



National Institute of Justice

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

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Solicitation for Evaluations of Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Discretionary Funds Projects

APPLICATION DEADLINE:

July 15, 2003

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs
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Washington, DC 20531

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Solicitation for Evaluations of OJJDP Discretionary Funds Projects

What's New?

Changes From Previous Solicitations

- T Proposals must be filed electronically.** NIJ has converted its application process to an electronic Grants Management System (GMS). Only proposals filed through GMS will be accepted.
- T Selection criteria include a component on utility.** Applicants should explain how their data collection and analysis will provide findings relevant to policy and practice.
- T Reporting requirements for evaluations are different from those for other research projects.** All evaluations now require intermediate reports; final reports must now cover additional topics.

Details of these changes are presented below.

I. Introduction

The National Institute of Justice is the research, development, and evaluation arm of the U. S. Department of Justice. NIJ is a component of the Justice Department's Office of Justice Programs (OJP). In the FY 2002 Justice Appropriations Bill, Congress directed the Department to support 89 projects totaling \$58.5 million in discretionary funds administered by OJP's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) under Title C of OJJDP's appropriations bill and its Safe Schools Initiative. The Bill also set aside resources to evaluate these projects. The Justice Department determined that NIJ would oversee these evaluations.

This solicitation calls for proposals to evaluate selected projects supported by these OJJDP discretionary

funds. The evaluations will provide significant value to a number of audiences. They will provide information to Congress about the effectiveness of grant recipients' performance and the utility of their findings. They will contribute to the understanding of similar programs operated by State and local organizations throughout the country; they will be useful in informing future policy and will contribute to better practice in the field.

II. Scope of Evaluation Effort

NIJ and OJJDP reviewed each project supported with discretionary funds in order to identify a high-priority subset for possible outcome evaluations. They made the selection using the criteria of magnitude of award amount, award history, evaluability, and potential contribution to knowledge. Following this initial review, the candidate projects in the subset were subjected to more thorough evaluability assessments intended to examine each project's scope, activities, and potential for rigorous evaluation. Assessments of projects for which NIJ is soliciting evaluations are available on the NIJ Web site (<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/funding.htm>).

NIJ intends to award grants under this solicitation for each of the projects selected for evaluation. Applicants should presume that the primary audience for the evaluation consists of Federal program funders and State and local program developers. Evaluation designs should address three issues relevant to these audiences: effectiveness (attribution of project outcomes to project activities), transferability (feasibility for adoption by other organizations), and return on investment (whether the projects are cost-effective or, wherever feasible, cost-beneficial).

Applicants should review each evaluability assessment carefully and use the information to develop an evaluation design. Each project has named a site liaison whom applicants should contact to obtain additional information and to explore possible ways that project staff could be asked to support the evaluation.

NIJ will monitor these grants intensively in order to provide substantial input to aid in the production of sound outcome findings and minimize expenditure of evaluation funds that will not provide useable products. NIJ will require grant recipients to routinely submit reports on project implementation in the early phases of the evaluation in order to identify and correct project irregularities that could compromise the success of the evaluation. In addition, OJJDP will collect performance measures on a quarterly basis from *all* discretionary funds projects. Evaluation data collections must be coordinated with OJJDP's effort. NIJ will negotiate reporting frequencies and statistics with the applicant before the grant is awarded. *NIJ reserves the right to terminate an award at any time if it believes there is little chance of completing a sound outcome evaluation.*

Applicants may propose to evaluate as many of the projects as they believe that they can manage effectively. Each evaluation must be submitted in a separate proposal. NIJ will assess each proposal on its individual merits. Recognizing that organizations may wish to propose the same personnel on more than one project, NIJ will negotiate key personnel issues for multiple awards to the same organization after technical peer reviews have been completed.

Applicants should propose timetables and durations consistent with the objective of performing a rigorous and successful outcome evaluation. NIJ will hold a two-day "cluster meeting" for all evaluation grant recipients in Washington, DC, about three months after awards are made. Applicants should budget time and funds for this meeting in their applications. Applicants should also budget the production of a detailed evaluation design and workplan, due within 60 days of award.

In addition to submitting final reports, applicants must submit, annually, substantive reports of interim progress that describe evaluation findings to date and provide feedback to project managers.

III. Selection Criteria

NIJ is firmly committed to a competitive process in making these awards. External peer review panelists consider both technical and programmatic merits of a proposed topic. Successful applicants must demonstrate to an independent peer review panel that: 1) the proposed evaluation design is rigorous and appropriate to the project scope; 2) principal investigators are highly qualified to execute the design within the proposed budget and timelines; and 3) the evaluation design and the dissemination plan ensure the utility of findings for both research and practice. Institute staff make recommendations to the NIJ Director based on the independent peer reviews. Final decisions are made by the NIJ Director after consultation with Institute staff.

Reviews of grant applications are based on the following criteria:

Quality and Technical Merit

- P Awareness of existing research and evaluation findings in the problem area;
- P Soundness of methodology and overall approach;
- P Innovation and creativity, where appropriate;
- P Feasibility of proposed project and awareness of pitfalls.

Capabilities, Demonstrated Productivity, and Experience of Applicants

- P Qualifications and experience of personnel with respect to outcome evaluations and with respect to the substantive area addressed;
- P Demonstrated ability to manage efforts of this scale and complexity; and
- P Soundness of proposed budget and management plan, including time and personnel.

Project Utility

- P Relevance of evaluation design and analyses to information needs of policy and practice audiences;
- P Likely contributions to substantive knowledge base; and
- P Plan for communicating results.

The application review process (including peer review, decision-making, and other considerations) may take up to six months to complete. Notices of award and non-award are made simultaneously about 180 days after the closing date of a solicitation. Notifications will be sent to the address as indicated on the Application for Assistance. Information about award status will not be available until such notifications are sent.

IV. How to Apply

You must submit your application(s) through the Office of Justice Program's automated **Grants Management System (GMS)**. GMS is an online system that you can access through the Internet. It is intended to expedite and streamline the receipt, review, and processing of applications. We will accept your final application *only* through our online GMS applications system. Call the GMS Hotline toll-free to receive technical assistance about the online application process: 1-888-549-9901. You may access the GMS Hotline Monday through Friday between 7 a.m. and 9 p.m. eastern time. To use the GMS system, complete the following steps:

Step 1

At the Internet, go to <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/fundopps.htm>. Here, you may link directly to OJP's Grants Management System (GMS). An online **GMS Application Procedures Handbook** is also available on this page. We strongly encourage you to review this handbook before beginning your GMS electronic application, as it includes step-by-step instructions for the application process.

Step 2

Select "**Logon directly to the Grants Management System (GMS)**" to apply for grant funding.

Step 3

If you have never used GMS, click on "**New User? Register Here**" and follow the on-screen instructions to register with GMS. After you register, select "NIJ Evaluations of OJJDP Programs."

If you are not a new user and have a GMS password, click on "**Login.**" If your password has expired, you will receive an "Authentication Error" or "Unauthorized User" message. In this case, click on "Having Login Problems?" for assistance in updating your password.

Please Note: Applicants must ensure that the information about the authorizing official and alternate contact is entered correctly. The authorizing official is the individual authorized to accept grant funds in your organization (e.g., executive director, attorney general, governor). If the individual applying online is not the signing authority, that individual *must* list the authorizing official's name and contact information where appropriate.

Step 4

Complete the online application, including the three required file attachments: Budget Detail Worksheet; Program Narrative; and Other Program Attachments (other forms required by NIJ). See below for details on creating each of these attachments. After submitting the final application, the GMS system will inform you that the application has been received and sent to NIJ. The system will also provide an application identification number for future reference.

Note: It is OJP's practice to accept documents through GMS and consider the entire submission to be

under the GMS applicant's online, electronically signed, submission of the grant application package. Thus, signatures are not required on forms included in Other Program Attachments.

If you have questions about GMS or need technical assistance with applying online, contact the **GMS Hotline at 1-888-549-9901, Monday to Friday, 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. eastern time** (except Federal holidays).

Required Forms and Documents

Individuals interested in submitting proposals in response to this announcement must complete the required application forms and related documents. You will complete some of the forms shown as part of the development of your user profile during the GMS online application process; others must be attached to your application file on GMS. (**GMS will not accept zip files or executable files.**) **Note:** Proposals containing maps, tables, digital photos, and other types of graphics will produce large file sizes that may affect the speed of transfer. Please take this into consideration when submitting your proposal online.

PART A:

- Application for Federal Assistance - Standard Form (SF 424)
- Proposal abstract
- Table of contents
- Budget Detail Worksheet
- Budget Narrative
- Negotiated indirect rate agreement (if appropriate)
- Program narrative
- References/Bibliography
- Names and affiliations of all key persons, including applicants and subcontractor(s), advisors, consultants, and advisory board members. Include name of principal investigator, title, organizational affiliation, department (if institution of higher education), address, phone, fax, and e-mail address.
- List of all previous and current NIJ awards made to principal investigators, including grant

numbers, information on final reports and other deliverables to NIJ (whether submitted or outstanding) and a list of all publications (by NIJ or other publishers) resulting from each grant award.

PART B:

- Privacy certificate
- Protection of Human Subjects Assurance Identification/Certification/Declaration (Form 310)
- Environmental Assessment (if required)
- Geographic Areas Affected Worksheet
- Assurances
- Certifications Regarding Lobbying, Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements (one form)
- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities
- Appendixes:
 - Letters of cooperation from organizations collaborating in the project
 - Résumés
 - Other materials

All forms needed to complete the application, including certifications and assurances, can be found online at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/forms.htm>.

National Environmental Policy Act

Requirement. All grant recipients must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (Public Law 91-190, codified at 42 U.S.C. § 4321 et seq.). Therefore, NIJ may require some recipients to submit additional information to ensure NEPA compliance.

V. Program Narrative Guidance

The Proposal Abstract. The proposal abstract is a very important part of the application. The abstract is used in sorting applications for review by the appropriate independent peer panel. Once a grant has been awarded, the abstract is computerized and serves as a summary available to all interested parties for the duration of the grant. When read separately from the rest of the application, the abstract should

serve as a succinct and accurate description of the proposed work. Applicants should concisely describe evaluation goals and objectives, evaluation design, and methods for achieving the goals and objectives. Length is not to exceed 400 words. Use the following two headers and instructions in developing the abstract.

Evaluation Goals and Objectives:

Statement of Purpose. State the problem under investigation, including goals and objectives of the proposed project, and anticipated relevance of the evaluation results to public policy and/or practice.

Research Subjects. If applicable, describe subjects who will be involved in the proposed project, including the number of participants, age, gender, race/ethnicity, and other pertinent characteristics such as how you will gain access to participants.

Proposed Evaluation Design and Methodology:

Methods. Describe the evaluation design, including data to be used in addressing the key research dimensions of effectiveness, transferability, and cost-benefit; data collection procedures; and instrumentation.

Data Analysis and Products. Describe the techniques proposed for data analysis and all expected products, including interim and final reports, instrumentation, and data to be archived under NIJ's Data Resource Program.

The Program Narrative. The program narrative should provide information and detail to adequately describe the proposed project and should include:

- Purpose, Goals and Objectives
- Review of Relevant Literature
- Design and Methods, Including Limitations
- Data Analysis, Anticipated Results
- Products and Anticipated Audiences
- Implications of the Results for Policy and Practice
- Staff/Research Management Plan
- *Tables, Charts, Figures, and Research Timeline*

Page limit. The number of pages in the "Program Narrative" section of the application must not exceed thirty (30), double-spaced, in 12-point font, with one-inch margins. Tables, charts, and figures describing the research design, calendar, analysis plan, etc., are encouraged and will not be counted against the 30-page limit.

Due date. Completed proposals must be submitted through the online GMS application system by 11:00 p.m. Eastern Time on **July 15, 2003**. Extensions of this deadline are not permitted. NIJ will not accept faxed or mailed proposals. NIJ reserves the right to return incomplete applications, those not responsive to the scope of this solicitation, or those not complying with format requirements.

CFDA Number. The CFDA number for this solicitation is 16.560.

Names and affiliations of the author(s) of the proposal should be clearly identified. Proposals exceeding the page limit will not be reviewed. No additions to the original submission are allowed.

The time period of the evaluation being proposed should be appropriate to the outcome questions under study. However, to ensure results are useful they must be available in order to inform policy in a timely fashion. NIJ requires applicants to report interim evaluation findings. Applicants should also allocate 90 days at the end of the project for reviews and revisions of final reports.

Note that instructions provided in this announcement supersede those outlined in the document, *Guidelines for Submitting Proposals for National Institute of Justice-Sponsored Research*.

VI. Performance Guidelines

To ensure compliance with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), Public Law

103-62, this solicitation notifies successful applicants that they will be required to collect and report information and data that measure the results of the grant. In order to ensure accountability, the performance standards presented below are established for all NIJ grant recipients under this solicitation, including deliverables and other required reports as explained below:

Grant applicants and recipients should use plain English in writing all proposals for funding and all grant products (See <http://www.plainlanguage.gov> for assistance). However, we recognize that descriptions of research methodologies may necessarily involve some technical information. Grant applicants and recipients should put this technical information in context for the non-researcher audience.

Research and Evaluation Performance Standards

Grant recipients are required to submit in draft form the following deliverables ninety (90) days before the grant end date:

Deliverables Required 90 Days Before the Grant End Date

- Abstract (400 words)
- Executive Summary (2,500 words)
- Research Report
- Electronic data and supporting documentation capable of being re-analyzed and used by other researchers

All NIJ draft research reports are peer reviewed upon submission. The reviews are forwarded to the principal investigator with suggestions for revisions. The principal investigator is then required to submit the revised final report, abstract, executive summary, final data set and codebook/data dictionary by the end date of the grant. The abstract, executive summary, and final report are to be submitted in both paper and electronic/diskette versions. The data set and codebook/dictionary are also to be submitted in electronic form.

In addition to the abstract, executive summary, research report and data set, grant recipients are required to submit the following financial status reports and progress reports:

Other Required Reports

- Quarterly financial status reports (Standard Form 269-A)
- Final financial status report (Standard Form 269-A)
- Semi-annual Categorical Assistance Progress Reports (OJP Form 4587)
- Final Categorical Assistance Progress Report (OJP Form 4587)

Financial Status Reports

Financial status reports (SF 269-A) are to be submitted quarterly, no later than 45 days after the end of each calendar quarter. Two copies of the financial status report must be submitted to OJP's Office of the Comptroller every quarter during which the award is active even if there has been no financial activity during the reporting period.

Additionally, a final financial report is due 120 days after the end date of the award. Future awards and fund drawdowns will be withheld if financial status reports are delinquent.

Progress Reports

Recipients of funding are also required to submit semi-annual Categorical Assistance Progress Reports (OJP Form 4587). Two copies must be submitted to the Office of the Comptroller twice a year even if there has been no substantive activity during the reporting period. The progress report should describe activities during the reporting period and status or accomplishment of objectives as set forth in the approved application for funding. For the duration of the award, progress reports must be submitted within 30 days after the end of the reporting periods (January 1 through June 30 and July 1 through December 31).

Additionally, a Final Progress Report providing a summary of achievement of the goals and objectives of the award, significant results, and any products developed under the award, is due 90 days after the end date of the award. Future awards and fund drawdowns may be withheld if progress reports are delinquent.

Forms for submitting financial and progress reports are available at the NIJ Web site. Report forms will also be provided by the Office of Justice Programs at the time of the grant award.

The information submitted on the reports will facilitate future program planning and/or research efforts and will allow OJP to provide the Congress and others with measurable results of its grants.

Research Report

The final research report, due in draft form 90 days before the end of the grant, should provide a comprehensive overview of the study and should include a detailed description of the research design, type of data used, methods, a full presentation of scientific findings, and a thorough discussion of the implications of the research findings for criminal justice practice and policy.

Evaluation Report

For *evaluation* studies, the research report should also 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.)

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 specific procedures for protection of private information about individuals as part of the Privacy Certificate submitted with the application package.

In addition to the regulations in Part 22, DOJ has adopted policies concerning protection of human subjects which 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 before the initiation of any research activities that are not exempt from the provisions of 28 CFR Part 46.

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. Applicants may call Winifred Reed (202-307-2952) or Edwin Zedlewski (202-307-2953) to obtain substantive information only.

Faith-based Organizations May Apply

NIJ does not discriminate against applicants on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, or disability.

Faith-based organizations are eligible to apply. NIJ does not discriminate against any one or any

organization on the basis of religion, religious name, the religious composition of the organization's board, or the religion of people who work for the organization. Religious organizations are treated equally in all grant determinations and grant administration.

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The National Institute of Justice is the research, development, and evaluation agency of the U.S. Department of Justice and is solely dedicated to researching crime control and justice issues. NIJ provides objective, independent, evidence-based knowledge and tools to enhance the administration of justice and public safety.

NIJ is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Office for Victims of Crime.

For more information about the National Institute of Justice, contact:

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