



National Institute of Justice

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

Jeremy Travis, Director

September 1999

Office of Research and Evaluation 2000 Solicitation for Investigator-Initiated Research

APPLICATION DEADLINE:
January 18, 2000

**U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs**
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National Institute of Justice
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<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij>

SL000385

From the Director

Dear Colleague:

I am pleased to present the 2000 Office of Research and Evaluation Solicitation for Investigator-Initiated Research. While NIJ solicits proposals throughout the year for directed research in specific topic areas, this is an open invitation to researchers and practitioners to explore innovative topics and techniques to aid in shaping public policies that control crime and enhance justice. In this endeavor, creativity counts.

We challenge you to build on the information gleaned from past research and development to shed new light on our efforts to understand and reduce crime. We give you free rein to experiment with practical approaches that will rethink the conventional wisdom and offer alternative means for solving recurring problems. Finally, we invite you to seek collaboration with other organizations and disciplines in testing ideas and approaches that more effectively involve the entire community in building safety and justice.

To supplement information in this solicitation on themes and topics addressed by NIJ research and development, please consult *Building Knowledge About Crime and Justice: The 1999 Research Prospectus of the National Institute of Justice* (NCJ 172883). *Building Knowledge About Crime and Justice: The 2000 Research Prospectus of the National Institute of Justice* (NCJ 178903) will be available in mid-November, 1999. Additional information is available at NIJ's Web site (<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij>).

This call for innovative research presents broad topic outlines, along with specific avenues that could be explored. We ask that you stretch the limits of your imagination to define and confront the challenges ahead. Such efforts will expand our knowledge of crime and justice and aid in formulating sound strategies to lead us into the 21st century.

Jeremy Travis
Director
National Institute of Justice

Office of Research and Evaluation 2000 Solicitation for Investigator-initiated Research¹

I. INTRODUCTION

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) is the research and development arm of the U.S.

Department of Justice. Created by Congress in 1968, the Institute is charged with investing public funds to develop knowledge that will reduce crime, enhance public safety, and improve the administration of justice. Under its enabling legislation, NIJ is authorized to assist State and local justice systems in the following ways:

- By conducting and sponsoring basic and applied research into the causes, prevention, and detection of crime.
- By sponsoring evaluations of major Federal initiatives concerning crime and justice.
- By supporting research, demonstrations, and validations to develop new approaches, techniques, systems, and equipment to improve law enforcement and the administration of justice.
- By developing, validating, and evaluating new technologies to deter crime and enhance criminal justice operations.
- By making recommendations to Federal, State, and local governments.
- By conducting conferences and workshops for criminal justice policymakers and professionals.
- By collecting and disseminating both domestic and international criminal justice information obtained by the Institute or other Federal agencies.

NIJ's portfolio covers a diverse and dynamic array of research and development topics. Over the course of each year, the Institute's research program evolves as a result of consultations with researchers, technologists and practitioners, State and local policymakers, and partnerships with other public and private organizations. *The 1998 NIJ Research Portfolio* (NCJ 171670), which lists ongoing NIJ research and development through June 1997 with

project descriptions, is available. The Institute encourages prospective applicants to consult that publication as well as *Building Knowledge About Crime and Justice: The 1999 Research Prospectus of the National Institute of Justice* (NCJ 172883) as guides to NIJ's approach to criminal justice research and development. *Building Knowledge About Crime and Justice: The 2000 Research Prospectus of the National Institute of Justice* (NCJ 178903) will be available in mid-November, 1999. (See section V of this solicitation for instructions on obtaining these and related documents.) Examples of recently awarded grants and cooperative agreements can be obtained from the Freedom of Information Office at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/foia.htm>.

LIST OF MAJOR CHANGES FROM PREVIOUS INVESTIGATOR-INITIATED SOLICITATIONS

One single closing date : January 18, 2000.

No separate requirements and review panel for small grants; all grants of all sizes may be up to 30 pages long and will be reviewed by the appropriate substantive review panel.

Science and Technology development proposals are not eligible under this solicitation, but should be submitted to a separate Office of Science and Technology Solicitation; however, evaluation and assessment of the application of new technologies are encouraged in this solicitation.

Policing Research and Evaluation proposals should be submitted to this solicitation.

NIJ's extramural research program uses two types of funding strategies: the directed solicitation and the investigator-initiated solicitation. These solicitations differ extensively in the amount of discretion allowed to applicants. Directed solicitations are more narrowly focused in order to address specific research and development topics, evaluations, or criminal justice applications under specific NIJ

¹ Applicants interested in submitting proposals to conduct research pertaining specifically to law enforcement technologies and other criminal justice system technologies should consult <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/sciencetech>. NIJ's Office of Science and Technology releases its own research solicitations which focus specifically on technology. (See <http://www.ncjrs.org/txtfiles1/sl000374.txt> for an ASCII text version, or <http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/sl000374.pdf> for an Adobe Acrobat version of the NIJ Science and Technology Solicitation.)

programs. They are released intermittently throughout the year and specify a project goal, may indicate methods or sites to be considered and sites to be examined, and dictate project start and end dates. [For copies of directed NIJ solicitations, please visit the Funding Opportunities page on the NIJ Website at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/funding.htm>]

In contrast to these directed solicitations, the Office of Research and Evaluation *Investigator-Initiated Solicitation* is the most flexible of the Institute's funding opportunities. In this solicitation, NIJ invites applicants to submit proposals that will help the Institute address five general themes related to the NIJ mission. This solicitation specifically requests proposals in topical areas that are **not** covered by other NIJ solicitations. Wherever possible, applicants interested in conducting research on such topics as violence against women or science and technology development should apply to directed solicitations targeting these particular areas of research.

II. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND TOPIC AREAS

Under this investigator-initiated program, applicants may submit proposals to explore a wide range of research and evaluation topics relevant to criminal justice policy or practice, supporting NIJ's broad portfolio of both basic and applied studies. While the Institute's specific research and development interests are constantly evolving in response to the needs of the field, the following five broad criminal justice areas are current NIJ priorities.

Rethinking Justice and the Processes That Create Just Communities.

As the 21st century approaches, the country faces new challenges to public safety, new demands on the justice system, and a need for research-based assessments of criminal justice processes and practices. Under the theme of rethinking justice, the Institute encourages the research community to propose and execute studies that improve the

delivery of justice and public safety by building upon the existing base of research knowledge and by testing key hypotheses. Studies should examine ways to achieve the purposes of the justice system, such as swift and certain apprehension of criminals, fair and speedy trials, appropriate punishments, and concern for crime victims. Investigators could also consider new ways to conceptualize and deliver justice as well as enhance the responsiveness of the justice system. The topics indicated below are meant to illustrate ways to respond to this challenge and stimulate applicants to consider nontraditional research problems.

- Redefining the missions of criminal justice agencies by incorporating nontraditional functions, by overlapping and coordinating services with other justice and non-justice organizations, and by developing new models of policing, prosecution, probation/parole, and corrections.
- Involving the community in delivering justice through such means as community policing, community-based prosecution, community sanctions, and restorative justice.
- Benefitting from victims' perspectives on justice system outcomes by exploring the implications of victims' rights initiatives and looking at communities as victims of criminal enterprises.
- Developing and promoting innovative approaches to policing and public safety, including strategies of crime prevention, partnerships with the community and other agencies, and employing new problemsolving models and technologies.
- Exploring the role of the court, particularly community-oriented and outcome-focused courts, and the roles of prosecutors and defenders.
- Exploring issues relating to sentencing practices, structured sentencing, fairness in sentencing outcomes, incapacitation, deterrence, and recidivism.
- Integrating justice concepts by improving coordination between adult and juvenile justice system processes and by combining legal strategies used in civil and criminal systems.
- Exploring relationships between crime rates and changing criminal justice organizational structures and delivery of services.

Understanding the Nexus Between Crime and Its Social Context

NIJ seeks to understand the nexus between crime and other social concerns by illuminating the relationships between criminal activity and its broader social context.

Examples of areas of interest to NIJ under this rubric are:

- Connections among such factors as community labor markets, unemployment, poverty, and race, as well as the development of criminal lifestyles within families and communities.
- Juvenile drug use and the escalation of juvenile firearms violence.
- Involvement of juveniles in criminal infrastructures (e.g., gangs and consignment thefts).
- Parenting skill interventions for parents and guardians in at-risk households and neighborhoods.
- Recent welfare reforms and "workfare" initiatives and their impacts on delinquency in at-risk families.
- Effects of eliminating "hot spots" on a neighborhood's quality of life and business activity.
- Treatment of populations that shuttle between criminal justice and mental health agencies.
- Interventions for repeat victimizations.

Breaking the Cycle of Crime by Testing Research-Based Interventions

When connections between crime and social conditions are identified, experiments with programs and policies that break the linkage between crime and certain social conditions should follow. Among several such NIJ efforts is one that examines the hypothesis that drug testing, mandatory treatment, and other interventions provided to those with a history of illicit drug use will reduce drug abuse and criminal behavior. NIJ is testing this hypothesis in three adult and two juvenile court systems around the country.

The Institute is exploring the possibility of developing and evaluating an intervention that would ameliorate the negative consequences of child abuse and neglect—particularly delinquency and substance abuse—because research suggests that abused or neglected children are 40 percent more likely to engage in delinquency or crime later in life.

NIJ is also testing in five sites the effectiveness of a comprehensive, multi-agency, research-based strategic planning process, known as the Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative (SACSI), for identifying and solving special crime-related problems in a jurisdiction.

NIJ is interested in applications that propose projects which are compatible with and build upon NIJ's existing efforts in this domain. For example, NIJ is interested in evaluations of :

- Interventions that rely on geographic analyses to develop solutions to recurring criminal justice problems.
- Innovative juvenile violence interventions to reduce gun and/or gang related homicides and assaults.
- Inter-agency, inter-organizational partnerships for developing and implementing crime prevention and intervention approaches.
- Effects of eliminating "hot spots" on a neighborhood's quality of life and business activity.
- Treatment of populations that shuttle between criminal justice and mental health agencies.
- Interventions for repeat victimizations.

Creating the Tools

Under the theme of *creating the tools*, the Institute's investigator-initiated solicitation supports efforts to evaluate new and transferable techniques and procedures for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the criminal justice system. For example, the Institute encourages proposals to improve the abilities of State and local law enforcement, judicial, correctional, and other criminal justice agencies to perform critical missions or enhance performance through the application and assessment of new technologies and procedures. NIJ's interests in this solicitation are on the behavioral, social, and organizational correlates and consequences of new tools, technologies, and techniques. [Applicants should note that this NIJ program focuses on research and evaluation and does not support the purchase of routine equipment for criminal justice agencies. In addition, the scientific development of new technologies and forensic techniques is not supported under this solicitation, but rather should be submitted to NIJ's Office of Science and Technology. See

<http://ncjrs.org/txtfiles1/sl000374.txt> for an ASCII text version, or <http://ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/sl000374.pdf> for an Adobe Acrobat version of the NIJ Science and Technology Solicitation.

Examples of particular topics of interest to NIJ in this area are:

- Information data management—developing and integrating State and local law enforcement databases with court and corrections databases and with public health and other agency and local data sources so that they support all criminal justice and local government agencies and community organizations in efforts to solve problems in particular jurisdictions.
- Crime mapping and crime analysis—evaluating, developing, and disseminating geographic information system technology products to test and improve its utility to local criminal justice and other practitioners in solving problems, focusing on innovative crime-mapping and data systems products, including software for analysis.
- New applications of innovative technologies and computer-related products for use by police, prosecutors, and other State and local agencies in their problem-solving and crime-reduction efforts.

Expanding the Horizons

The Institute, under its theme of *expanding the horizons*, asks the research and development community to move beyond traditional definitions of crime and criminal relationships. Investigators can consider how better to describe and classify new criminal events, develop methods of deterrence that will improve the public's sense of well-being, and identify new threats to public safety that will continue into the 21st century. They might also consider new, nontraditional forms of criminal enterprise, including new criminal marketplaces. NIJ is also strongly interested in new approaches that law enforcement or other agencies can adopt to combat crime of all definitions. The topics below indicate some of the many possibilities worthy of study in this area:

- Interconnections among criminal agents—including the fencing and smuggling of

stolen goods and the vertical integration of crime markets.

- Transnational crime—in which crime and crime control efforts extend beyond national boundaries. Research projects could involve the exploration of links to transnational crime in immigrant communities and the fostering of international investigative and prosecutorial collaborations.
- Cybercrimes—the use of computer technology to commit and facilitate crimes. Methods need to be developed to detect and prosecute cybercrime.
- Collaboration between law enforcement and nontraditional partners such as correctional agencies. Research could explore creative partnerships with non-justice organizations such as health services, private corporations, public housing, and transportation authorities.
- Innovative sanctions for corporate fraud, environmental pollution, and corruption.
- Investigation and prosecution of, and punishment for, personal fraud, scams, and con games.
- Evaluating the use of innovative computerized mapping and other analytic tools for the courts as well as community and institutional corrections.
- Innovative strategies to encourage compliance with environmental regulations and deter environmental violations and crimes among both businesses and individuals.
- New strategies for detection, investigation, prosecution, and sanctioning of large-scale organizational and white collar crime, such as health care fraud, insurance fraud, securities fraud and other financial and economic crimes.

III. SELECTION CRITERIA

NIJ is firmly committed to the competitive process for awarding grants. All proposals are subjected to an independent evaluation by a panel of peer reviewers with academic, practitioner, technical, and operational expertise in the subject areas of the solicitation. Based on the results of these independent reviews, Institute staff make recommendations to NIJ's Director. Then, after consultation with staff, final decisions are made by the NIJ Director based on the following criteria:

1. Quality and Technical Merit

- Soundness of methodology, analytic, or technical approach.
- Innovation and creativity.
- Feasibility of proposed project; awareness of pitfalls.
- Awareness of existing research and related applications.

2. Impact of the Project

- Understanding importance of the problem.
- Potential for significant advance in crime prevention, law enforcement, courts, corrections, or other practice or policy areas.
- Potential for advancement of scientific understanding of the problem area.
- Relevance to improving the policy and practice of criminal justice and related agencies and for improving public safety, security, and quality of life.

3. Capabilities, Demonstrated Productivity, and Experience of Applicants

- Qualifications and experience of personnel as related to proposed project.
- Responsiveness to the goals of the solicitation.
- Demonstrated ability to manage proposed effort.
- Adequacy of proposed resources to perform effort.

4. Budget Considerations

- Total cost relative to perceived benefit.
- Appropriate budgets and level of effort.
- Use of existing resources to conserve costs.

IV. APPLICATION INFORMATION

Persons interested in submitting research proposals under this solicitation must submit the required application materials. (See below for instructions on obtaining application forms and guidelines.) Applications must include the following information or completed forms to qualify for funding:

- 1. Topic and Thematic Area Designation form (at the end of this solicitation).**
- 2. Standard Form (SF) 424—application for Federal assistance.**
- 3. Proposal abstract.¹**
- 4. Assurances.**

5. Privacy Certificate.

6. Certifications Regarding Lobbying; Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements.

7. Disclosure of Lobbying Activities.

8. Budget Detail Worksheet.²

9. Budget Narrative.

GUIDELINES FOR GRANTEES

NIJ has established guidelines for grantees regarding deliverables such as final reports and data sets. With very few exceptions, a written report is expected at the completion of the grant period. In addition, most grantees are required to submit a complete annotated electronic data set upon completion of the study. These requirements are described in NIJ's [Guidelines for Submitting Proposals](#) (available on our website) and are stated as special conditions in the award package.

All NIJ research reports are peer reviewed. The reviews are forwarded to the principal investigator, who then submits a final report. In order to complete this work within the timeframe of a grant, a draft final report should be submitted 90 days before the end date of the grant. Data sets should also be submitted by the end date. Grant applicants should ensure that their application includes a proposed time line that accommodates these requirements.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION AND HUMAN SUBJECT PROTECTION

The Department of Justice (DOJ) regulations at 28 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 22 require recipients of NIJ research funds to protect personally identifiable information that is collected from all research participants. The regulations at 28 CFR Part 22 require applicants for NIJ funding to outline their plans for the protection of private information about individuals as part of a Privacy Certificate, which is submitted as part of their proposal.

In addition to the regulations in Part 22, DOJ has adopted policies on the protection of human subjects that are the same as those established by the Department of Health and Human Services in 45 CFR Part 46, Subpart A, also known as the "Common Rule." The DOJ regulations are set forth in 28 CFR Part 46. In general, 28 CFR Part 46 requires that all research involving human subjects conducted or supported by a federal department or agency be reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) before federal funds are expended for that research. If IRB approval is required for this project, a copy of the IRB's approval as well as supporting documentation concerning the IRB's institutional affiliation, its policies and procedures, and necessary assurances must be submitted to the National Institute of Justice prior to the initiation of any research activities that are not exempt from the provisions of 28 CFR Part 46.

10. Negotiated indirect cost rate agreement.

11. Names and affiliations of all key persons, including applicant and subcontractor(s), advisers, consultants, and advisory board members. For Principal Investigator and contact person (if other than PI), include complete address, phone, fax, and e-mail.

12. Table of contents.

13. Program narrative or technical proposal (not to exceed 30 double-spaced pages).

14. References.

15. Letters of cooperation from organizations collaborating in the research project.

16. Resumes.

17. Appendices, if any (e.g., list of previous NIJ awards, their status, and products [in NIJ or other publications]).

Ten (10) copies of fully executed proposals must be received by NIJ by the close of business on January 18, 2000. Proposals must be sent to the following address: Investigator-Initiated Solicitation; National Institute of Justice; 810 Seventh Street, N.W.; Washington, DC 20531 [ZIP Code if overnight courier service is used: 20001].

Obtaining Application Forms. To obtain application forms and guidelines for submitting proposals (which include requirements for proposal writers and requirements for award recipients), applicants may access the Justice Information Center on the World Wide Web at <http://www.ncjrs.org/fedgrant.htm#nij> or may access the NIJ Web site at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/funding.htm>. NIJ application policies and forms are available as electronic files that may be downloaded to a personal computer. In addition, mail delivery may be requested from the National Criminal Justice Reference Service at 800-851-3420 or from the Department of Justice Response Center at 800-421-6770 (in the Washington, D.C., area at 202-307-1480).

Other NIJ Funding Opportunities. NIJ's Data Resources Program awards funds for investigator-initiated research and development focusing on the secondary analysis of archived data sets created by NIJ grantees. A separate solicitation has been issued for this program. NIJ also provides support for Graduate Research Fellowships and for Visiting Research Fellowships under separate solicitations.

Finally, in addition to funding opportunities under NIJ's Investigator-Initiated Research Program, the Institute announces more specific requests for research and development proposals in its directed solicitations, which appear intermittently throughout the year. As noted earlier, these directed solicitations address more specific areas of research for which special funding is available. See the NIJ Website (<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/funding.htm>) for more information on these and other funding opportunities.

For Additional Information. The NIJ publications listed below provide additional information about NIJ programs, funding opportunities, and ongoing research. Prospective applicants are encouraged to consult these publications as they develop their proposals. All are available electronically from the Justice Information Center on the World Wide Web (<http://www.ncjrs.org>) and on the NIJ Web site (<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij>) or by calling NCJRS at 800-851-3420.

- *NIJ Research in Brief: NIJ Awards in Fiscal Year 1998* (NCJ 173932).
- *Building Knowledge About Crime and Justice: The 2000 Research Prospectus of the National Institute of Justice* (NCJ 178903), available mid-November, 1999.
- *Building Knowledge About Crime and Justice: The 1999 Research Prospectus of the National Institute of Justice* (NCJ 172883).
- *Criminal Justice Research Under the Crime Act 1995 to 1996* (NCJ 166142).
- *National Institute of Justice Year in Review 1998* (NCJ 177616).
- *NIJ Research Report: 1998 NIJ Research Portfolio* (NCJ 171670).

Applicants may wish to discuss their potential research topics with NIJ program staff. Those who wish to do so should contact the Department of Justice Response Center at 800-421-6770. Center staff can provide additional guidance and information to potential applicants and refer them to an appropriate NIJ professional. Applicants should obtain and carefully read application forms and proposal guidelines before contacting the Response Center for special guidance.

Notes:

1. The proposal abstract, when read separately from the rest of the application, is meant to serve as a succinct and accurate description of the proposed work. Applicants must concisely describe the research goals and objectives, research design, and methods for achieving the goals and objectives. Summaries of past accomplishments are to be avoided, and proprietary/confidential information is not to be included. Length is not to exceed 400 words. Abstracts should include information on both project goals and methodology.

2. When estimating budget requests, investigators should note that NIJ policy prohibits the use of grant funds for operational, training, or other non-research costs of the project.

TOPIC AND THEMATIC AREA DESIGNATION FORM

[PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND INCLUDE AS THE TOP SHEET OF YOUR APPLICATION PACKAGE]

TOPIC AREA(S)

All proposals submitted to NIJ are reviewed by peer review panels of experts in relevant substantive areas from the research and practitioner communities. To facilitate the assignment of each proposal to the most appropriate review panel, applicants are requested to indicate the primary topic area(s) addressed in the space provided below. Examples might include: Policing; Substance Abuse; Violent Crime; Courts/Adjudication; Firearms; etc. If applicable, more than one topic should be noted. For example, if a proposal addresses law enforcement strategies against gangs, both Policing and Gangs should be indicated. Again, these designations are critical to the assignment of your proposal to the review panel that will provide the most informed assessment of your study.

Topic Area(s)

THEMATIC AREA(S)

Indicate primary (1), secondary (2), and additional themes addressed below.

<u>Thematic Area</u>	<u>Priority Number</u>
Rethinking Justice	_____
Understanding the Nexus	_____
Breaking the Cycle	_____
Creating the Tools	_____
Expanding the Horizons	_____

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

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

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