



**2016-2017 Academic Year**  
**1 Research Assistantships (Doctoral Students only)**  
**Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE)**  
**Placement ID: SEI**

**Topic Area:** Sentinel Events and Learning from Error in the Criminal Justice System

**Program Overview:** Most of the pertinent information about NIJ's Sentinel Event Initiative can be found at <http://nij.gov/topics/justice-system/Pages/sentinel-events.aspx>.

A new NIJ program development initiative, SEI seeks to adapt "learning from error" strategies that have proven effective in aviation, medicine, and other industries and apply them to the criminal justice system. When bad things happen in a complex system, the cause is rarely a single act, event, or slip-up. More often, bad outcomes are "sentinel events."

A sentinel event is a significant negative outcome that:

- signals underlying weaknesses in the system or process.
- likely is the result of compound errors.
- may provide, if properly analyzed and addressed, important keys to strengthening the system and preventing future adverse events or outcomes.

**Research assistant project task responsibilities may include but are not limited to:**

- ♦ Compiling, summarizing, revising, or making use of complex, technical, or specialized literature.
- ♦ Assisting in program development, research design, and program dissemination strategies.
- ♦ Conceptualizing and drafting publications (such as government reports, peer-reviewed journal articles, NIJ publications, and trade magazine articles).
- ♦ Drafting and presenting presentations at conferences (where funding permits and the University approves).
- ♦ Assisting with coordination of research activities and participate in intra- and inter-agency working groups
- ♦ Assisting with various outreach activities such as meetings and webinars.

**Candidate Eligibility Criteria**

- Demonstrated basic knowledge of the U.S. criminal justice system **required**.
- Ability to think creatively **required**.
- Strong teamwork orientation **required**.
- Excellent communication skills **required**.



### General Required Qualifications

- **Education and/or Experience:** Doctoral students working toward a terminal degree (e.g., Ph.D., D.P.A., Dr.PH., D.H.Sc., D.S.W., Psy.D., Ed.D.).
- **Computer Skills:** Working knowledge of computers and standard software such as Adobe Professional, Excel, Internet Explorer, Outlook, Windows operating systems, Word, and PowerPoint required.
- **Reasoning Ability:** Ability to work independently, accurately, and in a timely manner.
- **Communication Skills:** Ability to communicate orally and in writing to prepare comprehensive research reports, proposals, and presentations and make recommendations to accomplish and enhance project objectives.
- **Certifications, Licenses, Registrations:** Human Subjects (HS) Protection training is required. NIJ research assistants must take annual HS training onsite at the Office of Justice Programs. RAs also must successfully complete CITI training prior to participating on any studies.
- **Background Check:** Candidates must complete all required U.S. Department of Justice profile and pre-screening paperwork with all security reviews and background investigations (such as credit and criminal investigations) resulting in a favorable adjudication.
- **Citizenship:** Candidates must be U.S. citizens.

**Work Location:** Primary work location will be at [NIJ's offices in Washington, D.C.](#) Minimal local travel in the [National Capital Region](#) may be needed to attend meetings and visit offsite research facilities.