



National Institute of Justice

S o l i c i t a t i o n

Jeremy Travis, Director

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Juvenile “Breaking the Cycle” Evaluation

APPLICATION DEADLINE:

Thursday, December 17, 1998

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs
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Washington, DC 20531

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Department of Justice Response Center:
800-421-6770

Office of Justice Programs
World Wide Web Site:
<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov>

National Institute of Justice
World Wide Web Site:
<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij>

Juvenile “Breaking the Cycle” Evaluation

I. Introduction

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) plans to enter into Cooperative Agreements with two sites to implement the Juvenile “Breaking the Cycle” (JBTC) Demonstration Project. These two sites will join three Adult “Breaking the Cycle” (BTC) sites, the first of which is currently under full implementation in Birmingham, Alabama.

Like all research-demonstration programs sponsored by NIJ, a separate award will be made for purposes of conducting an independent evaluation of the project. The evaluator chosen by NIJ will be expected to work closely with the two juvenile demonstration sites, NIJ staff, and the BTC Program Board to complete the evaluation. This solicitation makes available \$400,000 for the first stage of the multi-site evaluation; up to \$1.5 million total will be available for the complete evaluation of the two JBTC sites.

II. Background

A consortium of Federal agencies, led by NIJ and the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), and including the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the National Institute of Drug Abuse, the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, and the Corrections Program Office and the Drug Courts Program Office of the Office of Justice Programs, has designed JBTC, a research demonstration project to test the effectiveness of a system-wide intervention with drug-involved juvenile arrestees. The goal of this project is to provide drug testing, drug treatment, graduated sanctions and incentives, and judicial supervision to each drug-involved arrestee regardless of charge or detention status.

In essence, JBTC is a court system integrated with treatment and community resources which focuses on the development of individualized outcome-based treatment programs for drug-involved juveniles entering the juvenile justice system. Core components of JBTC include: drug testing as soon as possible after the juvenile is detained; individualized assessment of treatment and other needs; comprehensive drug treatment and coordination of services; immediate and certain sanctions and incentives; judicial supervision; collaborative implementation by the juvenile justice, drug treatment, and social service systems; and information sharing across systems. The JBTC model depends upon collaboration between systems relevant to juveniles (e.g. families, schools, the court system), as well as integration with other Federally- and locally-funded initiatives to reduce juvenile violence and drug use.

Both the demonstration and evaluation of JBTC will be managed by NIJ on behalf of its partner agencies who assisted in designing the model. At each site, NIJ anticipates supporting a 9- to 12-month planning phase, followed by two years of full program implementation. It is expected that the JBTC evaluator will enter the planning process no later than 60 days prior to the commencement of intake of eligible juveniles into the JBTC program at each site. The first stage of the evaluation, then, will begin during the program planning phase and continue for approximately 12 months, into the early phases of program implementation at both sites.

III. Required features of a JBTC Evaluation

The goal of JBTC is to demonstrate and rigorously evaluate the model outlined above. The working hypothesis of the demonstration project is that a fully integrated system of testing

S o l i c i t a t i o n

and needs assessment, graduated sanctions, treatment, service coordination, and supervision that (1) maximizes the involvement of the judiciary in overseeing treatment progress and (2) provides appropriate treatment for all juveniles irrespective of their detention status or the legal status of their cases will have the following positive outcomes:

- drug use in the subject population will decline;
- delinquent behavior in the subject population will decline;
- health and social functioning (e.g. school performance, family functioning, etc.) in the subject population will improve; and,
- the juvenile justice system will make more effective use of its resources, particularly detention capacity.

Applicants must outline an overall research strategy for two sites that includes a thorough **process analysis** and a comprehensive **analysis of the impact** of the JBTC program, on individual behavior and on system functioning.

Process Evaluation

The successful applicant will prepare an evaluation design that provides an effective strategy to evaluate the process of JBTC. The process evaluation should describe implementation of the program at each phase, including the barriers encountered as well as strategies developed for overcoming them. Program components that will need to be described and evaluated include:

- Drug Testing and Individualized Assessment: frequency of drug testing; impact of different testing procedures; nature and frequency of

assessment procedures; use of standardized assessment instruments;

- Case Management and Treatment Services: duration of case management and frequency of contact; approach to determining case management needs; types of treatment services provided; relationship between treatment providers and courts;
- Juvenile Justice Procedures: nature of judicial monitoring; use of sanctions and incentives; decision rules for use of sanctions;
- Integration with Other Services: education services; social services; medical care; provision of services to families;
- Collaboration / Partnerships: nature and extent of collaboration between juvenile justice, treatment, and other social service systems; role of community assessment centers, if applicable;
- Exchange of Information: format of data exchange; types of information exchanged; ability to access and locate information across systems.

Impact on Individual Behavior

The impact of JBTC must also be evaluated. Applicants should propose an evaluative strategy that tests hypotheses regarding changes in the following areas of behavior:

- drug use
- delinquent activity
- physical and mental health outcomes
- family functioning
- academic performance

Additional research questions pertaining to impact on individual behavioral outcomes may be

proposed as well. Applicants are encouraged to describe the multiple data sources (e.g. parent or guardian reports, social service records) they would use to address hypotheses regarding individual-level changes associated with JBTC.

System Impact

System effects may include, but are not limited to, changes in the following:

- test failure rates and proportion of arrestee population that is drug-free;
- kind and level of supervision and monitoring of juveniles who have entered the system;
- use of detention, and use of alternatives to incarceration;
- changes in recidivism and rearrest;
- case processing time;
- extent and efficiency of information exchange across systems;
- system costs (juvenile justice, health care, and other service systems) relative to benefits.

Prospective applicants are reminded that this is a hypothesis-testing evaluation. Taking into consideration time lines and schedules, the need for collaboration with the demonstration sites, and resource constraints, applicants are encouraged to propose rigorous, multi-method approaches that may include experimental and randomized design components. Proposals should identify and justify the selection of instruments to be used to assess program impact. Applicants should also specify the type of research and evaluation presence they anticipate they will maintain at the two demonstration sites.

In addition to providing an overall strategy for conducting the complete evaluation of JBTC at both sites, applicants should present a detailed budget and workplan for the first (12-month) stage of the evaluation. Although precise beginning and ending points cannot be specified due to uncertainty in program timelines, the first stage of the evaluation should correspond to the planning and early implementation phases at both program sites. By the end of this first stage, it is expected that the evaluator will have demonstrated progress in initiating the evaluation and interfacing with the JBTC sites. Activities / products to be completed as part of the first stage of evaluation may include, for example: piloting of instruments, collection of preliminary data on juveniles entering the system in both sites, and compilation of baseline process evaluation data.

IV. Relationship among JBTC sites, NIJ, and the JBTC Evaluator

NIJ envisions that implementing JBTC will be a cooperative effort. NIJ staff will be involved in the planning and implementation of the demonstration projects. The nature of the cooperative funding agreement necessitates NIJ serving as a ‘co-director’ of the projects, and NIJ will be involved in all major resource and policy decisions. Because NIJ has designed this model in order to conduct an evaluation, NIJ is committed to having the model implemented faithfully. Changes to the model will be subject to NIJ approval.

The JBTC evaluator will also be very involved with the implementation at the sites. Throughout the project, the evaluator will provide feedback to the sites on how implementation is progressing. It is anticipated that NIJ staff, the sites, and the evaluator will have, at a minimum, weekly contact. Both the evaluator and NIJ staff will make frequent evaluative site visits. In addition,

previous experience with the Adult BTC demonstration sites suggests that the evaluator may need to provide substantial technical assistance, particularly during the planning stage. For example, the national evaluator for the adult sites has assisted in setting up integrated data management systems and analyzing dimensions of case flow necessary to plan for full implementation. This coordination is appropriate since the accessibility of accurate and timely information is critical to both the implementation and the evaluation of JBTC.

V. How to Apply

Because the selection of the two JBTC sites has not yet been finalized, applicants should propose flexible, initial evaluation strategies, with the understanding that details of the workplan may change in response to the unique demands of specific sites. For budgeting purposes, applicants must estimate average site travel and technical support costs.

Letter of Intent

NIJ is trying to streamline its process to accommodate the volume of proposals anticipated under this and other solicitations. Researchers can help in a significant way by sending NIJ a non-binding letter of intent by November 13, 1998. The Institute will use these to forecast the numbers of peer panels it needs and to identify conflicts of interest among potential reviewers. **Please send letters of intent (stating applicant name, address, and phone) to: Jenifer Wood, National Institute of Justice, 810 Seventh Street NW, Washington DC 20531, or email woodj@ojp.usdoj.gov**

Those interested in submitting proposals in response to this solicitation must complete the required application forms and submit related required documents. (See below for how to obtain

application forms and guides for completing proposals.) Applicants must include the following information/forms to qualify for consideration:

- Standard Form (SF) 424—application for Federal assistance
- Assurances
- Certifications Regarding Lobbying, Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements (one form)
- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities
- Budget Detail Worksheet
- Budget Narrative
- Negotiated indirect rate agreement (if appropriate)
- Names and affiliations of all key persons from applicant and subcontractor(s), advisors, consultants, and advisory board members. Include name of principal investigator, title, organizational affiliation (if any), department (if institution of higher education), address, phone, and fax
- Proposal abstract
- Table of contents
- Program narrative or technical proposal
- Privacy certificate
- References
- Letters of cooperation from organizations collaborating in the research project
- Résumés
- Appendixes, if any (e.g., list of previous NIJ awards, their status, and products [in NIJ or other publications])

Page limit. The number of pages in the “Program Narrative” part of the proposal must not exceed 30 double-spaced pages.

Due date. Completed proposals **must be received** at the National Institute of Justice by the close of business on Thursday, December 17, 1998. Extensions of this deadline will not be permitted.

Award period. A budget period of 12 months is suggested for the first stage of the multi-site evaluation.

S o l i c i t a t i o n

Number of awards. NIJ anticipates supporting 1 grant under this solicitation.

Award amount. One award totaling up to \$400,000 will be made available under this solicitation, for the first stage of the multi-site evaluation.

Contact. *NIJ will make available a supplemental packet of information describing the juvenile sites and the nature of JBTC operations in greater detail, as well as containing materials pertaining the implementation and evaluation of the Adult BTC program.* Applicants who wish to receive this packet should contact the U.S. Department of Justice Response Center at 800-421-6770. Any questions regarding site operations and implementation should be directed to the BTC Program Manager, Spurgeon Kennedy, at 202-616-5121. Questions regarding application design and hypothesis testing issues should be directed to Jenifer Wood at 202-616-5191. ***Organizations and individuals intending to apply should submit a letter of intent to Jenifer Wood by November 13, 1998.***

Applying. Two packets need to be obtained: (1) application forms (including a sample budget worksheet) and (2) guidelines for submitting proposals (including requirements for proposal writers and requirements for grant recipients). To receive them, applicants can:

- Access the Justice Information Center on the web: <http://www.ncjrs.org/fedgrant.htm#NIJ> or the NIJ web site: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/NIJ/funding.htm> These web sites offer the NIJ application forms and guidelines as electronic files that may be downloaded to a personal computer.
- Request hard copies of the forms and guidelines by mail from the National Criminal Justice Reference Service at 800-851-3420 or from the Department of Justice Response Center at 800-421-6770 (in the Washington, D.C., area, at 202-307-1480).
- Request copies by fax. Call 800-851-3420 and select option 1, then option 1 again for NIJ. Code is 1023.

Send completed forms to:

Jenifer Wood
Juvenile “Breaking the Cycle” Evaluation
National Institute of Justice
810 Seventh Street N.W.
Washington, DC 20531
[overnight courier ZIP code 20001]

To find out more information about the National Institute of Justice, please contact:

National Criminal Justice Reference Service

Box 6000

Rockville, MD 20849-6000

800-851-3420

e-mail: askncjrs@ncjrs.org

To obtain an electronic version of this document, access the NIJ web site (<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij>).

If you have any questions, call or e-mail NCJRS.