



Peer Reviewers Wanted for School Safety Solicitations

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) seeks subject-matter experts to review the strengths and weaknesses of applications for grant funding under the Comprehensive School Safety Initiative (CSSI).

What is NIJ's peer review process? As the scientific research arm of the U.S. Department of Justice, NIJ provides objective, independent, evidence-based knowledge and tools to meet criminal justice challenges, particularly at the state and local levels. To do this, NIJ releases solicitations for research, evaluation and development. These solicitations are the key device through which our research agenda is articulated and advanced. To ensure that applications for funding meet the highest standards and advance our long-term research agenda, each one is reviewed by a panel of peer reviewers that help NIJ identify the best proposals with the greatest chance of advancing the field.

What are the duties of a peer reviewer? Reviews of CSSI applications will occur approximately from June–August 2015. NIJ's peer review process is time-sensitive and deadline-driven. Generally, reviewers have three weeks to review and evaluate 10 or more applications and then participate in a consensus call, webinar, or in-person peer review that lasts from one to two days. Reviewers spend two to four hours, on average, to thoroughly review each application. The amount of writing varies: lead reviewers provide a written report that may be up to five, single-spaced pages, and other reviewers submit shorter reviews.

Are peer reviewers compensated? NIJ peer reviewers receive a nominal compensation of \$125 for each application reviewed. Serving on a peer-review panel also offers nonmonetary benefits, such as professional experience — and because NIJ is a government agency with a critical law enforcement and justice mission, peer reviewers have the opportunity to provide a valuable public service.

What qualifications do I need? There are two types of NIJ Peer Reviewers: technical reviewers and practitioner reviewers. Technical reviewers have specialized knowledge in the research designs and strategies used in research applications; they are typically researchers themselves and are expected to play a leading role in consolidating reviewers' input into a consensus document. Practitioner reviewers may (but are not required to) possess research credentials or advanced degrees — however, they must have substantial experience related to school and student safety, gained through professional experience in positions such as a school resource officer, school principal or administrator, teacher, school counselor, or law enforcement or mental health expert.

What is CSSI? More than 15,000 school districts in the U.S. face the daily challenge of providing a safe learning environment for children. NIJ is overseeing CSSI — with guidance from a number of federal partners, including the U.S. departments of Justice, Education, Health and Human Services, and Homeland Security — to build science-based knowledge about the causes of school violence and test innovative approaches that will make an enduring contribution to our

understanding of how to keep schools safe for students and school personnel. Schools across the country will be able to use this information to address their own individual safety needs.

To learn more about becoming a CSSI peer reviewer, visit

<http://ojp.gov/grants101/applicationreview.htm>.

Learn more at nij.gov, keywords: Comprehensive School Safety.

Stay tuned to <http://www.nij.gov/funding/Pages/welcome.aspx> for future funding opportunities.