

# Practitioner Visiting Fellowships: Call for Concept Papers

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## Introduction

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) Visiting Fellowship Program supports research and development on high-priority topics that enhance the capabilities of criminal justice systems to combat crime, violence, and substance abuse. Emphasizing the nexus of research and practice, NIJ's Visiting Fellowship Program solicits applications from criminal justice professionals on issues relevant to NIJ and public policy. Through the program, Fellows may investigate new approaches for resolving operational problems and become involved in NIJ's national criminal justice research program.

## Background

NIJ seeks research-oriented practitioners at the middle and upper levels of the justice profession. These applicants, with experience in all aspects of criminal justice, have demonstrated their leadership ability and a particular field-based expertise that they wish to enhance through the Fellowship program.

Visiting Fellows study topics of mutual interest to the Fellow and the Institute while in residence at NIJ for 6 to 18 months. Previous studies have focused on policy issues that may require technical design input from NIJ professional staff. There also is an opportunity to address the application of science and technology within criminal justice. Fellows are expected to prepare reports, suitable for publication by NIJ, summarizing results and policy implications of their research. Specific products will be negotiated with Fellows during the pre-award period.

In evaluating concept papers submitted for consideration (see [How to Apply](#) section below), NIJ will give preference to proposals in the following high-priority areas:

### Responding to terrorism:

- Domestic preparedness by law enforcement officials
- Impact of terrorism convictions on corrections (classification, housing, and treatment)
- Effects of greater scrutiny of immigration status on corrections and the courts
- Public safety technology requirements

Responding to the needs of the criminal justice system:

- Bridging the gap: translating research results into effective practice
- Increasing use of DNA analysis in less-violent and non-violent crime and its evolution into an ordinary investigative technique

Development and application of criminal justice technologies in the field:

- Biometric technologies
- Technology tools for training
- Less-than-lethal technologies
- Communication interoperability technologies and policies

Fellows also may be asked to:

- Participate in developing plans for nationally significant criminal justice research programs.
- Interact with Institute staff and other Fellows.
- Provide technical assistance in specific program areas.
- Present several seminars in their areas of expertise.
- Help develop informational materials for new or current projects.

## **Selection Criteria**

The selection process is highly competitive. Candidates are chosen on the basis of their background and experience as well as on the quality and viability of the proposed project. Successful candidates will demonstrate that the gap in knowledge or practice they seek to fill is critical to understanding crime and justice and is policy relevant. In most instances, proposals to the Visiting Fellowship Program are subjected to external peer review. Final decisions are made by the NIJ Director after consultation with Institute staff. Reviews of grant applications are based upon the following criteria:

- Impact of the Project
  - Importance of the problem;
  - Potential for significant advances in the problem area;
  - 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.
- Quality and Technical Merit
  - Awareness of existing research;
  - Soundness of methodology, analytic, or technical approach;
  - Innovation and creativity;

- Feasibility of proposed project and awareness of pitfalls.
  
- Capabilities, Demonstrated Productivity, and Experience of Applicants
  - Qualifications and experience of personnel to proposed project;
  - Demonstrated ability to manage proposed effort;
  - Adequacy of proposed budget including time and personnel;
  - Past performance on NIJ grants and contracts, if applicable.
  
- Budget Considerations
  - Total cost relative to perceived benefit;
  - Budget appropriate to level of effort;
  - Use of existing resources to conserve costs.

## **Performance Measurement**

To insure compliance with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), Public Law 103-62, this call for concept papers notifies applicants that they will be required to collect and report data that measures the results of the grant. To ensure accountability of this data, for which the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) is responsible, the following performance measures are provided: by the end of the grant period, the grantee will produce a high-quality written product on the subject approved by NIJ that incorporates peer review comments and is suitable for publication by NIJ; and the final product will contain information of relevance to policymakers and/or practitioners in the subject area. Assistance in providing this information will facilitate future program planning and will allow OJP to provide the Congress and others with measurable program results of its grants.

## **How To Apply**

Individuals interested in submitting a concept paper in response to this solicitation must complete the required application forms and related documents. **The Institute will review each concept paper for suitability with current NIJ needs and priorities and selectively invite the development of a full proposal reflecting a scope and work plan of mutual interest.** The concept paper package consists of the following: a letter directed to NIJ Director, Sarah V. Hart, expressing the applicant's interest in practitioner fellowship opportunities; a career vitae; proposed budget; and a brief concept paper (4-5 double-spaced pages) that describes research objectives, how the work would contribute to national knowledge and practice, and how their residence at NIJ would contribute to the work of the Institute.

**Eligibility Requirements:** NIJ awards grants and cooperative agreements to educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, public agencies, individuals, and profit-making

organizations that are willing to waive their fees. For this program, no indirect costs are allowable.

**Award Amounts:** Funding allocations for this program are based on the quality of the proposals received and the extent to which they are related to ongoing research, evaluation, or science and technology priorities of NIJ. Fellows receive full financial and logistical support from NIJ as well as access to the abundant criminal justice resources of NIJ and the Nation's capital. Awards cover salary, fringe benefits, reasonable costs of relocation, travel essential to the project, and office expenses not provided by NIJ (e.g., computers and research assistants). Applicants should develop a reasonable budget that adequately covers the costs of the proposed project.

NIJ recognizes that in extraordinary cases a move to the Washington, D.C., area could impose a financial hardship. Hence, the salary may be adjusted to compensate for differences in costs of living between the applicant's place of residence and Washington, D.C. This differential cannot exceed 20 percent of the applicant's current salary. An allocation for relocation expenses may be approved to supplement the cost of temporary housing in the Washington, D.C., area or commuter travel from the Fellow's permanent residence to Washington, D.C.

**Award Period:** Visiting Fellowships last from 6 to 18 months. The period in residency and starting date at NIJ are negotiable.

**Due Date:** Concept paper packages must be received by 4:30 p.m. on May 31, 2002. There are no extensions to this deadline. Applicants submitting successful concept papers will be invited to submit a full proposal and can anticipate a decision timeframe of up to three months from concept paper to grant award. Further guidelines and instructions for grantees on format and paperwork requirements for the submission of complete proposals will be provided to those invited to submit a full proposal.

The concept paper package should be sent to:

Practitioner Visiting Fellowship Program  
National Institute of Justice  
810 7th Street NW, Room 7118  
Washington, DC 20531 (use zip code 20001 for commercial carriers and courier services)

Please note that NIJ continues to experience delays in delivery of U.S. mail. If you are sending time-sensitive materials to NIJ, such as in response to this solicitation, we recommend that you use an alternative to the U.S. Postal Service. For delivery by commercial carriers and courier services, our zip code is 20001. Concept paper application packages for the Practitioner Visiting Fellowship program may be faxed or submitted electronically. See staff contact information below.

**Staff Contact.** Applicants are encouraged to contact the Institute to discuss topic viability before submitting concept papers. To obtain further information about the

Practitioner Visiting Fellowship Program, prospective applicants may contact Cheryl Crawford Watson at 202-514-6210 by phone; by fax at 202-307-6256 or electronically via e-mail to [cheryl@ojp.usdoj.gov](mailto:cheryl@ojp.usdoj.gov)