



The U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice is pleased to announce that it is seeking applications for funding for social science research on emerging issues in forensic science. 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: Social Science Research on Emerging Issues in Forensic Science

Eligibility

(See "Eligibility," page 3)

Deadline

All applications are due **January 23, 2007, 11:59 p.m. eastern time.**

Contact Information

For assistance with the requirements of this solicitation, contact Katharine Browning, Social Science Analyst, at 202-616-4786 or Katharine.Browning@usdoj.gov.

This application must be submitted through Grants.gov. For technical assistance with submitting the application, call the Grants.gov Customer Support Hotline at 1-800-518-4726.

Grants.gov Funding Opportunity No. 2007-NIJ-1417

SL# 000784

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Social Science Research on Emerging Issues in Forensic Science

CFDA No. 16.560

Overview

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

The field of forensic science has experienced numerous advances over the last decade. Improvements in technology have increased the use of forensic evidence, both in terms of what can be analyzed, and how quickly it can be processed. These developments have raised important social and behavioral science research questions. NIJ is soliciting research on a broad array of emerging social science research issues in forensic science including, but not limited to, DNA databases, wrongful convictions, and evaluations of new forensic technologies and management practices.

Deadline: Registration

Registering with Grants.gov is a one-time process; however, if you are a first time registrant it could take up to several weeks to have your registration validated and confirmed and to receive your user password. Start the registration process early to prevent delays that may cause you to miss the application deadline. You must complete these three steps before you are able to register: 1) Register with Central Contractor Registry (CCR), 2) Register yourself as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR), and 3) Be authorized as an AOR by your organization. For more information visit www.grants.gov. **Note: Your CCR Registration must be renewed once a year. Failure to renew your CCR registration may prohibit submission of a grant application through Grants.gov.**

Deadline: Application

The due date for applying for funding under this announcement is **January 23, 2007, 11:59 p.m. eastern time.**

Eligibility

In general, NIJ is authorized to make grants to, or enter into contracts or cooperative agreements with, States (including territories), local governments (including federally recognized Indian tribal governments that perform law enforcement functions), nonprofit organizations (including faith-based and community organizations), profit organizations, institutions of higher education, and qualified individuals. Foreign governments or organizations are not eligible to apply.

Faith-Based and Other Community Organizations: Consistent with President George W. Bush's Executive Order 13279, dated December 12, 2002, and 28 C.F.R. Part 38, it is DOJ policy that faith-based and other community organizations that statutorily qualify as eligible applicants under DOJ programs are invited and encouraged to apply for assistance awards to fund eligible grant activities. Faith-based and other community organizations will be considered for awards on the same basis as other eligible applicants and, if they receive assistance awards, will be treated on an equal basis with all other grantees in the administration of such awards. No eligible applicant or grantee will be discriminated for or against on the basis of its religious character or affiliation, religious name, or the religious composition of its board of directors or persons working in the organization.

Faith-based organizations receiving DOJ assistance awards retain their independence and do not lose or have to modify their religious identity (e.g., removing religious symbols) to receive assistance awards. DOJ grant funds, however, may not be used to fund any inherently religious activity, such as prayer or worship. Inherently religious activity is permissible, although it cannot occur during an activity funded with DOJ grant funds; rather, such religious activity must be separate in time or place from the DOJ-funded program. Further, participation in such activity by individuals receiving services must be voluntary. Programs funded by DOJ are not permitted to discriminate in the provision of services on the basis of a beneficiary's religion.

Applicants are encouraged to review the Civil Rights Compliance section under "Additional Requirements" in this announcement.

Specific Information— Social Science Research on Emerging Issues in Forensic Science

Forensic science technologies have advanced significantly over the last decade. Technology improvements have increased the use of forensic evidence, both in terms of what can be analyzed and how quickly it can be processed. This is particularly true in the area of DNA analysis, where new techniques have led to expansions in the way DNA can be used to solve crimes. DNA can now be obtained from very small amounts of biological material from crime scenes to identify suspects. Coupled with the rapid growth of DNA databases in many States, the collection and analysis of DNA evidence will likely play an increasingly important role throughout the justice system.

Recent developments in the forensic sciences have raised many social and behavioral science research questions. NIJ is currently funding several research efforts in this emerging area, including a demonstration project examining the cost effectiveness of collecting DNA evidence in property crimes, a study of the role and impact of forensic evidence on criminal justice processes, and a national survey of fingerprint policies and procedures. See appendix A for a complete list of current NIJ projects.

NIJ seeks to expand this research portfolio to include other important questions. NIJ staff have identified several specific issues, but applicants are free to propose other topics dealing with social science questions and the forensic sciences. Research proposed under this solicitation should have direct implications for policy and/or practice for

forensic science in the criminal justice system, and these implications should be clearly stated in the proposal.

Evaluation of forensic interventions.

New forensics tools and management practices are continually being developed. For example, there is a push to develop tools that can be used at crime scenes to conduct rapid onsite presumptive tests to alleviate some of the burden on crime labs. Further, expert systems and robotics technologies are being added to crime laboratories to help increase throughput capacity in DNA analysis. New approaches to firearms analyses are also under development. NIJ is interested in proposals to evaluate these and other new forensic interventions. NIJ is specifically interested in social science evaluations that determine whether the application of existing or newly developed technologies or management practices works to improve forensic outcomes.

Applicants are encouraged to focus on the evaluation of a single technology or management practice in one or multiple sites. Where prudent, final decisions regarding the selection of evaluation sites may be made after the grant is awarded, in collaboration with NIJ. For evaluation research, funding priority will be given to applications proposing randomized experimental designs, regression discontinuity, propensity scores, or other enhanced quasi-experimental designs that maximize the validity and reliability of research results.

Applicants should provide specific intervention information in the proposal, including the name and description of the technology or practice to be evaluated and where it has been implemented. The proposal must also demonstrate that the technology or practice is being used on a large enough scale to support an evaluation with adequate statistical power. Additionally, answers to the following questions should be provided in the body of the application:

- What is the history of the technology/practice?
- At what stage of implementation is the technology/practice?
- What efficiencies or outcomes are expected?
- What data systems exist that would facilitate evaluation?
- What are the key data elements contained in these systems?
- Are data on comparison samples readily available?
- What outcomes will be assessed? By what measures?
- Is random assignment possible? If not, how will comparison groups be formed?
- What evaluation evidence already exists to justify an outcome evaluation?

Wrongful arrest and conviction.

One of the goals of the President's DNA Initiative is to make greater use of DNA in protecting the innocent. In recent years, high profile exonerations resulting from the application of forensic DNA analysis have brought heightened attention to the issue of wrongful arrest and conviction. This attention is likely to continue as many States have established procedural rules for post-conviction relief (see <http://www.ncsl.org/programs/cj/postconviction.htm>).

NIJ is interested in research that will explore the nature and extent of wrongful arrest and conviction. NIJ is interested in learning whether the exonerations discovered to date are representative of all cases (known and undiscovered) of wrongful arrest and/or

convictions. In particular, NIJ is interested in studies of forensic processes that might reduce the risks of wrongful arrests and/or convictions.

Impact of DNA databases on crime control and criminal justice.

DNA databases have been in existence for about 15 years and in some States are growing exponentially. As of the end of 2005, forty-three states authorized collection of DNA samples from all convicted felons for inclusion in their databases; thirty-three states authorized taking samples from juveniles, generally for the same offenses as adults.

DNA databases contain new information that can be used to explore issues relating to offense patterns and law enforcement productivity. State DNA databases may contain more than the original identifier record created when an adult or juvenile's DNA sample is entered; it may also contain profiles from subsequent crimes where a person's DNA appears regardless of whether an arrest is made. NIJ believes that the advent of these databases presents new opportunities to investigate important issues concerning the role of DNA analysis in crime control.

Clearly, DNA databases contribute to solving crimes; they may also help prevent crimes from occurring. NIJ is interested in research that will examine the impact of DNA databases on offending behavior or criminal justice processes beyond the solving of a specific crime. For example, is there an increased probability of arrest associated with having a sample in a DNA database? Can the analysis of identical DNA samples found at different crime scenes aid in identifying offenders even though they are not in a state database? Are jurors more likely to convict suspects when a DNA sample is presented in evidence?

NIJ will consider projects that examine these issues in a single site or in multiple sites. All States now have DNA databases, but who the State places in the convicted offender databases varies (see <http://www.ncsl.org/programs/cj/dnadatabanks.htm>) as do the samples included in forensic (case) databases. Applicants are encouraged to consult with a State CODIS database manager or someone very familiar with DNA databases in designing the study to ensure that information from the database(s) can be matched to other records as desired.

What will *not* be funded:

1. Provision of training or direct service.
2. Proposals primarily to purchase equipment, materials, or supplies. (Your budget may include these items if they are necessary to conduct applied research, development, demonstration, evaluation, or analysis, but NIJ does not fund proposals that are primarily to purchase equipment.)
3. Work that will be funded under another specific solicitation.
4. Work that duplicates current NIJ projects in this area. For a complete list of current projects, see Appendix A.
5. Proposals that fall within the scope of one of NIJ's targeted solicitations. Applicants should review the current funding opportunities section of NIJ's website to ensure that proposals are not better suited for other open solicitations. Proposals will not be considered under more than one solicitation.
6. Proposals to develop technology or test technology in a laboratory or other artificial setting. Development or testing of technologies is not the focus of this solicitation. NIJ only seeks proposals to evaluate the impact of new or existing technologies in operational settings.

7. Proposals that do not contain direct implications for policy and/or practice for forensic science in the criminal justice system.

Cost of proposed work: NIJ anticipates that up to \$2 million may become available for awards made through this solicitation. All NIJ awards are subject to the availability of appropriated funds and to any modifications or additional requirements that may be imposed by law. NIJ expects to make multiple awards depending on funds available and number of high-quality applications. If you propose a project that exceeds the amount of money that may be available for this solicitation, we recommend that you divide the project into phases, stages, or tasks so that NIJ can consider making awards for a specific portion of the work. NIJ cannot guarantee that subsequent phases, stages, or tasks will be funded. Such additional funding depends on NIJ's resources and your satisfactory completion of each phase, stage, or task. Note: Deliverables (e.g., a final report) will be required at the end of each phase, stage, or task.

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

Performance Measures

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

Objective	Performance Measures	Data Grantee Provides
Develop and analyze information and data having clear implications for criminal justice policy and practice.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Relevance to the needs of the field as measured by whether the grantee's substantive scope did not deviate from the funded proposal or any subsequent agency modifications to the scope. 2. Quality of the research as assessed by peer reviewers. 3. Quality of management as measured by whether significant interim project milestones were achieved, final deadlines were met, and costs remained within approved limits. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A final report providing a comprehensive overview of the project and 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. 2. Quarterly financial reports, semi-annual progress reports, and a final progress report.

How to Apply

DOJ is participating in the e-Government initiative, one of 25 initiatives included in the President's Management Agenda. Part of this initiative—Grants.gov—is a “one-stop storefront” that provides a unified process for all customers of Federal grants to find funding opportunities and apply for funding.

Grants.gov Instructions: Complete instructions can be found at www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp. If you experience difficulties at any point during this process, please call the Grants.gov Customer Support Hotline at 1-800-518-4726.

CFDA Number: 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 Grants.gov funding opportunity number is 2007–NIJ–1417.

A DUNS number is required: The Office of Management and Budget requires that all businesses and nonprofit applicants for Federal funds include a DUNS (Data Universal Numeric System) number in their application for a new award or renewal of an award. Applications without a DUNS number are incomplete. 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. The DUNS number will be used throughout the grant life cycle. Obtaining a DUNS number is a free, simple, one-time activity. Obtain one by calling 1-866-705-5711 or by applying online at <http://www.dnd.com/us>. Individuals are exempt from this requirement.

What an Application Must Include

Standard Form 424

Program Narrative

The Program Narrative includes:

- a. Abstract (not to exceed 400 words).
- b. Table of contents.
- c. Main body, which includes:
 - Purpose, goals, and objectives.
 - Review of relevant literature.
 - Research design and methods.
 - Implications for policy and practice.
 - Management plan and organization.
 - Dissemination strategy.
- d. Appendixes (not counted against program narrative page limit) include:
 - Bibliography/References (if applicable).
 - List of key personnel (required).
 - Résumés of key personnel (required).
 - List of previous and current NIJ awards (required).
 - Letters of cooperation/support or administrative agreements from organizations collaborating in the project (if applicable).

- Chart for timeline, research calendar, or milestones (required).
- Other materials required by the solicitation.

Budget Detail Worksheet

Templates for filling out the Budget Detail Worksheet may be found online at http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/Forms/budget_fillable.pdf, OJP Standard Forms & Instructions. If you have any questions, please contact the Office of the Comptroller's Customer Service Center at 1-800-458-0786.

Budget Narrative

Indirect Rate Agreement (if applicable)

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

Other Program Attachments

These include several forms, available on OJP’s funding page at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/forms.htm>.

Page limit

The program narrative section of your proposal must not exceed 30 double-spaced pages in 12-point font with 1-inch margins. Abstract, table of contents, charts, figures, appendixes, and government forms do not count toward the 30-page limit for the narrative section.

Cofunding

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

Selection Criteria

Successful applicants must demonstrate the following:

Understanding of the problem and its importance.

Quality and technical merit.

1. Awareness of the state of current research or technology.
2. Soundness of methodology and analytic and technical approach.
3. Feasibility of proposed project and awareness of pitfalls.
4. Innovation and creativity (when appropriate).

Impact of the proposed project.

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 and improving public safety, security, and quality of life.
4. Affordability and cost-effectiveness of proposed end products, when applicable (e.g., purchase price and maintenance costs for a new technology or cost of training to use the technology).
5. Perceived potential for commercialization and/or implementation of a new technology (when applicable).

Capabilities, demonstrated productivity, and experience of applicants.

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.

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.

Dissemination strategy.

1. Well-defined plan for the grant recipient to disseminate results to appropriate audiences, including researchers, practitioners, and policymakers.
2. Suggestions for print and electronic products NIJ might develop for practitioners and policymakers.

Relevance of the project for policy and practice:

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

Review Process

NIJ is firmly committed to the competitive process in awarding grants. All proposals under this solicitation will be subjected to independent peer-review panel evaluations. External peer-review panelists consider both technical and programmatic merits. Panelists are selected based on their expertise in subject areas pertinent to the proposals.

Peer-review panelists will evaluate proposals using the criteria listed above. NIJ staff then make recommendations to the NIJ Director. The Director makes award decisions.

Reasons for rejection: NIJ may reject applications that are incomplete, do not respond to the scope of the solicitation, do not comply with format requirements, or are submitted after the deadline. No additions to the original submission are allowed.

When awards will be made: All applicants, whether they are accepted or rejected, will be notified. The review and approval process takes about 6 months. You should not propose to begin work until at least 6 months after the proposal deadline on the cover of this solicitation. Also, you should not expect to receive notification of a decision for at least 6 months after that date. Lists of awards are updated regularly on NIJ's Web site at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/funding.htm>.

Additional Requirements

- Civil Rights Compliance
- Confidentiality and Human Subjects Protections regulations
- Anti-Lobbying Act
- Financial and Government Audit Requirements
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance
- DOJ Information Technology Standards
- Single Point of Contact Review
- Non-supplanting of State or Local Funds
- Criminal Penalty for False Statements
- Compliance with Office of the Comptroller Financial Guide
- Suspension or Termination of Funding
- Nonprofit Organizations
- Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA)
- Rights in Intellectual Property

We strongly encourage you to review the information pertaining to these additional requirements prior to submitting your application. Additional information for each can be found at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/otherrequirements.htm>.

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

Final substantive report: The final report should be a comprehensive overview of the project and should include a detailed description of the project design, data, and methods; a full presentation of scientific findings; 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 end date of the grant. The draft final report will be peer reviewed upon submission. The reviews will be forwarded to the principal investigator with suggestions for revisions. The author must then submit the revised final report, abstract, and executive summary by the end date of the grant. The abstract, executive summary, and final report must be submitted in both paper and electronic formats.

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

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

Appendix A

Current NIJ-Sponsored Social Science Research in Forensics October 2006

DNA Expansion Demonstration Program

With advances in technology, DNA evidence has become an increasingly powerful tool for solving crimes. Law enforcement officials have used DNA to solve violent crimes and have more recently focused on using DNA to solve cold cases. Now there is evidence that suggests DNA may be useful in solving high-volume property crimes that may also prevent future property crimes and more serious offenses. The goal of this demonstration program is to scientifically assess the contributions that DNA makes to solving high-volume serious crime and to identify cost-effective practices for collecting, analyzing, and utilizing DNA evidence. Five sites (Orange County, CA; Los Angeles, CA; Phoenix, AR; Denver, CO; Topeka, KS) were given funds to expand DNA evidence collection beyond homicides and sexual assaults to property crimes.

Evaluation of DNA Expansion Demonstration Program

The goal of this evaluation is to develop empirical estimates of the cost effectiveness of using forensic evidence in the investigation of property crimes, using a prospective random control design. Cost data are being collected on program inputs and are being compared by outcome in a cost-effectiveness analysis. These results will be used to evaluate the hypothesis that DNA evidence collection and processing is more efficient than business-as-usual investigations in burglary.

DNA Demonstration Related Projects

In conjunction with the DNA Demonstration Program, NIJ is funding two smaller studies. These projects include an examination of the impact of speeding up the turnaround time for DNA analysis in property crimes and a study of good practices in homicide crime scene investigation. The following is a brief description of each:

- A research agency has teamed up with a large metropolitan police department crime laboratory and an external crime laboratory to examine the usefulness of obtaining DNA analyses of burglary crime scene evidence in 1 month versus the normal processing time of 2 to 4 months or longer. The study is also examining detectives' practices involved in finding burglary crime suspects or persons of interest when they have been given a "hit" from the local DNA database.
- The second study involves field research to identify good practices in homicide crime scene investigation management. Key objectives include: identification of significant resources in law enforcement that can be helpful in developing good practices in homicide crime scene evidence management; discovery and documentation of models and good techniques of effective crime scene evidence management at homicide scenes; and a review of

crime scene evidence practices in sexual assault cases to see if any of the practices are innovative or helpful for law enforcement.

Evaluation of Impacts of Federal Casework Programs

The President's DNA Initiative is a 5-year effort to improve the use of DNA in the criminal justice system. This Initiative has provided over \$1 billion in funding, training, and assistance to Federal, State, and local agencies to ensure that DNA reaches its full potential to solve crimes, protect the innocent, and identify missing persons. Much of the funding has gone towards improving crime laboratory capacity and eliminating backlogs in DNA analysis. The goal of this project is to assess the impacts and cost-effectiveness of these Federal programs. The multi-level evaluation design includes advanced analysis of secondary data; surveys of law enforcement, crime laboratory technicians, and prosecutors; and intensive case studies to explore in greater depth promising and effective investigative practices.

Social Science Research on the Role and Impact of Forensic Evidence in Criminal Justice Processes

Forensic evidence is an integral part of many criminal investigations; however, there has been limited research on the impact that forensic evidence has had on the criminal justice system. The primary goal of this research is to evaluate the attrition of forensic evidence through the collection, analysis, and subsequent investigative and adjudicative processes. More specifically, the study will (1) estimate the percentage of crime scenes from which each type of forensic evidence is collected; (2) describe and catalog the kinds of evidence collected at crime scenes; (3) track the attrition of forensic evidence from crime scenes through laboratory analyses, and then through subsequent criminal justice processes; and (4) identify which forms of evidence contribute most frequently (relative to their availability) to successful case outcomes. Findings from this research could influence a variety of policies regarding such issues as the allocation of resources and the training of laboratory and/or crime scene personnel.

Controlled Substances Case Processing Descriptive Study

According to past surveys and crime laboratory reports, the bulk of requests for forensic services over the last 40 years have involved the identification of controlled substances. Despite the integral role that controlled substance analyses may have in criminal investigations, there has been limited research on the impact of such evidence on the criminal justice system. The goal of this project is to get an overview of the movement of cases involving controlled substances from the time of arrest to the disposition of the case. The project involves a descriptive analysis that will track the use and attrition of controlled substance testing in the criminal justice system from crime scenes through laboratory analysis, and then through subsequent criminal justice processes.

Fingerprint Survey

Fingerprints often play a major role in the investigation and identification of criminal offenders. The goal of this project is to get an overview of the policies and procedures used by law enforcement agencies in the processing of fingerprints. The study will provide a sense of how much variation there is in these policies and procedures and determine what challenges exist in the fingerprint process in an effort to identify

potential improvements that could be made to the process. The project involves a survey that will examine the entire process that is handled by the police department, beginning with collection of the latent print at the crime scene through the procedures for following up on an identified match.

Cold Case

NIJ is currently developing a multi-year effort to improve the effectiveness of cold case investigations by local law enforcement agencies. This effort will examine current practices of police agencies conducting cold case investigations; develop measurement criteria for identifying superior practices and approaches; identify superior practices by applying these criteria; construct alternative model programs and alternative program elements that agencies of various sizes could implement; and provide estimates of the resource requirements implied by these model programs. The goal is to produce outputs that can serve as the basis for an FY 2008 demonstration initiative.

Governors' Criminal Justice Policy Advisors Project

The goal of this project is to assist governors and their advisors in meeting criminal justice priorities by applying lessons learned from current research and by strategizing with States on ways to apply research to inform public policy. Major activities of the project related to DNA include: creating a learning network for four States on improving the use of and funding for forensic DNA; conducting in-State policy workshops in the four learning network States; convening a policy forum for the four learning network States; and providing ongoing customized expert consultation and assistance to all State governors' offices. The learning network aims to help States develop strategic plans that address the current and emerging challenges to sustaining DNA initiatives by promoting executive leadership, sharing best practices across States, and building on current research.

Elder Abuse Forensics

Elder abuse and neglect is an understudied problem that has largely gone unaddressed by the law enforcement and forensic communities. Of particular concern to criminal justice practitioners is the paucity of research relating to forensic aspects of elder abuse and neglect. Experts acknowledge that the field is 30 to 40 years behind child abuse forensics and two decades behind sexual and domestic violence forensics. For these reasons, NIJ has specifically solicited projects that identify and explore forensic markers of physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect among the elderly as part of the Elder Abuse solicitation. Research examining forensics issues related to elder abuse/neglect should be submitted under the Elder Abuse solicitation.