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**NIJ**

Guidelines

**How to Submit Applications**

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## I. Introduction

The National Institute of Justice is the research, development, and evaluation agency of the U.S. Department of Justice. NIJ provides objective, independent, evidence-based knowledge and tools to enhance the administration of justice and public safety. The Institute solicits proposals to inform its search for the knowledge and tools to guide policy and practice through announcements on its Web site at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij>. All awards are subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

This document provides general instructions for completing applications in response to NIJ solicitations. Specific requirements are detailed in each solicitation.

**Eligibility.** NIJ provides funding to educational institutions, public agencies, nonprofit organizations, faith-based organizations, individuals, and profitmaking organizations willing to waive profits and fees. Some solicitations have special eligibility criteria, which are defined in the solicitation.

**Unsolicited proposals.** Most discretionary funding is awarded in response to solicitations issued by NIJ. Although you may submit unsolicited proposals, you are discouraged from doing so unless you have discussed the concept with NIJ staff and have been asked to submit a proposal that does not fit into a specific solicitation. Unsolicited proposals may receive either an external peer review or an internal review. If the proposal fits into an already established solicitation category, it will be returned with a recommendation to resubmit it under that solicitation.

**Concept papers.** NIJ sometimes solicits concept papers before soliciting full proposals. The concept papers are reviewed, and some of the applicants are then invited to submit full proposals. The format for concept papers differs somewhat from the format described in this Guide for full proposals. With few exceptions, NIJ requires that both concept papers and full proposals be submitted online using <http://www.grants.gov>.

## II. Getting Started

With few exceptions, applications must be submitted to NIJ online through <http://www.grants.gov>. Paper copies are not accepted.

**Note:** Begin the application process as soon as possible, especially if you are a first-time user. For assistance with the electronic application process, call Grants.gov technical support at 1-800-518-4726. For assistance with substantive issues related to a specific solicitation, call NIJ at 202-305-7807.

Instructions for applying using Grants.gov are available at <http://www.grants.gov/GetStarted>.

A Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number must be included in every application for a new award or renewal of an award. **An application will not be considered complete until a valid DUNS number is provided by the applicant.**

Individuals who would personally receive a grant or cooperative agreement from the Federal Government are exempt from this requirement.

Applicants can receive a DUNS number at no cost online at <http://www.dnb.com/us> or by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711.

### III. Preparing Application Files

You must use one of these three formats to upload documents into Grants.gov: Portable Document Format (.pdf), Microsoft Word (.doc), or ascii (.txt).

Your application should include these elements:

- A. Program Narrative.
- B. Budget Detail Worksheet.
- C. Budget Narrative.
- D. Negotiated Indirect Rate Agreement (if applicable).
- E. Other Program Attachments.

**A. Program Narrative.** The Program Narrative includes an abstract, table of contents, main body, and appendixes. The page limit defined in the solicitation does not include the bibliography/ references or appendixes, list of key personnel, résumés of key personnel, list of previous and current NIJ awards and products, charts, tables, or other necessary appendixes (such as letters of cooperation from collaborating organizations). Applicants may include additional substantive material in a technical appendix but are advised that reviewers may not read beyond the page limit.

**1. Abstract.** NIJ uses abstracts for several purposes, including to assign proposals to an independent peer review panel. The abstract becomes public if the proposal receives an award. The abstract should serve as a succinct, stand-alone, and accurate description of the proposed work and should not exceed 400 words.

The abstract should state the problem under investigation (including goals and objectives of the proposed project) and the anticipated relevance of the project to public policy, practice, or theory. It should describe the proposed method and/or research design, including data to be used in addressing research questions, data collection procedures and instrumentation, access to data, and other methods or procedures of the proposed study. It should also describe procedures for data analysis and all expected products, including interim and final reports, instrumentation, devices, or data to be archived under NIJ's Data Resource Program. If applicable, it should describe the subjects who will be involved in the proposed project, including the number of participants; participants' age, gender, and race/ethnicity; and other pertinent characteristics, such as how you will gain access to subjects. (See section VIII, "Confidentiality of Information and Human Subjects Protection," for details about using human subjects.)

**2. Table of contents.** List the main headings in the proposal and their page numbers.

**3. Main body.** Describe the project in depth. The main body of the Program Narrative should include the following sections:

- **Purpose, goals, and objectives.** The Program Narrative should begin with a clear, concise statement of the purpose, goals, and objectives of the project and related questions to be explored.
- **Review of relevant literature.** Unless the solicitation defines an exception, the Program Narrative should discuss the relationship of the proposed work to the existing research literature.
- **Research design and methods.** This section should detail the study design and analytical methodologies or procedures. Proposed data sources, data collection strategies, and procedures for data analysis should be delineated carefully and completely. If applicable, the research design and methods section should identify and describe all databases to be developed as part of the proposed project and discuss potential problems.
- **Implications for policy and practice.** The Program Narrative should describe the issues and concerns that have prompted the proposed line of inquiry, discuss the anticipated contribution the project will make to criminal justice policy and practice, and suggest how the study will contribute to current knowledge.
- **Management plan and organization.** This section should list major milestones or events, activities, and products and contain a timeline for completing individual

tasks. All project activities, including writing the final report, should be completed within the timeline. The amount of time for which staff are committed to the project should be included.

- **Dissemination strategy.** This section of the Program Narrative should describe a plan to disseminate the results of the project beyond the jurisdictions and individuals directly affected by it. The plan should identify specific methods, such as publication of articles, to inform the field about the project results. Expectations regarding products are discussed more fully in section VI, “Postaward Reporting Requirements.”

**4. Appendixes**, which are not counted in the page limit, include:

- Bibliography/references (if applicable).
- List of key personnel, which should include names, organizational affiliations, and complete contact information for all key people. The list should include key personnel from your organization, your subcontractors, advisers, consultants, and advisory board members (required).
- Résumés of key personnel (required).
- List of previous and current NIJ awards made to principal investigators. The list should contain grant numbers, information on final reports and other deliverables to NIJ (whether submitted or outstanding), and a list of all publications (by NIJ or other publishers) that resulted from each grant award (required).
- Letters of cooperation/support or administrative agreements from organizations collaborating in the project, if any (if applicable).
- Chart for timeline, research calendar, or milestones (required).
- Other materials required by the solicitation.

**B. Budget Detail Worksheet.** Your Budget Detail Worksheet should clearly present a breakdown of costs associated with each of nine budget categories (see box, “Budget Categories”). Itemize where necessary. NIJ strongly recommends that you develop the Budget Detail Worksheet using the template available online at [http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/sample\\_bdws.xls](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/sample_bdws.xls). The template includes an example of a worksheet and descriptions of the details for each category.

The Budget Detail Worksheet must show funding for the entire life of the project.

**C. Budget Narrative.** Your Budget Narrative must describe the purpose for every item, service, or person listed in the Budget Detail Worksheet. Use the same budget categories, headings, order, descriptors, and names in both the Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative. For example, do not refer to a piece of equipment by brand name in the Budget Detail Worksheet but by the type of equipment in the Budget Narrative; do not refer to a person by name in the Budget Detail Worksheet but by job title in the Budget Narrative.

**D. Negotiated Indirect Rate Agreement.** Include this if applicable.

**Budget Guidance.** The following information will help you make your budget clear, concise, and understandable to reviewers:

- **Personnel.** The Budget Detail Worksheet must include breakdowns of salaries and time spent on the project. The Budget Narrative must accurately describe each person’s role in the proposed project.
- **Travel.** Transportation costs and per diem rates must comply with your organization’s travel policy, and a copy of the policy should be an appendix to the Budget Narrative. If your organization does not have a written travel policy, travel rates must be consistent with those established by the Federal Government (<http://www.gsa.gov>; click on “Policy” then “Transportation Management Policy”).

The Budget Detail Worksheet must show breakdowns for all costs, including estimated fare, number of persons traveling, number of trips anticipated, location of trips if known,

**Budget Categories**

The Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative must present each of the following major budget categories clearly and separately. These budget categories are required by OJP’s Office of the Comptroller:

1. Personnel.
2. Fringe Benefits.
3. Travel.
4. Equipment.
5. Supplies.
6. Construction.
7. Consultants/Contracts (includes Consultant Fees, Consultant Expenses, and Contracts).
8. Other Costs.
9. Indirect Costs.



length of stay, lodging costs, ground transportation, meals, and incidental expenses. The Budget Narrative must describe the purpose of the travel as it relates to the project.

- **Equipment.** In general, grant funds may be used to purchase or lease equipment essential to accomplishing the project objectives. The Budget Detail Worksheet must list such equipment and the related costs. If more than one piece of a specific type of equipment is being purchased (e.g., video camera), you must state the individual price, the number being purchased, and the total price. The Budget Narrative must describe the purpose of the equipment.
- **Supplies.** Appropriate breakdowns and itemizations must appear in the Budget Detail Worksheet. The Budget Narrative must include a complete description of the materials and how they will be used.
- **Construction.** In general, construction costs are not allowable. In some cases, minor repairs or renovations may be allowable.
- **Consultants/contracts.** When appropriate, include a justification for using consultants as well as a justification if a consultant’s daily rate exceeds the Federal limit (currently \$450 per day). If the rate exceeds the current limit, OJP approval of the higher rate is needed before the award is made. For contracts, OJP must approve any sole source contract greater than \$100,000.
- **Other costs.** The components of other items should be specified in your Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative. Costs for conference registration, meetings, classes, and so forth must be included in the “Other Costs” category. (Expenses for traveling to conferences, meetings, or classes, however, go in the “Travel” category.) Other costs cannot include set-asides for undefined contingencies.

Your budget may include costs of required financial audits,<sup>1</sup> costs directly related to compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA, Public Law 91–190), and costs directly related to Institutional Review Board review and approval of NIJ-funded research activity involving human subjects.

- **Indirect costs.** All costs should be budgeted directly unless your organization has an indirect cost rate that was approved by a Federal agency within the past 2 years. If you

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1. See section VI, “Postaward Reporting Requirements,” for information on required financial audits.

have a federally approved indirect cost agreement, attach it in an appendix to and include the indirect cost recovery estimate in your Budget Narrative. For information about applying for an indirect cost rate, go to <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/oc>. The approval process can take several months. See also OJP's *Financial Guide* at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/FinGuide/part3chap17.htm>.

- **Nonfederal funding.** A grant made by NIJ may be 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 nonfederal support for the project. If nonfederal funding is proposed, indicate clearly throughout your Budget Narrative and Budget Detail Worksheet which items, if any, will be supported with nonfederal contributions.
- **Supplanting funds.** NIJ funds can be used to supplement existing funding but cannot replace State or local funds already appropriated for the project. OJP's Office of the Comptroller reviews budgets for potential supplanting, and these reviews occur during the pre- and postaward phase as well as during audits. If reviewers find a potential for supplanting, you must supply documentation demonstrating that the reduction in other funding occurred for reasons other than the receipt or expected receipt of Federal funds. For more details, see OJP's *Financial Guide* at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/FinGuide>.
- **Related funding.** In many cases, NIJ encourages collaborative funding. At the same time, NIJ wants to avoid inadvertent duplicate funding of projects or related projects. To achieve these goals, please list other funding sources both actual and potential for your project or closely related projects and include current and possible future funding from Federal, State, local, or private sources. For each related project that may receive Federal funds, you should list (1) program/project title, (2) name of the Federal grantor agency, (3) Federal award amount, and (4) a brief description of the purpose. The term "related projects" means those that have the same purpose (i.e., the proposed award would supplement, expand, complement, or continue activities funded with other Federal grants) or are another phase or component of the same project. Applicants may submit multiple proposals to NIJ, but the same proposal cannot be submitted in response to different solicitations.
- **Funds cannot be used for lobbying.** The Anti-Lobbying Act (18 U.S.C. Section 1913) was amended in 2002 to expand significantly the restriction on use of appropriated funding for lobbying. This expansion also makes the anti-lobbying restrictions enforceable via large civil penalties; civil fines are between \$10,000 and \$100,000 for each individual occurrence of lobbying activity. These restrictions are in addition to the anti-lobbying and lobbying disclosure restrictions imposed by 31 U.S.C. Section 1352.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is in the process of amending the OMB cost circulars and the common rule (codified at 28 CFR Part 69 for U.S. Department of Justice grantees) to reflect these modifications. However, in the interest of full disclosure, all applicants must understand that no federally appropriated funding made available under NIJ grant programs may be used, either directly or indirectly, to support the enactment, repeal, modification, or adoption of any law, regulation, or policy, at any level of government, without the express approval of OJP. Any violation of this prohibition is subject to a minimum \$10,000 fine for each occurrence. This prohibition applies to all activity, even if currently allowed within the parameters of the existing OMB circulars.

**E. Other Program Attachments.** Other Program Attachments include several forms that are available on OJP's funding page at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/forms.htm>.

Required forms include:

- **Disclosure of Lobbying Activities.** This is required if you are a registered, paid lobbyist. See also the section on "Funds cannot be used for lobbying" above.
- **Privacy Certificate.** If you are proposing a project that will not involve, collect, analyze, disclose, or otherwise use information identifiable to a private person, a statement to that effect should be inserted in the "Brief Description of the Project" section of the form. If the project does involve information identifiable to a private person, each section of the Privacy Certificate template must be completed. Additional guidance may be found in section VIII, "Confidentiality of Information and Human Subjects Protection" and at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/funding/humansubjects/index.html>.
- **Protection of Human Subjects Form.** If your project does not involve human participants or identifiable private information, insert a statement to that effect under item 8 on the Protection of Human Subjects Form. If the project does involve human participants or identifiable private information, complete the entire form. If the project has not been reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) when you submit the application, indicate that "No assurance has been filed" under item 6 on the form. If your project is funded, you will be required to submit a copy of the IRB approval and assurance documentation. Additional guidance can be found at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/funding/humansubjects/index.html>.
- **Accounting System and Financial Capability Questionnaire.** This form is required for applicants who have never received an award from OJP. Applicants who are government entities are not required to submit this form.

## IV. Submitting the Application

Go to <http://www.grants.gov/SubmitApplication> on the Grants.gov Web site for instructions on filing applications and completing the application process.

## V. Making Decisions and Awards

After NIJ receives all applications for a solicitation, staff review the proposals and convene independent peer review panels consisting of researchers and practitioners. Panel members read each proposal, assess the technical merits and policy relevance of the proposed research, and meet to discuss their assessments. The panel assessments as well as any accompanying NIJ staff reports are submitted to the NIJ Director, who has the authority to make awards.

The application review process (peer review, decisionmaking, and other considerations) may take 6 months or longer. Notices of award and nonaward are sent about 6 months after the closing date of a solicitation. Information on the status of awards is not available until notifications have been sent. Awards are posted regularly on the NIJ Web site at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/funding.htm>.

## VI. Postaward Reporting Requirements

If your project is funded, you will be required to submit several reports and other materials. The major postaward reports include:

**A. Final substantive report.** The final report should be a comprehensive overview of the project and include a detailed description of the project design, data, and methods; a full presentation of scientific findings; and a thorough discussion of the implications of the project findings for criminal justice practice and policy. It must contain an abstract of no more than 400 words and an executive summary of no more than 2,500 words.

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

For evaluation studies, the 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.)

**B. Progress reports (OJP Form 4587/1, Categorical Assistance Progress Report).** Progress reports must be submitted twice a year to OJP's Office of the Comptroller. Each progress report should describe activities during the reporting period and the status or accomplishment of objectives set forth in the approved award application. Progress reports must be submitted within 30 days after the end of the reporting periods (January 1 through June 30 and July 1 through December 31) for the life of the award. A report must be submitted even if no substantive activity occurred during the reporting period. Future awards and fund drawdowns may be withheld if progress reports are delinquent. Progress reports may be filed online through the OJP Grants Management System at <https://grants.ojp.usdoj.gov>.

A final progress report is due 120 days after the end date of the award. The final progress report should address achievement of the goals and objectives of the award, significant results, and any products developed under the award. Your grant manager may identify a number of specific items you should include in your final progress report.

**C. Financial reports (Standard Form [SF] 269A, Quarterly Financial Status Report).**

Financial status reports (SF 269A) must be submitted no later than 45 days after the end of each calendar quarter. (A financial status report must be submitted to OJP's Office of the Comptroller every quarter during the award period even if no financial activity has occurred during the reporting period.) A final financial report is due 120 days after the end date of the award.

Financial status reports may be filed online at <https://grants.ojp.usdoj.gov>. Future awards and fund drawdowns will be withheld if financial status reports are delinquent.

For additional information concerning reports, go to the online Financial Guide at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/FinGuide> or contact OJP, Office of the Comptroller, Customer Service Center, at 1-800-458-0786 (option 2) or at [ask.oc@usdoj.gov](mailto:ask.oc@usdoj.gov).

**D. Financial audits.** If your organization expends \$500,000 or more of Federal funds during the fiscal year, you must submit an organizationwide financial and compliance audit report as specified in chapter 19 of OJP's Financial Guide (available at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/FinGuide/part3chap19.htm>). The audit must be performed in accordance with the U.S. Government Accountability Office Government Accounting Standards. Detailed information on the independent audit is available in OMB Circular A-133 (available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars>).

## VII. Performance Guidelines

NIJ must comply with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA, Public Law 103–62). To assist NIJ in meeting GPRA requirements, successful applicants will be required to collect and report data to measure the results of their grant. Generally, these data are contained in the grantee’s final report (discussed in section VI, “Postaward Reporting Requirements”), but NIJ may request additional information to aid future planning and ensure accurate reporting to Congress and others on the measurable results of grants. For example, in the past, NIJ has asked grantees to report on the following:

- Number of technology demonstrations conducted.
- Number of technologies introduced into criminal justice, school, or public safety agency use.
- Number of informational guides, standards, and assessments in progress or completed.
- Number of prototype technologies or computer programs developed.
- Number of research, development, and evaluation studies conducted related to specific tools and techniques.
- Number of projects researching characteristics and properties of materials that have potential forensic applications or projects researching new forensic DNA markers.
- Number of forensic laboratories with improved analytical and technological resources.
- Number of DNA samples analyzed or to be analyzed with the 13 core STR loci used in the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS).
- Number of forensic laboratories demonstrating improved access to and increased laboratory capacity for analyzing DNA samples of convicted offenders.
- Number of States that have experienced an increase in the number of DNA samples available to CODIS.

## VIII. Confidentiality of Information and Human Subjects Protection

U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) regulations (28 CFR Part 22) require recipients of NIJ research funds to protect information identifiable to a private person that is collected, analyzed, disclosed, or otherwise used as part of a research or statistical activity funded by NIJ. This

regulation, among other matters, requires applicants for NIJ funding to outline specific procedures for protection of information identifiable to a private person as part of the Privacy Certificate submitted with the application package. See 28 CFR §22.23. Please note that the definition of “private person” includes entities as well as living individuals. See 28 CFR §22.2(b), wherein “private person” is defined to include individuals, corporations, associations, partnerships, and other entities. Government agencies are specifically excluded from the definition of “private person.”

In addition to the confidentiality regulations, DOJ has adopted regulations concerning protection of human research subjects. See 28 CFR Part 46. In general, the DOJ regulations require that all research involving human subjects conducted or supported by a Federal department or agency be reviewed and approved by an IRB before Federal funds are used for such activities. If IRB approval is required, a copy of the IRB’s approval and supporting documentation concerning the IRB’s institutional affiliation, its policies and procedures, and necessary assurances must be submitted to NIJ before the initiation of any research activities involving human subjects, except for activities that have been specifically exempted from IRB approval requirements under the provisions of 28 CFR Part 46.

Additional information on NIJ’s requirements for confidentiality and protection of human subjects can be found at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/funding/humansubjects/index.html>.

## **IX. Service to Limited English Proficient Persons**

Recipients of OJP financial assistance are required to comply with several Federal civil rights laws, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (“Title VI”) and the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (“Safe Streets Act”), as amended. These laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, and sex in the delivery of services.

National origin discrimination includes discrimination on the basis of limited English proficiency (LEP). To ensure compliance with Title VI and the Safe Streets Act, recipients are required to take reasonable steps to ensure that LEP persons have meaningful access to their programs. Meaningful access may entail providing language assistance services, including oral and written translation, when necessary. Grantees are encouraged to consider the need for language services for LEP persons served or encountered both in developing their proposals and budgets and in conducting their programs and activities. For example, researchers are encouraged to consider the need for language services for persons with limited English proficiency who are the subjects of, or otherwise involved in, NIJ-funded research efforts. Reasonable costs associated with providing meaningful access for LEP individuals are considered allowable program costs.

The U.S. Department of Justice has issued guidance for grantees to assist them in complying with Title VI requirements. The guidance document can be accessed on the Internet at <http://www.lep.gov>, by contacting OJP's Office for Civil Rights at 202-307-0690, or by writing to: Office for Civil Rights, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, 810 Seventh Street N.W., Eighth Floor, Washington, DC 20531.

## **X. Rights in Intellectual Property**

The U.S. Department of Justice reserves certain rights with respect to data, patentable inventions, works subject to copyright, and other intellectual property associated with an award of Federal funds. See 28 CFR §70.36 and 37 CFR Part 401.

## **XI. Additional Guidance and Information**

- For general and substantive guidance and information, contact NIJ at 202-305-7807.
- For technical assistance in using Grants.gov, call 1-800-518-4726.
- For more information on the National Institute of Justice, visit NIJ at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij> or the National Criminal Justice Reference Service, Box 6000, Rockville, MD 20849-6000; phone: 1-800-851-3420; e-mail: [askncjrs@ncjrs.gov](mailto:askncjrs@ncjrs.gov); or Web site: <http://www.ncjrs.gov>.



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NIJ provides objective, independent, evidence-based knowledge and tools to enhance the administration of justice and public safety.

NIJ is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Office for Victims of Crime.