If the applicant is proposing a project that reasonably could be conducted in discrete phases, with each phase resulting in completion of one or more significant, defined milestones, then NIJ strongly recommends that the applicant structure the application – specifically including the narrative, expected scholarly products, timelines/milestones, and budget detail worksheet and budget narrative – to clearly set out each phase. Given limitations on the availability to NIJ of funds for research, development, and evaluation awards, this information will assist NIJ in considering whether partial funding of proposals that would not receive full funding would be productive. (If NIJ elects to fund only certain phases of a proposed project in FY 2015, the expected scholarly products from the partial-funding award may, in some cases, vary from those described above.)

NIJ may, in certain cases, provide supplemental funding in future years to awards under its research, development, and evaluation solicitations. Important considerations in decisions regarding supplemental funding include, among other factors, the availability of funding, strategic priorities, NIJ’s assessment of the quality of the management of the award (for example, timeliness and quality of progress reports), and NIJ’s assessment of the progress of the work funded under the award.

All awards are subject to the availability of appropriated funds and to any modifications or additional requirements that may be imposed by law.

¹⁰ www.whitehouse.gov/share/brain-initiative

Type of Award¹¹

NIJ expects that it will make any award from this solicitation in the form of a cooperative agreement, which is a particular type of grant used if NIJ expects to have ongoing substantial involvement in award activities. Substantial involvement includes direct oversight and involvement with the grantee organization in implementation of the grant, but does not involve day-to-day project management. See [Administrative, National Policy, and other Legal Requirements](#), under Section [F. Federal Award Administration Information](#), for details regarding the federal involvement anticipated under an award from this solicitation. (Any funds provided to another federal agency will be handled in a different manner.)

As discussed [later in the solicitation](#), important rules (including limitations) apply to any conference/meeting/training costs under cooperative agreements.

Please note: Any recipient of an award under this solicitation will be required to comply with Department of Justice regulations on confidentiality and human subjects' protection. See "Evidence, Research, and Evaluation Guidance and Requirements" under "Solicitation Requirements" in the [OJP Funding Resource Center](#).

Financial Management and System of Internal Controls

If selected for funding, the award recipient must:

- a) Establish and maintain effective internal control over the federal award that provides reasonable assurance that the non-federal entity is managing the federal award in compliance with federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the federal award. These internal controls should be in compliance with guidance in "Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government" issued by the Comptroller General of the United States and the "Internal Control Integrated Framework", issued by the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission (COSO).
- b) Comply with federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the federal awards.
- c) Evaluate and monitor the non-federal entity's compliance with statute, regulations and the terms and conditions of federal awards.
- d) Take prompt action when instances of noncompliance are identified including noncompliance identified in audit findings.
- e) Take reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other information the federal awarding agency or pass-through entity designates as sensitive or the non-federal entity considers sensitive consistent with applicable federal, State and local laws regarding privacy and obligations of confidentiality.

In order to better understand administrative requirements and cost principles, award applicants are encouraged to enroll, at no charge, in the Department of Justice Grants Financial Management Online Training available [here](#).

¹¹ See *generally* 31 U.S.C. §§ 6301-6305 (defines and describes various forms of federal assistance relationships, including grants and cooperative agreements (a type of grant)).

Budget Information

What will not be funded:

- Proposals that are not responsive to this specific solicitation. This includes:
 - Proposals that do not contain a research component or do not respond to the specific goals of this solicitation.
 - Proposals that do not clearly address criminal justice concerns in the United States.
- Proposals primarily to purchase equipment, materials, or supplies. (A budget may include these items if they are necessary to conduct research, development, demonstration, evaluation, or analysis. Proposals that include equipment purchases should include a discussion of how federally-funded equipment is proposed to be used after the funded work has been completed and/or the project period has ended. Note that OJP may issue specific equipment disposition instructions in appropriate circumstances.)
- Provision of training or direct service.
- Proposals in the area of digital evidence or digital forensics. Digital evidence includes information stored or transmitted in binary form that may be relied on in court. It is typically found on computer hard drives, mobile phones, personal digital assistants, CDs/DVDs, flash memory equipment and other electronic devices. Digital evidence is commonly associated with electronic crime (e.g., child pornography or credit card fraud); however, digital evidence can also be used as forensic evidence in other types of crimes.⁸ Applicants proposing projects in the areas of digital evidence or digital forensics may consider submitting applications to the planned FY 2015 NIJ solicitation entitled, *Development of Improved Tools and Methods for Acquiring, Processing, and Storing Digital Evidence*.
- Proposals that focus primarily on crimes directly related to nonhuman animals. (A project may include nonhuman animals, if a) they are necessary to conduct the proposed research [e.g., the use of animals or other organisms for experimental modeling], or b) the nonhuman biological components are analogous to the physical evidence that would be examined in criminal investigations involving human suspects and victims).
- Proposals focusing on the estimation of postmortem interval (i.e. time since death) whose research design is not novel nor applicable across the geography. The primary intent of these studies must be to generate new knowledge or contribute to the knowledge in the forensic scientific literature that is applicable to locations other than the one(s) being evaluated.
- Proposals that focus on predicting the behavior of criminal offenders or indicators that result in victimization.
- Proposals that seek to administer surveys on the perceptions of physical evidence collection policies among evidence examiners.

- Proposals that focus on legal factors involved in how physical evidence is processed.
- Proposals for social science research whose primary focus is not identification, collection, testing and interpretation of physical evidence.
- Proposals focused on criminal psychology.
- Proposals involving the use of canines, (e.g. detector dogs).
- Proposals on voice authentication.
- Proposals on deception detection.
- Costs associated with conducting conferences. A conference is a symposium, seminar, workshop, or any other organized and formal meeting, whether conducted face-to-face or via the Internet, where individuals assemble (or meet virtually) to exchange information and views or explore or clarify a defined subject, problem, or area of knowledge, whether or not a published report results from such meeting. A meeting where a gathering discusses general matters as part of a normal course of doing business is not considered a conference. Funds may be used to *attend* conferences for the purposes of dissemination of research findings.

Cost Sharing or Match Requirement

See “Cofunding” paragraph under item 4 (“Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative”) under [What an Application Should Include](#) in Section D. Application and Submission Information.

Pre-Agreement Cost Approvals

OJP does not typically approve pre-agreement costs; an applicant must request and obtain the prior written approval of OJP for all such costs. If approved, pre-agreement costs could be paid from grant funds consistent with a grantee’s approved budget, and under applicable cost standards. However, all such costs prior to award and prior to approval of the costs are incurred at the sole risk of an applicant. Generally, no applicant should incur project costs *before* submitting an application requesting federal funding for those costs. Should there be extenuating circumstances that appear to be appropriate for OJP’s consideration as pre-agreement costs, the applicant should contact the point of contact listed on the title page of this announcement for details on the requirements for submitting a written request for approval. See the section on Costs Requiring Prior Approval in the [Financial Guide](#), for more information.

Limitation on Use of Award Funds for Employee Compensation; Waiver

With respect to any award of more than \$250,000 made under this solicitation, recipients may not use federal funds to pay total cash compensation (salary plus cash bonuses) to any employee of the award recipient at a rate that exceeds 110% of the maximum annual salary payable to a member of the Federal Government’s Senior Executive Service (SES) at an

agency with a Certified SES Performance Appraisal System for that year.¹² The 2014 salary table for SES employees is available at www.opm.gov/pay-leave. Note: A recipient may compensate an employee at a greater rate, provided the amount in excess of this compensation limitation is paid with non-federal funds. (Any such additional compensation will not be considered matching funds where match requirements apply.)

The Director of the National Institute of Justice may exercise discretion to waive, on an individual basis, the limitation on compensation rates allowable under an award. An applicant requesting a waiver should include a detailed justification in the budget narrative of the application. Unless the applicant submits a waiver request and justification with the application, the applicant should anticipate that OJP will request the applicant to adjust and resubmit the budget.

The justification should include the particular qualifications and expertise of the individual, the uniqueness of the service the individual will provide, the individual's specific knowledge of the program or project being undertaken with award funds, and a statement explaining that the individual's salary is commensurate with the regular and customary rate for an individual with his/her qualifications and expertise, and for the work to be done.

Prior Approval, Planning, and Reporting of Conference/Meeting/Training Costs

OJP strongly encourages applicants that propose to use award funds for any conference-, meeting-, or training-related activity to review carefully – before submitting an application – the OJP policy and guidance on “conference” approval, planning, and reporting available at www.ojp.gov/financialguide/PostawardRequirements/chapter15page1.htm. OJP policy and guidance (1) encourage minimization of conference, meeting, and training costs; (2) require prior written approval (which may affect project timelines) of most such costs for cooperative agreement recipients and of some such costs for grant recipients; and (3) set cost limits, including a general prohibition of all food and beverage costs.

Costs Associated with Language Assistance (if applicable)

If an applicant proposes a program or activity that would deliver services or benefits to individuals, the costs of taking reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to those services or benefits for individuals with limited English proficiency may be allowable. Reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to services or benefits may include interpretation or translation services where appropriate.

For additional information, see the "Civil Rights Compliance" section under “Solicitation Requirements” in the [OJP Funding Resource Center](#).

C. Eligibility Information

Eligibility

For additional eligibility information, see Title page.

¹² This limitation on use of award funds does not apply to the non-profit organizations specifically named at Appendix VIII to 2 C.F.R. Part 200.

Cost Sharing or Match Requirement

For additional information on cost sharing and match requirement, see Section [B. Federal Award Information](#).

Limit on Number of Application Submissions

If an applicant submits multiple versions of the same application, NIJ will review only the most recent system-validated version submitted. For more information on system-validated versions, see [How to Apply](#).

D. Application and Submission Information

What an Application Should Include

Applicants should anticipate that if they fail to submit an application that contains all of the specified elements, it may affect negatively the review of their application; and, should a decision be made to make an award, it may result in the inclusion of special conditions that preclude the recipient from accessing or using award funds pending satisfaction of the conditions.

Moreover, applicants should anticipate that applications determined to be nonresponsive to the scope of the solicitation, or that do not include the application elements that NIJ has designated to be critical, will neither proceed to peer review nor receive further consideration. Under this solicitation, NIJ has designated the following application elements as critical: Program Narrative, Budget Detail Worksheet, Budget Narrative, and resumes/curriculum vitae of key personnel. For purposes of this solicitation, "key personnel" means the principal investigator, and any and all co-principal investigators. Please review the "Note on File Names and File Types" under [How to Apply](#) to be sure applications are submitted in permitted formats.

OJP strongly recommends that applicants use appropriately descriptive file names (e.g., "Program Narrative," "Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative," "Timelines," "Memoranda of Understanding," "Resumes") for all attachments. Also, OJP recommends that applicants include resumes in a single file.

1. Information to Complete the Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)

The SF-424 is a required standard form used as a cover sheet for submission of pre-applications, applications, and related information. Grants.gov and OJP's Grants Management System (GMS) take information from the applicant's profile to populate the fields on this form. When selecting "type of applicant," if the applicant is a for-profit entity, select "For-Profit Organization" or "Small Business" (as applicable).

Intergovernmental Review: This funding opportunity (program) **is not** subject to [Executive Order 12372](#). (In completing the SF-424, applicants are to make the appropriate selection in response to question 19 to indicate that the "Program is not covered by E.O. 12372.")

2. Project Abstract

The project abstract is a very important part of the application, and serves as an introduction to the proposed project. NIJ uses the project abstract for a number of purposes, including assignment of the application to an appropriate review panel. If the application is funded, the project abstract typically will become public information and be used to describe the project.

Applications should include a high-quality project abstract that summarizes the proposed project in 250-400 words. Project abstracts should be—

- Written for a general public audience.
- Submitted as a separate attachment with “Project Abstract” as part of its file name.
- Single-spaced, using a standard 12-point font (Times New Roman) with 1-inch margins.

As a separate attachment, the project abstract will **not** count against the page limit for the program narrative.

3. Program Narrative

The program narrative section of the application should not exceed 18 single-spaced pages in 12-point font with 1-inch margins, of which a minimum of 9 pages should be dedicated to the description of the project/program design and implementation. If included in the main body of the program narrative, tables, charts, figures, and other illustrations count toward the 18-page limit for the narrative section. The project abstract, table of contents, appendices, and government forms do not count toward the 18-page limit.

If the program narrative fails to comply with these length-related restrictions, NIJ may consider such noncompliance in peer review and in final award decisions.

The following sections should be included as part of the program narrative.¹³

Program Narrative Guidelines:

a. Title Page (not counted against the 18-page program narrative limit).

The title page should include the title of the project, submission date, funding opportunity number, and the name and complete contact information (that is, address, telephone number, and e-mail address) for both the applicant organization and the principal investigator, including “new investigator” status, as applicable.

¹³ As noted earlier, if the proposed program or project reasonably could be conducted in discrete phases, with each phase resulting in completion of one or more significant, defined milestones, then NIJ strongly recommends that the applicant structure the application – specifically including the narrative, expected scholarly products, timelines/milestones, and budget detail worksheet and budget narrative – to set out each phase clearly. (In appropriate cases, the expected scholarly product(s) from a particular phase may vary from those described above.) See generally, “Goals, Objectives, Deliverables, and Expected Scholarly Products” under “Program-Specific Information,” above.

b. Resubmit Response (if applicable) (not counted against the 18-page program narrative limit).

If an applicant is resubmitting a proposal presented previously to NIJ, but not funded, the applicant should indicate this. A statement should be provided, no more than two pages, addressing: (1) the title, submission date, NIJ-assigned application number of the previous proposal, and (2) a brief summary of revisions to the proposal, including responses to previous feedback received from NIJ.

c. Table of Contents and Figures (not counted against 18-page program narrative limit).

d. Main Body.

The main body of the program narrative should describe the proposed project in depth. The following sections should be included as part of the program narrative:

- Statement of the Problem.
- Project Design and Implementation. (This section should account for a minimum of 9 pages of the main body of the narrative).
- Potential Impact.
- Capabilities/Competencies.

Within these sections, the narrative should address:

- Purpose, goals, and objectives.
- Review of relevant literature.
- Detailed description of research design and methods, such as research questions, hypotheses, description of sample (sample types, sample collection methods, rationale for sample size, etc.), and analysis plan.
- Planned Scholarly Products (See [Goals, Objectives, Deliverables, and Expected Scholarly Products](#) under [Program-Specific Information](#), above, for a discussion of expected scholarly products.)
- Implications for criminal justice policy and practice in the United States.
- Management plan and organization.
- Plan for Dissemination to Broader Audiences (if applicable to the proposed project). Applicants should identify plans (if any) to produce or to make available to broader interested audiences – such as criminal/juvenile justice practitioners or policymakers – summary information from the planned scholarly products of the proposed project

(such as summaries of articles in peer-reviewed scientific journals), in a form designed to be readily accessible and useful to those audiences. (Such dissemination might include, for example, trade press articles and webinars.)

e. Appendices (not counted against the 18-page program narrative limit) include:

- Bibliography/references.
- Any tools/instruments, questionnaires, tables/charts/graphs, or maps pertaining to the proposed project that are supplemental to such items included in the main body of the narrative. (Tables, charts, graphs, or other relevant illustrations that are essential for comprehension of the project/program design should be included in the main body of the narrative.)
- Supporting data—This should include any preliminary data to support the investigator’s ability to perform the work and/or proof of principle for the proposed research/technology.
- Curriculum vitae or resumes of the principal investigator and any and all co-principal investigators. In addition, curriculum vitae, resumes, or biographical sketches of all other individuals (regardless of “investigator” status) who will be significantly involved in substantive aspects of the proposal (including, for example, individuals such as statisticians serving as consultants to conduct proposed data analysis).
- Documentation of “new investigator” status, if applicable.
- List (to the extent known) of all proposed project staff members, including those affiliated with the applicant organization or any proposed subrecipient organization(s), any proposed consultant(s) and contractors (whether individuals or organizations), and any proposed members of an advisory board for the project (if applicable). The list should include, for each individual and organization: name, title (if applicable), employer or other organizational affiliation, and roles and responsibilities proposed for the project. Applicants should use the “Proposed Project Staff, Affiliation, and Roles” form available at www.nij.gov/funding/documents/nij-project-staff-template.xlsx to provide this listing.
- Proposed project timeline and expected milestones.
- Human Subjects Protection paperwork (documentation and forms related to Institutional Review Board (IRB) review). (See nij.gov/funding/humansubjects/Pages/welcome.aspx) NOTE: Final IRB approval is not required at the time an application is submitted.
- Privacy Certificate (for further guidance go to nij.gov/funding/humansubjects/pages/confidentiality.aspx).

- List of any previous and current NIJ awards to applicant organization and investigator(s), including the NIJ-assigned award numbers and a brief description of any scholarly products that resulted in whole or in part from work funded under the NIJ award(s). (See “Goals, Objectives, Deliverables, and Expected Scholarly Products” under “Program-Specific Information,” above, for definition of “scholarly products.”)
- Letters of cooperation/support or administrative agreements from organizations collaborating in the project, or letters of intent to establish agreements (if applicable).
- List of other agencies, organizations, or funding sources to which this proposal has been submitted (if applicable).
- Data archiving plan. Applicants should anticipate that NIJ will require (through special award conditions, including a partial withholding of award funds) that data sets resulting in whole or in part from projects funded under this solicitation be submitted for archiving with the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data (NACJD) or to other appropriate public databases such as databases hosted by the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI), forensically relevant population databases such as US Y-STR and EMPOP, or other potentially relevant databases listed at Nature Publishing Group’s open access online publication Scientific Data. (For a detailed discussion of the information NIJ expects to find in a data archiving plan, see www.nij.gov/funding/data-resources-program/applying/Pages/data-archiving-strategies.aspx.)

Applications should include as an appendix a brief plan – labeled “Data Archiving Plan” – to comply with data archiving requirements. The plan should provide brief details about proposed data management and archiving, including submission to NIJ of **all files and documentation** necessary to allow for future efforts by others to reproduce the project’s findings and/or to extend the scientific value of the data set through secondary analysis. Pertinent files and documentation include, among other things, qualitative and quantitative data produced, instrumentation and data collection forms, codebook(s), any specialized programming code necessary to reproduce all constructed measures and the original data analysis, description of necessary de-identification procedures, and (when required) a copy of the privacy certificate and informed consent protocols.

The plan should be one or two pages in length and include the level of effort associated with meeting archiving requirements.

Note that required data sets are to be submitted 90 days before the end of the project period.

4. Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative

a. Budget Detail Worksheet

A sample Budget Detail Worksheet can be found at www.ojp.gov/funding/Apply/Resources/BudgetDetailWorksheet.pdf. Applicants that submit their budget in a different format should include the budget categories listed in the sample budget worksheet. (Work associated with satisfying data archiving requirements should be reflected.) NIJ expects applicants to provide a thorough narrative to each section of the Budget Detail Worksheet.

For questions pertaining to budget and examples of allowable and unallowable costs, see the Financial Guide at www.ojp.gov/financialguide/index.htm.

b. Budget Narrative

The budget narrative should thoroughly and clearly describe every category of expense listed in the Budget Detail Worksheet. OJP expects proposed budgets to be complete, cost effective, and allowable (e.g., reasonable, allocable, and necessary for project activities).

Applicants should demonstrate in their budget narratives how they will maximize cost effectiveness of grant expenditures. Budget narratives should generally describe cost effectiveness in relation to potential alternatives and the goals of the project. For example, a budget narrative should detail why planned in-person meetings are necessary, or how technology and collaboration with outside organizations could be used to reduce costs, without compromising quality.

The narrative should be sound mathematically, and correspond with the information and figures provided in the Budget Detail Worksheet. The narrative should explain how the applicant estimated and calculated all costs, and how they are relevant to the completion of the proposed project. The narrative may include tables for clarification purposes but need not be in a spreadsheet format. As with the Budget Detail Worksheet, the Budget Narrative should be broken down by year.

c. Cofunding

An award made by NIJ under this solicitation may account for up to 100 percent of the total cost of the project. The application should indicate whether it is feasible for the applicant to contribute cash, facilities, or services as non-federal support for the project. The application should identify generally any such contributions that the applicant expects to make and the proposed budget should indicate in detail which items, if any, will be supported with non-federal contributions.

For additional match information, see the [Cost Sharing or Match Requirement](#) section under [B. Federal Award Information](#).

If a successful application proposes a voluntary match amount, and OJP approves the budget, the total match amount incorporated into the approved budget becomes mandatory and subject to audit.

d. Non-Competitive Procurement Contracts In Excess of Simplified Acquisition Threshold

If an applicant proposes to make one or more non-competitive procurements of products or services, where the non-competitive procurement will exceed the simplified acquisition threshold (also known as the small purchase threshold), which is currently set at \$150,000, the application should address the considerations outlined in the [Financial Guide](#).

e. Pre-Agreement Cost Approvals

For information on pre-agreement costs approvals, see Section [B. Federal Award Information](#).

5. Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)

Indirect costs are allowed only if the applicant has a current federally approved indirect cost rate. (This requirement does not apply to units of local government.) Attach a copy of the federally approved indirect cost rate agreement to the application. Applicants that do not have an approved rate may request one through their cognizant federal agency, which will review all documentation and approve a rate for the applicant organization, or, if the applicant's accounting system permits, costs may be allocated in the direct cost categories. For the definition of Cognizant Federal Agency, see the "Glossary of Terms" in the [Financial Guide](#). For assistance with identifying your cognizant agency, please contact the Customer Service Center at 1-800-458-0786 or at ask.ocfo@usdoj.gov. If DOJ is the cognizant federal agency, applicants may obtain information needed to submit an indirect cost rate proposal at www.ojp.gov/funding/Apply/Resources/IndirectCosts.pdf.

6. Tribal Authorizing Resolution (if applicable)

Tribes, tribal organizations, or third parties proposing to provide direct services or assistance to residents on tribal lands should include in their applications a resolution, a letter, affidavit, or other documentation, as appropriate, that certifies that the applicant has the legal authority from the tribe(s) to implement the proposed project on tribal lands. In those instances when an organization or consortium of tribes applies for a grant on behalf of a tribe or multiple specific tribes, the application should include appropriate legal documentation, as described above, from all tribes that would receive services or assistance under the grant. A consortium of tribes for which existing consortium bylaws allow action without support from all tribes in the consortium (i.e., without an authorizing resolution or comparable legal documentation from each tribal governing body) may submit, instead, a copy of its consortium bylaws with the application.

7. Applicant Disclosure of High Risk Status

Applicants are to disclose whether they are currently designated high risk by another federal grant making agency. This includes any status requiring additional oversight by the federal agency due to past programmatic or financial concerns. If an applicant is designated high risk by another federal grant making agency, you must email the following information to OJPComplianceReporting@usdoj.gov at the time of application submission:

- The federal agency that currently designated the applicant as high risk;

- Date the applicant was designated high risk;
- The high risk point of contact name, phone number, and email address, from that federal agency; and
- Reasons for the high risk status.

OJP seeks this information to ensure appropriate federal oversight of any grant award. Unlike the Excluded Parties List, this high risk information does not disqualify any organization from receiving an OJP award. However, additional grant oversight may be included, if necessary, in award documentation.

8. Additional Attachments

a. Applicant disclosure of pending applications¹⁴

Applicants are to disclose whether they have pending applications for federally funded grants or subgrants (including cooperative agreements) that include requests for funding to support the same project being proposed under this solicitation and will cover the identical cost items outlined in the budget narrative and worksheet in the application under this solicitation. The disclosure should include both direct applications for federal funding (e.g., applications to federal agencies) and indirect applications for such funding (e.g., applications to State agencies that will subaward federal funds).

OJP seeks this information to help avoid any inappropriate duplication of funding. Leveraging multiple funding sources in a complementary manner to implement comprehensive programs or projects is encouraged and is not seen as inappropriate duplication.

Applicants that have pending applications as described above are to provide the following information about pending applications submitted within the last 12 months:

- The federal or State funding agency.
- The solicitation name/project name.
- The point of contact information at the applicable funding agency.

¹⁴ Typically, the applicant is not the principal investigator; rather, the applicant, most frequently, is the institution, organization, or company in which the principal investigator is employed.

Federal or State Funding Agency	Solicitation Name/Project Name	Name/Phone/E-mail for Point of Contact at Funding Agency
DOJ/COPS	COPS Hiring Program	Jane Doe, 202/000-0000; jane.doe@usdoj.gov
HHS/ Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration	Drug Free Communities Mentoring Program/ North County Youth Mentoring Program	John Doe, 202/000-0000; john.doe@hhs.gov

Applicants should include the table as a separate attachment, with the file name “Disclosure of Pending Applications,” to their application. Applicants that do not have pending applications as described above are to include a statement to this effect in the separate attachment page (e.g., “[Applicant Name on SF-424] does not have pending applications submitted within the last 12 months for federally funded grants or subgrants (including cooperative agreements) that include requests for funding to support the same project being proposed under this solicitation and will cover the identical cost items outlined in the budget narrative and worksheet in the application under this solicitation.”).

b. Research and Evaluation Independence and Integrity

If a proposal involves research and/or evaluation, regardless of the proposal’s other merits, in order to receive funds, the applicant must demonstrate research/evaluation independence, including appropriate safeguards to ensure research/evaluation objectivity and integrity, both in this proposal and as it may relate to the applicant’s other current or prior related projects. This documentation may be included as an attachment to the application which addresses BOTH i. and ii. below.

i. For purposes of this solicitation, applicants must document research and evaluation independence and integrity by including, at a minimum, one of the following two items:

a. A specific assurance that the applicant has reviewed its proposal to identify any research integrity issues (including all principal investigators and sub-recipients) and it has concluded that the design, conduct, or reporting of research and evaluation funded by NIJ grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts will not be biased by any personal or financial conflict of interest on the part of part of its staff, consultants, and/or sub-recipients responsible for the research and evaluation or on the part of the applicant organization;

OR

b. A specific listing of actual or perceived conflicts of interest that the applicant has identified in relation to this proposal. These conflicts could be either personal (related to specific staff, consultants, and/or sub-recipients) or organizational (related to the applicant or any subgrantee organization).

Examples of potential investigator (or other personal) conflict situations may include, but are not limited to, those in which an investigator would be in a position to evaluate a spouse's work product (actual conflict), or an investigator would be in a position to evaluate the work of a former or current colleague (potential apparent conflict). With regard to potential organizational conflicts of interest, as one example, generally an organization could not be given a grant to evaluate a project if that organization had itself provided substantial prior technical assistance to that specific project or a location implementing the project (whether funded by OJP or other sources), as the organization in such an instance would appear to be evaluating the effectiveness of its own prior work. The key is whether a reasonable person understanding all of the facts would be able to have confidence that the results of any research or evaluation project are objective and reliable. Any outside personal or financial interest that casts doubt on that objectivity and reliability of an evaluation or research product is a problem and must be disclosed.

- ii. In addition, for purposes of this solicitation applicants must address the issue of possible mitigation of research integrity concerns by including, at a minimum, one of the following two items:
 - a. If an applicant reasonably believes that no potential personal or organizational conflicts of interest exist, then the applicant should provide a brief narrative explanation of how and why it reached that conclusion. Applicants **MUST** also include an explanation of the specific processes and procedures that the applicant will put in place to identify and eliminate (or, at the very least, mitigate) potential personal or financial conflicts of interest on the part of its staff, consultants, and/or sub-recipients for this particular project, should that be necessary during the grant period. Documentation that may be helpful in this regard could include organizational codes of ethics/conduct or policies regarding organizational, personal, and financial conflicts of interest.

OR

- b. If the applicant has identified specific personal or organizational conflicts of interest in its proposal during this review, the applicant must propose a specific and robust mitigation plan to address conflicts noted above. At a minimum, the plan must include specific processes and procedures that the applicant will put in place to eliminate (or, at the very least, mitigate) potential personal or financial conflicts of interest on the part of its staff, consultants, and/or sub-recipients for this particular project, should that be necessary during the grant period. Documentation that may be helpful in this regard could include organizational codes of ethics/conduct or policies regarding organizational, personal, and financial conflicts of interest. There is no guarantee that the plan, if any, will be accepted as proposed.

Considerations in assessing research and evaluation independence and integrity will include, but are not be limited to, the adequacy of the applicant's efforts to identify factors that could affect the objectivity or integrity of the proposed staff and/or the

organization in carrying out the research, development, or evaluation activity; and the adequacy of the applicant's existing or proposed remedies to control any such factors.

9. Financial Management and System of Internal Controls Questionnaire

In accordance with [2 CFR 200.205](#), Federal agencies must have in place a framework for evaluating the risks posed by applicants before they receive a Federal award. To facilitate part of this risk evaluation, **all** applicants (other than an individual) are to download, complete, and submit this [form](#).

10. Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

All applicants must complete this information. Applicants that expend any funds for lobbying activities are to provide the detailed information requested on the form Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL). Applicants that do not expend any funds for lobbying activities are to enter "N/A" in the text boxes for item 10 ("a. Name and Address of Lobbying Registrant" and "b. Individuals Performing Services").

How to Apply

Applicants must register in, and submit applications through Grants.gov, a "one-stop storefront" to find federal funding opportunities and apply for funding. Find complete instructions on how to register and submit an application at www.Grants.gov. Applicants that experience technical difficulties during this process should call the Grants.gov Customer Support Hotline at **800-518-4726** or **606-545-5035**, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, except federal holidays. Registering with Grants.gov is a one-time process; however, **processing delays may occur, and it can take several weeks** for first-time registrants to receive confirmation and a user password. OJP encourages applicants to **register several weeks before** the application submission deadline. In addition, OJP urges applicants to submit applications 72 hours prior to the application due date to allow time to receive validation messages or rejection notifications from Grants.gov, and to correct in a timely fashion any problems that may have caused a rejection notification.

NIJ strongly encourages all prospective applicants to sign up for Grants.gov email notifications regarding this solicitation. If this solicitation is cancelled or modified, individuals who sign up with Grants.gov for updates will be automatically notified.

Note on File Names and File Types: Grants.gov only permits the use of certain specific characters in names of attachment files. Valid file names may include only the characters shown in the table below. Grants.gov is designed to reject any application that includes an attachment(s) with a file name that contains any characters not shown in the table below. Grants.gov is designed to forward successfully submitted applications to OJP's Grants Management System (GMS).

Characters	Special Characters		
Upper case (A – Z)	Parenthesis ()	Curly braces { }	Square brackets []
Lower case (a – z)	Ampersand (&)	Tilde (~)	Exclamation point (!)
Underscore (_)	Comma (,)	Semicolon (;)	Apostrophe (')
Hyphen (-)	At sign (@)	Number sign (#)	Dollar sign (\$)
Space	Percent sign (%)	Plus sign (+)	Equal sign (=)
Period (.)	When using the ampersand (&) in XML, applicants must use the “&amp;” format.		

GMS does not accept executable file types as application attachments. These disallowed file types include, but are not limited to, the following extensions: “.com,” “.bat,” “.exe,” “.vbs,” “.cfg,” “.dat,” “.db,” “.dbf,” “.dll,” “.ini,” “.log,” “.ora,” “.sys,” and “.zip.” GMS may reject applications with files that use these extensions. It is important to allow time to change the type of file(s) if the application is rejected.

All applicants are required to complete the following steps:

OJP may not make a federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the federal awarding agency is ready to make a federal award, the federal awarding agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a federal award to another applicant.

- 1. Acquire a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number.** In general, the Office of Management and Budget requires that all applicants (other than individuals) for federal funds include a DUNS number in their applications for a new award or a supplement to an existing award. A DUNS number is a unique nine-digit sequence recognized as the universal standard for identifying and differentiating entities receiving federal funds. The identifier is used for tracking purposes and to validate address and point of contact information for federal assistance applicants, recipients, and subrecipients. The DUNS number will be used throughout the grant life cycle. Obtaining a DUNS number is a free, one-time activity. Call Dun and Bradstreet at 866–705–5711 to obtain a DUNS number or apply online at www.dnb.com. A DUNS number is usually received within 1-2 business days.
- 2. Acquire registration with the System for Award Management (SAM).** SAM is the repository for standard information about federal financial assistance applicants, recipients, and subrecipients. OJP requires all applicants (other than individuals) for federal financial assistance to maintain current registrations in the SAM database. Applicants must be registered in SAM to successfully register in Grants.gov. Applicants must **update or renew their SAM registration annually** to maintain an active status.

Applications cannot be successfully submitted in Grants.gov until Grants.gov receives the SAM registration information. The information transfer from SAM to Grants.gov can take up to 48 hours. OJP recommends that the applicant register or renew registration with SAM as early as possible.

Information about SAM registration procedures can be accessed at www.sam.gov.

- 3. Acquire an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and a Grants.gov username and password.** Complete the AOR profile on Grants.gov and create a username and password. The applicant organization’s DUNS number must be used to complete this

step. For more information about the registration process, go to www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp.

4. **Acquire confirmation for the AOR from the E-Business Point of Contact (E-Biz POC).** The E-Biz POC at the applicant organization must log into Grants.gov to confirm the applicant organization's AOR. Note that an organization can have more than one AOR.
5. **Search for the funding opportunity on Grants.gov.** Use the following identifying information when searching for the funding opportunity on Grants.gov. The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance number for this solicitation is 16.560, titled "National Institute of Justice Research, Evaluation, and Development Project Grants" and the funding opportunity number is NIJ-2015-3985.
6. **Submit a valid application consistent with this solicitation by following the directions in Grants.gov.** Within 24–48 hours after submitting the electronic application, the applicant should receive two notifications from Grants.gov. The first will confirm the receipt of the application and the second will state whether the application has been successfully validated, or rejected due to errors, with an explanation. It is possible to first receive a message indicating that the application is received and then receive a rejection notice a few minutes or hours later. Submitting well ahead of the deadline provides time to correct the problem(s) that caused the rejection. **Important:** OJP urges applicants to submit applications **at least 72 hours prior** to the application due date to allow time to receive validation messages or rejection notifications from Grants.gov, and to correct in a timely fashion any problems that may have caused a rejection notification.

Click [here](#) for further details on DUNS, SAM, and Grants.gov registration steps and timeframes.

Note: Duplicate Applications

If an applicant submits multiple versions of the same application, NIJ will review only the most recent system-validated version submitted. See Note on File Names and File Types under [How To Apply](#).

Experiencing Unforeseen Grants.gov Technical Issues

Applicants that experience unforeseen Grants.gov technical issues beyond their control that prevent them from submitting their application by the deadline must contact the [Grants.gov Customer Support Hotline](#) or the [SAM Help Desk](#) to report the technical issue and receive a tracking number. Then applicant must e-mail the NIJ contact identified in the Contact Information section on page 2 **within 24 hours after the application deadline** and request approval to submit their application. The e-mail must describe the technical difficulties, and include a timeline of the applicant's submission efforts, the complete grant application, the applicant's DUNS number, and any Grants.gov Help Desk or SAM tracking number(s). **Note: NIJ does not automatically approve requests.** After the program office reviews the submission, and contacts the Grants.gov or SAM Help Desks to validate the reported technical issues, OJP will inform the applicant whether the request to submit a late application has been approved or denied. If OJP determines that the applicant failed to follow all required procedures, which resulted in an untimely application submission, OJP will deny the applicant's request to submit their application.

The following conditions are generally insufficient to justify late submissions:

- Failure to register in SAM or Grants.gov in sufficient time.
- Failure to follow Grants.gov instructions on how to register and apply as posted on its website.
- Failure to follow each instruction in the OJP solicitation.
- Technical issues with the applicant's computer or information technology environment, including firewalls.

Notifications regarding known technical problems with Grants.gov, if any, are posted at the top of the OJP funding Web page at www.ojp.gov/funding/Explore/CurrentFundingOpportunities.htm.

E. Application Review Information

Selection Criteria

Depending on the number of applications received, applications may be categorized by scientific discipline into discrete groups for purposes of peer review and/or selection for award.

Applications that meet basic minimum requirements will be evaluated by peer reviewers using the following review criteria.

Statement of the Problem (Understanding of the problem and its importance) – 10%

1. Demonstrated understanding of the problem that exists in an identified forensic science field/discipline or area of criminal justice.
2. Demonstrated awareness of the state of current research.

Project Design and Implementation (Quality and technical merit) – 50%

1. Soundness of methods and analytic and technical approach to addressing the stated aim(s) of the proposed project. (The overall strategy, methodology, and analyses should be well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project.)
2. Feasibility of proposed project and the strength of supporting data. (The proof of principle of the proposed technology or methodology should be established and supported by preliminary data presented in or referenced in the proposal. More innovative plans and/or plans with a higher potential for failure should be counterbalanced to manage the inherent risk; e.g., by firm theoretical basis, reasonable preliminary data (depending on the mechanism), the track record of the principal investigator and any co-principal investigator(s), and an outstanding scientific and management plan).
3. Awareness of potential pitfalls of proposed project design and feasibility of proposed actions to minimize and/or mitigate them.

Potential Impact – 20%

Potential for a significant scientific or technical advance(s) that will improve criminal/juvenile justice in the United States, such as—

- Potential for significantly improved understanding of the stated criminal/juvenile justice problem. (If the goals of the project are achieved, how will scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or forensic science practice in the criminal justice system be improved? What is the likelihood that the project will exert a sustained, powerful influence on the forensic science field(s) related to criminal justice?)
- Potential for innovative solution to address (all or a significant part of) the stated criminal/juvenile justice problem. (How will successful completion change the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, or services that drive the forensic science field as it relates to criminal justice? How will a successful project address the identified criminal justice or forensic science problem and associated critical barriers to progress?)

Capabilities/Competencies (Capabilities, demonstrated productivity, and experience of the applicant organization and proposed project staff) – 20%

1. Qualifications and experience of proposed project staff (that is, the principal investigator, any and all co-principal investigators, and all other individuals (and organizations) identified in the application (regardless of “investigator” status) who will be significantly involved in substantive aspects of the proposal).
2. Demonstrated ability of the applicant organization to manage the effort.
3. Relationship between the capabilities/competencies of the proposed project staff (including the applicant organization) and the scope of the proposed project.
4. Strength of the scientific environment (e.g., institutional support, equipment and other physical resources, or collaborative arrangements) in which the work will be done and its contribution to the probability of success.

Budget

Peer reviewers will consider and may comment on the following additional items in the context of scientific and technical merit.

1. Total cost of the project relative to the perceived benefit (cost effectiveness).
2. Appropriateness of the budget relative to the level of effort.
3. Use of existing resources to conserve costs.
4. Proposed budget alignment with proposed project activities.

Plan for Dissemination to Broader Audiences (if applicable to the proposed project)

Peer reviewers may comment – in the context of scientific and technical merit – on the proposed plan (if any) to produce or to make available to broader interested audiences, such as criminal/juvenile justice practitioners or policymakers, summary information from the planned scholarly products of the project.

Review Process

OJP is committed to ensuring a fair and open process for awarding grants. NIJ reviews the application to make sure that the information presented is reasonable, understandable, measurable, and achievable, as well as consistent with the solicitation.

Peer reviewers will review the applications submitted under this solicitation that meet basic minimum requirements (critical elements). For purposes of assessing whether applicants have met basic minimum requirements, OJP screens applications for compliance with specified program requirements to help determine which applications should proceed to further consideration for award. Although program requirements may vary, the following are common requirements applicable to all solicitations for funding under OJP grant programs:

- Applications must be submitted by an eligible type of applicant.
- Applications must request funding within programmatic funding constraints (if applicable).
- Applications must be responsive to the scope of the solicitation.
- Applications must include all items designated as “critical elements.”
- Applicants will be checked against the General Services Administration’s Excluded Parties List.

For a list of critical elements, see “What an Application Should Include” under [Section D. Application and Submission Information](#).

NIJ may use internal peer reviewers, external peer reviewers, or a combination, to assess applications meeting basic minimum requirements on technical merit using the solicitation’s selection criteria. An external peer reviewer is an expert in the subject matter of a given solicitation who is not a current DOJ employee. An internal reviewer is a current DOJ employee who is well-versed or has expertise in the subject matter of this solicitation. A peer review panel will evaluate, score, and rate applications that meet basic minimum requirements.

OJP reviews applications for potential discretionary awards to evaluate the risks posed by applicants before they receive an award. This review may include but is not limited to the following:

1. Financial stability and fiscal integrity

2. Quality of management systems and ability to meet the management standards prescribed in the Financial Guide
3. History of performance
4. Reports and findings from audits
5. The applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-Federal entities
6. Proposed costs to determine if the Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative accurately explain project costs, and whether those costs are reasonable, necessary, and allowable under applicable federal cost principles and agency regulations

All final award decisions will be made by the Director of the National Institute of Justice. Peer reviewers' ratings and any resulting recommendations are advisory only, although their views are considered carefully. In addition to peer review ratings, considerations for award recommendations and decisions may include, but are not limited to, planned scholarly products, proposed budgets, past performance (including scholarly products) under prior NIJ and OJP awards, research independence and integrity, strategic priorities, "new investigator" status, "innovative areas of research," and available funding when making awards.

F. Federal Award Administration Information

Federal Award Notices

OJP award notification will be sent from GMS. Recipients will be required to login; accept any outstanding assurances and certifications on the award; designate a financial point of contact; and review, sign, and accept the award. The award acceptance process involves physical signature of the award document by the authorized representative and the scanning of the fully-executed award document to OJP.

Administrative, National Policy, and other Legal Requirements

If selected for funding, in addition to implementing the funded project consistent with the agency-approved project proposal and budget, the recipient must comply with award terms and conditions, and other legal requirements, that are included in the award, incorporated into the award by reference, or are otherwise applicable to the award. OJP strongly encourages prospective applicants to review the information pertaining to these requirements **prior** to submitting an application. To assist applicants and recipients in accessing and reviewing this information, OJP has placed it on its [Solicitation Requirements](#) page of the [OJP Funding Resource Center](#).

Please note in particular the following two forms, which applicants must submit in GMS prior to the receipt of any award funds, as each details legal requirements with which applicants must provide specific assurances and certifications of compliance. Applicants may view these forms in the [OJP Funding Resource Center](#) and are strongly encouraged to review and consider them carefully prior to making an application for OJP grant funds.

- [Certifications Regarding Lobbying; Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements](#)
- [Standard Assurances](#)

Upon grant approval, OJP electronically transmits (via GMS) the award document to the prospective award recipient. In addition to other award information, the award document contains award terms and conditions that specify national policy requirements¹⁵ with which recipients of federal funding must comply; uniform administrative requirements, cost principles, and audit requirements; and program-specific terms and conditions required based on applicable program (statutory) authority or requirements set forth in OJP solicitations and program announcements. For example, certain efforts may call for special requirements, terms, or conditions relating to intellectual property, data/information-sharing or -access, or information security; or audit requirements, expenditures and milestones, or publications and/or press releases.

OJP also may place additional terms and conditions on an award based on its risk assessment of the applicant, or for other reasons it determines necessary to fulfill the goals and objectives of the program.

Prospective applicants may access and review the text of mandatory conditions OJP includes in all OJP awards, as well as the text of certain other conditions, such as administrative conditions, via OJP's [Mandatory Award Terms and Conditions](#) page of the [Funding Resource Center](#).

As stated above, NIJ expects that it will make any award from this solicitation in the form of a cooperative agreement. Cooperative agreement awards include standard "federal involvement" conditions that describe the general allocation of responsibility for execution of the funded program. Generally-stated, under cooperative agreement awards, responsibility for the day-to-day conduct of the funded project rests with the recipient in implementing the funded and approved proposal and budget, and the award terms and conditions. Responsibility for oversight and redirection of the project, if necessary, rests with NIJ.

In addition to any "federal involvement" condition(s), OJP cooperative agreement awards include a special condition specifying certain reporting requirements required in connection with conferences, meetings, retreats, seminars, symposium, training activities, or similar events funded under the award, consistent with OJP policy and guidance on "conference" approval, planning, and reporting.

General Information About Post-Federal Award Reporting Requirements

Recipients must submit quarterly financial reports, semi-annual progress reports, final financial and progress reports, and, if applicable, an annual audit report in accordance with 2 CFR Part 200. Applicants should anticipate that progress reports will be required to follow the non-budgetary components of the Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR) template/format. General information on RPPRs may be found at www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/rppr/. Future awards and fund drawdowns may be withheld if reports are delinquent.

¹⁵ See generally 2 C.F.R. 200.300 (provides a general description of national policy requirements typically applicable to recipients of Federal awards, including the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (FFATA)).

Special Reporting requirements may be required by OJP depending on the statutory, legislative or administrative requirements of the recipient or the program.

As indicated earlier in this solicitation, NIJ expects scholarly products to result from any award under this solicitation. Please review the [Goals, Objectives, Deliverables, and Expected Scholarly Products](#) segment of the “Program-Specific Information” section of this solicitation, as well as the “Performance Measures” section.

In addition to the expectation of scholarly products, successful applicants under this solicitation will be required to submit the following deliverables regarding the work funded by the NIJ award.

Draft and Final Summary Overview of the Work Conducted under the Award

The overview is expected to provide an overall summary of the work under, and results of, the project funded by NIJ under this solicitation. Among other things, the summary overview should address the purpose of the project, project subjects (if applicable), project design and methods, data analysis, project findings, and implications for criminal justice policy and practice in the United States. The overview should be suitable for dissemination to the general public; and contain no proprietary, confidential information or trade secrets.

A draft summary overview no longer than 10 pages long (double-spaced) is to be submitted 90 days prior to the end of the project period for NIJ review and comment.

Required Data Sets and Associated Files and Documentation

As discussed earlier, NIJ requires recipients of an award under this solicitation to submit to NACJD, or another more appropriate public database, all data sets that result in whole or in part from the work funded by NIJ, along with associated files and any documentation necessary to allow for future efforts by others to reproduce the project’s findings and/or to extend the scientific value of the data set through secondary analysis. All data sets and necessary documentation are to be submitted 90 days prior to the end of the project period. For more information, see the “Program Narrative” section of [What an Application Should Include](#).

Performance Measures

To assist the Department with fulfilling its responsibilities under the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA), Public Law 103-62, and the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010, Public Law 111-352, applicants that receive funding under this solicitation must provide data that measure the results of their work done under this solicitation. OJP will require any award recipient, post award, to provide the data requested in the “Data Grantee Provides” column so that OJP can calculate values for the “Performance Measures” column. (Submission of performance measures data is not required for the application.) Performance measures for this solicitation are as follows:

Objective	Performance Measure(s)	Data Grantee Provides
<p>Conduct research in science, technology, engineering, and/or mathematics having clear implications for criminal justice policy and practice in the United States.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Relevance to the needs of the field as measured by whether the project's substantive scope did not deviate from the funded proposal or any subsequent agency-approved modifications to the scope. 2. Quality of the research as demonstrated by the scholarly products that result in whole or in part from work funded under the NIJ award (published, peer-reviewed, scientific journal articles, and/or (as appropriate for the funded project) law review journal articles, book chapter(s) or book(s) in the academic press, technological prototypes, patented inventions, or similar scientific products). 3. Quality of management as measured by such factors as whether significant project milestones were achieved, reporting and other deadlines were met, and costs remained within approved limits. 4. If applicable, the number of technologies fielded as a result (in whole or in part) of work funded under the NIJ award. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quarterly financial reports, semi-annual and final progress reports, and a draft and final summary overview of the work performed under the NIJ award. 2. List of citation(s) to all scholarly products that resulted in whole or in part from work funded under the NIJ award. 3. If applicable, each data set that resulted in whole or in part from work funded under the NIJ award. 4. If applicable, a description of all technologies fielded as a result (in whole or in part) of work funded under the NIJ award.

G. Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s)

For additional Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s), see the Title page.

For additional contact information for Grants.gov, see the Title page.

H. Other Information

Provide Feedback to OJP

To assist OJP in improving its application and award processes, we encourage applicants to provide feedback on this solicitation, the application submission process, and/or the application review/peer review process. Provide feedback to OJPSolicitationFeedback@usdoj.gov.

IMPORTANT: This e-mail is for feedback and suggestions only. Replies are not sent from this mailbox. If you have specific questions on any program or technical aspect of the solicitation, you must directly contact the appropriate number or e-mail listed on the front of this solicitation document. These contacts are provided to help ensure that you can directly reach an individual who can address your specific questions in a timely manner.

If you are interested in being a reviewer for other OJP grant applications, please e-mail your resume to ojpeerreview@lmbps.com. The OJP Solicitation Feedback email account will not

forward your resume. Note: Neither you nor anyone else from your organization can be a peer reviewer in a competition in which you or your organization have submitted an application.

Application Checklist

Research and Development in Forensic Science for Criminal Justice Purposes

This application checklist has been created to assist in developing an application.

What an Applicant Should Do:

Prior to Registering in Grants.gov:

- _____ Acquire a DUNS Number (see page 26)
- _____ Acquire or renew registration with SAM (see page 26)

To Register with Grants.gov:

- _____ Acquire AOR and Grants.gov username/password (see page 26)
- _____ Acquire AOR confirmation from the E-Biz POC (see page 27)

To Find Funding Opportunity:

- _____ Search for the funding opportunity on Grants.gov (see page 27)
- _____ Download Funding Opportunity and Application Package (see page 27)
- _____ Sign up for Grants.gov [email](#) notifications (optional) (see page 25)
- _____ Read [Important Notice: Applying for Grants in Grants.gov](#)

After application submission, receive Grants.gov email notifications that:

- _____ (1) Application has been received
- _____ (2) Application has either been successfully validated or rejected with errors (see page 27)

If no Grants.gov receipt, and validation or error notifications are received:

- _____ Contact NIJ regarding experiencing technical difficulties (see page 27)

General Requirements:

- _____ Review the [Solicitation Requirements](#) in the OJP Funding Resource Center.

What an Application Should Include:

- _____ Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) (see page 15)
- _____ Project Abstract (see page 16)
- _____ Program Narrative (see page 16)
- _____ Appendices (see page 18)
 - _____ Bibliography/references
 - _____ Any tools/instruments, questionnaires, tables/charts/graphs, or maps pertaining to the proposed study that supplement those in the narrative
 - _____ Supporting Data—This should include any preliminary data to support the investigator’s ability to perform the work and/or proof of principle for the proposed research/technology
 - _____ Curriculum vitae or resumes of the principal investigator and any and all co-principal investigators.
 - _____ Documentation of “new investigator” status, if applicable
 - _____ List (to the extent known) of all proposed project staff members
 - _____ Proposed project timeline and expected milestones
 - _____ Human Subjects Protection Paperwork
 - _____ Privacy Certificate

- _____ List of any previous and current NIJ awards to applicant organization and investigator(s)
- _____ Letters of cooperation/support or administrative agreements from organizations collaborating in the project, or letters of intent to establish agreements (if applicable)
- _____ List of other agencies, organizations, or funding sources to which this proposal has been submitted (if applicable)
- _____ Data archiving plan
- _____ Budget Detail Worksheet (see page 20)
- _____ Budget Narrative (see page 20)
- _____ Employee Compensation Waiver request and justification (if applicable) (see page 13)
- _____ Read OJP policy and guidance on “conference” approval, planning, and reporting available at www.ojp.gov/financialguide/PostawardRequirements/chapter15page1.htm (see page 14)
- _____ Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL) (see page 25)
- _____ Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable) (see page 21)
- _____ Tribal Authorizing Resolution (if applicable) (see page 21)
- _____ Applicant Disclosure of High Risk Status (see page 21)
- _____ Additional Attachments
 - _____ Applicant Disclosure of Pending Applications (see page 22)
 - _____ Research and Evaluation Independence and Integrity (see page 23)
- _____ Financial Management and System of Internal Controls Questionnaire (if applicable) (see page 25)