



The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of Justice Programs (OJP), National Institute of Justice (NIJ) is pleased to announce that it is seeking applications for funding research to improve the understanding of the accuracy, reliability, and measurement validity of forensic science disciplines. Research studies should focus on expanding the scientific basis of forensic methods, development of quantifiable measures of the reliability and accuracy of forensic analyses, and development of an understanding of human factors that may affect forensic analyses. 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.

Solicitation: Fundamental Research to Improve Understanding of the Accuracy, Reliability, and Measurement Validity of Forensic Science Disciplines

Eligibility

In general, NIJ is authorized to make grants to, or enter into contracts or cooperative agreements with, States (including territories), local governments (including federally-recognized Indian tribal governments as determined by the Secretary of the Interior and published in the Federal Register), nonprofit and profit organizations (including tribal nonprofit and profit organizations), institutions of higher education (including tribal institutions of higher education), and certain qualified individuals. Foreign governments, foreign organizations, and foreign institutions of higher education are not eligible to apply.

Deadline

Registration with [OJP's Grant Management System \(GMS\)](#) is required prior to application submission. (See "How to Apply," page 8.)

All applications are due by **11:45 p.m. eastern time on April 16, 2010.**
(See "Deadlines: Registration and Application," page 4.)

Contact Information

For technical assistance with submitting the application, contact the Grants Management System Support Hotline at 1-888-549-9901, option 3 or via e-mail to GMS.HelpDesk@usdoj.gov.

Note: The [GMS](#) Support Hotline hours of operation are Monday–Friday from 6:00 a.m. to midnight eastern time, except for Federal holidays.

For assistance with any other requirement of this solicitation, contact Gerald Laporte, Forensic Policy Program Manager, at 202-305-1106 or by email to Gerald.Laporte@usdoj.gov.

SL# 000909

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Fundamental Research to Improve Understanding of the Accuracy, Reliability, and Measurement Validity of Forensic Science Disciplines CFDA No. 16.560

Overview

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) is the research, development, and evaluation agency of the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and a component of the Office of Justice Programs (OJP). NIJ provides objective, independent, evidence-based knowledge and tools to enhance the administration of justice and public safety. NIJ solicits applications to inform its search for the knowledge and tools to guide policy and practice.

NIJ seeks qualified applicants to conduct research to improve the understanding of the accuracy, reliability, and measurement validity of the forensic science disciplines (specific disciplines stated below). In this solicitation, the term “validity” refers to the extent of the truth of an inference based upon scientific measurement. In other words, what is the extent to which relevant scientific evidence supports an inference as being true or correct? This solicitation does not address subjective, qualitative, or legal analyses of validity.

With this solicitation, NIJ intends to extend prior work that examines methods used by forensic scientists to develop a more complete understanding of the scientific basis of physical, chemical, biological, digital, or other forensic evidence. Studies are also needed to develop quantifiable measures of the reliability and accuracy of forensic analyses. Such studies should examine various processes within forensic methods, from the initial acceptance and examination of evidence for probative value and quality to the final assessment of forensic results. NIJ encourages applicants to propose new approaches, including quantitation of methods that are currently qualitative in nature.

Researchers may also examine potential systemic errors in forensic practice. Similar to professionals in other fields, forensic scientists may be subject to human observer bias, whether it is related to contextual bias, perceptual errors, or other factors. NIJ encourages applicants to propose studies that examine potential human or systemic errors in forensic practice, including studies that examine the interaction between forensic practitioners and other criminal justice practitioners.

NIJ seeks a full understanding, to the greatest extent feasible, of quantifiable measures of uncertainty in the conclusions of forensic analyses, regardless of the sources of uncertainty. Such studies should establish limits of reliability and accuracy that forensic methods can achieve due to varying conditions of forensic evidence.

With this solicitation, NIJ does not seek proposals that automate or otherwise improve the efficiency of forensic methods (with the understanding that improvements in knowledge or practice of forensic methods may result from the fundamental research that is the goal of this solicitation).

Applicants are encouraged to review prior research work and improve the breadth and methodology of those studies, if necessary, to develop a full understanding of the reliability and accuracy of forensic techniques.

Authorizing Legislation: Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (sections 201 and 202); Homeland Security Act of 2002 (section 232); Department of Justice Appropriations Act, 2010 (Public Law 111–117).

Deadlines: Registration and Application

Registration is required prior to submission. The deadline to register in GMS is **11:45 p.m. eastern time on April 16, 2010** and the deadline for applying for funding under this announcement is **11:45 p.m. eastern time on April 16, 2010**. Please see the “How to Apply” section, page 8, for more details.

Eligibility

Please refer to the title page for eligibility information under this program.

Specific Information—Fundamental Research to Improve Understanding of the Accuracy, Reliability, and Measurement Validity of Forensic Science Disciplines

NIJ is the national focal point for work on law enforcement technologies, including corrections, investigative, and forensic technologies, as well as technologies that support the judicial process. NIJ administers programs that improve the safety and effectiveness of, and criminal justice agency access to, these technologies through research, development, testing, and evaluation. NIJ seeks qualified applicants to conduct fundamental research to improve the understanding of the accuracy, reliability, and measurement validity of specific forensic science disciplines within the context of their application to criminal justice. Through this solicitation, NIJ seeks qualified applicants to conduct research and validation studies to improve the scientific foundation of the following forensic disciplines:

1. Firearms and toolmark identification.
2. Questioned documents.
3. Trace evidence, with an emphasis on microscopic examination techniques.
4. Fire debris analysis and arson scene investigations.
5. Latent print and other pattern/impression evidence.
6. Blood pattern analysis.
7. Digital evidence.
8. Forensic pathology/death investigation.

The most competitive proposals under this solicitation will address:

- Strengths and limitations of a specific forensic method or methods.
- Sources of bias and variation.
- Quantification of uncertainties created by these sources.
- Measures of performance.

- Procedural steps in the process of analyzing forensic evidence.
- Methods to continuously monitor and improve the steps in the forensic evidence analysis process.

Applicants may propose any one of the above-bulleted issues for study or, ideally, a combination of these issues. Areas of interest include:

1. Studies that examine the degree of accuracy and reliability of methods used by forensic scientists to help ensure a more complete understanding of the scientific basis of physical, chemical, biological, digital, or other forensic evidence. Validation studies provide statistical characterization of specific methods with respect to issues such as rates of false positives. Such studies may examine the system of a forensic discipline, such as the ACE-V method employed by latent print examiners. They also may examine various processes within forensic methods, from the initial acceptance and examination of evidence for its probative value and quality to the final assessment of forensic results. Applicants may refer to *Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States: A Path Forward*, National Research Council of the National Academies, The National Academies Press, February 2009) to examine the Committee's view of methods of validation and gaps in understanding of specific forensic disciplines. NIJ encourages studies that examine error rates in actual, current forensic practice, rather than error rates based on certification tests. This solicitation is not intended to fund routine validation of accepted methods used in a particular laboratory.
2. Research designed to further a full understanding of quantifiable measures of uncertainty in the conclusions of forensic analyses, regardless of the sources of uncertainty. Studies should also establish limits of reliability and accuracy that forensic methods can achieve with respect to varying conditions of forensic evidence. NIJ is particularly interested in proposals for fundamental research that will advance the forensic science disciplines in the criminal justice arena by answering basic research questions of measurement validity, accuracy, reliability, and error. NIJ does not seek proposals with the primary goal of automating or otherwise improving forensic methods, although it is expected that these fundamental studies will improve the throughput of forensic methods and may examine the interaction of the forensic examiner with automated tools.
3. Research designed to develop new approaches to forensic analysis, including quantitation of analyses that are currently qualitative in nature. For example, in the development of quantitative studies related to friction ridge analysis and other impression evidence, applicants should review NIJ's solicitation, "Quantitative Research on Friction Ridge Patterns" (see <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/si000698.pdf>). NIJ encourages studies that leverage prior work in this area.
4. Research to examine human factors that affect forensic practice, including the potential for systemic errors. This includes studies that examine the interactions between forensic practitioners and other criminal justice practitioners. In forensic practice, it may be more important to understand error rates associated with systemic issues, such as the likelihood that a particular piece of evidence will be correctly associated (or not associated) with a particular source instead of all other possible sources. Similar to professionals in other fields, forensic scientists may be subject to human observer bias, whether it is related to contextual bias, perceptual errors, or other factors. It is expected that a fuller understanding of human factors will improve the speed and accuracy of

forensic analyses through improved practices, management, and professional development.

5. Other fundamental research to improve and expand the scientific basis for determining the measurement validity of forensic disciplines; for example, does a method provide results that correspond with a particular scientific hypothesis?

Amount and length of awards: Total funding for this solicitation and the number of awards made will depend on the availability of funds, the quality of the applications, and other pertinent factors. **All awards are subject to the availability of appropriated funds and to any modifications or additional requirements that may be imposed by law.** NIJ funding for an individual research or development project rarely exceeds \$500,000 annually, although total funding for some projects that require multiple years to complete has exceeded \$1 million. NIJ recommends that, if feasible, applicants divide the proposed work into discrete phases, with each phase resulting in a measurable deliverable. Applicants should try to structure phases so that the funding required in any fiscal year will not exceed \$500,000. Although NIJ cannot guarantee that subsequent phases, stages, or tasks will be funded, this approach will enable NIJ to fund the proposed work incrementally, depending on, among other things, the quality of the deliverable at the end of each phase, strategic priorities, and the availability of funds. It should be noted, however, that applicants should not divide their work if it is not feasible to do so without impairing the technical and programmatic soundness of their approach. Note: Deliverables (including technical reports, proof-of-concept demonstrations, prototypes, etc.) will be required at the end of each phase to enable NIJ to assess the progress of the work and assist NIJ in making reasoned determinations regarding the suitability of funding the next phase of the work.

Applicants should be aware that the total period for an award, including one that receives additional funding, ordinarily will not exceed 3 years.

A grant made by NIJ under this solicitation may account for up to 100 percent of the total cost of the project. See "Cofunding" under "What an Application Must Include."

Please note: All applicants under this solicitation must comply with Department of Justice regulations on confidentiality and human subjects protection. See "Other Requirements for OJP Applications" at http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/other_requirements.htm.

What will *not* be funded:

1. Provision of training or direct service.
2. Proposals primarily to purchase equipment, materials, or supplies. (An applicant's budget may include these items if they are necessary to conduct applied research, development, demonstration, evaluation, or analysis.)
3. Work that will be funded under another solicitation.
4. Proposals to automate or otherwise improve the efficiency of forensic methods, except when improvements to the understanding or practice of forensic methods may result from the fundamental research programs that are the subject of this solicitation.

Budget 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, Federal funds may not be used

to pay total cash compensation (salary plus 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. (The 2010 salary table for SES employees is available at <http://www.opm.gov/oca/10tables/indexSES.asp>.) Note: A recipient may compensate an employee at a higher 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.)

The limitation on compensation rates allowable under an award may be waived on an individual basis at the discretion of the Director of the National Institute of Justice. An applicant that wishes to request a waiver must include a detailed justification in the budget narrative of its application. Unless the applicant submits a waiver request and justification with the application, the applicant should anticipate that OJP will request that the applicant adjust and resubmit its budget.

The justification should include: the particular qualifications and expertise of the individual, the uniqueness of the service being provided, 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 that is to be done.

Performance Measures

To assist in fulfilling the Department's responsibilities under the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), P.L. 103-62, applicants who receive funding under this solicitation must provide data that measure the results of their work. Performance measures for this solicitation are as follows:

Objective	Performance Measure(s)	Data Grantee Provides
<p>Research that improves understanding of the accuracy, reliability, and measurement validity of forensic science disciplines.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Relevance to the needs of the field as measured by whether the grantee's substantive scope did not deviate from the funded proposal or any subsequent agency modifications to the scope. 2. Quality of the research as assessed by peer reviewers. 3. Quality of management as measured by whether significant interim project milestones were achieved, final deadlines were met, and costs remained within approved limits. 4. If applicable, number of NIJ final grant reports, NIJ research documents, and grantee research documents published. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A final report, including: (1) a comprehensive overview of the project, (2) a detailed description of the project design, data, and methods, (3) a full presentation of scientific findings, and (4) a thorough discussion of the implications of the findings for criminal justice practice and policy in the United States. 2. Quarterly financial reports, semi-annual progress reports, and a final progress report. 3. If applicable, each data set that was collected, acquired, or modified in conjunction with the project. 4. If applicable, citation to report(s)/document(s).

How to Apply

Applications will be submitted through OJP's Grants Management System ([GMS](#)). [GMS](#) is a Web-based, data-driven computer application that provides cradle to grave support for the application, award and management of grants at OJP. Applicants should begin the process immediately to meet the GMS registration deadline, especially if this is the first time they have used the system. Complete instructions on how to register and submit an application in GMS can be found at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/gmscbt/. If you experience technical difficulties at any point during this process, please e-mail GMSHelpDesk@usdoj.gov, or call 1-888-549-9901 (option 3), Monday-Friday from 6:00 a.m. to midnight eastern time, except for Federal holidays. OJP highly recommends starting the registration process as early as possible to prevent delays in the application submission by the specified deadline.

All applicants are required to complete the following steps.

- 1. Acquire a DUNS Number.** A DUNS number is required to submit an application in GMS. The Office of Management and Budget requires that all businesses and nonprofit applicants for Federal funds include a DUNS (Data Universal Numbering System) number in their application for a new award or renewal of an existing award. A DUNS number is a unique nine-digit sequence recognized as the universal standard for identifying and keeping track of 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. Obtain a DUNS number by calling 1-866-705-5711 or by applying online at www.dunandbradstreet.com. Individuals are exempt from this requirement.
- 2. Acquire or Renew Registration with the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) Database.** CCR registration is required to receive funding. OJP requires that all applicants (other than individuals) for Federal financial assistance maintain current registrations in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database. The CCR database is the repository for standard information about Federal financial assistance applicants, recipients, and subrecipients. Organizations that have previously submitted applications via Grants.gov are already registered with CCR, as it is a requirement for Grants.gov registration. Please note, however, that applicants must update or renew their CCR registration at least once per year to maintain an active status. Information about CCR registration procedures can be accessed at www.ccr.gov.
- 3. Acquire a GMS Username and Password.** If you are a new user, please create a GMS profile by selecting the first time user link under the sign-in box of the [GMS](#) home page. For more information on how to register in GMS, go to www.ojp.usdoj.gov/gmscbt/.
- 4. Search for the Funding Opportunity on GMS.** After you log in to GMS or complete your GMS profile for your username and password, go to the Funding Opportunities link on the left hand side of the page. Please select "National Institute of Justice" and then "NIJ FY 10 Fundamental Research to Improve Understanding of the Accuracy, Reliability, and Measurement Validity of Forensic Science Disciplines."
- 5. Select the Apply Online Button Associated with the Solicitation Title.** The search results from step 4 will display the solicitation title along with the Registration and

Application Deadlines for this funding opportunity. Please select the Apply Online button in the Action Column to create an application in the system.

6. **Submit an Application Addressing All of the Requirements Outlined in this Solicitation by Following the Directions in GMS.** Once submitted, GMS will display a confirmation screen stating your submission was successful. **Important:** You are urged to submit your application at least 72 hours prior to the due date of the application.

Note: OJP's Grants Management System (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."

Experiencing Unforeseen GMS Technical Issues

If you experience unforeseen GMS technical issues beyond your control which prevent you from submitting your application by the deadline, you must contact the NIJ staff member listed on the title page **within 24 hours after the deadline** and request approval to submit your application. At that time, NIJ staff will require you to e-mail the complete grant application, your DUNS number, and provide a GMS Help Desk tracking number(s). After the program office reviews all of the information submitted, and contacts the GMS Helpdesk to validate the technical issues you reported, OJP will contact you to either approve or deny your request to submit a late application. If the technical issues you reported cannot be validated, your application will be rejected as untimely.

To ensure a fair competition for limited discretionary funds, the following conditions are not valid reasons to permit late submissions: (1) failure to begin the registration process in sufficient time; (2) failure to follow GMS instructions on how to register and apply as posted on its Web site; (3) failure to follow all of the instructions in the OJP solicitation; and (4) technical issues experienced with the applicant's computer or information technology (IT) environment.

Notifications regarding known technical problems with GMS are posted on the OJP funding Web page, www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/solicitations.htm.

What an Application Must Include

OJP strongly recommends use of appropriately descriptive file names (e.g., "Program Narrative," "Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative," "Timelines," "Memoranda of Understanding," "Resumes") for all required attachments. Where resumes are required, OJP recommends that all resumes be included in a single file.

Standard Form 424

Please see www07.grants.gov/assets/SF424Instructions.pdf for instructions on how to complete your SF424. When selecting "type of applicant," if the applicant is a for-profit entity, please select "For-Profit Organization" or "Small Business" (as applicable) in the Type of Applicant data field. For-profit applicants also may select additional applicable categories (e.g., "Private Institution of Higher Education").

Program Narrative

The Program Narrative includes:

- a. Cover page
- b. Abstract (not to exceed 600 words).
- c. Table of contents.
- d. Main body, which includes:
 - Purpose, goals, and objectives.
 - Review of relevant literature.
 - Research design and methods including the plan for data analysis, if applicable.
 - Research independence and integrity (see “Selection Criteria,” below).
 - Implications for criminal justice policy and practice in the United States.
 - Management plan and organization.
 - Dissemination strategy.
- d. Appendices (not counted against program narrative page limit) include:
 - Bibliography/References (if applicable).
 - List of key personnel (required).
 - Resumes of key personnel (required).
 - List of previous and current NIJ awards to applicant organization and investigator(s) (required).
 - Letters of cooperation/support or administrative agreements from organizations collaborating in the project (if applicable).
 - Chart for timeline, research calendar, or milestones (required).
 - Human Subjects Protection Paperwork including Institutional Review Board (IRB) documentation and forms (see <http://www.ojp.gov/nij/funding/humansubjects/human-subjects.htm>).
 - Privacy Certificate (for further guidance go to <http://www.ojp.gov/nij/funding/humansubjects/privacy-certificate-guidance.htm>).
 - List of other agencies, organizations, or funding sources to which you have submitted this proposal (if applicable).
 - Other materials required by the solicitation.

The program narrative section of your application must not exceed 50 double-spaced pages in 12-point font with 1-inch margins. Abstract, table of contents, charts, figures, appendices, and government forms do not count toward the page limit for the narrative section.

Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative

A sample Budget Detail Worksheet can be found at www.ojp.gov/funding/forms/budget_detail.pdf. If you submit a different format, you must include the budget categories as listed in the sample budget worksheet.

For questions pertaining to budget and examples of allowable and unallowable costs, please see the OJP Financial Guide at www.ojp.gov/financialguide/index.htm.

The Budget Narrative is a plain-language description of each of the proposed expenditures listed in the Budget Detail Worksheet. It should clearly explain the purpose and reason for all expenditures in the budget. There should be no ambiguities about any budget item. The narrative also should include details for calculated rates or other

figures. As with the Budget Detail Worksheet, the Budget Narrative must be broken down on a year-by-year basis.

Cofunding: A grant made by NIJ under this solicitation may account for up to 100 percent of the total cost of the project. You must indicate whether you believe it is feasible for you to contribute cash, facilities, or services as non-Federal support for the project. Your application should identify generally any such contributions that you expect to make and your proposed budget should indicate in detail which items, if any, will be supported with non-Federal contributions.

Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)

Applicants that do not have a federally negotiated indirect cost rate and wish to establish one can submit a proposal to their “cognizant” Federal agency. Generally, the cognizant Federal agency is the agency that provides the preponderance of direct Federal funding. This can be determined by reviewing an organization’s schedule of Federal financial assistance. If DOJ is your cognizant Federal agency, obtain information needed to submit an indirect cost rate proposal at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/financialguide/part3/part3chap17.htm>.

Tribal Authorizing Resolution (if applicable)

If an application is being submitted by either (1) a tribe or tribal organization, or (2) by a third party proposing to provide direct services or assistance to residents on tribal lands, then a current authorizing resolution of the governing body of the tribal entity or other enactment of the tribal council or comparable governing body authorizing the inclusion of the tribe or tribal organization and its residents must be included with the application. In those instances when an organization or consortium of tribes proposes to apply for a grant on behalf of a tribe or multiple specific tribes, then the application must include a resolution from all tribes that will be included as a part of the services/assistance provided under the grant.

If an applicant is unable to obtain a signed copy of a tribal resolution documenting support for its application, then, at a minimum, the applicant must submit an unsigned, draft tribal resolution as part of its application. If an applicant fails to submit either a signed or an unsigned copy of a tribal resolution as part of its application, then it will be eliminated from funding consideration. If selected for funding, any applicant that has submitted an unsigned tribal resolution must submit the signed copy of the tribal resolution to OJP within 30 days of acceptance of the award. In all such cases, use of and access to funds will be contingent on receipt of the signed tribal resolution.

Other Standard Forms

Additional forms that may be required are available on OJP’s funding page at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/forms.htm>. Please note in particular the following forms.

1. [Certifications Regarding Lobbying; Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements](#) (required of all applicants as part of the GMS application process)

2. [Disclosure of Lobbying Activities](#) (required for any applicant that expends any funds for lobbying activities)
3. [Accounting System and Financial Capability Questionnaire](#) (required for any applicant that is a nongovernmental entity and that has not received any award from OJP within the past 3 years)
4. [Standard Assurances](#) (required of all applicants as part of the GMS application process)

Note: Attachments to the application should be included in one of the following four categories: 1) Program Narrative; 2) Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative; 3) Appendices; and 4) Other Requirements.

Selection Criteria

Statement of the Problem (Understanding of the problem and its importance)—10%

Project/Program Design and Implementation (Quality and technical merit)—40%

1. Understanding of the issues of accuracy, reliability, and/or measurement validity in the forensic science disciplines within the context of their criminal justice applications as it relates to the proposed work.
2. Relevance of the proposed work for accomplishing the objectives of this solicitation.
3. Soundness of the approach for accomplishing the proposed work.
4. Innovation and creativity (when appropriate).

Capabilities/Competencies (Capabilities, demonstrated productivity, and experience of applicants)—20%

1. Qualifications and experience of proposed staff.
2. Demonstrated ability of proposed staff and organization to manage the effort.
3. Adequacy of the plan to manage the project, including how various tasks are subdivided and resources are used.
4. Successful past performance on NIJ grants and contracts (when applicable).

Budget—10%

1. Total cost of the project relative to the perceived benefit.
2. Appropriateness of the budget relative to the level of effort.
3. Use of existing resources to conserve costs.

Impact/Outcomes and Evaluation (Relevance to policy and practice)—20%

1. Potential for significant advances in scientific or technical understanding of the problem.
2. Potential for significant advances in the field.
3. Relevance for improving the policy and practice of criminal justice and related agencies in the United States and improving public safety, security, and quality of life.
4. Affordability and cost-effectiveness of proposed end products, when applicable (e.g., purchase price and maintenance costs for a new technology or cost of training to use the technology).
5. Perceived potential for commercialization and/or implementation of a new technology (when applicable).

Relevance of the project for policy and practice in the United States

Higher quality applications clearly explain the practical implications of the project. They connect technical expertise with criminal justice policy and practice. To ensure that the project has strong relevance for policy and practice, some researchers and technologists collaborate with practitioners and policymakers. You may include letters showing support from practitioners, but they carry less weight than clear evidence that you understand why policymakers and practitioners would benefit from your work and how they would use it. While a partnership may affect State or local activities, it should also have broader implications for others across the country.

Research Independence and Integrity

Regardless of a proposal's rating under the criteria outlined above, in order to receive funds, the applicant's proposal must demonstrate research independence, including appropriate safeguards to ensure research objectivity and integrity.

Considerations in evaluating research independence and integrity will include, but may not be limited to, the adequacy of the applicant's efforts to identify factors that could affect the objectivity/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.

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 basic minimum program or legislative requirements as stated in the solicitation (including, but not limited to, requirements as to timeliness, proper format, and responsiveness to the scope of the solicitation).

Peer reviewers will be reviewing the applications submitted under this solicitation that meet basic minimum requirements. NIJ may use either internal peer reviewers, external peer reviewers, or a combination to review the applications under this solicitation. An external peer reviewer is an expert in the field of the subject matter of a given solicitation who is NOT a current U.S. Department of Justice employee. An internal reviewer is a current U.S. Department of Justice employee who is well-versed or has expertise in the subject matter of this solicitation. Eligible applications will be evaluated, scored, and rated by a peer review panel. Peer reviewers' ratings and any resulting recommendations are advisory only. In addition to peer review ratings, considerations for award recommendations and decisions may include, but are not limited to, underserved populations, geographic diversity, strategic priorities, past performance, and available funding.

The Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO), in consultation with NIJ, conducts a financial review of applications for potential discretionary awards and cooperative agreements to evaluate the fiscal integrity and financial capability of applicants; examines proposed costs to determine if the budget and budget narrative accurately explain project costs; and determines whether 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, who also may give consideration to factors including, but not limited to, underserved populations, geographic diversity, strategic priorities, past performance, and available funding when making awards.

Additional Requirements

Applicants selected for awards must agree to comply with additional legal requirements upon acceptance of an award. We strongly encourage you to review the information pertaining to these additional requirements prior to submitting your application. Additional information for each can be found at http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/other_requirements.htm.

- Civil Rights Compliance
- Faith-Based and Other Community Organizations
- Confidentiality and Human Subjects Protection (if applicable)
- Anti-Lobbying Act
- Financial and Government Audit Requirements
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (if applicable)
- DOJ Information Technology Standards (if applicable)
- Single Point of Contact Review
- Nonsupplanting of State or Local Funds
- Criminal Penalty for False Statements
- Compliance with [Office of Justice Programs Financial Guide](#)
- Suspension or Termination of Funding
- Nonprofit Organizations
- For-Profit Organizations
- Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA)
- Rights in Intellectual Property
- Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) of 2006
- Awards in excess of \$5,000,000 – Federal taxes certification requirement

If your proposal is funded, you will be required to submit several reports and other materials, including:

Final substantive report: The final report should be a comprehensive overview of the project and should include a detailed description of the project design, data, and methods; a full presentation of scientific findings; a thorough discussion of the implications of the project findings for criminal justice practice and policy in the United States; etc. It must contain an abstract of no more than 600 words and an executive summary of 2,500 to 4,000 words.

A draft of the final report, abstract, and executive summary must be submitted 90 days before the end date of the grant. The draft final report will be peer reviewed upon submission. The reviews will be forwarded to the principal investigator with suggestions for revisions. The author must then submit the revised final report, abstract, and executive summary by the end date of the grant. The abstract, executive summary, and final report must be submitted in both paper and electronic formats.

For program evaluation studies, the final report should include a section on measuring program performance. This section should outline the measures used to evaluate program effectiveness, modifications made to those measures as a result of the evaluation, and recommendations regarding these and other potential performance measures for similar programs. (This information will be particularly valuable to NIJ and other Federal program agencies in implementing performance measures for federally funded criminal justice programs.)

Interim reports: Grantees must submit quarterly financial reports, semi-annual progress reports, a final progress report, and, if applicable, an annual audit report in accordance with Office of Management and Budget Circular A-133. Future awards and fund drawdowns may be withheld if reports are delinquent.

Application Checklist

Fundamental Research to Improve Understanding of the Accuracy, Reliability, and Measurement Validity of Forensic Science Disciplines

The application checklist has been created to aid you in developing your application.

Eligibility

_____ Tribal authorizing resolution (if applicable)

Application Components:

_____ Program Narrative (see page 10 and “Selection Criteria,” pages 12–13)

_____ Appendices to the Program Narrative

_____ Bibliography/References (if applicable)

_____ List of key personnel (required)

_____ Resumes of key personnel (required)

_____ List of previous and current NIJ awards to applicant organization and investigators (required)

_____ Letters of cooperation/support or administrative agreements from organizations collaborating in the project (if applicable)

_____ Chart for timeline, research calendar, or milestones (required)

_____ Human Subjects Protection Paperwork

_____ Privacy Certificate

_____ List of other agencies, organizations, or funding sources to which you have submitted this proposal (if applicable)

_____ Budget Narrative

_____ Budget Detail Worksheet

_____ Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)

Program Narrative/Abstract Format:

_____ Double-spaced

_____ 12-point standard font

_____ 1” standard margins

_____ Narrative is 50 pages or less

Other Requirements:

_____ Standard Form 424

_____ DUNS number

_____ Other Standard Forms as applicable (see pages 11–12), including

_____ Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable)

_____ Accounting System and Financial Capability Questionnaire (if applicable)