

Call for Papers on Reentry

OVERVIEW

In an effort to provide rigorous evidence of “what works” in reentry, the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) is planning to conduct one or more experiments of promising reentry interventions, strategies or programs. These experiments, implemented at multiple sites, will randomly assign re-entering offenders to receive the experimental treatment or to receive “business-as-usual” reentry services (or some other clearly defined control treatment). These experiments will be funded by NIJ in partnership with the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) as part of NIJ’s new Demonstration Field Experiment (DFE) program. (For more information on NIJ’s DFE program read <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/funding/2010/demonstration-field-experiment.pdf>).

For these experiments, NIJ seeks to test the most important, compelling and promising strategies, interventions and programs for reducing recidivism and reoffending among reentering offenders. With this announcement, NIJ is issuing a call to researchers and others to submit reentry experiment “best design” papers to help in identifying and fully describing these important, compelling and promising strategies, interventions and programs for experiments in reentry.

One paper will be selected through competitive peer review as the best overall design and will be used as the design “blueprint” for NIJ’s Reentry Demonstration Field Experiment (DFE), a major reentry randomized control trial (RCT) to begin later this year. The author of the winning design will serve as Senior Research Consultant to the Reentry DFE and will be awarded a \$50,000 consulting fee.

Consultant fees of \$20,000 may be awarded to as many as three other top-rated applicants whose designs for a reentry experiment showed great promise but were not selected for use in the DFE.

DETAILS

NIJ is issuing a Request for Designs (RFD) for experiments in reentry. Papers submitted under this RFD will be reviewed against the criteria described below, and stipends for research consulting to NIJ will be awarded to the authors of the best papers.

This is not a solicitation for proposals to conduct research. Instead, this is a call for papers that propose and describe in detail a compelling research design for a reentry experiment to be sponsored, engineered and implemented by NIJ. Papers submitted in response to this RFD should provide all the necessary detail needed – a “blueprint,” in essence – for an experiment in reentry. Papers submitted should:

- Articulate the current state of knowledge about the process of reentry in the U.S. and identify best practices.
- Provide a comprehensive and detailed description of a promising model of reentry that builds upon existing research.

- Describe in rich detail the specific experiment in reentry programming or reentry intervention that should be tested in a rigorous experiment (to be undertaken by NIJ in partnership with BJA and funded through another mechanism).
- Describe the technical requirements of the proposed experiment (sample size requirements, safeguards against threats to validity, expected effect size, outcome measures, follow-up period and so forth).
- Provide information on the likely cost of implementing the proposed intervention or program, measured against some standard of “reentry business-as-usual.”

One paper will be selected through competitive peer review as the best overall design and will be used as the design “blueprint” for NIJ’s Reentry DFE, a major reentry RCT to begin later this year. The author of the winning design will serve as Senior Research Consultant to the Reentry DFE and will be awarded a \$50,000 consulting fee. As Senior Research Consultant to the project during the first 18 months of the DFE, the design author will meet with NIJ and project staff, visit DFE sites, and help in guiding and shaping the experiment that will test the selected reentry intervention.

Consultant fees of \$20,000 may be awarded to as many as three other top-rated applicants whose designs for a reentry experiment showed great promise but were not selected for use in the DFE.

Papers submitted to NIJ and selected as the best proposals become the property of NIJ. Each author selected to receive a stipend must agree to contract terms that give NIJ the right to implement the proposed design as part of a reentry experiment.

(NIJ has posted the *Evaluation of the Multi-site Demonstration Field Experiment: What Works in Reentry Research* solicitation. That solicitation seeks applications to evaluate the program(s) to be implemented as part of the multisite DFE. Potential applicants may submit to either or both this RFD and the evaluation solicitation.)

HOW TO APPLY

The submission deadline is close of business on **Friday, July 30, 2010**.

Essays and other required documents described below should be sent **in pdf format** to Stephanie McDaniel, Project Director for NIJ’s research assistance contract, at stephaniem@esi-dc.com.

Essays are sought from researchers and others interested in advancing the state of reentry evaluation and in the development and testing of best practices. Essays should focus on a single compelling, promising and testable model of reentry programming designed to reduce reoffending and recidivism, suitable to rigorous testing through a randomized controlled trial RCT. More specifically, essays should provide a comprehensive description of a reentry plan that can be tested in a multisite DFE with

random assignment of offenders to treatment and control groups. The proposed reentry intervention, strategy or model should be rooted in current research and should be designed to advance current practice in the field.

The essay should detail the following components: the theoretical and substantive nature of the reentry model; features of the research design and randomization process; performance measures; project timeline; and estimated costs of implementation.

Applicants responding to this call must submit the following information to qualify for consideration:

- An essay detailing an innovative model of reentry to be tested in an experimental setting must not exceed 15 double-spaced pages in 12-point font with 1-inch margins. Abstract, table of contents, charts, figures, tables and appendices do not count toward the 15-page limit for the narrative section.
- Two copies of a current resume/vita for the author(s).
- A cover sheet that lists the proposed title, author's name and affiliation, and the following statement:
 - In submitting this design for a reentry experiment to NIJ, I understand and agree that, should my proposed design be selected among the best proposed designs, NIJ has the right to use this design as part of a reentry Demonstration Field Experiment.

Please note: All material should be submitted as a pdf file.

All submissions will be subject to external peer-review.

Please contact Marie Garcia (202-514-7128, Marie.Garcia@usdoj.gov) for additional information or questions.