

CORRECTIONS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT FAMILY SUPPORT

Corrections Field Test Design Solicitation

I. Introduction

The National Institute of Justice is soliciting proposals for the design of a Corrections and Law Enforcement Family Support (CLEFS) field test program for correctional officers and their families. This solicitation provides background on the CLEFS program, outlines the purpose of this solicitation and the scope of work to be undertaken by the recipient, and identifies questions to be addressed by applicants seeking to design the field test program under this cooperative agreement. This solicitation is being announced as a limited competition with responses due no later than 5:00 p.m. EST on April 28, 2000. The selected recipient will be expected to begin work immediately upon selection.

II. Background

In 1994, the U.S. Congress authorized the Law Enforcement Family Support (LEFS) program through Title XXI of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Assistance Act in order to ameliorate the harmful effects of stress experienced by correctional officers and their families. Under section 2301, 42 U.S.C. § 3796jj (1) - (5), the legislation authorized the Attorney General of the United States to:

- research the effects of stress on law enforcement personnel and their families;
- identify and evaluate model programs that provide support services to law enforcement personnel and families;
- provide technical assistance and training programs to develop stress-reduction and family support programs for State and local law enforcement agencies;
- collect and disseminate information regarding family support, stress reduction, and psychological services to State and local law enforcement organizations and other interested parties;
- determine issues to be researched by the Department of Justice and grant recipients.

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ), the research, evaluation, and development arm of the U.S. Department of Justice, was given administrative responsibility for this program. In response, NIJ began providing funds to promote research, demonstration, evaluation and dissemination of stress intervention methods to further the objectives of the Law Enforcement Family Support program. NIJ also obtained a ruling from the Office of General Counsel clarifying the term “law enforcement personnel.” The interpretation provided by that Office has allowed for the inclusion of other peace officers (to include correctional, probation, and parole officers) within the activities funded by the expanded Corrections and Law Enforcement Family Support (CLEFS) program.

Research, Evaluation, Development and Demonstration Awards

Since 1996, the National Institute of Justice has solicited grant proposals from law enforcement and correctional agencies and the organizations representing these officers (i.e., unions or membership associations) to support the development of research, demonstration, and evaluation

projects on stress intervention methods. To date, thirty-two grants totaling over \$2.8 million have been awarded. These awards have focused on expanding knowledge about the development, implementation and coordination of services; the feasibility and efficacy of various program elements/strategies; the efficacy of specific approaches; and the causes, nature and consequences of officer and family stress. Services developed and studied have included critical incident stress debriefing and management techniques, peer support services, police psychological services referral networks, police chaplaincy services, rookie stress inoculation counseling, police organizational change and well-being, stress management training methods, spouse academies, and train-the-trainer stress education programs.

Information Synthesis and Dissemination Activities

NIJ published *Developing a Law Enforcement Stress Program for Officers and Their Families* in 1997 to disseminate state-of-the-art information on stress reduction programming for law enforcement officers. This document explored the best methods for planning, implementing and marketing programs aimed at preventing and reducing the effects of stress for police officers and their families. A companion document, *Addressing Correctional Officer Stress: Programs and Strategies*, will be published in the spring of 2000 and will focus on planning, implementing and marketing similar programs for correctional officers. A web site has also been developed and provides general information about the program as well as specific information about grants that have been awarded since the program's inception.

In October of 1999, NIJ convened a National Symposium on Law Enforcement Families in San Antonio, Texas to increase national awareness of and improve the response to law enforcement officer and family stress. Attendees included law enforcement officer stress experts, NIJ grantees, practitioners, family members, academics, Chiefs of Police and Sheriffs. Issues addressed during panel sessions included the impact of work stress on law enforcement officers and their families, the needs of police families, labor and management issues, and organizational issues. Four discussion sessions were held throughout the Symposium to solicit information from and obtain the perspectives of the various participants on these issues.

Visiting Fellowship

Additional information is being compiled by NIJ Visiting Fellow Robert P. Delprino, Ph.D. Dr. Delprino's tasks while at NIJ have been twofold: to conduct a national survey to benchmark family support services offered by correctional agencies and to develop a report that synthesizes the information gained from the thirty-two CLEFS grants to date.

Dr. Delprino has developed a questionnaire to solicit information from all state corrections agencies on the various family support services offered to correctional officers and their families. Dr. Delprino is currently working with NIJ and other organizations to determine the best method for administering the instrument.

Dr. Delprino is also visiting each of the grant sites and has been meeting with various representatives including the project manager, the principal investigator, trainers, participants, family members, administrators, union representatives, and personnel directors. He is collecting

process information as well as outcome information, when available. His final report will document the responses and will focus on providing useful information about how to best develop and implement a family support program.

III. Purpose of Solicitation

Although NIJ has expanded the state-of-practice in law enforcement and correctional officer stress in the last six years, little has been generated in the way of outcome data. To help ensure that future practice in this area is based on sound research, NIJ is interested in developing a CLEFS field test model for correctional officers and their families specifically to allow for the systematic evaluation of selected program components.

NIJ defines a field test as a well-controlled, real-world test of a hypothesis which involves one or more sites and may or may not be derived from an established Office of Justice Programs research portfolio. Field tests are based on and justified by an especially well developed body of research and practice knowledge and include both formative and outcome-focused evaluations.

NIJ is issuing this solicitation for a partner to help identify and design the hypothesis and program components, provide technical assistance to selected sites, and develop both the process and outcome evaluation methodology for the field test. The selected recipient will work with NIJ to identify and select appropriate field test sites. The recipient will work with NIJ and the selected field test sites to refine the evaluation methodology, to ensure that the program elements are implemented in a manner conducive to their evaluation, and to begin the collection of appropriate data. The recipient will also be expected to provide continued technical assistance to the sites, to conduct evaluation activities, and to conduct the analysis.

NIJ intends to incorporate the field test program components and evaluation design into a solicitation for sites interested in implementing the field test. Solicitations for the implementation of the CLEFS field tests will be published in the summer of 2000. Each site chosen will be required to participate in the rigorous external evaluation of project activities to be undertaken by the recipient of this award. Three sites will be chosen to implement the correctional officer field test.

IV. Scope of Work

For a period hereinafter set forth, the recipient will furnish the necessary personnel, travel, supplies, and otherwise perform all things necessary for the performance of work as set forth below, in cooperation with NIJ:

Task 1

The purpose of this task is to design the field test program and to develop the evaluation methodology.

During the first thirty days following selection, the recipient will work collaboratively with NIJ to identify relevant research and promising programs addressing stress-related issues for correctional officers and their families. Based on the findings, the recipient, in collaboration with NIJ, will select field test program components to include in the comprehensive field test model. The field test model will include: types of services to be provided; objectives of each of the program elements; to whom services should be provided; when, how often and for what duration services should be provided; and minimum staffing credentials for service providers. The recipient will also work, with input from NIJ, to identify any promising curricula to be used if training is to be included as part of the proposed field tests.

The recipient will, during the same time period, design the process evaluation and the outcome evaluation, in collaboration with NIJ, ensuring that the outcome evaluation ties directly to program objectives.

It is expected that the respondent will incorporate the program components and evaluation design into a formal, written field test model. This field test model will serve as the basis for the field test site solicitation document that will be published in the early summer.

Estimated Completion Date: June 30, 2000

Task 2

The purpose of this task is to select appropriate field test sites.

The recipient will work with NIJ to identify the criteria upon which individual sites will be selected for implementation, identify issues that need to be considered when choosing field test sites, and determine the best method for identifying potential sites. The recipient will be expected to assist NIJ in reviewing and evaluating proposals, to include visiting at least five potential sites.

Estimated Completion Date: September 12, 2000

Task 3

The purpose of this task is to provide on-going technical assistance, to conduct the evaluation, and to begin dissemination of results.

After the sites have been chosen, the recipient will work with the sites and with NIJ to refine the program and evaluation plans given the knowledge of the specific sites selected and the priorities of the selected sites. The recipient and NIJ will work with the sites on evaluation issues, determine availability and appropriateness of measures to be used for data collection, and assist sites in refining baseline data collection techniques.

The recipient will also be required to conduct the evaluations for each site and will be expected to conform to the time line developed and milestones identified during the first year.

NIJ is also interested in expeditious and innovative methods to disseminate the results from all projects. Methods that would supplement the more traditional forms of dissemination are encouraged. Results of evaluations are expected to be reported to NIJ as they become available and, at a minimum, through semi-annual progress reports and other interim products to be determined. The recipient may also be asked to present interim results at professional corrections conferences throughout the award period.

Estimated Completion Date: April 30, 2002

V. Applicant Criteria

Applicants should meet the following criteria:

1. Demonstrated expertise in program development, particularly in the area of criminal justice.
2. Research and practical knowledge about stress-related issues, particularly for correctional officers and their families.
3. Expertise in the development and implementation of process and outcome evaluations.
4. Experience providing technical assistance to program staff on program implementation and evaluation.
5. Proven record of working collaboratively on projects with other organizations.

VI. Proposal Questions

Applicants competing for this cooperative agreement must review and sign the Assurances and Certifications, prepare a detailed budget and provide a double-spaced narrative proposal. The narrative should not exceed 20 pages; the required forms and budget do not count toward the page length. The proposal should address all of the following questions for you and your organization:

1. Describe, in detail, any experience in working with corrections. Describe extent of knowledge on stress-related issues for correctional officers, to include the nature of, causes of, and consequences of stress.
2. Describe previous experience working on the development of data-driven programs. Provide examples of how problems were addressed during the development and implementation phases and how any differences of opinion were resolved among collaborators.
3. Describe extent of knowledge about effective stress prevention and treatment programs for correctional officers and their families. Include a brief description of the services which should be considered in developing a stress-related field test for this population.
4. Describe experience in developing and conducting process evaluations. Describe experience in developing and conducting outcome evaluations. Describe experience in collecting data, conducting analysis and synthesizing results.

5. Describe experience providing technical assistance to a third-party on evaluation issues. Describe a sample management plan for providing technical assistance to the three field test sites for this project.

6. Describe experience in working in collaborative partnerships with federal, state, or local agencies.

7. Describe a sample staffing and management plan for the development of the field test program design and for the implementation of the evaluation. Provide your plan for identifying promising services, potential sites, and topic areas for analysis.

8. Discuss how the data collected from the three field test sites could be analyzed, documented, reviewed, and disseminated. Provide a description of any additional data collection efforts or other activities you would like to undertake and the deliverables that would result. Discuss how corrections agencies could utilize the information that will be generated as a result of your efforts.

VII. Budget

Prepare a detailed budget for a two-year agreement. Applicants may apply for up to \$500,000. The budget may include travel and per diem costs related to collaborating with NIJ including, to visiting potential field test locations and to providing technical assistance to the three field tests sites selected.

VIII. Application Deadline and Page Limit

Applications for the Corrections and Law Enforcement Family Support Field Test Design cooperative agreement are due on April 28, 2000, by 5:00 p.m. EST. The selected awardee will be notified by phone and fax and should plan to begin meeting with NIJ in May, 2000 to begin work.

Applications should not exceed 20 double-spaced, 12-point typed pages. Budget materials, letters of support/cooperation, and time lines are considered acceptable appendices.

Attachments can be obtained from <http://www.ncjrs.org/fedgrant.htm#NIJ> under Application Forms or by calling the Department of Justice Response Center at 800-851-3420.

Submit an original application and ten copies to:

Corrections and Law Enforcement Family Support Field Test Design
National Institute of Justice
810 7th Street, NW, Room 7112
Washington, DC 20531

IX. NIJ Contact for Assistance

Please contact Rebecca Childress by phone at 202-307-0200 or by e-mail at childrer@ojp.usdoj.gov to obtain additional information about this solicitation.

X. Notice of Intent to Apply

Please fax a short letter notifying NIJ of your intent to apply for the Corrections and Law Enforcement Family Support Field Test Design cooperative agreement. The non-binding letter should be faxed to the attention of Rebecca Childress at (202) 307-6256 no later than April 14, 2000.

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