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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 to participate in an action research project designed for State and local jurisdictions that are struggling with large quantities of untested sexual assault kits. The purpose of this study is to understand the underlying nature of the problem and to identify effective and sustainable solutions. 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: Strategic Approaches to Sexual Assault Kit (SAK) Evidence: An Action Research Project**

### **Eligibility**

Applicants are limited to States (including territories) and units of local government (including federally-recognized Indian tribal governments as determined by the Secretary of the Interior). Each applicant must demonstrate a team approach that includes an effective partnership between the applicant jurisdiction's criminal justice practitioner agencies and a research organization partner. Please carefully review the "Program-Specific Information" section, beginning on page 3, for additional details.

### **Deadline**

Registration with [Grants.gov](#) is required prior to application submission. (See "How to Apply," page 10.)

**Note:** A Webinar for applicants will be held on November 17, 2010 at 2:00 p.m. eastern standard time. See <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/sexual-assault-kits.htm> for more details.

All applications are due by 11:59 p.m. eastern time on January 18, 2011. (See "Deadlines: Registration and Application," page 3.)

### **Contact Information**

For technical assistance with submitting the application, contact the Grants.gov Customer Support Hotline at 800-518-4726 or via e-mail to [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov).

**Note:** The [Grants.gov](#) Support Hotline hours of operation are 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, except Federal holidays.

For assistance with any other requirement of this solicitation, contact Kristina Rose, Deputy Director, at 202-307-0466 or by e-mail to [Kristina.Rose@usdoj.gov](mailto:Kristina.Rose@usdoj.gov); or Katharine Browning, Ph.D., Senior Social Science Analyst, at 202-616-4786 or by e-mail at [Katharine.Browning@usdoj.gov](mailto:Katharine.Browning@usdoj.gov).

Grants.gov number assigned to announcement: NIJ-2011-2808

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# Strategic Approaches to Sexual Assault Kit (SAK) Evidence: An Action Research Project (CFDA 16.560)

## Overview

NIJ is seeking applicants interested in participating in an action research project designed for State and local jurisdictions that are struggling with large quantities of untested sexual assault kits. The purpose of this study is to understand the underlying nature of the problem and identify effective and sustainable solutions.

The action research project will be conducted in two phases. The first phase will be a six-month planning grant in which the teams will come together, conduct an initial assessment of the problem, and develop a working plan for implementing the remainder of the action research steps in the second phase of the project. This solicitation is for the first phase of the project only.

**Authorizing Legislation:** Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (sections 201 and 202).

## Deadlines: Registration and Application

Registration is required prior to submission. OJP strongly encourages registering with Grants.gov several weeks before the deadline for application submission. The deadline for applying for funding under this announcement is 11:59 p.m. eastern time on January 18, 2011. Please see the “How to Apply” section, page 10, for more details.

## Eligibility

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

## Program-Specific Information—Strategic Approaches to Sexual Assault Kit (SAK) Evidence: An Action Research Project

Over the past few years, the discovery of thousands of untested sexual assault kits (SAK) (also known as “rape kits”) in law enforcement agencies has been the topic of extensive media coverage, numerous policy discussions, and Congressional hearings. These untested SAKs are often referred to as being part of a “backlog,” but in actuality this is not the case. A backlog refers to evidence that has been submitted to a crime laboratory by a law enforcement agency and is awaiting DNA analysis.<sup>1</sup> In this solicitation, we are referring to SAK evidence that has **not yet been submitted to a crime laboratory and may have been recently discovered in the law enforcement agency’s property room or storage facility.**

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<sup>1</sup>Mark Nelson. Making Sense of the DNA Backlog: Myths and Realities, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, 2010, NCJ 230183.

The purpose of this study is two-fold. First, NIJ is interested in learning about the underlying factors that contribute to this unsubmitted SAK evidence. Second, based on what is learned, promising strategies will be developed and implemented to reduce and eliminate the untested kits in that jurisdiction. Through monitoring and assessment, all strategies will be evaluated for their effectiveness and sustainability. The primary goals of this research project are to:

- Develop transportable lessons and practices regarding SAK evidence using a proven problem-solving research model.
- Improve the criminal justice system response to sexual assault, from the initial point of contact through prosecution.

A recent NIJ study of more than 2,000 law enforcement agencies across the country found that 14 percent of all unsolved homicides and 18 percent of unsolved rapes contained evidence that was not submitted by law enforcement agencies to crime labs for analysis.<sup>2</sup> The same study showed that investigating officers may not have submitted the evidence to a crime lab for a number of reasons. For example, subsequent investigation may have shown that the evidence would not have probative value; charges against an alleged perpetrator may have been dropped; the suspect may have pled guilty; or, in a rape case, the issue may be "consent" and, therefore, analysis of the evidence may have been considered not to be relevant or of sufficient probative value for the purposes of helping to establish whether or not there was consent. However, the study showed that some law enforcement agencies may not fully understand the potential value of forensic evidence in developing new leads in a criminal investigation. Forty-four percent said that one of the reasons they did not send evidence to the lab was because a suspect had not been identified and 15 percent said that they did not submit evidence because analysis had not been requested by a prosecutor. Specialized training in these cases may have been beneficial and led to a different outcome. The only way to determine if the untested evidence in law enforcement custody needs to be submitted for forensic analysis is to review the case and the evidence itself.<sup>3</sup>

There has been little research on the nature of untested SAK evidence, and few, if any, promising practices exist to guide jurisdictions as they manage the current situation and develop valid and reliable policies and procedures for the future.

The issue of untested SAK evidence has prompted a number of research questions that include:

- What should be the course of action when a large quantity of untested SAK evidence is discovered in a given jurisdiction? Should resources be devoted to test all evidence—even cases past the statute of limitations?
- Alternatively, should a “triage” process be established to determine what SAK evidence should be sent to the lab and when? If a triage is warranted, upon what rules should it be established?
- How many untested kits contain probative evidence in one or more cases? What procedures need to be put in place to ensure these kits are processed in the future?
- When and how should sexual assault victims be notified during this process?

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<sup>2</sup> Kevin J. Strom, Jeri Roper-Miller, Shelton Jones, Nathan Sikes, Mark Pope and Nicole Horstmann, [The 2007 Survey of Law Enforcement Forensic Evidence Processing \(pdf, 81 pages\)](#), Final Report, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, September 2009, 228415.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

- What types of follow-up services are effective for victims who have been recently notified of re-opened cases?

Applicants should consider these and other research questions when formulating their proposed action research projects.

### **Overview of Action Research**

Action research refers to an approach where researchers engage in an active partnership with one or more practitioner agencies to solve problems. Action research often includes the following steps:

1. Identifying the problem.
2. Developing the strategies to address the problem.
3. Implementing the strategies.
4. Monitoring the progress of the implementation.
5. Providing feedback to better refine the strategies targeting the problem.
6. Assessing and evaluating the implementation and the impact the strategies have.

The research partner plays a key role in identifying the problem by analyzing data and other information that can pinpoint the issue that will be addressed. The research partner works in partnership with the practitioner agency to develop intervention strategies to target the problem. The practitioner agency implements the strategies and the researchers monitor the progress and provide feedback to better refine the approach. Finally, the researchers conduct an assessment on the implementation and impact of the strategies.

NIJ, as the research and evaluation arm of the U.S. Department of Justice, has been at the forefront of the development and support of this type of criminal justice action research, and has played a pioneering role in the advancement of this strategic problem-solving approach within the criminal justice system. Examples of previous NIJ action research include the Operation Ceasefire Program in Boston (see <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/188741.pdf>) and the Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative (SACSI) (see <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/216298.pdf>). For further reading on action research, please refer to:

- *Action Research for Crime Control and Prevention* by Lois Felson Mock (<http://www.ncjrs.gov/App/publications/Abstract.aspx?id=252402>).
- *Research for Problem Solving and the New Collaborations* by David Kennedy (<http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/176979.pdf>).
- *The Memphis Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiatives Project: A Case Study* by James R. "Chip" Coldren, Jr. and David R. Forde. (<http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/232198.pdf>).

### **The Sexual Assault Kit Action Research Project**

NIJ will award funding to 3-5 sites to be part of this action research project. The formal applicant must be a State or unit of local government, although each site should demonstrate a team

approach that includes an effective partnership between the practitioner agencies and a research organization or partner. The research partner should have a full understanding of the action research approach. The practitioner team should consist of, but not be limited to, representatives from police departments, the crime laboratory, the prosecutor's office, and a community-based victim services organization.<sup>4</sup> NIJ will provide guidance and technical assistance on action research to the practitioner team and its research partners as needed.

**Note:** A Webinar for applicants will be held on November 17, 2010 at 2:00 p.m. eastern standard time. See <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/sexual-assault-kits.htm> for more details.

The action research project will be conducted in two phases. The first phase will be a six-month planning grant in which the teams will come together, conduct an initial assessment of the problem, and develop a working plan for implementing the remainder of the action research steps in the second phase of the project.

### **Phase 1: Planning**

This solicitation is for proposals for the first phase of the project. In the first phase of the project, the team will need to conduct an audit of the cases in the set of untested SAKs, as a first step in the action research process.

As part of the application:

- The applicant must submit signed letters of commitment from the agency that has untested sexual assault evidence, the crime laboratory that provides DNA services to the law enforcement agency, the prosecutor's office, a community-based victim services organization, and a research organization. The letters must be included in the application to be considered for funding.
- The application should include a list of key team members from each participating agency (one from each agency) and describe the role of each team member. Each team should designate a "site coordinator" who will serve as the central point of contact for the site team. This individual will be responsible for fostering and coordinating communication among the team members and ensuring that the team is meeting its milestones.
- As part of the application, information regarding the extent of untested evidence that has yet to be submitted to a crime laboratory should be provided in detail. The number of untested kits in the crime laboratory for which an official request for testing has not been made, may be included in this description. There should be a minimum of 500 untested cases combined in this set for the purposes of this solicitation.
- The application should include a discussion of current practices and procedures regarding the submission of physical evidence in sexual assault cases and a discussion of potential outcome variables that might be appropriate for the applicant's jurisdiction.

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<sup>4</sup> A community-based victim services organization is a nonprofit, nongovernmental organization that assists sexual assault victims, including rape crisis centers, faith-based organizations, and other organizations with a documented history of effective work concerning sexual assault.

- The applicant should demonstrate the willingness and ability of the participating agencies that make up the site team to follow up on leads generated from analysis of DNA samples from sexual assault kits.
- Funds for Phase 1 may be used to cover personnel costs (including research partners), travel expenses for meetings and project activities, group meeting expenses, and preliminary DNA screening or analysis (as appropriate for the project).

Within 60 days of award, a 2-day workshop for all the sites will take place in Washington, DC. All key site team personnel will be expected to attend. The workshop will focus on the elements of a successful action research project and key issues around DNA and untested SAK evidence. Funding for this workshop will be provided through NIJ's logistical contractor and does not need to be factored into the applicant's budget.

## Phase 2: Implementation

Phase two is contingent on successful progress during phase one and the submission of an implementation plan and research design for the remaining steps of the action research project.

**Amount and length of awards:** For phase one, NIJ anticipates that up to a total of \$1 million may become available for up to 5 planning grant awards of up to \$200,000 each made through this solicitation. **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 project rarely exceeds \$500,000, though total funding for projects requiring multiple years to complete has exceeded \$1 million in some cases.

NIJ envisions applicants will use funds from year 1 to analyze and define the problem, develop strategies and procedures for possible solutions, and develop a research design to provide assessment of outcomes and impacts of this action research project. Eligible funded applicants will then be allowed to apply for further assistance to implement their action research plans.

Applicants should be aware that the total period for an award ordinarily will not exceed 3 years (one year planning and two years implementation and evaluation). Additional funding, up to \$4 million, subject to appropriations availability, will be made available to continue the study after the planning year has concluded.

**Evaluation research:** Within applications proposing evaluation research, funding priority will be given to experimental research designs that use random selection and assignment of participants to experimental and control conditions. When randomized designs are not feasible, priority will be given to quasi-experimental designs that include contemporary procedures such as Propensity Score Matching or Regression Discontinuity Design to address selection bias in evaluating outcomes and impacts.

Evaluations that also include measurements of program fidelity and implementation as part of a thorough process assessment are desirable. Measurements of program fidelity should be included as part of an assessment of program processes and operations to ensure that policies, programs, and technologies are implemented as designed. As one aspect of a comprehensive evaluation, assessments of program processes should include objective measurements and qualitative observations of programs as they are actually implemented and of services that are

delivered. These may include assessment of such aspects as adherence to program content and protocol, quantity and duration, quality of delivery, and participant responsiveness.

Proposed evaluation research designs with multiple units of analysis and multiple measurements will also be given priority. Design aspects that contribute to the validity of results are necessary to effectively address issues of generalizability and representativeness of findings.

Finally, applications that include cost/benefit analysis will be given priority. NIJ views cost/benefit analysis as an effective way to communicate and disseminate findings from evaluation research.

**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](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/other_requirements.htm).

**What will not be funded:**

1. Work that will be funded under another specific solicitation.
2. Proposals that do not contain a research component or do not respond to the specific goals of this solicitation.
3. Proposals that only offer to eliminate the sexual assault kit backlog but not to participate in the research portion of the study.

**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 [www.opm.gov/oca/10tables/indexSES.asp](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 the applicant to 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.

**Match requirement:** See “Cofunding” paragraph under “What an Application Should Include” (below).

## Performance Measures

To assist in fulfilling the Department’s responsibilities under the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), Public Law 103-62, applicants that receive funding under this solicitation must provide data that measure the results of their work. Any award recipient will be required, post award, to provide the data requested in the “Data Grantee Provides” column so that OJP can calculate values for the “Performance Measures” column. Performance measures for this solicitation are as follows:

| Objective   | Performance Measure(s)   | Data Grantee Provides   |
|---|--|---|
| 1. To develop a plan for an action research project.<br><br>2. To implement an action research project that includes an assessment of outcomes and impact in Phase 2. | 1. Develop a plan that effectively addresses a jurisdiction’s particular circumstances as assessed by peer reviewers.<br><br>2. Establish coordinating teams to implement plans as demonstrated by copies of executed agreements.<br><br>3. If applicable, effectively execute an action research project. | 1. Interim and final reports concerning the status and outcomes from the action research planning grant, including an implementation plan for the research project, clearly relating the project to the jurisdictions’ circumstances.<br><br>2. If applicable, interim and final reports concerning the status and outcomes from the action research project. |

Submission of performance measures data is not required for the application. Instead, applicants must discuss in their application their proposed methods for collecting data for performance measures. Please refer to the section “What an Application Should Include” (below) for additional information.

**Note on project evaluations:** Applicants that propose to use funds awarded through this solicitation to conduct project evaluations should be aware that certain project evaluations (such as systematic investigations designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge) may constitute “research.” However, project evaluations that are intended only to generate internal improvements to a program or service, or are conducted only to meet OJP’s performance measure data reporting requirements likely do not constitute “research.” Research is subject to applicable DOJ human subjects protections. Applicants should provide sufficient information for OJP to determine whether the particular project they propose would either intentionally or unintentionally collect and/or use information in such a way that it meets the DOJ regulatory definition of research.

Research, for the purposes of OJP-funded programs, is defined as, “a systematic investigation, including research development, testing, and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge.” 28 C.F.R. § 46.102(d). For additional information on determining whether a proposed activity would constitute research, see the decision tree to assist applicants on the “Research and the Protection of Human Subjects” section of the OJP Web site ([www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/other\\_requirements.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/other_requirements.htm)).

## Notice of New Post-Award Reporting Requirements

Applicants should anticipate that all recipients (other than individuals) of awards of \$25,000 or more under this solicitation, consistent with the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (FFATA), will be required to report award information on any first-tier subawards totaling \$25,000 or more, and, in certain cases, to report information on the names and total compensation of the five most highly compensated executives of the recipient and first-tier subrecipients. Each applicant entity must ensure that it has the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with the reporting requirements should it receive funding.

It is expected that reports regarding subawards will be made through the FFATA Subaward Reporting System (FSRS), found at <https://www.frs.gov>. Additional guidance on reporting will be provided in the near future by OJP and/or the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

Please note also that applicants should anticipate that no subaward of an award made under this solicitation may be made to a subrecipient (other than an individual) unless the potential subrecipient acquires and provides a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number.

## How to Apply

Applications will be submitted through Grants.gov. Grants.gov is a “one-stop storefront” that provides a unified process for all customers of Federal awards to find funding opportunities and apply for funding. Complete instructions on how to register and submit an application can be found at [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov). If the applicant experiences technical difficulties at any point during this process, please call the Grants.gov Customer Support Hotline at **800-518-4726**, 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 up to several weeks** for first-time registrants to receive confirmation and a user password. OJP highly recommends that applicants start the registration process as early as possible to prevent delays in submitting an application package by the specified application deadline.

All applicants are required to complete the following steps:

1. **Acquire a DUNS number.** A DUNS number is required for [Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) registration. In general, the Office of Management and Budget requires that all applicants (other than individuals) for Federal funds include a DUNS (Data Universal Numbering System) number in their applications 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 Dun and Bradstreet at 866–705–5711 or by applying online at [www.dnb.com](http://www.dnb.com). Individuals are exempt from this requirement.

2. **Acquire or renew registration with the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database.** OJP requires that all applicants (other than individuals) for Federal financial assistance maintain current registrations in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database. An applicant must be registered in the CCR to successfully register in Grants.gov. 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 annually** to maintain an active status. Information about CCR registration procedures can be accessed at [www.ccr.gov](http://www.ccr.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/applicants/get\\_registered.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp).
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. Please note that there can be more than one AOR for the organization.
5. **Search for the funding opportunity on Grants.gov.** Please use the following identifying information when searching for the funding opportunity on Grants.gov. The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) 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-2011-2808.
6. **Submit an 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 an e-mail validation message from Grants.gov. The validation message will state whether the application has been received and validated, or rejected, with an explanation. **Important:** Applicants are urged to submit applications **at least 72 hours prior** to the due date of the application to allow time to receive the validation message and to correct any problems that may have caused a rejection notification.

**Note: Grants.gov will forward the application to OJP's Grants Management System (GMS). 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 Grants.gov Technical Issues**

If an applicant experiences unforeseen Grants.gov technical issues beyond the applicant's control that prevent submission of its application by the deadline, the applicant must contact NIJ staff **within 24 hours after the deadline** and request approval to submit its application. At that time, NIJ staff will instruct the applicant to submit specific information detailing the technical

difficulties. The applicant must e-mail: a description of the technical difficulties, a timeline of submission efforts, the complete grant application, the applicant DUNS number, and Grants.gov Help Desk tracking number(s) received. After the program office reviews all of the information submitted, and contacts the Grants.gov Help Desk to validate the technical issues reported, OJP will contact the applicant to either approve or deny the request to submit a late application. If the technical issues reported cannot be validated, the 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 Grants.gov 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 Grants.gov, if any, are posted at the top of the OJP funding Web page, [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/solicitations.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/solicitations.htm).

## What an Application Should Include

This section describes what an application should include and sets out a number of elements. Applicants should anticipate that failure to submit an application that contains all of the specified elements may negatively affect the review of the application; and, should a decision be made to make an award, it may result in the inclusion of special conditions that preclude access to or use of award funds pending satisfaction of the conditions.

Moreover, applicants should anticipate that some application elements are so critical that applications unresponsive to the scope of the solicitation, or that do not include a program narrative, budget detail worksheet including a budget narrative, tribal resolution (if applicable), resumes/curriculum vitae of key personnel, and all required sign letters of commitment (see page 13) will neither proceed to peer review nor receive further consideration.

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 attachments. OJP recommends that resumes be included in a single file.

### 1. Information to Complete the Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)

The SF-424 is a standard form required for use as a cover sheet for submission of pre-applications, applications, and related information. Grants.gov and 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, please select "For-Profit Organization" or "Small Business" (as applicable).

### 2. Program Narrative

The program narrative section of the application must not exceed 25 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 25-page limit for the narrative section.

If the program narrative fails to comply with these length-related restrictions, noncompliance may be considered in peer review and in final award decisions.

Program Narrative Guidelines:

- a. **Title Page** (not counted against the 25-page program narrative limit).  
The title page should include the title of the project, submission date, funding opportunity number, and the applicant's name and complete contact information (i.e., name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address).
- b. **Project Abstract** (not counted against the 25-page program narrative limit)  
The 400 to 600-word abstract should provide a brief summary of the proposal, including the make-up of the project team and the basic approach being used to accomplish the project.
- c. **Table of Contents and Figures** (not counted against the 25-page program narrative limit).
- d. **Main body.** The main body of the program narrative should describe the project in depth. The following sections should be included as part of the program narrative:
  - Statement of the Problem.
  - Project/Program Design and Implementation.
  - Capabilities/Competencies.
  - Impact/Outcomes and Evaluation.

**Note:** Within the above sections, the narrative should address:

  - Purpose, goals, and objectives.
  - Detailed description of the jurisdiction's current problem and the approach that will be used to accomplish the project objectives. See "Phase 1: Planning" discussion on page 6 for additional details regarding what the narrative should include.
  - Implications for criminal justice policy and practice in the United States.
  - Management plan and organization.
- e. **Appendices** (not counted against the 25-page program narrative limit) include:
  - Bibliography/references.
  - Any tools/instruments, questionnaires, tables/charts/graphs, or maps pertaining to the proposed study.
  - Curriculum vitae, resumes or biographical sketches of all key personnel.
  - Project timeline and research calendar with expected milestones.
  - Research independence and integrity (see "Selection Criteria," below).
  - 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 previous and current NIJ awards to applicant organization and investigator(s).

- Signed letters of commitment from participating agencies, as described in the “Phase 1: Planning” section, on page 6 (above).
- List of other agencies, organizations, or funding sources to which you have submitted this proposal (if applicable).
- Other materials specified by the solicitation.

### 3. Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative

#### a. Budget Detail Worksheet

A sample Budget Detail Worksheet can be found at [www.ojp.gov/funding/forms/budget\\_detail.pdf](http://www.ojp.gov/funding/forms/budget_detail.pdf). If the budget is submitted in a different format, the budget categories listed in the sample budget worksheet must be included.

For questions pertaining to budget and examples of allowable and unallowable costs, please see the OJP Financial Guide at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/financialguide/index.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/financialguide/index.htm).

#### b. Budget Narrative

The Budget Narrative should thoroughly and clearly describe every category of expense listed in the Budget Detail Worksheet. The narrative should be mathematically sound and correspond with the information and figures provided in the Budget Detail Worksheet. The narrative should explain how all costs were estimated and calculated 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 must be broken down by year.

**Cofunding:** A grant made by NIJ under this solicitation may account for up to 100 percent of the total cost of the project. The applicant 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.

### 4. Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)

Indirect costs are allowed only if the applicant has a federally approved indirect cost rate. (This requirement does not apply to units of local government.) A copy of the rate approval must be attached. If the applicant does not have an approved rate, one can be requested by contacting the applicant’s 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. If DOJ is the cognizant Federal agency, obtain information needed to submit an indirect cost rate proposal at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/financialguide/part3/part3chap17.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/financialguide/part3/part3chap17.htm).

### 5. Tribal Authorizing Resolution (if applicable)

If an application is being submitted by either (1) a tribe or tribal organization or (2) 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 membership 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. A consortium of tribes for which existing consortium bylaws allow action without support from all tribes in the consortium (i.e., without authorizing resolution or other enactment of each tribal governing body) may submit a copy of its consortium bylaws with the application in order to satisfy this requirement.

#### 6. **Other Standard Forms**

Additional forms that may be required in connection with an award are available on OJP's funding page at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/forms.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/forms.htm). For successful applicants, receipt of funds may be contingent upon submission of all necessary forms. Please note in particular the following forms.

- a. Certifications Regarding Lobbying; Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements (required to be submitted in GMS prior to the receipt of any award funds)
- b. Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (required for any applicant that expends any funds for lobbying activities; this form must be downloaded, completed, and then uploaded)
- c. Accounting System and Financial Capability Questionnaire (required for any applicant other than an individual that is a non-governmental entity and that has not received any award from OJP within the past 3 years; this form must be downloaded, completed, and then uploaded)
- d. Standard Assurances (required to be submitted in GMS prior to the receipt of any award funds)

## **Selection Criteria**

**Statement of the Problem** (Understanding of the problem and its importance)—5%

**Project/Program Design and Implementation** (Quality and technical merit)—20%

1. Soundness of the approach to accomplish the proposed work.
2. Feasibility of proposed project and awareness of pitfalls.
3. Innovation and creativity (when appropriate).

**Capabilities/Competencies** (Capabilities, demonstrated productivity, and experience of applicants)—45%

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 products, when applicable (e.g., purchase price and maintenance costs for a new technology or cost of training to use the technology).

### **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.

For purposes of this solicitation, research independence and integrity pertains only to ensuring that the design, conduct, or reporting of research funded by NIJ grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts will not be biased by any financial interest on the part of the investigators responsible for the research or on the part of the applicant.

In the appendix dealing with research independence and integrity, the applicant must explain the process and procedures that the applicant has put in place to identify and manage potential financial conflicts of interest on the part of its staff, consultants, and/or subrecipients. It must also identify any potential organizational financial conflicts of interest on the part of the applicant with regard to the proposed research. If the applicant believes that there are no potential organizational financial conflicts of interest, the applicant must provide a brief narrative explanation of why it believes that to be the case.

Where potential organizational financial conflicts of interest exist, in the appendix the applicant must identify the safeguards the applicant has put in place to address those conflicts of interest.

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 the solicitation.

Peer reviewers will review 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 to evaluate the fiscal integrity and financial capability of applicants; examines proposed costs to determine if the budget detail worksheet 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. OJP strongly encourages applicants to review the information pertaining to these additional requirements prior to submitting an application. Additional information for each requirement can be found at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/other\\_requirements.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/other_requirements.htm).

- Civil Rights Compliance
- Faith-Based and Other Community Organizations
- Confidentiality
- Research and the Protection of Human Subjects
- Anti-Lobbying Act
- Financial and Government Audit Requirements
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- DOJ Information Technology Standards (if applicable)
- Single Point of Contact Review
- Non-Supplanting 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
- Active CCR Registration

If the proposal is funded, the award recipient 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, placed in the context of existing literature; 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 electronic format.

**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

## Strategic Approaches to Sexual Assault Kit (SAK) Evidence: An Action Research Project

This application checklist has been created to assist in developing an application.

### Eligibility Requirement:

\_\_\_\_\_ Tribal authorizing resolution (if applicable)

### What an Application Should Include:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) (see page 12)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Program Narrative (see page 12)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Appendices to the Program Narrative: (see page 13)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Bibliography/references
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Any tools/instruments, questionnaires, tables/charts/graphs, or maps pertaining to the proposed study
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Curriculum vitae, resumes or biographical sketches of all key personnel
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Project timeline and research calendar with expected milestones
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Research independence and integrity
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Human Subjects Protection Paperwork
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Privacy Certificate
  - \_\_\_\_\_ List of previous and current NIJ awards to applicant organization and investigators
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Signed letters of commitment from participating agencies
  - \_\_\_\_\_ List of other agencies, organizations, or funding sources to which you have submitted this proposal (if applicable)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Data Archiving Strategy
- \_\_\_\_\_ Budget Detail Worksheet (see page 14)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Budget Narrative (see page 14)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable) (see page 14)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tribal Authorizing Resolution (if applicable) (see page 14)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Program Narrative/Abstract Format: (see page 12)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Double-spaced
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 12-point standard font
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 1" standard margins
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Narrative is 25 pages or less
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other Standard Forms as applicable (see page 15), including:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Accounting System and Financial Capability Questionnaire (if applicable)