

Notices regarding the solicitation “Developing Improved Means to Collect Digital Evidence”

April 1, 2016: Answers to questions have been posted. To assist applicants in completing their proposals, NIJ has made the answers to questions received available for this funding opportunity. Visit <http://nij.gov/funding/pages/solicitation-qa.aspx#NIJ-2016-8976> for questions and answers to help prepare your application.

The original solicitation document begins on the next page.



The [U.S. Department of Justice](#) (DOJ), [Office of Justice Programs](#) (OJP), [National Institute of Justice](#) (NIJ) is seeking applications for funding to conduct research and technology development leading to the introduction into practice of new, innovative means for: collecting digital evidence from mobile devices or large-scale computer networks, or for detecting human images. This program furthers the Department's mission by sponsoring research to provide objective, independent, evidence-based knowledge and tools to meet the challenges of crime and justice, particularly at the State and local levels.

Developing Improved Means to Collect Digital Evidence 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, federally recognized Indian tribal governments (as determined by the Secretary of the Interior) that perform law enforcement functions, non-profit and for-profit organizations (including tribal non-profit and 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. 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 project. 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 14, 2016**.

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

For additional application information, see [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 email 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 email 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 the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS) Response Center: toll-free at 1-800-851-3420; via TTY at 301-240-6310 (hearing impaired only); email grants@ncjrs.gov; fax to 301-240-5830; or web chat at <https://webcontact.ncjrs.gov/ncjchat/chat.jsp>. The NCJRS Response Center hours of operation are 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. eastern time, Monday through Friday, and 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. eastern time on the solicitation close date.

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-2016-8976

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Developing Improved Means to Collect Digital Evidence

(CFDA No. 16.560)

A. Program Description

Overview

The purpose of the NIJ Research, Evaluation, and Development Project Grants program is to encourage and support research, development, and evaluation to improve criminal justice policy and practice in the United States.

With this solicitation, NIJ seeks proposals for funding to conduct research and technology development leading to the introduction into practice of new and innovative tools to:

- Process large-scale computer networks for digital evidence in a forensically sound manner that preserves the probative value of the evidence that the computer network may contain;
- Process mobile devices voluntarily surrendered to law enforcement by witnesses or victims of an alleged crime, which will discriminate between data that are germane to that crime and that which is not, and which will only collect data that are germane; or
- Automatically detect children in pornographic videos of varying quality.

Individual applicants may propose to address one or more of these topics, **but must do so in separate, discrete applications**. Single applications proposing to address more than one topic will not be accepted.

Authorizing Legislation: Title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (sections 201 and 202); the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (sections 231-233); and 28 U.S.C. 530C.

Program-Specific Information

For the purposes of this solicitation, the following definitions apply:

- **Digital evidence** – information stored or transmitted in binary form that may be relied upon in court.¹
- **Computer Network** – two or more devices connected in some way using hardware and software to enable the devices to communicate. Devices may include desktop

¹ "Digital Evidence and Forensics," National Institute of Justice. Last modified November 5, 2010. Accessed September 2, 2015. <http://www.nij.gov/topics/forensics/evidence/digital/Pages/welcome.aspx>.

computers, printers, routers, switches, wireless devices, access points, laptops, and mobile devices.²

- **Digital Forensic Process** – a process used in computer and mobile device forensic investigations and consisting of seizure of the computer or device, acquisition of the digital evidence, analysis of the evidence, and reporting on the findings of that analysis.
- **Forensically Sound** – the application of a transparent digital forensic process that preserves the original meaning of the data for production in a court of law.³
- **Large-Scale** – a computer network containing at least 5,000 devices.
- **Mobile-Device** – a small, portable, wireless computing device capable of being handheld, such as a smartphone or a tablet.

For information regarding the preservation and documentation of digital crime scenes, applicants may refer to the following NIJ publications:

- *Electronic Crime Scene Investigation: A Guide for First Responders* (<https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/187736.pdf>).
- *Forensic Examination of Digital Evidence: A Guide for Law Enforcement* (<http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/199408.pdf>).

For information regarding the handling of digital evidence and presenting it in court, applicants may refer to the following NIJ publication:

- *Digital Evidence in the Courtroom: A Guide for Law Enforcement and Prosecutors* (<https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/211314.pdf>).

For information regarding investigations involving the internet and networks, applicants may refer to the following NIJ publication:

- *Investigations Involving the Internet and Computer Networks* (<http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/210798.pdf>).

Processing Large-scale Computer Networks

In 2014, the RAND Corporation, with funding from NIJ, published *Digital Evidence and the U.S. Criminal Justice System: Identifying Technology and Other Needs to More Effectively Acquire and Utilize Digital Evidence* (<https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/248770.pdf>). The report identified the lack of tools to examine computer networks as a continuing area of concern for State and local law enforcement.⁴ Large-scale computer networks are often identified as a

² *Investigations Involving the Internet and Computer Networks*, Special Report, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, January 2007, NCJ 210798.

³ McKemish, Rodney, "Advances in Digital Forensics IV," in *IFIP — The International Federation for Information Processing*, ed. Indrajit Ray and Sujeet Sheno, New York: Springer US, 2008: 3-15.

⁴ Goodison, Sean E., Robert C. Davis, and Brian A. Jackson, "Digital Evidence and the U.S. Criminal Justice System: Identifying Technology and Other Needs to More Effectively Acquire and Utilize Digital Evidence," Research report to the National Institute of Justice, grant number 2013-MU-CX-K003, 2005, NCJ 248770, available at <http://www.ncjrs.gov>.

potential source of digital evidence in criminal justice investigations that range from combating terrorism to economic crimes.

Digital forensic processing of large-scale computer networks offers some significant challenges when compared to traditional computer forensics. They entail diverse configurations, operating systems, applications, connectivity, hardware, and components. In a distributed computing system, data are more volatile and unpredictable than on standalone devices. Information that may be of evidentiary interest—such as, but not limited to, date and time stamps, user names and passwords, IP addresses, connection information, contraband files, and system activity logs⁵—may be obfuscated by the applications used (e.g., Microsoft Office), resources attached to the network (e.g., printers, fax machines, scanners, and disk drives), differing configurations (e.g., desktop computers, laptops, tablets, virtual environments), data storage (onsite, offsite, cloud), or the network topology (e.g., ring, bus, star, hierarchical, or mesh). Increasingly, because networks may be distributed across multiple jurisdictions, only portions or segments of the data may be readily accessible to investigators in the jurisdiction(s) where the crime occurred.

Goals and Objectives

This solicitation seeks proposals to develop innovative, new tools for criminal justice agencies—particularly at the State and local level—that overcome these challenges and allow these agencies to conduct digital forensics processing of large-scale computer networks in a forensically sound manner, for example, but not limited to, tools capable of reassembling transferred files (including documents, images, executable, etc.), searching for keywords, and parsing human communication such as emails, messenger, or chat sessions from captured network traffic. For purposes of this solicitation, NIJ is concerned exclusively with the acquisition of digital evidence contained in the network pertaining to crimes not involving the network directly. In other words, NIJ is not interested in proposals for the development of tools for forensic examination related to attacks on the network; nor is NIJ interested in proposals for development of tools that deal **solely** with the ability to track traffic on the network. Any applications proposing such research will be deemed not responsive to this solicitation.

Applicants are encouraged to consider the benefit of partnering with criminal justice agencies to provide a fuller understanding of these challenges and the operational context within which these tools would be employed. Proposals should touch on the cost and training implications of the proposed tools.

Among other topics, the applicant's proposal should explain how the proposed tools will preserve the probative value of the evidence produced. The proposal should also address how the proposed tool would be introduced into practice. For example, would it be sold as a commercial product? If so, how would it be commercialized?

Processing Mobile Devices

Mobile devices are ubiquitous in our society. According to the Pew Research Center, 64 percent of Americans own a smartphone.⁶ Mobile devices are really miniature computers. They can take pictures and videos; send and receive text messages; record audio; run applications; browse the Internet; and retrieve, store and edit documents. Given their ubiquity, it is not surprising that

⁵ *Investigations Involving the Internet and Computer Networks*.

⁶ "Mobile Technology Fact Sheet." Pew Research Center Internet, Science & Tech. December 27, 2013. Accessed June 26, 2015. <http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheets/mobile-technology-fact-sheet/>.

law enforcement practitioners often encounter these devices when interviewing victims and witnesses.

There are many instances where information obtained from a victim or witness' mobile device may help law enforcement further the investigation of a crime, or determine that a crime was committed. Bystander video capture of an incident is one of the most common forms of evidence from these mobile devices. Other potential evidence could include text messages from a potential stalking victim, photographs from witnesses, and audio recordings.⁷

In *U.S. v. Damian Anthony Murphy* in 2009, the court cited "the manifest need to preserve evidence" in ruling that law enforcement may conduct warrantless searches of a mobile device. In *U.S. v. Young* in 2010, the court ruled further that law enforcement may also retrieve text messages and other information seized during an arrest.⁸ In 2014, however, in a case brought by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the Supreme Court unanimously ruled that the "answer to the question of what police must do before searching a cell phone seized incident to an arrest is . . . simple — get a warrant."⁹ The courts have yet to resolve the legal obligations of law enforcement when a mobile device is presented to law enforcement voluntarily by a witness or victim of a crime.

Existing law enforcement tools to collect evidence from mobile devices are designed based on the assumption that the device in question has been legally taken from the alleged perpetrator of a crime because of its potential evidentiary value.¹⁰ As a result, they are likely to capture all data held on a mobile device including data that are not germane to the incident in question. Law enforcement needs the capability to collect digital evidence from victim or witness devices discriminately – where broad capture of all data might capture data that are not germane to the case being investigated.¹¹ Protection of the privacy of data from witness and victim mobile devices that are not germane to the incident is paramount in this instance.

Goals and Objectives

This solicitation seeks proposals to develop innovative, new tools that allow narrow collection of data from the mobile devices of victims and witnesses which are voluntarily presented to police; tools that will discriminate between data that are germane to an incident and that which are not and only collect germane data. Solutions that address traditional search and seizure methodologies are not part of this solicitation and will be considered non-responsive.

Applicants are encouraged to consider the benefit of partnering with criminal justice agencies to provide a fuller understanding of the operational context within which these tools would be employed. Proposals should touch on the cost and training implications of the proposed tools.

⁷ The admissibility of audio recordings may depend on whether the jurisdiction involved follows one-party or two-party consent laws.

⁸ Kotowski, Jason. "Can Police Seize Your Cellphone As Evidence? There's No Easy Answer." The Huffington Post. August 11, 2013. Accessed August 25, 2015. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/08/12/police-seize-cellphone-evidence_n_3739770.html.

⁹ "Riley v. California," *Harvard Law Review* 128 (1) (November 2014): 251-260, <http://harvardlawreview.org/2014/11/riley-v-california/> (accessed August 25, 2015).

¹⁰ Walls, Robert J., Erik G. Learned-Miller, and Brian N. Levine, "Forensic Triage for Mobile Phones with DECODE," *USENIX Security Symposium* (2011).

¹¹ Goodison, Davis, and Jackson, "Digital Evidence and the U.S. Criminal Justice System: Identifying Technology and Other Needs to More Effectively Acquire and Utilize Digital Evidence"

Among other topics, the applicant's proposal should explain how the proposed tools will preserve the probative value of the evidence produced. The proposal should also address how the proposed tool would be introduced into practice. For example, would it be sold as a commercial product? If so, how would it be commercialized?

Automated Image Detection

Much of law enforcement seizure of media potentially containing child pornography involves video. During an investigation, an analyst may review hundreds of videos to determine whether (a) a human is present, and (b) if it is a human; then the analyst must determine whether a child is present in the image. This process is stressful to the analyst, and error-prone.¹²

The primary challenge to automation of the detection of pornographic images of children in video, are poor image quality, image size, and/or the orientation of the individual in the image. Determining if an unidentified individual in an explicit video is an adult or a child for prosecutorial purposes often relies on medical testimony dealing with anthropomorphic indicators of age.

One often used tool is the Tanner Scale, which differentiates ages in humans based on the expected maturity of their visual sexual characteristics, such as genitalia. Poor image quality, image size and/or orientation may obscure the indicators that the Tanner Scale relies on. They also may obscure other anthropomorphic indicators of age such as muscle mass, facial structure, and limb proportions.

The natural variation among individuals in the anthropomorphic indicators of age also complicates the detection of pornographic images of children. As it relates to sexual exploitation and other abuse of children, the federal government defines a minor as individuals under the age of 18.¹³ Most adolescent girls have taken on the physical characteristics of adults several years before 18. Most boys have done so by 18.

Current solutions for detecting child pornography in video rely upon representative key frame image captures that the analyst must manually review.¹⁴ While this method is an improvement over having to view an entire video, it is still time consuming and does not significantly reduce the workload of computer forensic analysts.

In 2010, NIJ funded the University of Rhode Island (URI) to conduct research into the challenge of automatically identifying human images to assist law enforcement in child pornography cases. URI developed a child pornography detection tool using machine-learning classification software, called Support Vector Machines (SVM)¹⁵ for feature extraction (i.e., eye distances, limb proportions, mass differences, etc.).

This approach worked well for adult pornography, where most instances of video are studio grade. This approach met limited success in detecting children in pornographic videos, in part because most of these types of videos are less than studio grade. Further, differentiation

¹² Tanner, Kylie, "Modeling automated detection of children in images" *Dissertations and Master's Theses (Campus Access)* (2011).

¹³ United States Code, 2006 Edition, Supplement 5, Title 18 - CRIMES AND CRIMINAL PROCEDURE, 18 U.S.C. § 110 2256 (2006 & Supp. 2011).

¹⁴ Christian Jansohn, Ulges, Adrian, and Breuel, Thomas M. "Detecting pornographic video content by combining image features with motion information," *Proceedings of the 17th ACM international conference on Multimedia* (2009): 601-604.

¹⁵ Tanner, "Modeling automated detection of children in images," 14.

between adults and children in pornography was difficult because differences in orientation of the child in an image, sizes of the images, and quality of the images makes extracting particular features, such as eye dimensions, nearly impossible. Thus, any results from the tool developed still required interpretation by an analyst.

Other research into automated detection of children in two dimensional images with controlled size and resolution yielded an accuracy rate of 70% in distinguishing between classes of adults and children, using automated feature detection of the eyes, ears, and mouth; and age estimation based on the extracted features.¹⁶

Goals and Objectives

This solicitation seeks proposals to develop innovative, new tools that would automatically detect prepubescent individuals in pornographic videos of varying quality. Ideally, those tools would also be able to detect post pubescent individuals in pornographic videos prior to assuming the full physical characteristics of an adult.

Applicants are encouraged to consider the benefit of partnering with criminal justice agencies to provide a fuller understanding of the operational context within which these tools would be employed. Proposals should touch on the cost and training implications of the proposed tools.

The proposal should also address how the proposed tool would be introduced into practice. For example, would it be sold as a commercial product? If so, how would it be commercialized?

Deliverables and Expected Scholarly Products

An exemplar of any tool or method resulting from research and development activities funded under this solicitation will be delivered to NIJ at the end of the award for third-party evaluation, along with detailed implementation instructions.

In addition to delivering the technology exemplar, any required data sets, interim and final progress and financial reports,¹ 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, patented inventions, or similar scientific products.

B. Federal Award Information

NIJ anticipates that up to a total of \$1,500,000 may become available for several awards under this solicitation in FY 2016. From the total amount, NIJ anticipates that it will make one to three awards.

Notwithstanding, applicants should base their federal funding request and period of performance on the requirements of the research, and not necessarily on the funding anticipated being available in FY 2016.

Important considerations in decisions regarding the provision of supplemental funding include, among other factors, the availability of funding, strategic priorities, NIJ's assessment of the

¹⁶ Tanner, "Modeling automated detection of children in images," 54.

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.

If an applicant is proposing a project that will exceed the amount that NIJ anticipates becoming available for awards under this solicitation in FY 2016 and/or that will exceed a three-year period, the applicant's project design, to the extent possible, should be phased with each phase resulting in one or more significant, defined milestones. This will allow NIJ to make more informed decisions regarding the quality of management and the progress of the research. In such a case, the applicant's budget detail worksheet should also be structured in discrete phases that support the project design.

Awards will be made under this solicitation on or before September 30, 2016. To allow for time for, among other things, any necessary post-award review, modification, and clearance by OJP of the proposed budget, applicants should anticipate an award start date of January 1, 2017.

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

Type of Award¹⁷

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.

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 [OJP's 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).

¹⁷ 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]).

- 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](#).

Budget Information

What will not be funded:

- 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 are not responsive to this specific solicitation.

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

Pre-agreement costs are costs incurred by the applicant prior to the start date of the period of performance of the grant award.

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.¹⁸ The 2016 salary table for SES employees is available at the Office of Personnel Management [website](#). 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.) For employees who charge only a portion of their time to an award, the allowable amount to be charged is equal to the percentage of time worked times the maximum salary limitation.

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 <http://ojp.gov/financialguide/DOJ/PostawardRequirements/chapter3.10a.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 [OJP's Funding Resource Center](#).

¹⁸ 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.

C. Eligibility Information

Eligibility

For additional eligibility information, see title page.

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.

Project abstracts should follow the detailed template (including the detailed instructions as to content) available at www.nij.gov/funding/documents/nij-project-abstract-template.pdf.

Permission to Share Project Abstract with the Public: It is unlikely that NIJ will be able to fund all promising applications submitted under this solicitation, but it may have the opportunity to share information with the public regarding promising but unfunded applications, for example, through a listing on a Web page available to the public. The intent of this public posting would be to allow other possible funders to become aware of such proposals.

In the project abstract template, applicants are asked to indicate whether they give OJP permission to share their project abstract (including contact information) with the public if NIJ does not fund the proposed project. Granting (or failing to grant) this permission will not affect OJP’s funding decisions, and, if the application is not funded, granting permission will not guarantee that project abstract information will be shared, nor will it guarantee funding from any other source.

Note: OJP may choose not to list a project that otherwise would have been included in a listing of promising but unfunded applications, should the abstract fail to meet the format and content requirements noted above and outlined in the project abstract template.

3. Program Narrative

The program narrative section of the application should not exceed 30 double-spaced pages in 12-point font with 1-inch margins. If included in the main body of the program narrative, tables, charts, figures, and other illustrations count toward the 30-page limit for the narrative section. The project abstract, table of contents, appendices, and government forms do not count toward the 30-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.¹⁹

Program Narrative Guidelines:

a. Title Page (not counted against the 30-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.

b. Resubmit Response (if applicable) (not counted against the 30-page 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, and 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 the 30-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.
- Potential Impact.
- Capabilities/Competencies.

Within these sections, the narrative should address:

- Purpose, goals, and objectives.

¹⁹ 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, “Deliverables and Expected Scholarly Products” under “Program-Specific Information,” above.

- Review of relevant literature.
- Detailed description of research design and methods, such as research questions, hypotheses, description of sample, and analysis plan.
- Planned Scholarly Products (See [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. 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
Conduct research in science, technology, engineering, and/or mathematics having clear implications for criminal justice policy and practice in the United States.	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	1. Quarterly financial reports, semi-annual and final progress reports 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

	<p>chapter(s) or book(s) in the academic press, technological prototypes, patented inventions, or similar scientific products).</p> <p>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.</p> <p>4. Number of technologies fielded as a result (in whole or in part) of work funded under the NIJ award.</p>	<p>funded under the NIJ award.</p> <p>3. If applicable, each data set that resulted in whole or in part from work funded under the NIJ award.</p> <p>4. Description of all technologies fielded as a result (in whole or in part) of work funded under the NIJ award.</p>
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f. Appendices (not counted against the 30-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.
- 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).
- 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 “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, such as law enforcement and correctional agencies (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) (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 (through NACJD) 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. The Budget Detail Worksheet should be broken down by year.

For questions pertaining to budget and examples of allowable and unallowable costs, see the Financial Guide at <http://ojp.gov/financialguide/DOJ/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 [Section 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.
- 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 applications²⁰

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.

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

²⁰ 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.

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 C.F.R. 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/web/grants/register.html.
- 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-2016-8976.
- 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](#) (Federal Service 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 <http://ojp.gov/funding/index.htm>.

E. Application Review Information

Selection Criteria

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.
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.
2. Feasibility of proposed project.
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:

1. Potential for significantly improved understanding of the stated criminal/juvenile justice problem.
2. Potential for innovative solution to address (all or a significant part of) the stated criminal/juvenile justice problem.

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.

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. 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, 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 requirements²¹ 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 the [Mandatory Award Terms and Conditions](#) page of the [OJP 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 C.F.R. Part 200. The final progress report shall encompass the entire scope for the full project period. 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.

²¹ 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)).

The final progress report is expected to provide a summary of the work covering the entirety of the grant period and results of the project funded by NIJ under this solicitation. The final progress report **should include an executive summary** (minimum of one page in length), and address, among other things:

1. **Accomplishments**

- What were the major goals and objectives of the project?
- What was accomplished under these goals?
- What opportunities for training and professional development did the project provide?
- How were the results disseminated to communities of interest?

2. **Products** – List any products resulting from the project during the reporting period. Examples of products include:

- Publications, conference papers, and presentations.
- Website(s) or other Internet site(s).
- Data collection instruments.
- Technologies or techniques.
- Inventions, patent applications, and/or licenses.
- Other products such as data or databases, physical collections, audio or video products, software, models, educational aids or curricula, instruments or equipment, research material, interventions, or new business creation.

3. **Participants and Other Collaborating Organizations**

- What individuals have worked on the project?
- Has there been a change in the principal investigator(s) or senior/key personnel?
- What other organizations have been involved as partners?
- Have other collaborators or contacts been involved?

4. **Impact** – Describe distinctive contribution, major accomplishments, innovations, successes, or any change in practice or behavior that has come about as a result of the project relative to:

- The development the principal discipline(s) of the project.
- Other disciplines.

- The development of human resources.
- Teaching and educational experiences.
- Physical, institutional, and information resources that form infrastructure.
- Technology transfer.
- Society beyond science and technology.

5. **Changes/Problems** – Provide the following information, if applicable:

- Changes in approach and reasons for change.
- Actual or anticipated problems or delays and actions or plans to resolve them.
- Changes that have a significant impact on expenditures.
- Significant changes in use or care of human subjects, vertebrate animals, biohazards, and/or select agents.

6. **Project Outcomes** – Describe project outcomes specifically for the public to provide insight into the outcomes of federally funded research, education, and other activities.

The final progress report is to be submitted 90 days prior to the end of the project period for peer and internal review and comment.

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 [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.

Required Data Sets and Associated Files and Documentation

As discussed earlier, NIJ requires recipients of an award under this solicitation to submit to NACJD 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](#).

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 ojppeerreview@lmsolas.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

Developing Improved Means to Collect Digital Evidence

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 24)
- Acquire or renew registration with SAM (see page 25)

To Register with Grants.gov:

- Acquire AOR and Grants.gov username/password (see page 25)
- Acquire AOR confirmation from the E-Biz POC (see page 25)

To Find Funding Opportunity:

- Search for the funding opportunity on Grants.gov (see page 25)
- Download Funding Opportunity and Application Package (see page 25)
- Sign up for Grants.gov [email](#) notifications (optional) (see page 24)
- Read [Important Notice: Applying for Grants in Grants.gov](#)
- Read OJP policy and guidance on “conference” approval, planning, and reporting available at ojp.gov/financialguide/DOJ/PostawardRequirements/chapter3.10a.htm (see page 12)

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 26)

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

- Please refer to the section: Experiencing Unforeseen Grants.gov Technical Issues (see page 26)

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 13)
- Project Abstract (if applicable) (see page 14)
- Program Narrative (see page 14)
- Budget Detail Worksheet (see page 18)
- Budget Narrative (see page 19)
- Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable) (see page 20)
- Tribal Authorizing Resolution (if applicable) (see page 20)
- Applicant Disclosure of High Risk Status (see page 20)
- Additional Attachments
 - Applicant Disclosure of Pending Applications (see page 21)
 - Research and Evaluation Independence and Integrity (see page 22)
- Financial Management and System of Internal Controls Questionnaire (if applicable) (see page 23)
- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL) (see page 23)
- Employee Compensation Waiver request and justification (if applicable) (see page 12)