



National Institute of Justice

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

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Research on Community Prosecution

APPLICATION DEADLINE:
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Research on Community Prosecution

I. Introduction

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) in collaboration with the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) seeks proposals for two or three research projects for a total of up to \$500,000 in the area of community prosecution in the United States. The first research topic will consist of developing typologies of community prosecution, while the second research area consists of the identification and development of measures for assessing community prosecution.

II. Background

With the advent of community policing, many police departments changed the way they do business. This interest in involving the community in some regard has now been extended to other parts of the criminal justice system (e.g. community prosecution and community courts).

Like community policing, community prosecution has been put forward as a strategy that extends police and community partnerships to the office of the local prosecutor. In community policing, partnerships between both the public and private community and the police were created to improve public safety and the quality of life. Similarly, community prosecution is seen to integrate the prosecutors' office into processes to address community problems. This in turn is expected to further the goals of improved prosecution and improved quality of life at the local level.

The current concept of community prosecution was developed about a decade ago, most notably by the prosecutors' offices of Kings County, New York and Multnomah County, Oregon. These prosecutors saw the need to re-examine the role of the prosecutors' office vis-a-vis the community.

In Kings County, the problems affecting the community were serious offenses such as drug and violent crimes. After determining that these were the most important problem areas, the Kings County prosecutors' office targeted specific criminal activity throughout its jurisdiction, and assigned individual Assistant D.A.'s to track particular cases more closely

from the first hearing through the final stage of the judicial process.

In Multnomah County, the community was faced with problems associated with quality of life issues. In this jurisdiction, the prosecutor determined that a geographically-based approach was more advantageous to improving the quality of the community rather than focusing on specific criminal activities.

Regardless of the strategy applied by the prosecutor to address the assignment of cases (geographically-based or crime-based), one of the first steps was to change the long standing policy of measuring success by the volume of cases won to a problem-solving approach focused on the needs of the community followed by identifying a target area or issue.

Once the target problem was specified, chief prosecutors assigned specific assistant district attorneys to follow the criminal activities in these problem areas closely. An example of one type of change in the strategy of prosecution was the adoption of a "vertical prosecution method." This approach involved the assistant prosecuting attorney following a particular case or defendant through the entire judicial process, which was seen as providing greater accountability.

The Federal interest in community prosecution began in 1993 when BJA contracted with the American Prosecutors Research Institute (APRI) to convene a focus group to begin to understand what was being implemented under the rubric of community prosecution. A second focus group was convened in 1995. Over the course of the two meetings, nine primary components of community prosecution were identified. These components were outlined in a publication entitled "Community Prosecution Implementation Manual." The nine elements were as follows:

- Pro-active approach;
- A clearly defined target area;
- Problem solving, public safety and quality of life issues;

- Direct interaction between the prosecutor and the community and the incorporation of the community's input into the courtroom;
- Partnerships among the prosecutor, law enforcement, public and private agencies and the community;
- Long-term strategies;
- Commitment of policy makers;
- Various enforcement methods; and
- Continuous evaluation.

In an effort to provide federal support to local jurisdictions interested in community prosecution, BJA put out a competitive solicitation in 1999. A number of grants have been awarded from that solicitation. With an emphasis placed on "planning grants" for potential community prosecution sites, BJA awarded approximately 14 grants. Additionally, BJA also awarded about 9 implementation grants; 9 enhancement grants; and about 7 grants to sites that fit special categories such as providing technical assistance to other community prosecution sites.

In order to continue support for the development of community prosecution programs in prosecutors' offices in the United States, the Bureau of Justice Assistance has contracted with APRI to provide technical assistance to those jurisdictions receiving BJA funds. The first workshop was held in February 2000 and several more will be held in the future. The workshops train prosecutors in planning community prosecution programs; provide technical assistance to prosecutors in implementing the programs; and assist prosecutors in forging partnerships with law enforcement, the community, and public and private organizations.

Although the number of sites with community prosecution programs has been growing, there have been few research studies that have analyzed these programs. NIJ has funded several studies of individual community prosecution sites and a cross-site analysis. These studies primarily present individual case studies of the evolution of community prosecution from conceptualization to practice. Further, they examine the impacts that changing prosecution from a case winning strategy to a problem solving policy have on the organization of the prosecutors' office.

Overall, these efforts provide both an important understanding of the activities at individual sites, and begin to develop a classification schema for community prosecution. However, what is actually being implemented across a variety of sites is still largely unknown.

Furthermore, there has been no assessment of how various dimensions within this approach (or approaches) might be measured. Although one approach to community prosecution has been to encourage a problem solving strategy, there has been a lack of measures developed to determine prosecutorial success within such a framework.

III. Areas of Research Required

The first area of research requested in this solicitation addresses developing typologies of community prosecution. This may include the nine elements listed above as well as any other important components identified by the researcher. The second area of research is the identification or development of measures of community prosecution. Each is detailed below.

A. Identification of organizational patterns or strategies for community prosecution that emerge from practice

Although some initial work has been done on developing elements of community prosecution, the extent to which these are representative of current practice is unknown. NIJ and BJA are interested in research that examines current practice within multiple jurisdictions in order to distinguish differing organizational patterns or strategies that are being developed under the term 'community prosecution.' This examination should lead to suggestions regarding the development of community prosecution typologies. Potential research questions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- What attracts a prosecutor to a community prosecution strategy? What are the expected benefits of adopting a model of community prosecution?
- What encourages prosecutors' offices to change

their approach to a problem solving strategy?
Are there local issues that prompted the move to community prosecution, and if so, what are they?

- What are the distinguishing organizational features of community prosecution? How do these overlap with the nine elements developed by APRI? Which elements have dropped out, and why?
- Within each jurisdiction, have prosecutors established a single community prosecution program within their office, or have multiple neighborhood community prosecution sites been created within a prosecutors' jurisdiction? Are there different strategies being employed in the different neighborhood community prosecution sites?
- What criteria do prosecutors use to pick sites, both the initial site and subsequent sites? Are all programs eventually jurisdiction wide?
- How are models of community prosecution different from community policing, or are they essentially similar to community policing models?
- Have prosecutors' offices partnered with others? If so, with whom? Do offices include community members in their conduct of community prosecution? If so, who is included and what role is played?
- Does community prosecution change the relationship between police and the prosecutor? If so, how?
- Is there a relationship between the District Attorney and the City Attorney? If so, what effect does community prosecution have on relationships between these agencies?
- What strategies are prosecutors' offices employing to reach targeted communities? Do prosecutors believe these strategies are working well? What factors are considered by prosecutors' offices in determining the needs of the community?

- How do prosecutors make themselves available to community leaders, groups, and residents? Has community prosecution had an effect on community issues such as public trust and confidence in the criminal justice system?
- Does the community play a role in the development of community prosecution policy? If so, what is that role?

Since different jurisdictions approach community prosecution in different ways, NIJ seeks research on multiple sites across the United States, not just single program case studies.

B. Development of measures for assessing community prosecution strategies

By changing the role of the prosecutor from primarily a focus on prosecution of specific cases to a broader problem solving strategy, community prosecution might have an impact on both the management of the prosecutors' office as well as other parts of the criminal justice system. However, strategies for measuring their impact are still undeveloped. This research area asks the applicant to consider measurement issues in community prosecution. In developing the research to be conducted in this area, potential research questions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- How do policy makers and practitioners conceptualize community prosecution practices and outcomes?
- What do local participants view as the consequences of community prosecution?
- What systemic impacts do the criminal justice system, the community, and public and private organizations expect to result from community prosecution? How might those be translated into performance measures? Are these measures different from those measures traditionally used, and if so, how?
- Under community prosecution, how are prosecutors measuring the operations or

performance of their individual prosecutors? Of their offices? Has this changed from previous approaches? If so, how?

- Has the implementation of community prosecution strategies improved the adjudication of cases? If so, how is that measured?
- Do those in community prosecution jurisdictions think that the criminal justice system is improving? What measures might be used to assess the improvement?
- How might any potential impacts of changing policies both within prosecutors' offices and the criminal justice system at large be measured?
- Are there other changes either in the criminal justice system or in the community that are seen to result from community prosecution? If so, how are they measured?
- Are the interests and concerns of the community being solicited through community prosecution? In what ways are these measured?

Research should not be limited to a single site; thus the research designs should include a sampling frame and strategy. Further, multiple methods, both quantitative and qualitative, are encouraged.

IV. How to Apply

Those interested in submitting proposals in response to this solicitation must complete the required application forms and submit related required documents. (See below for how to obtain application forms and guides for completing proposals.) Applicants must include the following information/forms to qualify for consideration:

- Standard Form (SF) 424—application for Federal assistance
- Assurances
- Certifications Regarding Lobbying, Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements (one form)

- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities
- Budget Detail Worksheet
- Budget Narrative
- Negotiated indirect rate agreement (if appropriate)
- Names and affiliations of all key persons from applicant and subcontractor(s), advisors, consultants, and advisory board members. Include name of principal investigator, title, organizational affiliation (if any), department (if institution of higher education), address, phone, and fax
- Proposal abstract
- Table of contents
- Program narrative or technical proposal
- Privacy certificate
- References
- Letters of cooperation from organizations collaborating in the research project
- Résumés
- Appendixes, if any (e.g., list of previous NIJ awards, their status, and products [in NIJ or other publications])

Proposal abstract. 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. Use the following two headers:

Project Goals and Objectives:

Proposed Research Design and Methodology:

Page limit. The number of pages in the “Program Narrative” part of the proposal must not exceed 30 (double-spaced pages) for awards greater than \$50,000.

Due date. Completed proposals **must be received** at the National Institute of Justice by the close of business on **July 25, 2000**. Extensions of this deadline will not be permitted.

Award period. In general, NIJ limits its grants and cooperative agreements to a maximum period of 12 or

24 months. However, longer budget periods may be considered.

Number of awards. NIJ anticipates supporting two or three grants under this solicitation.

Award amount. Awards totaling \$500,000 will be made available for this NIJ solicitation. Applicants should make money available for two trips per year to Washington, D.C. for meetings or conferences when making application to this solicitation.

Applying. Two packets need to be obtained: (1) application forms (including a sample budget worksheet) and (2) guidelines for submitting proposals (including requirements for proposal writers and requirements for grant recipients). To receive them, applicants can:

- Access the Justice Information Center on the web: <http://www.ncjrs.org/fedgrant.htm#NIJ> or the NIJ web site: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/funding.htm>

These web sites offer the NIJ application forms and guidelines as electronic files that may be downloaded to a personal computer.

- Request hard copies of the forms and guidelines by mail 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).
- Request copies by fax. Call 800–851–3420 and select option 1, then option 1 again for NIJ. Code is 1023.

Guidance and information. Applicants who wish to receive additional guidance and information may contact the U.S. Department of Justice Response Center at 800–421–6770. Center staff can provide assistance or refer applicants to an appropriate NIJ professional. Applicants may, for example, wish to discuss their prospective research topics with Andrew Goldberg of NIJ by calling (202) 307-1135.

Send completed forms to:

Research in Community Prosecution
National Institute of Justice
810 Seventh Street N.W.
Washington, DC 20531
[overnight courier ZIP code 20001]

For more information on the National Institute of Justice, please contact:

National Criminal Justice Reference Service
Box 6000
Rockville, MD 20849–6000
800–851–3420
e-mail: askncjrs@ncjrs.org

You can view or obtain an electronic version of this document from the NCJRS Justice Information Center web site (<http://www.ncjrs.org>) or the NIJ web site (<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij>).

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