

## **Notices regarding the solicitation “NIJ FY24 Research and Development in Forensic Science for Criminal Justice Purposes”**

March 29, 2024: NIJ has adjusted the total available funding for this solicitation. The total available is reduced by \$1,000,000 from \$13,500,000 to \$12,500,000.

March 6, 2024: The page limit and formatting requirements for the Proposal Narrative have been updated. [See page 24](#).

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The original funding opportunity document begins on the next page.

U.S. Department of Justice  
Office of Justice Programs  
National Institute of Justice



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# NIJ FY24 Research and Development in Forensic Science for Criminal Justice Purposes

**Assistance Listing Number:** 16.560  
**Grants.gov Opportunity Number:** O-NIJ-2024-171962  
**Solicitation Release Date:** February 01, 2024  
**Step 1: Application Grants.gov Deadline:** 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on April 11, 2024  
**Step 2: Application JustGrants Deadline:** 8:59 p.m. Eastern Time on April 18, 2024

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## Contents

Synopsis.....	4
Overview.....	4
Eligibility.....	4
Agency Contact Information.....	5
Application Submission Information.....	5
Registration.....	5
Submission.....	5
Program Description.....	7
Program Description Overview.....	7
Statutory Authority.....	8
Specific Information.....	8
Solicitation Goals and Objectives.....	11
Goals.....	11
Deliverables.....	14
Priority Areas.....	15
Federal Award Information.....	17
Awards, Amounts, and Durations.....	17
Continuation Funding Intent.....	17

Availability of Funds.....	18
Type of Award .....	18
Budget Information .....	18
Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement.....	19
Eligibility Information .....	19
How To Apply .....	19
Application Resources .....	19
How To Apply .....	19
Registration .....	19
Submission.....	20
Applying as an Individual.....	20
Submission Dates and Time .....	21
Experiencing Unforeseen Technical Issues Preventing Submission of an Application (Technical Waivers).....	21
Application and Submission Information .....	22
Content of Application Submission and Available Surveys .....	22
Content of the SF-424 in Grants.gov .....	23
Content of the JustGrants Application Submission .....	23
Application Review Information .....	37
Review Criteria .....	38
Review Process.....	40
Federal Award Administration Information.....	41
Federal Award Notices .....	41
Evidence-Based Programs or Practices .....	41
Information Regarding Potential Evaluation of Programs and Activities .....	41
Administrative, National Policy, and Other Legal Requirements .....	41
Civil Rights Compliance.....	41
Financial Management and System of Internal Controls.....	42
Information Technology Security Clauses.....	42
General Information About Post-Federal Award Reporting Requirements .....	42
Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s).....	42
Other Information .....	43
Freedom of Information and Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. §§ 552 and 552a).....	43
Provide Feedback to OJP .....	43
Performance Measures.....	44

Application Checklist.....	45
Pre-Application.....	45
Application Step 1.....	45
Application Step 2.....	46
Review, Certify, and Submit Application in JustGrants.....	47
Standard Solicitation Resources.....	48

# Synopsis

## Overview

The [U.S. Department of Justice](#) (DOJ), [Office of Justice Programs](#) (OJP), [National Institute of Justice](#) (NIJ) is seeking applications for funding.

OJP is committed to advancing work that promotes civil rights and equity, increases access to justice, supports crime victims and individuals impacted by the justice system, strengthens community safety and protects the public from crime and evolving threats, and builds trust between law enforcement and the community.

With this solicitation, NIJ seeks applications for funding basic or applied research and development in forensic science for criminal justice purposes. [NIJ's Forensic Science Strategic Research Plan](#) and [Forensic Science Research and Development Technology Working Group \(TWG\)](#) identify current research priorities and technology challenges encountered in operational forensic science laboratories. Research-based knowledge and newly developed tools that work towards addressing these priorities and resolving these challenges facilitate the criminal justice community to enforce the law, promote public safety, prevent and reduce crime, and ensure fair and impartial administration of justice.

This program furthers DOJ's mission to uphold the rule of law, to keep our country safe, and to protect civil rights.

## Eligibility

- State governments
- Special district governments
- City or township governments
- Public and State controlled institutions of higher education
- County governments
- Native American tribal organizations (other than Federally recognized tribal governments)
- Native American tribal governments (Federally recognized)
- Nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education
- Nonprofits that do not have a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education
- Private institutions of higher education
- For-profit organizations other than small businesses
- Small businesses
- Individuals
- Other
  - Federal agencies
  - Units of local government

An applicant may submit more than one application if each application proposes a different project in response to the solicitation. Also, an entity may be proposed as a subrecipient (subgrantee) in more than one application.

NIJ will consider applications under which two or more entities (project partners) would carry out the federal award; however, only one entity may be the applicant for the solicitation. Any others must be proposed as subrecipients (subgrantees). See the [Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information on subawards.

NIJ may choose to fund applications submitted under this FY 2024 solicitation in future fiscal years, dependent on, among other considerations, the merit of the applications and the availability of appropriations.

## Agency Contact Information

For assistance with the requirements of this solicitation, contact the OJP Response Center by phone at 800-851-3420 or 301-240-6310 (TTY for hearing-impaired callers only) or email [grants@ncjrs.gov](mailto:grants@ncjrs.gov). The OJP Response Center operates from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Eastern Time (ET) Monday-Friday and from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. ET on the solicitation closing date.

For contact procedures related to unforeseen technical issues beyond the control of the applicant that impact submission by the deadlines, see the “How To Apply” section, [Experiencing Unforeseen Technical Issues](#).

For assistance with submitting the [Application for Federal Assistance standard form \(SF-424\)](#) and a [Disclosure of Lobbying Activities \(SF-LLL\)](#) in Grants.gov, contact the Grants.gov Customer Support Hotline at 800-518-4726, 606-545-5035, [Grants.gov Customer Support](#), or [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov). The Grants.gov Support Hotline is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, except on federal holidays.

For technical assistance with submitting the **full application** in JustGrants, contact the JustGrants Service Desk at 833-872-5175 or [JustGrants.Support@usdoj.gov](mailto:JustGrants.Support@usdoj.gov). The JustGrants Service Desk operates from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. ET Monday-Friday and from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. ET on Saturday, Sunday, and federal holidays.

## Application Submission Information

### Registration

Before submitting an application, an applicant must have a registration in the [System for Award Management \(SAM.gov\)](#).

The SAM.gov registration is not required for a person applying as an “individual” and not on behalf of a company; state, local or tribal government; academic institution; or other type of organization. Individuals should obtain an Employer Identification Number (EIN) and not apply using a social security number: [IRS Apply for an Employer Identification Number \(EIN\) Online](#).

The SAM.gov registration is required for a person applying on behalf of a small business (company). The business should obtain an Employer Identification Number (EIN) and not apply using a social security number: [IRS Apply for an Employer Identification Number \(EIN\) Online](#).

### Submission

Applications must be submitted to DOJ electronically through a two-step process that begins in Grants.gov and is completed in JustGrants. See the solicitation [Submission Dates and Time](#) section for the Grants.gov and JustGrants application deadlines.

**Step 1:** The applicant must register for this opportunity in Grants.gov at <https://grants.gov/register> and submit by the Grants.gov deadline the required [Application for Federal Assistance standard form \(SF-424\)](#) and a [Disclosure of Lobbying Activities \(SF-LLL\)](#). See the solicitation [Submission Dates and Time](#) section for application deadlines.

**Step 2:** The applicant must submit the **full application**, including attachments, in JustGrants at [JustGrants.usdoj.gov](https://justgrants.usdoj.gov) by the JustGrants application deadline. See the solicitation [Submission Dates and Time](#) section for application deadlines.

# Program Description

## Program Description Overview

With this solicitation, NIJ seeks applications for funding basic or applied research and development in forensic science for criminal justice purposes. [NIJ's Forensic Science Strategic Research Plan](#) and [Forensic Science Research and Development TWG](#) identify current research priorities and technology challenges encountered in operational forensic science laboratories. Research-based knowledge and newly developed tools that work towards addressing these priorities and resolving these challenges facilitate the criminal justice community to enforce the law, promote public safety, prevent and reduce crime, and ensure fair and impartial administration of justice.

An NIJ forensic science research and development grant supports a discrete, specified, circumscribed project that will:

1. Increase the body of knowledge to guide and inform forensic science policy and practice; or
2. Lead to the production of useful material(s), device(s), system(s), or method(s) that have the potential for forensic application.

The intent of this program is to direct the findings of basic scientific research; foster research and development in broader scientific fields applicable to forensic science; and support ongoing forensic science research toward the development of highly discriminating, accurate, reliable, cost-effective, and rapid methods for the identification, analysis, and interpretation of forensic evidence for criminal justice purposes. Although the goals and deliverables of proposed projects are not required to result in immediate solutions to the posted challenges and needs, proposals should, at a minimum, address the foundational work that will lead to eventual solutions.

Information on NIJ's forensic science research and development programs (including previously funded projects) can be found at: <https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/forensics>.

Applicants are encouraged to propose multidisciplinary research teams to build on the complementary strengths of different methods and areas of subject matter expertise. NIJ also seeks proposals that include consideration and measurement of issues of diversity, discrimination, and bias across age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation, as applicable.

Applications proposing research involving partnerships with juvenile justice criminal justice or other agencies should include a strong letter of support signed by an appropriate decision-making authority from each proposed partnering agency. A letter of support should include the partnering agency's acknowledgment that de-identified data derived from, provided to, or obtained through an award funded by NIJ will be archived by the grant recipient at the conclusion of the award. Applicants and their potential partners are encouraged to review [NIJ's data archiving guidance](#). Regardless of the primary data repository used, *all NIJ-funded projects* must provide study-level information to the [National Archive of Criminal Justice Data \(NACJD\)](#), which includes a project abstract and link to the publicly accessible data location, ideally with a digital object identifier (DOI) or other persistent link. If selected for an award, grantees will be expected to have a formal agreement in place with partnering agencies by January 1, 2025.



That formal agreement must include a provision to meet the data archiving requirements of the award.

NIJ seeks proposals that include robust, creative, and multi-pronged dissemination strategies that include strategic partnerships with organizations and associations that are best equipped to ensure that research findings lead to changes in policies and practices.

In the case of partnerships that will involve the use of federal award funds by multiple partnering agencies to carry out the proposed project, only one entity/partnering agency may be the applicant (as is the case with any application submitted in response to this solicitation); any others must be proposed as subrecipients. The applicant is expected to conduct the preponderance of the work proposed.

NIJ encourages researchers to seek guidance from, or partner with, crime laboratories. Such associations foster a greater understanding of the issues unique to the field of forensic science and may strengthen the scope of the proposed research plan. To assist researchers in identifying appropriate practitioner partners, NIJ has developed a site for crime laboratories to indicate their interest in participating in research. Interested laboratories are encouraged to visit <https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/forensics/connecting-researchers-forensic-laboratories> to provide their contact information.

Researchers who have developed methods and/or technologies that are ready for evaluation in forensic laboratory practice, including previous and current NIJ research grantees, are strongly encouraged to apply to NIJ's [Research and Evaluation in Publicly Funded Forensic Laboratories](#) program.

## **Statutory Authority**

Any awards under this solicitation would be made under statutory authority provided by a full-year appropriations act for FY 2024. As of the writing of this solicitation, the Department of Justice is operating under a short-term "Continuing Resolution;" no full-year appropriation for the Department has been enacted for FY 2024.

## **Specific Information**

This solicitation seeks applications for funding to support basic or applied research and development forensic science projects. For the purposes of this solicitation, the following definitions apply:

- Forensic — Of, relating to, or used in legal proceedings or argumentation.<sup>1</sup>
- Science — The observation, identification, description, experimental investigations, and theoretical explanation of natural phenomena.<sup>2</sup>
- Basic research — A systematic study directed toward fuller knowledge or understanding of the fundamental aspects of phenomena and of observable facts without specific

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<sup>1</sup> The definition of "forensic" is taken from *Webster's II New Riverside University Dictionary*.

<sup>2</sup> The definition of "science" is taken from *Webster's II New Riverside University Dictionary*.

applications towards processes or products in mind. Basic research may include activities with broad applications in mind.<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of this solicitation, foundational/basic research must include activities with broad application to forensic sciences related to the criminal justice system.

- Applied research — A systematic study to gain knowledge or understanding necessary to determine the means by which a recognized and specific need may be met.<sup>4</sup> For the purposes of this solicitation, the specific need(s) being met must relate to the improvement of forensic science services for criminal justice purposes.
- Development — The systematic application of knowledge or understanding, directed toward the production of useful materials, devices, and systems or methods, including design, development, and improvement of prototypes and new processes to meet specific requirements.<sup>5</sup> For the purposes of this solicitation, the development of forensic technologies and methods should assist in answering questions posed in criminal investigations or increase crime laboratory capacity to meet the demand for forensic science services.

Funding priorities for this program are expected to align with the Department of Justice's mission. Proposed projects should address the current technology challenges encountered by forensic scientists by generating new knowledge or tools that will lead to better methods, move the state-of-the-art forward, or otherwise resolve identified issues so as to assist law enforcement, enhance public safety, prevent and reduce crime, and ensure the fair and impartial administration of justice. Although the goals and deliverables of proposed projects are not required to result in immediate solutions to the posted challenges and needs, proposals should, at a minimum, address the foundational work that will lead to eventual solutions.

Projects should address the challenges and needs of the forensic science community, including but not limited to priorities outlined in the [NIJ Forensic Science Strategic Research Plan](#) and operational needs identified at NIJ's [Forensic Science Research and Development TWG](#) meetings. Additional research needs of the forensic science community can be found at the National Institute of Standards and Technology's (NIST) [Organization of Scientific Area Committees](#) (OSAC).

NIST, through its OSAC and partnership with NIJ, has also been working with practitioners in various forensic science disciplines to produce [process maps](#) that identify key decision points in the forensic evidence examination process.

Proposals are expected to identify the focus areas (e.g., forensic science discipline[s]) intended to benefit from the project. **The focus areas should be listed in the keywords on the title page.** Some examples are listed below. Where available, links have also been provided to sites containing additional information:

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<sup>3</sup> Definition is taken from: OMB Circular A-11, Preparation, Submission, and Execution of the Budget, Section 84—Character Classification (Schedule C).

<sup>4</sup> Definition is taken from: OMB Circular A-11, Preparation, Submission, and Execution of the Budget, Section 84—Character Classification (Schedule C).

<sup>5</sup> Definition is taken from: OMB Circular A-11, Preparation, Submission, and Execution of the Budget, Section 84—Character Classification (Schedule C).

- Bloodstain pattern analysis (<https://www.nist.gov/topics/forensic-science/bloodstain-pattern-analysis-subcommittee>).
- Digital/multimedia evidence (<https://www.swgde.org/>, <https://www.nist.gov/topics/forensic-science/digitalmultimedia-scientific-area-committee>).
- DNA and forensic biology (<https://strbase-b.nist.gov/>, <http://www.swgdam.org>, <https://www.nist.gov/topics/organization-scientific-area-committees-forensic-science/biologydna-scientific-area-committee>).
- Forensic anthropology and forensic odontology (<https://www.nist.gov/topics/forensic-science/anthropology-subcommittee>, <https://www.nist.gov/topics/forensic-science/odontology-subcommittee>).
- Forensic crime scene analysis (<https://www.nist.gov/organization-scientific-area-committees-forensic-science/crime-scene-investigation-reconstruction>).
- Forensic toxicology (<https://www.nist.gov/topics/forensic-science/toxicology-subcommittee>).
- Firearms and toolmark identification (<https://www.nist.gov/topics/forensic-science/firearms-and-toolmarks-subcommittee>).
- Fire debris analysis and arson scene investigations (<https://www.nist.gov/topics/forensic-science/fire-and-explosion-investigation-subcommittee>, <https://www.nist.gov/topics/forensic-science/fire-debris-and-explosives-subcommittee>).
- Latent print (<https://www.nist.gov/topics/organization-scientific-area-committees-forensic-science/friction-ridge-subcommittee>).
- Medicolegal death investigations, including forensic pathology (<https://www.nist.gov/topics/forensic-science/medicolegal-death-investigation-subcommittee>).
- Questioned documents (<https://www.nist.gov/topics/forensic-science/forensic-document-examination-subcommittee>).
- Seized drugs (<http://www.swgdrug.org>, <https://www.nist.gov/topics/forensic-science/seized-drugs-subcommittee>).
- Shoeprint/tire tread examination (<https://www.nist.gov/topics/forensic-science/footwear-and-tire-subcommittee>).
- Trace evidence (<https://www.nist.gov/topics/forensic-science/sac-chemistryinstrumental-analysis>, <https://www.nist.gov/topics/forensic-science/materials-trace-subcommittee>).
- Wildlife forensics (<https://www.nist.gov/topics/organization-scientific-area-committees-forensic-science/wildlife-forensics-subcommittee>).

The following are not within the scope of this solicitation and will not be reviewed:

- Applications that are not responsive to the purposes of this specific solicitation. This includes:
  - Proposals that do not contain a research component.
  - Proposals that do not respond to the specific goals of this solicitation.
  - Proposals that do not clearly address criminal justice concerns in the United States.
- Applications primarily to purchase equipment, materials, or supplies. (A budget may include these items if they are necessary to conduct research, development, demonstration, evaluation, or analysis.)

- Proposals primarily to provide training.
- Proposals that provide direct criminal/forensic laboratory services.
- Proposals focusing on the estimation of postmortem interval (i.e., time since death) whose research design is not novel nor applicable across the geography of the United States. The primary intent of these studies must be to generate new knowledge or contribute to the knowledge in the forensic scientific literature that is applicable to locations other than the one(s) being evaluated.
- Proposals that focus on predicting the behavior of criminal offenders or indicators that result in victimization.
- Proposals that seek to administer surveys on the perceptions of forensic evidence collection policies among evidence examiners.
- Proposals that focus on legal factors involved in how forensic evidence is processed.
- Proposals for social science research that do not focus on the identification, analysis, and scientific interpretation of forensic evidence for criminal justice purposes.
- Proposals focused on criminal psychology.
- Proposals involving the use of canines (i.e., detector dogs) as the sole sensing instrument. Research involving detector dogs must incorporate quantitative instrumental methods of chemical analysis.
- Proposals on deception detection.

## Solicitation Goals and Objectives

### Goals

Proposals should address at least one of the goals specified below. Proposed projects that address more than one goal should be separated into discrete phases that clearly identify the goal to be addressed by each phase (additional information regarding the phasing of proposals can be found in Federal Award Information). Proposed projects should include goals that speak to specific forensic science needs and challenges that, if resolved, will aid the criminal justice community to enforce the law, enhance public safety, prevent and reduce crime, and ensure fair and impartial administration of justice. Although some late-stage applied research and development projects may be able to propose tangible or direct solutions, early-stage research projects are not required to result in immediate solutions; however, these early-stage research projects should clearly explain how the proposed objectives, once achieved, will produce knowledge that contributes to eventual solutions.

- **Foundational/Basic Research Goal:** Improve the understanding of the accuracy, reliability, and measurement validity of forensic science disciplines. Applicants may refer to [\*Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States: A Path Forward\*](#) by the National Research Council of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to

review historical material relevant to this goal. If addressing this goal, projects should meet at least one of the following objectives:

- Conduct basic scientific research in the physical, life, and cognitive sciences that is designed to increase the knowledge underlying forensic science disciplines intended for use in the criminal justice system. For the purposes of this objective, basic research studies proposed must include activities with broad application to forensic sciences related to the criminal justice system. Proposals should describe the anticipated impact of the study on one or more forensic science disciplines.
  - Perform studies that examine the degree of accuracy and reliability of methods used by forensic scientists to achieve a more complete understanding of the scientific basis of forensic evidence and the interpretation of that evidence. Studies may also examine various processes within forensic methods, from the initial acceptance and examination of evidence for its probative value and quality, to the final interpretation of forensic results, including assessment of error rate.
  - Conduct foundational research studies designed to further the understanding of quantifiable measures of uncertainty in the conclusions of forensic analyses, regardless of the sources of uncertainty. Studies should seek to establish limits of reliability and accuracy that forensic methods can achieve with respect to varying conditions of forensic evidence.
  - Develop new approaches to forensic analysis, including quantitation of analyses that are currently qualitative in nature (e.g., in the development of quantitative studies related to friction ridge analysis or other impression and pattern evidence).
- **Applied Research Goal:** Increase knowledge or understanding necessary to guide criminal justice policy and practice related to the forensic sciences. To achieve this goal, projects should meet at least one of the following objectives:
    - Perform applied research to increase knowledge of physical evidence and/or its behavior. Examples include, but are not limited to, the study of fluid transfer and fluid dynamics of certain biological fluids (e.g., blood) to increase understanding of patterns deposited at crime scenes; the examination of chemical properties of evidence for the purpose of identifying source materials; studies of the behavior of chemical compounds of forensic interest in biological systems; research to better understand aged, degraded, limited, damaged, inhibited, or otherwise compromised physical evidence (e.g., studies on the effect of environmental factors on physical evidence; studies to increase the overall understanding of the processes and mechanisms that result in the inability to obtain analytical results from evidence).
    - Perform evaluation studies of technologies that are expected to have application to forensic sciences in criminal justice settings. The purpose of an evaluation must be to test a new, modified, or previously untested technology to determine whether it is effective for forensic science application. Proposals for evaluation studies should systematically use scientific methods to measure efficiency, implementation, and utility of the technology being evaluated. The primary intent

of a proposed evaluation study must be to generate new knowledge or contribute to the knowledge in the forensic scientific literature. Furthermore, knowledge gained from an evaluation study should be applicable to sites other than the one(s) being evaluated. An evaluation study should result in a report suitable for publication and dissemination to guide criminal justice policy and/or practice related to the forensic sciences. The results of an evaluation study should contribute to **generalizable knowledge that can be applied beyond a particular program/geography, and can inform other researchers, practitioners, and/or policymakers.**

- **Development Goal:** Produce novel and useful materials, devices, systems, or methods that have the potential for forensic application for criminal justice purposes. For development projects, proposals should demonstrate potential for increased quality of result and/or decreased time/cost for forensic analyses as compared to current standard practices. In order to achieve this goal, projects should meet at least one of the following objectives:
  - Improve the “front end” of the forensic analysis processes. Examples include, but are not limited to, the development of improved methods for detection and identification of evidence at crime scenes; the development of improved screening methods to help assess the probative value of forensic evidence (i.e., onsite presumptive and/or confirmatory analysis of evidence); the development of improved means to remotely detect forensic evidence at a crime scene in order to overcome scene hazards and prevent evidence contamination; the development of nondestructive or minimally destructive methods for evidentiary sample identification and/or collection; the development of improved tools or methods for evidence preservation and/or storage.
  - Develop instrumental systems to improve analysis throughput and the reliability, reproducibility, selectivity, and/or sensitivity of current methods used in crime laboratories for forensic analysis.
  - Develop tools or methods that can separate the various components of a mixture. The separation method must be successful on typical forensic samples (limited in yield, etc.) and must not reduce the efficiency of downstream forensic methods. Examples of mixtures include, but are not limited to, cells from different sources (e.g., sperm cells from female epithelial cells, epithelial cells from different sources), products of DNA processes (e.g., polymerase chain reaction [PCR] products in mixtures from two or more individuals), and trace materials.
  - Develop improved tools for examining aged, degraded, limited, damaged, inhibited, or otherwise compromised physical evidence. Examples include, but are not limited to, the development of tools to determine the condition of the evidence to assist crime laboratory analysts in selecting the appropriate analytical approach, the development of methods to repair damaged evidence (without compromising sample integrity) to increase the likelihood of obtaining an analytical result, improvements to the methods for detection and/or removal or remediation of substances that inhibit the success of analysis, or other methods that will maximize the success rate of the analysis of compromised evidence.

- Develop novel approaches to forensic science methods for analysis and interpretation. Examples include streamlined, portable, high-throughput, more informative, more sensitive, less susceptible to inhibition, and other novel methods for analysis of forensic evidence for criminal justice purposes.
- Develop novel approaches and/or enhance current approaches to interpret forensic data derived from physical evidence, including an assessment of the significance of association. This may include development of databases<sup>6</sup> (comprehensive, searchable, easily accessible, secure databases for use in determining the statistical strength of analytical results obtained from evidence found at crime scenes), and/or analyses that provide quantitative measures and statistical evaluation of forensic evidence.

## Deliverables

Research award recipients are expected to produce the following deliverables.

Technical Summary. Any recipient of an award under this solicitation will be expected to submit a technical summary by the end of the award project period. Additional information on the technical summary requirement for the solicitation is posted on NIJ's [webpage](#).

Required Data Sets and Associated Files and Documentation. Any recipient of an award under this solicitation will be expected to submit all data sets that result in whole or in part from the work funded by the award, in accordance with their data archiving plan (see Data Archiving Plan under "Application and Submission Information"), along with associated files and any documentation necessary for future efforts by others to reproduce the project's findings. Applicants and their potential partners are encouraged to review [NIJ's data archiving guidance](#). Regardless of the primary data repository used, *all NIJ-funded projects* must provide study-level information to NACJD, which includes a project abstract and link.

In addition to these deliverables, NIJ expects scholarly products to result from each award under this solicitation, taking the form of one or more published, peer-reviewed, scientific journal articles, and/or (if appropriate) conference presentations, book chapter(s) or book(s) in the academic press, technological prototypes, patented inventions, or similar scientific products. Awardees are encouraged to publish their research using open access options. Grant funds may be used for costs associated with open access publication. NIJ expects that there will be an equal effort to make the research findings accessible to practitioner and policymaker audiences.

Some projects may be chosen for technology evaluation or technology transition activities. More information, including examples of previous workshops and evaluations, can be found through the following link: <http://www.forensiccoe.org>.

For information about what the applicant needs to submit regarding Goals, Objectives, and Deliverables, please see the [How to Apply](#) section on the [Application Goals, Objectives, Deliverables, and Timeline](#).

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<sup>6</sup> If database development is proposed, subsequent NIJ awardees are encouraged to share such information with the National Institute of Standards and Technology's forensic catalog of databases at <https://www.nist.gov/oles/forensic-database>

## Priority Areas

### Research and Development Priority Opportunities

NIJ is interested in funding innovative research that aligns with administration R&D priorities.<sup>7</sup> Proposals that advance the following administrative priorities may be given special consideration in award decisions. **If submitting a research proposal that contributes to one of the following national priorities, the applicant should state this on the title page of the proposal.**

- Advancing national security and technological competitiveness: NIJ supports technologies that power the industries of the future, to include industries that support the forensic sciences that may: (1) increase the body of knowledge to guide and inform forensic science policy and practice; or (2) lead to the production of useful material(s), device(s), system(s), or method(s) that have the potential for forensic application.
  - National Artificial Intelligence Initiative: “The mission of the National AI Initiative is to ensure continued U.S. leadership in AI research and development, lead the world in the development and use of trustworthy AI in the public and private sectors, and prepare the present and future U.S. workforce for the integration of AI systems across all sectors of the economy and society.”<sup>8</sup> NIJ is interested in funding proposals that employ AI in order to advance forensic science.
  - National Nanotechnology Initiative (NNI): The NNI is a U.S. government research and development initiative to understand and control matter at the nanoscale, intended to revolutionize technology and industry to benefit society. “The vision of the NNI is a future in which the ability to understand and control matter at the nanoscale leads to a revolution in technology and industry that benefits society.”<sup>9</sup> NIJ is interested in funding proposals that employ nanotechnology to advance forensic science.
- Cultivating an equitable STEM education, engagement, and workforce ecosystem: NIJ supports the improvement of technical training of future forensic scientists through science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) training through hands-on laboratory and research experience. NIJ encourages applicants to include the employment of students in their research proposals. Furthermore, NIJ supports building capacity at institutions that serve high proportions of underrepresented or underserved groups. Applications submitted under this priority consideration area should include in their management plans how students will be recruited; what laboratory/research activities they will perform; what training/education they will receive through the research; how the project promotes diversity, inclusion, equity, and accessibility in STEM; and how their post-graduation/project activities will be tracked and reported to NIJ.
- Promoting open science and community-engaged R&D: NIJ supports more inclusive engagement in science. Inclusive engagement includes making research and development

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/M-22-15.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.ai.gov/>.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.nano.gov/>.



accessible, reproducible, transparent, and non-discriminatory using open science principles. Open science practices allow NIJ to mitigate biases, increase accountability in research, disclose null findings, and ensure the preservation, availability, and transparency of data collected through its grant funded research projects. NIJ encourages applicants to adopt open science practices through comprehensive data archiving, the use of open-source software, publishing research findings in openly accessible journals and increased collaboration with the forensic science enterprise.

## Minority-Serving Institutions

There is a body of evidence that racial and ethnic minority groups are underrepresented in science and engineering fields at all levels.<sup>10,11</sup> NIJ will give special consideration in award decisions to proposals for which a Minority-Serving Institution (MSI) is the lead applicant.

Minority-Serving Institutions include:

- Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU)
- Hispanic-serving Institutions (HSI)
- Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCU)
- Alaska Native-serving Institutions or Native Hawaiian-serving Institutions (ANNH)
- Predominantly Black Institutions (PBI)
- Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-serving Institutions (AANAPISI)
- Native American-serving Non-Tribal Institutions (NASNTI)

Whether an institution is an MSI is based on the original purpose of its establishment or its current enrollment thresholds and is designated as such by the federal government for various purposes under specific statutes. For more information, please see the U.S. Department of Education's [definitions](#) and [lists of institutions](#). (The lists are provided for reference purposes only; MSI status is not an eligibility criterion for this solicitation.)

Note: Addressing these priority areas is one of many factors that NIJ considers in making funding decisions. Receiving priority consideration for one or more priority areas does not guarantee an award. MSI status will not be a factor considered by reviewers, who review and score applications strictly according to the Merit Review Criteria, but may be considered by the NIJ Director in making award decisions.

## New Investigator Opportunity

NIJ is interested in funding new investigators engaging in forensic science research. To that end, NIJ may, in appropriate circumstances, give special consideration in award decisions to applications proposing such researchers as principal investigators (PIs). In the case of a grant application that involves more than one investigator, **all** co-investigators must meet the definition of “new investigator” for the application to be considered as a “new investigator” application.

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<sup>10</sup> National Science Board, National Science Foundation. 2022. *Higher Education in Science and Engineering. Science and Engineering Indicators 2022*. NSB-2022-3. Alexandria, VA. Available at <https://nces.nsf.gov/pubs/nsb20223/>.

<sup>11</sup> National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics. 2021. *Women, Minorities, and Persons with Disabilities in Science and Engineering: 2021*. Special Report NSF 21-321. Alexandria, VA: National Science Foundation. Available at <https://nces.nsf.gov/wmpd>.

To be considered a “new investigator” for the purposes of this solicitation, one of the two criteria below must be demonstrated.

- The investigator must have received — no earlier than April 1, 2020 — an initial appointment in the United States to a full-time junior faculty position<sup>1</sup> at a university or to an equivalent full-time staff scientist position in a research institution; hold such a full-time appointment at the time of application submission; and must never have received NIH funding for a research project — other than a Graduate Research Fellowship program grant; or
- The investigator must be an established researcher who has not successfully competed for NIH funding as a principal investigator or co-principal investigator in the past 10 years. The investigator must hold a full-time appointment in the United States to a faculty position at a university or an equivalent position as a full-time staff scientist at a research institution at the time of application.

If seeking to be considered for the new investigator opportunity, the applicant should identify that it is submitting a new investigator proposal on the title page of the application.

## **Federal Award Information**

### **Awards, Amounts, and Durations**

Anticipated Number of Awards: up to 30 awards. Total number of awards NIH expects to make to be determined by the number of applications received and their merit.

Anticipated Maximum Dollar Amount per Award: Maximum dollar amount for each award to be determined by the requirements of the research proposed in grants selected for award. Applicants are encouraged to propose budgets that match the research activities proposed, up to the full dollar amount anticipated to be awarded under this solicitation.

Period of Performance Start Date: 1/1/25.

Period of Performance Duration (Months): up to 60 months. To be determined by the period of performance of awarded applications. Successful applicants will be expected to complete the work proposed within a five-year period of performance.

Anticipated Total Amount To Be Awarded Under This Solicitation: \$12,500,000.

Additional Information: Grantees must clear all required award special conditions before incurring expenses barring spending pre-approval, and, if applicable, confirm NIH approval of new or modified IRB and privacy certificate documents before beginning research activities.

### **Continuation Funding Intent**

NIH may, in certain cases, provide additional funding in future years to awards made under this funding opportunity through continuation awards. NIH will consider, among other factors, NIH’s strategic priorities, a recipient’s overall management of the award, and the progress of the work funded under the award, when making continuation award decisions.

## Availability of Funds

This funding opportunity, and awards under this funding opportunity, are subject to the availability of funding and to any changes or additional requirements that may be imposed by the agency or by law. In addition, nothing in this solicitation is intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

## Type of Award

NIJ expects to make awards under this funding opportunity as grants. See the “[Administrative, National Policy, and Other Legal Requirements](#)” section of the [Application Resource Guide](#) for a brief discussion of important statutes, regulations, and award conditions that apply to many (or in some cases, all) OJP grants.

## Budget Information

If the applicant is proposing a project that reasonably could be conducted in discrete phases, with each phase resulting in completion of one or more significant, defined milestones, then NIJ strongly recommends that the applicant structure the application — specifically including the narrative, expected scholarly products, timelines/milestones, and budget detail worksheet and budget narrative — to clearly define each phase. (This is particularly the case if the applicant proposes a project that will exceed — in cost or the length of the period of performance — the amount or length of time anticipated for an individual award (or awards) under this solicitation.) Given limitations on the availability to NIJ of funds for awards for research, development, and evaluation, this information will assist NIJ in considering whether partial funding of applications would be productive. (If, in FY 2024, NIJ elects to fund only certain phases of a proposed project, the expected scholarly products from the partial-funding award may, in some cases, vary from those described above.)

NIJ may elect to fund applications submitted under this FY 2024 solicitation in future fiscal years, dependent on, among other considerations, the merit of the applications and on the availability of appropriations.

Proposals that include equipment purchases should include a discussion of how federally funded equipment is proposed to be used after the funded work has been completed and/or the project period has ended. Note that OJP may issue specific equipment disposition instructions in appropriate circumstances.)

What will not be funded:

- Applications primarily to purchase equipment, materials, or supplies, or to provide direct services. (A budget may include these items if they are necessary to conduct research, development, demonstration, evaluation, or analysis.)

The applicant should identify within their budget which items, services, etc., will/would be covered by matching sources and explain what type of match will be provided.

## Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

See “Cofunding” paragraph under “Budget and Associated Documentation” in the “Application and Submission Information” section.

## Eligibility Information

For eligibility information, [see the Synopsis section](#).

For the purposes of this notice of funding opportunity, “state” means any state of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

An “individual” applicant may apply for this funding opportunity. If you work on grant applications on behalf of a company; state, local, or tribal government; academic institution; or other type of organization, then you are not an individual applicant. [See the “How To Apply” section for information on how to apply as an individual](#).

For the purposes of this notice of funding opportunity, other units of local government include towns, boroughs, parishes, villages, or other general purpose political subdivisions of a State.

Foreign governments, foreign organizations, and foreign colleges and universities are not eligible to apply. Federal agencies are eligible to apply. (Any award made to a federal agency will be made as an inter-agency reimbursable agreement.)

## How To Apply

### Application Resources

When preparing and submitting an application, the following resources may aid prospective applicants:

1. Grants.gov [“How to Apply for Grants”](#)
2. OJP [“How To Apply”](#) section in the [Application Resource Guide](#)
3. JustGrants [Application Submission Training](#)
4. NIJ [Guidance for Applicants and Awardees](#)

This solicitation (notice of funding opportunity) incorporates guidance provided in the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) (Application Resource Guide), which provides additional information for applicants to prepare and submit applications to OJP for funding. **If this solicitation requires something different from any guidance provided in the [Application Resource Guide](#), the difference will be noted in this solicitation and the applicant is to follow the guidelines in this solicitation, rather than the guidance in the [Application Resource Guide](#) that is in conflict.**

## How To Apply

### Registration

Before submitting an application, all applicants must register with the System for Award Management (SAM.gov). An applicant must renew their registration every 12 months. If an applicant does not renew their SAM.gov registration, it will expire. An expired registration can delay or prevent application submission in Grants.gov and JustGrants. Applicants are encouraged to start the SAM.gov registration process at least 30 days prior to the application deadlines. Applicants who fail to begin the registration or renewal process at least 10 business days prior to the Grants.gov deadline may not complete the process in time and will not be considered for late submission.

A small business, in addition to obtaining the SAM.gov registration, should obtain an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the Internal Revenue Service. The person applying for an award will submit the EIN value as the Tax Identification Number (TIN). The applicant should not submit their social security numbers. For additional information, including the steps to obtain an EIN: <https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/apply-for-an-employer-identification-number-ein-online>.

## Submission

Applications must be submitted to DOJ electronically through a two-step process that begins in Grants.gov and is completed in JustGrants.

**Step 1:** After registering with SAM.gov, the applicant must submit the **SF-424** and **SF-LLL** in Grants.gov at <https://grants.gov/register> by the Grants.gov deadline. **To leave time to address any technical issues that may arise, an applicant should submit the SF-424 and SF-LLL as early as possible and recommended not later than 48 hours before the Grants.gov deadline.** If an applicant fails to submit in Grants.gov by the deadline, they will be unable to apply in JustGrants. Applicants can confirm Grants.gov submission by verifying their application status shows as “submitted” or “agency tracking number assigned.”

**Step 2:** The applicant must then submit the **full application**, including attachments, in JustGrants at [JustGrants.usdoj.gov](https://justgrants.usdoj.gov) by the JustGrants deadline.

OJP recommends that applicants submit the complete application package in JustGrants at least 48 hours prior to the JustGrants deadline. Some of the required sections of the application will be entered directly into JustGrants, and other sections will require documents to be uploaded and attached. Therefore, applicants should allow enough time before the JustGrants deadline to prepare all the requirements of the application. Applicants may save their progress in the system and add to or change the application as needed prior to hitting the “Submit” button at the end of the application in JustGrants.

An applicant will receive emails when successfully submitting in Grants.gov and JustGrants and should maintain all emails and other confirmations received from SAM.gov, Grants.gov, and JustGrants systems.

For additional information, see the “[How To Apply](#)” section in the [Application Resource Guide](#) and the [DOJ Application Submission Checklist](#).

## Applying as an Individual

The SAM.gov registration is not required for a person applying as an “individual” and not on behalf of a company; state, local, or tribal government; academic institution; or other type of organization.

An individual who wishes to apply for this funding in their personal capacity should use the Funding Opportunity Number (FON) O-NIJ-2024-171962 to register with Grants.gov. Enter the FON at <https://apply07.grants.gov/help/html/help/index.htm#t=Register%2FIndividualApplicantRegistration.htm> to complete the registration form and create a username and password for Grants.gov.

Individuals should obtain an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the Internal Revenue Service. The individual applying for an award will submit the EIN value as the Tax Identification Number (TIN). Individuals should not submit their social security numbers. For additional information, including the steps to obtain an EIN: <https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/apply-for-an-employer-identification-number-ein-online>.

For additional information, see the “[How To Apply](#)” section of the [Application Resource Guide](#). Follow the instructions for applying as an individual.

## Submission Dates and Time

The **SF-424 and the SF-LLL** must be submitted in Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. ET on April 11, 2024.

The **full application** must be submitted in JustGrants by 8:59 p.m. ET on April 18, 2024.

To be considered timely, the **full application** must be submitted in JustGrants by the JustGrants application deadline. Failure to begin the SAM.gov, Grants.gov, or JustGrants registration and application process in sufficient time (i.e., waiting until the due dates identified in this solicitation for those systems to begin the application steps) is not an acceptable reason to request a technical waiver.

## Experiencing Unforeseen Technical Issues Preventing Submission of an Application (Technical Waivers)

OJP will only consider requests to submit an application after the deadline when the applicant can document that a technical issue with a government system prevented submission of the application on time.

If an applicant misses a deadline due to unforeseen technical issues with SAM.gov, Grants.gov, or JustGrants, the applicant may request a waiver to submit an application after the deadline. However, the waiver request will not be considered unless it includes documentation of attempts to receive technical assistance to resolve the issue prior to the application deadline. A tracking number is the most typical documentation and is generated when the applicant contacts the applicable service desks to report technical difficulties. Tracking numbers are generated automatically when an applicant emails the applicable service desks, and for this reason, long call wait times for support do not relieve the applicant of the responsibility of getting a tracking number.

An applicant experiencing technical difficulties must contact the associated service desk indicated below to report the technical issue and receive a tracking number:

- SAM.gov: contact the [SAM.gov Help Desk \(Federal Service Desk\)](#), Monday-Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. ET at 866-606-8220.
- Grants.gov: contact the [Grants.gov Customer Support Hotline](#), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, except on federal holidays, at 800-518-4726, 606-545-5035, or [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov).
- JustGrants: contact the JustGrants Service Desk at [JustGrants.Support@usdoj.gov](mailto:JustGrants.Support@usdoj.gov) or 833-872-5175, Monday-Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. ET and Saturday, Sunday, and federal holidays from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. ET.

If an applicant has technical issues with SAM.gov or Grants.gov, the applicant must contact the OJP Response Center at [grants@ncjrs.gov](mailto:grants@ncjrs.gov) within **24 hours of the Grants.gov deadline** to request approval to submit after the deadline.

If an applicant has technical issues with JustGrants that prevent application submission by the deadline, the applicant must contact the OJP Response Center at [grants@ncjrs.gov](mailto:grants@ncjrs.gov) within **24 hours of the JustGrants deadline** to request approval to submit after the deadline.

Waiver requests sent to the OJP Response Center must:

- describe the technical difficulties experienced (provide screenshots if applicable);
- include a timeline of the applicant’s submission efforts (e.g., date and time the error occurred, date and time of actions taken to resolve the issue and resubmit; and date and time support representatives responded);
- include an attachment of the complete grant application and all the required documentation and materials;
- include the applicant’s Unique Entity Identifier (UEI); and
- include any SAM.gov, Grants.gov, and JustGrants Service Desk tracking numbers documenting the technical issue.

OJP will review each waiver request and the required supporting documentation and notify the applicant whether the request for late submission has been approved or denied. An applicant that does not provide documentation of a technical issue (including all information listed above), or that does not submit a waiver request within the required time period, will be denied.

For more details on the waiver process, OJP encourages applicants to review the “Experiencing Unforeseen Technical Issues” section in the [Application Resource Guide](#).

## Application and Submission Information

### Content of Application Submission and Available Surveys

The following application elements **must** be included in the application to meet the basic minimum requirements to advance to peer review and receive consideration for funding:

- SF-424 and SF-LLL (in Grants.gov).
- Proposal Narrative (in JustGrants).
- Budget Web-Based Form, which includes the budget details and the budget narrative (in JustGrants).

- Financial Management and System of Internal Controls Questionnaire, including applicant disclosure of high-risk status (in JustGrants).
- Curriculum Vitae/Resumes for Key Personnel. (For purposes of this solicitation, “key personnel” means the principal investigator, all co-principal investigators, and other significant contributors.)

If NIJ determines that an application does not include these elements, it will not proceed to peer review and will not receive any further consideration.

### **Content of the SF-424 in Grants.gov**

The SF-424 must be submitted in Grants.gov. It is a required standard form used as a cover sheet for submission of pre-applications, applications, and related information. See the [Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information on completing the SF-424.

In Section 8F of the SF-424, please include the name and contact information of the individual **who will complete the application in JustGrants**. JustGrants will use this information (*email address*) to assign the application to this user in JustGrants.

**Intergovernmental Review:** This funding opportunity **is not** subject to [Executive Order \(E.O.\) 12372](#). In completing the SF-424, an applicant should answer question 19 by selecting “Program is not covered by E.O. 12372.”

### **Content of the JustGrants Application Submission**

#### ***Entity and User Verification (First Time Applicant)***

For first time JustGrants applicants, once the application is received from Grants.gov, DOJ will send an email (from [DIAMD-NoReply@usdoj.gov](mailto:DIAMD-NoReply@usdoj.gov)) to the individual listed in Section 8F of the SF-424 with instructions on how to create a JustGrants account. This email should arrive within 24 hours after this individual receives confirmation from Grants.gov of their SF-424 and SF-LLL submissions. Register the Entity Administrator (the person who manages who can access JustGrants on behalf of the applicant), the Application Submitter, and Authorized Representative for the applicant with JustGrants as early as possible and (recommended) not later than 48-72 hours before the JustGrants deadline. Once registered in JustGrants, the Application Submitter will receive a link in an email to complete the rest of the application in JustGrants. Find additional information on JustGrants Application Submission in the [Application Resource Guide](#).

#### ***Standard Applicant Information***

The “Standard Applicant Information” section of the JustGrants application is pre-populated with the SF-424 data submitted in Grants.gov. The applicant will need to review the Standard Applicant Information in JustGrants and make edits as needed. Within this section, the applicant will need to add ZIP codes for areas affected by the project; confirm their Authorized Representative; and verify and confirm the organization’s unique entity identifier, legal name, and address.

#### ***Proposal Abstract***



A Proposal Abstract (no more than 400 words) summarizing the proposed project — including goals, objectives, research questions, research design and methods, work products and dissemination plan — must be completed in the JustGrants web-based form. This abstract should be in paragraph form without bullets or tables, written in the third person, and exclude personally identifiable information. Abstracts will be made publicly available on the OJP and USASpending.gov websites if the project is awarded. See the [Application Resource Guide](#) for an [example](#) of a proposal abstract.

### ***Data Requested With Application***

The following application elements should be submitted in the web-based forms in JustGrants.

#### **Financial Management and System of Internal Controls Questionnaire (including applicant disclosure of high-risk status)**

The Financial Management and System of Internal Controls Questionnaire helps OJP assess the financial management and internal control systems, and the associated potential risks of an applicant as part of the pre-award risk assessment process. Every OJP applicant (other than an individual applying in their personal capacity, not representing an applicant organization) is required to complete the web-based Questionnaire form in JustGrants. See the [Application Resource Guide: Financial Management and System of Internal Controls Questionnaire \(including Applicant Disclosure of High Risk Status\)](#) for the additional guidance on how to complete the questionnaire.

#### **Brief Applicant Entity Questionnaire**

The Office of Justice Programs (OJP) is collecting the following information to help assess its efforts to attract a broader range of applicants. These questions apply to the applicant entity and its work and scope only, and not to the specific project(s) being proposed within the application. Responses to the questions will not be considered in the application review process. The questions included in the questionnaire are available in the [Standard Forms & Instructions: Brief Applicant Entity Questionnaire](#).

#### **Principal Investigator Contact Information**

To facilitate administrative processes associated with application review and post review activities, applicants are requested to enter the name of the Principal Investigator for the application project, as well as their contact information.

### ***Proposal Narrative***

The Proposal Narrative should be submitted as an attachment in JustGrants. The attached document should not exceed 18 numbered pages, of which a minimum of nine (9) pages should be dedicated to Project Design and Implementation. If included in the main body of the proposal narrative, tables, charts, figures, and other illustrations count toward the 18-page limit for the narrative section. The proposal abstract, table of contents, appendices, and government forms do not count toward the 18-page limit. If the Proposal Narrative fails to comply with these length restrictions, NIJ may consider such noncompliance in peer review and in final award decisions.

The Proposal Narrative must include the following sections:

a. Title Page (not counted against the proposal narrative page limit)

The title page should include:

- Project title.
- Submission date.
- Funding opportunity number.
- Principal Investigator (and any co-principal investigators).
- Unique author identifier (e.g., ORCID, ResearcherID, Scopus Author ID), if available.
- Requests for consideration under “priority areas.”
- Key words, including forensic science focus areas.
- Contact information (that is, name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address) for both the applicant institution and the principal investigator.

b. Resubmit Response (if applicable) (not counted against the proposal narrative page limit.)

If an applicant is resubmitting an application previously submitted to NIJ, but not funded, the applicant should indicate this. A statement should be provided, no more than two pages, addressing: (1) the title, submission date, and NIJ-assigned application number of the previous application, and (2) a brief summary of revisions to the application, including responses to previous feedback received from NIJ.

c. Table of Contents and Figures (not counted against the proposal narrative page limit)

d. Main Body

1. Statement of the Problem

The statement of the problem should address the need for research in this area. Applicants should discuss current gaps in data, research, and knowledge, including those for particular justice sectors, for certain populations, and to answer questions relevant to current policy and practice needs and public interests. It is not uncommon for multiple problems to exist simultaneously (for example, there may be a criminal justice problem affecting public safety, a current technical challenge/need identified by forensic practitioners, as well as a scientific/technology gap between the current state of the art and a desired solution), and applicants should discuss each of these clearly and justify the importance of the separate issues. As part of this discussion, applicants should present a review of previous literature and discuss previous research related to these problems.

This section should also identify the proposed research questions and introduce the purpose, goals, and objectives of the proposed project.

The Statement of the Problem section should do the following:

- Explain the importance of the problem or critical barrier to progress in the field that the proposed project addresses.
  - Explain the criminal justice significance of the problem.
  - Describe the scientific premise for the proposed project, including consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of published research or preliminary data crucial to the support of your application.
  - Describe the current state of the art and technologies, both in practice and in past/current research, directed at the described problem. If this request is a direct follow-up of an earlier study, describe those results.
  - Explain how the proposed project will improve scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or forensic practice. Describe how concepts, methods, technologies, or services that drive the forensic science field will be changed if the proposed aims are achieved.
  - Include a review of relevant literature.
2. Project Design and Implementation (This section should account for a minimum of nine (9) pages of the main body of the narrative.)

Applicants should provide a detailed description of the strategies to implement this research project and address the research questions. Design elements should follow directly from the research project's goals and objectives and address the program-specific information noted in the solicitation. Applicants should describe the research methodology and analysis plan in detail and demonstrate the validity and usefulness of the data they will collect. Applicants should consider the rigor and soundness of the methodology and analytical and technical approaches for the proposed research and address the feasibility of the proposed project and potential challenges or problems in carrying out the activities.

The Project Design and Implementation section should include the following:

- Describe the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project. Describe the experimental design and methods proposed and how they will achieve robust and unbiased results. Include how the data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted, as well as the data archiving plan (see Data Archiving Plan under Appendices).
- Human subjects/study population: If the project will involve human subjects, clearly describe the study population. Include detailed information about how subjects were or will be identified and sampled and the method(s) of characterization. For case-control studies, provide inclusion and exclusion criteria and any matching done between cases and controls. Describe relevant environmental factors and how they were measured. If the subjects provided for this study are a subset of a family population, explain which individuals were included and how they were selected. Highlight special features of the study population that would enhance success.

- Sample information: In table form, provide: sample description, such as case/control status and/or collection site; number of samples included in the study; subsample source (e.g., tissue source of the DNA). If data from other subjects will be included in the analysis, add row(s) to describe those samples.

Three examples are provided below:

Sample Set	Target # of Samples	Source	Service	Previous Service
Known controls	500	Buccal	Targeted sequencing	STR base genotyping
Forensic samples	500	Buccal	Targeted sequencing	STR base genotyping

Sample Set	Target # of Samples	Source	Subsample Set	Service
Crania	300	Modern Donated Collection	300 individuals of known Hispanic Ancestry; 150 Male, 150 Female	Morphometric sex Estimation
Pelvis	300	Modern Donated Collection	300 individuals of known Hispanic Ancestry; 150 Male, 150 Female	Morphometric sex Estimation

Subject Description	Target # of Samples	Collection Site
Patients at drug rehab facilities	100	Scalp, cut (not plucked)
Controls – subjects donating hair for wigs	100	Scalp, cut (not plucked)

- Provide supporting text that justifies the choice of samples. Describe other relevant information (e.g., the extraction methods used for each DNA source and the approximate DNA concentrations). Describe previous analyses done on these subjects.
- Power and effect size: Use power analyses to describe the range of effect sizes detectable by the study. Address relevant features of the analytic plan, such as the model(s) to be tested, the extent of multiple testing, and what significance level would be used for testing. Include all appropriate parameters. If the study design requires separate analysis of subject groups, provide power analyses for each category. If there is a plan to test for environment effects, address the power for detection of these effects.
- Data analyses: Provide a thorough plan for data analyses. Include: analytical approaches to be used and their justification, plans for quality control analyses, methods to control for possible confounding effects, how false positive rates will be controlled in light of multiple testing, etc. If there is a plan to analyze the data obtained with earlier data, or to perform comparisons to determine success, describe your strategy for that process.

- Describe the role of each team member in the analysis process, and summarize the team’s experience with the approaches proposed.
- Discuss potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success anticipated to achieve the aims.
- If the project is in the early stages of development, describe any strategy to establish feasibility and address the management of any high-risk aspects of the proposed work.
- Explain how relevant variables are factored into research designs and analyses.
- Data management: Describe the institutional computing resources available for this study, the type of database that will be used (if applicable), and how the data will be managed. Highlight the team’s experience with management of data sets (especially those similar to the proposed project). Also describe strategies for data sustainability beyond the proposed funded work.
- Preliminary Data/Results: For new lines of research, include preliminary results, if available. Discuss the PI’s preliminary studies, data, and or experience pertinent to this application. Preliminary data can be an essential part of a research grant application, and help to establish the likelihood of success of the proposed project. New Investigators should include preliminary data.

### 3. Potential Impact

Applicants should describe the potential impact of the research and how it may inform or improve criminal or juvenile justice-related policy, practice, or theory in the United States.

The Potential Impact section should do the following:

- Explain the criminal justice significance of the proposed study.
- Explain how the application challenges and seeks to shift current research or forensic practice paradigms.
- Describe any novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions to be developed or used, and any advantage over existing methodologies, instrumentation, or inventions.
- Explain any refinements, improvements, or new applications of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, or instrumentation.
- Describe the plan for dissemination to produce scholarly products (See [Deliverables](#) above, for a discussion of expected scholarly products.) Applicants should also identify plans to broader interested practitioners and policy makers in a form that is designed to be readily accessible and useful to them. Awardees are encouraged to publish their research using open access options. **Grant funds may be used for costs associated with open access publication.**

Describe implications for criminal justice policy and practice in the United States.

#### 4. Capabilities and Competencies

This section should describe the experience and capabilities of the applicant organization, key staff, and any proposed subgrantees (including consultants) that the applicant will use to implement and manage this effort and the federal funds under this award, highlighting any previous experience implementing projects of similar scope, design, and magnitude. Applicants should address:

- Experience and capacity to work with the proposed data sources in the conduct of similar research efforts.
- Experience and capacity to design and implement rigorous research and data analysis projects.
- Experience producing and disseminating meaningful deliverables.

Applicants should also outline the management plan and organization that connects to the goals and objectives of the project. Among other factors, that plan should include a description of the anticipated level of effort of key personnel.

The Capabilities/Competencies section should include the following:

- Facilities and other resources: Describe how the scientific environment in which the research will be done contributes to the probability of success (e.g., institutional support, physical resources, and intellectual rapport). In describing the scientific environment in which the work will be done, discuss ways in which the proposed studies will benefit from unique features of the scientific environment or subject populations or will employ useful collaborative arrangements. If there are multiple performance sites, describe the resources available at each site.
- Equipment: List major items of equipment already available for this project and, if appropriate identify location and pertinent capabilities.
- Senior/Key personnel profile: Describe each senior/key personnel's role in the project and why the individual is well-suited for that role. The relevant factors may include: aspects of past training; previous experimental work on this specific topic or related topics; technical expertise; collaborators or scientific environment; and/or past performance in this or related fields. Senior/key personnel are defined as all individuals who contribute in a substantive, meaningful way to the scientific development or execution of the project, whether or not salaries are requested. Consultants should be included if they meet this definition.
  - Principal investigator (PI) profile should be listed first.
  - The remaining senior/key personnel profiles should be listed in alphabetical order. Although alphabetical order is preferred, it is not

required. However, be aware that these profiles will appear in the application in the order provided by the applicant. Therefore, peer reviewers will see them in the order presented. Those with a postdoctoral role should be included if they meet the definition of senior/key personnel.

- Other significant contributors (OSCs): OSCs are those individuals who commit to contribute to the scientific development or execution of the project, but do not commit any specified measurable effort (i.e., person months) to the project. These individuals are typically presented at effort of “zero person months” or “as needed.” Individuals with measurable effort may not be listed as OSCs. Consultants should be included if they meet the OSC definition. OSCs should be listed after all senior/key persons.

5. Appendices (not counted against the proposal narrative page limit) include:

- Multiple PI leadership plan. For applications designating multiple PIs, a leadership plan must be included. For applications designating multiple PIs, all such individuals must be assigned the PI role on the Senior/Key Personnel Profile form, even those at organizations other than the applicant organization. A rationale for choosing a multiple PI approach should be described. The governance and organizational structure of the leadership team and the research project should be described, including communication plans, process for making decisions on scientific direction, and procedures for resolving conflicts. The roles and administrative, technical, and scientific responsibilities for the project or program should be delineated for the PIs and other collaborators. Do not submit a leadership plan if you are not submitting a multiple PI application. Reviewers use these pages in part to address the “Capabilities/Competencies” selection criterion. Attach this information as a separate PDF file titled “Multiple PI Leadership Plan.”
- If the application (including the budget) identifies any proposed non-competitive agreements that are or may be considered procurement “contracts” (rather than subawards) for purposes of federal grants administrative requirements, the applicant also must list the entities with which the applicant proposes to contract.
- List of other agencies, organizations, or funding sources to which this application has been submitted (if applicable).

### Application Goals, Objectives, Deliverables, and Timeline

The applicant will submit the project’s goals, objectives, deliverables, and timeline in the JustGrants. This is a summary of the goals, objectives, deliverables, and timeline that relate to the proposal narrative. The applicant will also enter the projected fiscal year and quarter that each objective and deliverable will be completed. Please refer to the [Application Submission Job Aid](#) for step-by-step directions.

- **Goals:** The applicant should describe the project’s intent to change, reduce, or eliminate the problem noted in the proposal narrative.

- **Project Objectives and Timeline:** The applicant should include objectives to accomplish its goals. Objectives are specific, measurable actions to reach the project's desired results. They should be included in the timeline and be clearly linked to the goals of the project.
- **Deliverables and Timeline:** Project deliverables refer to outputs — tangible (for example, a report or a website) or intangible (for example, greater feelings of safety reported by the community) — that are documented and submitted within the scope of a project. Deliverables should be included in the timeline.

### Deliverables Expected by Successful Applicants

Project deliverables include, but are not limited to, a final technical summary for publication by NIJ at the National Criminal Justice Reference Service and peer-reviewed publications. Project objectives and deliverables should be included in one timeline.

### Budget and Associated Documentation

#### Funding Restrictions

All recipients and subrecipients (including any for-profit organization) must forgo any profit or management fee.

#### Budget Detail and Narrative Web-Based Form

The applicant will complete the JustGrants web-based budget form, which includes both detailed calculations and budget narrative sections.

For additional information about how to prepare a budget for federal funding, see the "[Application Resource Guide](#)" section on [Budget Preparation and Submission Information](#) and the technical steps to complete the budget form in JustGrants in the [Complete the Application in JustGrants: Budget](#) training.

The following paragraph (on "Cofunding") expressly modifies the "[Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement](#)" provisions in the Application Resource Guide. The applicant is to follow the guidance in the following paragraph instead of the guidance stated under the "Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement" heading in the OJP Grant Application Resource Guide.

**Cofunding:** An award made by NIJ under this solicitation may account for up to 100% of the total cost of the project. The application should indicate whether it is feasible for the applicant to contribute cash, facilities, or services as non-federal support for the project. The application should identify generally any such contributions that the applicant expects to make and the proposed budget should indicate in detail which items, if any, will be supported with non-federal contributions.

If a successful application proposes a voluntary match amount, and OJP approves the budget, the total match amount incorporated into the approved budget becomes mandatory and subject to audit.



## Prior Approval, Planning, and Reporting of Conference/Meeting/Training Costs

OJP strongly encourages every applicant that proposes to use award funds for any conference-, meeting-, or training-related activity (or similar event) to review carefully — before submitting an application — the [Application Resource Guide](#) for information on prior approval, planning, and reporting of conference/meeting/training costs.

## Costs Associated With Language Assistance (if applicable)

If an applicant proposes a program or activity that would deliver services or benefits to individuals, the costs of taking reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to those services or benefits for individuals with limited English proficiency may be allowable. See the [Application Resource Guide](#) for information on costs associated with language assistance.

## Budget/Financial Attachments

### Pre-Agreement (Pre-Award) Costs (if applicable)

Pre-agreement costs are defined as costs requiring approval incurred by the applicant prior to the start date of the period of performance of the federal award. OJP does not typically approve pre-agreement costs. If a successful applicant, in anticipation of the federal award, but before the start date of the period of performance, incurs costs that are necessary for efficient and timely performance of the funded project, those costs may not be charged to the award. See the “Costs Requiring Prior Approval” section in the [DOJ Grants Financial Guide Post-Award Requirements](#) for more information.

### Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)

Indirect costs are costs of an organization that are not readily assignable to a particular project but are necessary to the operation of the organization and the performance of the project. Examples of costs usually treated as indirect include those incurred for facility operation and maintenance, depreciation, and administrative salaries. The requirements for the development and submission of indirect cost proposals and cost allocation plans are listed in Appendices III – VII of 2 C.F.R. Part 200. A non-federal applicant should follow the guidelines applicable to its type of organization. If applicable, an applicant with a current federally-approved indirect cost rate agreement will upload it as an attachment in JustGrants. See the [DOJ Financial Guide](#) for additional information on [Indirect Cost Rate Agreement](#).

### Consultant Rate (if applicable)

Costs for consultant services require prior approval from OJP. If the proposed project expects to fund consultant services, compensation for individual consultant services is to be reasonable and consistent with that paid for similar services in the marketplace. See the [DOJ Grants Financial Guide](#) for information on the consultant rates, which require prior approval from OJP.

### Limitation on Use of Award Funds for Employee Compensation for Awards Over \$250,000; Waiver (if applicable)

If an applicant proposes to hire employees with federal award funds, for any award of more than \$250,000 made under a funding opportunity, an award recipient may not use federal funds to pay total cash compensation (salary plus cash bonuses) to any employee of the recipient at a

rate that exceeds 110% of the maximum annual salary payable to a member of the federal government's Senior Executive Service (SES) at an agency with a Certified SES Performance Appraisal System for that year. See the [Application Resource Guide](#) for information on the "Limitation on Use of Award Funds for Employee Compensation for Awards over \$250,000; Waiver."

#### Disclosure of Process Related to Executive Compensation (if applicable)

An applicant that is a nonprofit organization may be required to make certain disclosures relating to the processes it uses to determine the compensation of its officers, directors, trustees, and key employees. If applicable, the applicant will upload a description of the process used to determine executive compensation as an attachment in JustGrants. See the "Application Attachments" section of the [Application Resource Guide](#) for information.

### ***Additional Application Components***

The applicant will attach the additional requested documentation in JustGrants.

#### Curriculum Vitae or Resumes

Provide curriculum vitae, resumes, or biosketches of senior/key personnel (not counted against the proposal narrative page limit). Curriculum vitae, resumes, or biosketches of key personnel should not exceed five (5) pages per person. For the purposes of this solicitation, "key personnel" means the principal investigator, all co-principal investigators, and other significant contributors. Reviewers use these pages in part to address the "Capabilities/Competencies" selection criterion. NIJ encourages use of the SciENCv standard format biosketch (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sciencv/>). Attach this information as a separate PDF file titled "CVs of Key Personnel."

#### Tribal Authorizing Resolution (if applicable)

An application in response to this solicitation may require inclusion of tribal authorizing documentation as an attachment. If applicable, the applicant will upload the tribal authorizing documentation as an attachment in JustGrants. See the [Application Resource Guide](#) for information on tribal authorizing resolutions.

#### Letters of Support

Applicants should include, for each named supporting entity, a signed letter of support that outlines the supporting entity's reasons for supporting for the project and the scope of work they are committing to. Applications submitted from two or more entities are encouraged to submit signed letters of support that provide a detailed description of why the proposed project should receive federal funding.

Each letter of support should include the following: (1) a description of the relationship between the applicant entity and the supporting entity; (2) a description of the need and what benefits would be gained from the project; (3) a description of the applicant's capacity to complete the proposed project; and (4) an understanding that final, de-identified project data will be archived. In addition, letters ensuring access to core facilities and resources should stipulate whether access will be provided as a fee-for-service.

Letters of support should also be included as necessary to demonstrate the support of consortium participants and collaborators such as key personnel and other significant contributors included in the grant application. These letters should stipulate expectations for co-authorship, and whether samples, data, or other resources promised in the letter are freely available to other investigators in the scientific community or will be provided to the particular investigators only. For consultants, letters should include rate/charge for consulting services and level of effort/number of hours per year anticipated.

Letters of support should be signed by the relevant decision-maker and then submitted as one separate attachment to the application titled "Letters of Support".

### Research and Evaluation Independence and Integrity Statement

If an application proposes research (including research and development) and/or evaluation, the applicant must demonstrate research/evaluation independence and integrity, including appropriate safeguards, before it may receive award funds. The applicant will upload documentation of its research and evaluation independence and integrity as an attachment in JustGrants. For additional information, see the [Application Resource Guide](#).

### Bibliography/References

Provide a bibliography of any references cited in the Proposal Narrative. Each reference must include the names of all authors (in the same sequence in which they appear in the publication), the article and journal title, book title, volume number, page numbers, and year of publication. Include only bibliographic citations. Although there is not a page limitation, it is important to be concise and to select only those literature references pertinent to the proposed research. Attach this information as a separate PDF file titled "Bibliography and References Cited."

### Any Tools/Instruments, Questionnaires, Tables/Charts/Graphs, or Maps

Any tools/instruments, questionnaires, tables/charts/graphs, or maps pertaining to the proposed project that are supplemental to such items included in the main body of the narrative. (Tables, charts, graphs, or other relevant illustrations that are essential for comprehension of the project/program design should be included in the main body of the narrative.)

### List of Individuals in the Application

To assist OJP in assessing actual or apparent conflicts of interest (including such conflicts on the part of prospective reviewers of the application), provide a complete list of the individuals named or otherwise identified anywhere in the application (including in the budget or in any other attachment) who will or may work (or advise or consult) on the proposed research, development, or evaluation project. Applicants should use the "[Proposed Project Staff, Affiliation, and Roles](#)" form available on the NIJ webpage to prepare this list.

### Human Subjects Protection

Human Subjects Protection paperwork as a separate attachment (documentation and forms related to Institutional Review Board [IRB] review). See <https://nij.ojp.gov/funding/human-subjects-protection>. **Note:** Final IRB approval is not required at the time an application is submitted.

## Privacy Certificate

Privacy Certificate as a separate file (for further guidance go to <https://nij.ojp.gov/funding/confidentiality-and-privacy-protections> and <https://nij.ojp.gov/funding/privacy-certificate-guidance#model-privacy-certificate>).

## Request To Use Incentives or Stipends

Applicants proposing to use incentives or stipend payments as part of their research project design must submit an incentive or stipend approval request, as a separate document, according to the requirements set forth at <https://nij.ojp.gov/funding/participant-support-costs-and-incentives>.

## Documentation of “New Investigator” status (if applicable)

Documentation of “new investigator” status, if applicable, in the form of:

- A signed letter from Dean, department head, or equivalent, stating date of initial appointment to a junior faculty position, or
- A signed letter from the principal investigator attesting that the principal investigator (and any co-investigators) have not served as principal investigator or co-principal investigator on an NIJ-funded grant in the last 10 years

## Consortium/Contractual Agreements

Explain the programmatic, fiscal, and administrative arrangements to be made between the applicant organization and the consortium organization(s). If consortium/contractual activities represent a significant portion of the overall project, explain why the applicant organization, rather than the ultimate performer of the activities, should be the grantee. Reviewers use these pages in part to address the “Project Design and Implementation” selection criterion. Attach this information as a separate PDF file titled “Consortium/Contractual Arrangements”.

## Data Archiving Plan

Applicants should anticipate that NIJ will require, through special award conditions, that data sets resulting in whole or in part from projects funded under this solicitation be submitted for archiving in accordance with the submitted plan as approved by NIJ. Regardless of the primary data repository used, *all NIJ-funded projects* must provide study-level information to the [National Archive of Criminal Justice Data \(NACJD\)](#), which includes a project abstract and link to the publicly accessible data location, ideally with a DOI or other persistent link. See <https://nij.ojp.gov/funding/data-archiving>.

Applications should include as a separate file a brief plan — labeled “Data Archiving Plan” — detailing plans for data management and archiving of **all files and documentation** necessary to allow for others to reproduce the project’s findings. Pertinent files and documentation include, among other things, **qualitative and quantitative** data produced, instrumentation and data collection forms, codebook(s), any specialized programming code necessary to reproduce all reported results, description of necessary de-identification procedures, and (when required) a copy of the privacy certificate and informed consent protocols.

The plan should be one or two pages in length and include the level of effort associated with meeting archiving requirements.

The National Archive of Criminal Justice Data (NACJD) is NIJ's principal data repository and is the preferred repository for social science data. However, NACJD is not equipped to accept many of the data types produced in the natural sciences (e.g., sequence data, spectra, images, video). NIJ encourages that data of this nature be archived at a repository appropriate to the particular field of study, and that a DOI or another persistent link be assigned. In this case, the DAP should refer to submission of only basic project information to NACJD along with a DOI link to the data in a publicly available repository elsewhere. See <https://nij.ojp.gov/funding/data-archiving#alternate-data-repositories> for further guidance.

### Performance Report for Continuing Lines of Research

Performance report for continuing lines of research, if applicable. Applicants with current or prior NIJ-funded projects in the same line of research as that being proposed may attach the most recent performance report, if desired.

### List of Any Previous and Current NIJ Awards

List of any previous and current NIJ awards to the applicant and investigator(s), including the NIJ-assigned award numbers and a brief description of any scholarly products that resulted in whole or in part from work funded under the NIJ award(s). (See "Deliverables" under "Program-Specific Information," above, for definition of "scholarly products.")

### Potential Environmental Impact Coversheet and Checklist - National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

Each applicant is to submit an NIJ Programmatic Coversheet and Checklist with its application to assist NIJ in assessing the potential environmental impacts of the activities proposed for funding by the applicant. Specifically, the applicant is expected to:

- Carefully read the [Programmatic Environmental Assessment](#);
- Complete the [Cover Sheet and the attached Programmatic Checklist](#); and
- Attach the completed documents to the grant application.

The applicant should also submit a Cover Sheet and NIJ Programmatic Checklist for any organization identified in the Budget Detail Worksheet that will receive grant funds through a sub-award or procurement contract to perform any of the following activities: new construction or renovations that change the basic prior use of a facility or significantly change the size; research and/or technology development that could be expected to have an effect on the environment; or implementation of programs involving the use of chemicals. For more information about NEPA and NIJ's NEPA Process, please go to <https://nij.ojp.gov/funding/national-environmental-policy-act-nepa>.

### Current and Pending (Other) Support

List of other agencies, organizations, or funding sources to which this application has been submitted, or that are currently supporting this work. NIJ encourages use of the SciENCv "NSF Current and Pending (Other) Support" standard format (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sciencv/>).

## Project Management Plan and Timeline

Applicants should also outline the management plan and organization that connects to the goals and objectives of the project, including the project management structure, approach, and strategies. Among other factors, that plan should include a description of the anticipated level of effort of key personnel. In addition, applicants should include a project management timeline documenting the timing for project tasks, management, milestones, and deliverables.

## *Disclosures and Assurances*

The applicant will address the following disclosures and assurances.

### Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

The SF-LLL attachment that was completed and submitted in Grants.gov is attached to this section.

### Applicant Disclosure of Duplication in Cost Items

To ensure funding coordination across grant making agencies, and to avoid unnecessary or inappropriate duplication among grant awards, the applicant will disclose if it has any pending applications for federal funding, including pending applications for subawards of federal funds. Complete the JustGrants web-based Applicant Disclosure of Duplication in Cost Items form. See the [Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information.

### DOJ Certified Standard Assurances

Review and accept the DOJ Certified Standard Assurances in JustGrants. See the [Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information.

### DOJ Certifications Regarding Lobbying; Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters; Drug-Free Workplace Requirements; Law Enforcement and Community Policing

Review and accept in JustGrants the DOJ Certifications Regarding Lobbying; Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters; Drug-Free Workplace Requirements; Law Enforcement and Community Policing. See the [Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information.

### Applicant Disclosure and Justification – DOJ High-Risk Grantees

If applicable, submit the DOJ High-Risk Disclosure and Justification as an attachment in JustGrants. A DOJ High-Risk Grantee is an award recipient that has received a DOJ High-Risk designation based on a documented history of unsatisfactory performance; financial instability; management system or other internal control deficiencies; noncompliance with award terms and conditions on prior awards; or is otherwise not responsible. See the [Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information.

## **Application Review Information**

## Review Criteria

### *Basic Minimum Review Criteria*

OJP screens applications to ensure they meet the basic minimum requirements prior to conducting the peer review. Although specific requirements may vary, the following are requirements for all OJP solicitations:

- The application must be submitted by an eligible type of applicant.
- The application must request funding within any stated programmatic funding limits or boundaries.
- The application must be responsive to the scope of the solicitation.
- The application must include all items necessary to meet the basic minimum requirements.

### *Merit Review Criteria*

Depending on the number of applications received, applications may be categorized by scientific discipline into discrete groups for purposes of peer review and/or selection of award.

Applications that meet the basic minimum requirements will be evaluated by peer reviewers on how the proposed project/program addresses the following criteria:

#### Statement of the Problem (understanding of the problem) (10%)

- Demonstrated understanding of the problem(s) that exist in an identified forensic science field/discipline.
- Demonstrated awareness of the current state of the art and technologies, both in practice and in past/current research, directed at the described problem(s).

#### Project Design and Implementation (quality and technical merit) (40%)

- Soundness of methods and analytic and technical approach to addressing the stated aim(s) of the proposed project. The overall strategy, methodology, and analyses should be well reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project.
- Feasibility of proposed project and the strength of supporting data. The proof-of-principle of the proposed technology or methodology should be established and supported by preliminary data presented in, or referenced in, the proposal. More innovative plans and/or plans with a higher potential for failure should be counterbalanced to manage the inherent risk; e.g., by firm theoretical basis, reasonable preliminary data (depending on the mechanism), the track record of the principal investigator and any co-principal investigator(s), and an outstanding scientific and management plan.
- Detailed description and justification of the sample type and sample size to be tested. Approaches for data analysis are thorough and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project.
- Awareness of potential pitfalls of proposed project design and feasibility of proposed actions to minimize and/or mitigate them.

- Feasibility of completing the deliverables noted in the solicitation (which include datasets, peer-reviewed journal articles, technological prototypes, patented inventions, etc., as appropriate).

Capabilities and Competencies (capabilities, demonstrated productivity, and experience of the applicant organization and proposed project staff) (15%)

- Qualifications and experience of proposed project staff (that is, the principal investigator, all co-principal investigators, and all other individuals (and organizations) identified in the application (regardless of “investigator” status) who will be significantly involved in substantive aspects of the proposed project).
- Demonstrated ability of proposed project staff to produce scholarly products (applicants should briefly describe the management plan here; full details for the project management structure, approach, and strategies should be described in the project management plan).
- Relationship between the capabilities/competencies of the proposed project staff (including the applicant organization) and the scope and strategies of the proposed project.

Potential Impact (30%)

- Potential for a significant scientific or technical advance(s) that will improve criminal/juvenile justice in the United States, such as:
  - If the goals of the project are achieved, how will scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or forensic science practice in the criminal justice system be improved?
  - What is the likelihood that the project will exert a sustained, powerful influence on the forensic science field(s) related to criminal justice?
- Potential for innovative solution to address (all or a significant part of) the stated forensic science problem.
  - How will successful completion change the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, or services that drive the forensic science field as it relates to criminal justice?
  - How will a successful project address the identified criminal justice or forensic science problem and associated critical barriers to progress?
- Strength and feasibility of the proposed dissemination plan to produce scholarly products (such as published, peer-reviewed, scientific journal articles, book chapter(s) or book(s) in the academic press, technological prototypes, patented inventions, databases, standards, or similar scientific products) as well as make summary information available to broader interested audiences, such as criminal justice practitioners or policymakers.

Budget (5%)

In addition, peer reviewers will consider and may comment on the following additional items in the context of scientific and technical merit.

- Alignment of the proposed budget with proposed project activities.
- Appropriateness of the budget relative to the level of effort.
- Use of existing resources to conserve costs.



Reviewers are not expected to conduct a detailed financial analysis and assessment of the budget, but rather to consider it from the perspective of their experience.

### ***Other Review Criteria/Factors***

Other important considerations for OJP include geographic diversity, strategic priorities (specifically including, but not limited to, the priority areas of research and development opportunities, new investigator, and Minority Serving Institutions already mentioned, if applicable), available funding, past performance, planned scholarly products, geographic diversity, and the extent to which the Budget web-based form accurately explains project costs that are reasonable, necessary, and otherwise allowable under federal law and applicable federal cost principles. Costs are allowable when they are reasonable, allocable to, and necessary for the performance of the federal award, and when they comply with the funding statute and agency requirements (to include the conditions of the award), including the cost principles set out in the [Uniform Requirements 2 C.F.R. Part 200, Subpart E](#).

### ***Risk Criteria/Factors***

Pursuant to the Part 200 Uniform Requirements, before award decisions are made, OJP also reviews information related to the degree of risk posed by the applicant. Among other things to help assess whether an applicant with one or more prior federal awards has a satisfactory record of performance, integrity, and business ethics, OJP checks whether the applicant is listed in SAM.gov as excluded from receiving a federal award.

In addition, if OJP anticipates that an award will exceed \$250,000 in federal funds, OJP also must review and consider any information about the applicant that appears in the non-public segment of the integrity and performance system accessible through SAM.gov (currently, the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System, FAPIIS).

Important note on FAPIIS: An applicant may review and comment on any information about its organization that currently appears in FAPIIS and was entered by a federal awarding agency. OJP will consider such comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in FAPIIS, in its assessment of the risk posed by the applicant.

### ***Review Process***

Applications submitted under this solicitation that meet the basic minimum requirements will be evaluated for technical merit by a peer review panel(s) in accordance with OJP peer review policy and procedures using the review criteria listed above.

Peer review panels will evaluate and score applications that meet basic minimum requirements. NIJ may use external peer reviewers, internal peer reviewers, or a combination, to assess applications on technical merit using the solicitation's review criteria. An external peer reviewer is an expert in the subject matter of a given solicitation who is not a current DOJ employee. An internal reviewer is a current DOJ employee who is well-versed or has expertise in the subject matter of this solicitation. Peer reviewers' ratings and any resulting recommendations are advisory only, although reviewer views are considered carefully.

All final award decisions will be made by the Director of the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), who may take into account not only peer review ratings and NIJ staff recommendations, but also other factors as indicated in this section.

## **Federal Award Administration Information**

### **Federal Award Notices**

Generally, award notifications are made by the end of the current federal fiscal year, September 30. See the [Application Resource Guide](#) for information on award notifications and instructions.

### **Evidence-Based Programs or Practices**

OJP strongly encourages the use of data and evidence in policymaking and program development for criminal justice, juvenile justice, and crime victim services. For additional information and resources on evidence-based programs or practices (programs or practices that have been evaluated as effective), see the [Application Resource Guide](#).

### **Information Regarding Potential Evaluation of Programs and Activities**

OJP may conduct or support an evaluation of the projects and activities funded under this solicitation. For additional information on what should be included in the application, see the [Application Resource Guide](#) section entitled “Information Regarding Potential Evaluation of Programs and Activities.”

### **Administrative, National Policy, and Other Legal Requirements**

If selected for funding, in addition to implementing the funded project consistent with the OJP-approved application, the recipient must comply with all award conditions and all applicable requirements of federal statutes and regulations, including the applicable requirements referred to in the assurances and certifications executed in connection with award acceptance. For additional information on these legal requirements, see the “Administrative, National Policy, and Other Legal Requirements” section in the [Application Resource Guide](#).

### **Civil Rights Compliance**

If a successful applicant accepts funding from OJP — as a recipient of OJP funding — that award recipient must comply with certain federal civil rights laws that prohibit it from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, or disability in how the recipient delivers its program’s services or benefits and in its employment practices. The civil rights laws that may be applicable to the award include Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), the nondiscrimination provisions of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (Safe Streets Act), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. These and other federal civil rights laws are discussed in greater detail here: [Overview of Legal Requirements Generally Applicable to OJP Grants and Cooperative Agreements - FY 2024 Awards](#) under the “Civil Rights Requirements” section, and additional resources are available from the [OJP Office for Civil Rights](#).

Part of complying with civil rights laws that prohibit national origin discrimination includes recipients taking reasonable steps to ensure that people who are limited in their English proficiency (LEP) because of their national origin have meaningful access to a recipient’s

program and activity. An LEP person is one whose first language is not English and who has a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English. To help recipients meet this obligation to serve LEP persons, DOJ has published a number of resources, including a language access assessment and planning tool, which are available at <https://www.lep.gov/language-access-planning>. Additional resources are available at <https://www.ojp.gov/program/civil-rights-office/limited-english-proficient-lep>. If the award recipient proposes a program or activity that would deliver services or benefits to LEP individuals, the recipient may use grant funds to support the costs of taking reasonable steps (e.g., interpretation or translation services) to provide meaningful access. Similarly, recipients are responsible for ensuring that their programs and activities are readily accessible to qualified individuals with disabilities. Applicants for OJP funding must allocate grant funds or explain how other available resources will be used to ensure meaningful and full access to their programs. For example, grant funds can be used to support American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter services for deaf or hard of hearing individuals or the purchase of adaptive equipment for individuals with mobility or cognitive disabilities. For resources, see <http://www.ADA.gov> or contact OJP.

### **Financial Management and System of Internal Controls**

Award recipients and subrecipients (including recipients or subrecipients that are pass-through entities) must, as described in the Part 200 Uniform Requirements as set out at 2 C.F.R. § 200.303, comply with standards for financial and program management. See the [Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information.

### **Information Technology Security Clauses**

An application in response to this solicitation may require inclusion of information related to information technology security. See the [Application Resource Guide](#) for more information.

### **General Information About Post-Federal Award Reporting Requirements**

In addition to the deliverables described in the “[Program Description](#)” section, all award recipients under this solicitation will be required to submit certain reports and data.

Required reports. Award recipients must submit quarterly financial reports, semi-annual performance reports, final financial and performance reports, technical summary, and, if applicable, an annual audit report in accordance with the Part 200 Uniform Requirements or specific award conditions. Future awards and fund drawdowns may be withheld if reports are delinquent (in appropriate cases, OJP may require additional reports).

See the [Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information on specific post-award reporting requirements, including performance measure data.

### **Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s)**

For questions directed to the Federal Awarding Agency, see OJP Response Center contact information in the solicitation Synopsis.

For OJP contact(s), contact information for Grants.gov, and contact information for JustGrants, see the solicitation Synopsis.

## **Other Information**

### **Freedom of Information and Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. §§ 552 and 552a)**

See the [Application Resource Guide](#) for information on the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. §§ 552 and 552a).

### **Provide Feedback to OJP**

See the [Application Resource Guide](#) for information on how to provide feedback to OJP.

## Performance Measures

Objective	Performance Measure(s)	Description	Data Recipient Provides
<p>Conduct research in science, technology, engineering, and/or mathematics that has clear implications for criminal or juvenile justice policy and practice in the United States.</p>	<p>Quality of the research as demonstrated by the scholarly products that result, in whole or in part, from work funded under the NIJ award, such as published, peer-reviewed, scientific journal articles, and/or (as appropriate for the funded project) conference presentations, book chapter(s) or book(s) in the academic press, technological prototypes, patented inventions, or similar scientific products.</p>		<p>List of citation(s) to all scholarly products that resulted, in whole or in part, from work funded under the NIJ award.</p> <p>If applicable, each data set that resulted, in whole or in part, from work funded under the NIJ award.</p>
	<p>Relevance to the needs of the field as measured by whether the project's substantive scope did not deviate from the funded project or any subsequent agency-approved modifications to the scope.</p> <p>Quality of management as measured by such factors as whether significant project milestones were achieved, reporting and other deadlines were met, and costs remained within approved limits.</p>		<p>Quarterly financial reports, semi-annual and final performance reports, and products of the work performed under the NIJ award (including, at minimum, a final technical summary). If applicable, an annual audit report.</p>
	<p>Number of technologies fielded as a result, in whole or in part, of work funded under the NIJ award.</p>	<p>A technology is defined as a tool to include, for example, test methods, software, hardware, etc.</p> <p>A fielded technology is one that remains in use at the conclusion of the grant or agreement.</p>	<p>Description of all technologies fielded as a result, in whole or in part, of work funded under the NIJ award.</p>

## Application Checklist

### NIJ FY24 Research and Development in Forensic Science for Criminal Justice Purposes

This application checklist has been created as an aid in developing an application. For more information, reference [The OJP Application Submission Steps in the OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) and the [DOJ Application Submission Checklist](#).

#### Pre-Application

##### *Before Registering in Grants.gov*

- Confirm your entity's registration in the [System Award Management \(SAM.gov\)](#) is active through the solicitation period; submit a new or renewal registration in SAM.gov if needed (see [Application Resource Guide](#)).

##### *Register in Grants.gov*

- Acquire an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and a Grants.gov username and password (see [Application Resource Guide](#)).
- Acquire AOR confirmation from the E-Business Point of Contact (E-Biz POC) (see [Application Resource Guide](#)).

##### *Find the Funding Opportunity*

- Search for the funding opportunity in Grants.gov using the opportunity number, assistance listing number, or keyword(s).
- Access the funding opportunity and application package (see Step 7 in the [Application Resource Guide](#)).
- Sign up for Grants.gov email [notifications](#) (optional) (see [Application Resource Guide](#)).
- Read [Important Notice: Applying for Grants in Grants.gov](#) (about [browser compatibility and special characters in file names](#)).
- Read OJP policy and guidance on conference approval, planning, and reporting available at <https://www.ojp.gov/funding/financialguidedoj/iii-postaward-requirements#6g3y8> (see [Application Resource Guide](#)).

##### *Review the Overview of Post-Award Legal Requirements*

- Review the "[Overview of Legal Requirements Generally Applicable to OJP Grants and Cooperative Agreements – FY 2024 Awards](#)" in the [OJP Funding Resource Center](#).

##### *Review the Scope Requirement*

- The federal amount requested is within the allowable limit(s) of \$12,500,000.

##### *Review Eligibility Requirement*

- Review the "Eligibility" section in the solicitation synopsis and "Eligibility Information" section in the solicitation.

#### Application Step 1

After registering with SAM.gov (*unless applicant is an individual*), submit the SF-424 and SF-LLL in Grants.gov.

- In Section 8F of the SF-424, include the name and contact information of the individual who will complete the application in JustGrants and the SF-LLL in Grants.gov.

Within 48 hours after the SF-424 and SF-LLL submission in Grants.gov, receive four (4) Grants.gov email notifications:

- A submission receipt.
- A validation receipt.
- A grantor agency retrieval receipt.
- An agency tracking number assignment.

If no Grants.gov receipt and validation email is received, or if error notifications are received:

- Contact OJP Response Center at [grants@ncirs.gov](mailto:grants@ncirs.gov) or 800-851-3420 or TTY: 301-240-6310 (hearing impaired only) or Grants.gov Customer Support Hotline at 800-518-4726, 606-545-5035, [Grants.gov customer support](#), or [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov) regarding technical difficulties (see “[Application Resource Guide](#)” section on [Experiencing Unforeseen Technical Issues](#)).

Within 24 hours after receipt of confirmation emails from Grants.gov, the individual in Section 8F of the SF-424 will receive an email from JustGrants with login instructions.

- Proceed to Application Step 2 and complete application in JustGrants.

## **Application Step 2**

Submit the following information in JustGrants:

### **Application Components**

- Entity and User Verification (First Time Applicant).
- Standard Applicant information (SF-424 information from Grants.gov).
- Proposal Abstract.
- **Proposal Narrative\*** (Critical Component).
- Application Goals, Objectives, Deliverables, and Timeline.

### **Budget and Associated Documentation**

- **Budget Detail Narrative and web-based form\*** (Critical Component).
- Financial Management and System of Internal Controls Questionnaire (see [Application Resource Guide](#)).
- Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable) (see [Application Resource Guide](#)).
- Disclosure of Process related to Executive Compensation (see [Application Resource Guide](#)).

### **Additional Application Components**

- **Curriculum vitae, resumes, or biosketches of key personnel\*** (Critical Component).
- Tribal Authorizing Resolution (if applicable) (see [Application Resource Guide](#)).
- Letters of support.
- Research and Evaluation Independence and Integrity (see [Application Resource Guide](#)).
- Bibliography/references.

- Any tools/instruments, questionnaires, tables/chart/graphs, or maps.
- List of individuals in the application.
- Human Subjects Protection.
- Privacy Certificate.
- Request to Use Incentives or Stipends.
- Documentation of “New Investigator” Status (if applicable).
- Consortium/Contractual Arrangements.
- Data Archiving Plan.
- Performance report for continuing lines of research.
- List of any previous and current NIJ awards.
- Potential Environmental Impact coversheet and checklist - National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).
- Current and pending (other) support.
- Project Management Plan and Timeline.
- Request and Justification for Employee Compensation; Waiver (if applicable) (see [Application Resource Guide](#)).

### **Disclosures and Assurances**

- [Disclosure of Lobbying Activities \(SF-LLL\)](#) (see [Application Resource Guide](#)).
- Applicant Disclosure of Duplication in Cost Items (see [Application Resource Guide](#)).
- DOJ Certified Standard Assurances (see [Application Resource Guide](#)).
- DOJ Certifications Regarding Lobbying; Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters; Drug-Free Workplace Requirements; Law Enforcement and Community Policing (see [Application Resource Guide](#)).
- Applicant Disclosure and Justification – DOJ High-Risk Grantees (if applicable) (see [Application Resource Guide](#)).

**\*Note: Items designated with an asterisk must be submitted for an application to meet the basic minimum requirements review. If OJP determines that an application does not include the designated items, it will neither proceed to peer review, nor receive further consideration.**

### **Review, Certify, and Submit Application in JustGrants**

- Any validation errors will immediately display on screen after submission.
- Correct validation errors, if necessary, and then return to the “Certify and Submit” screen to submit the application. Access the [Application Submission Validation Errors Quick Reference Guide](#) for step-by-step instructions to resolve errors prior to submission.
- Once the application is submitted and validated, a confirmation message will appear at the top of the page. Users will also receive a notification in the “bell” alerts confirming submission.

If no JustGrants application submission confirmation email or validation is received, or if error notification is received:

- Contact the JustGrants Service Desk at 833-872-5175 or [JustGrants.Support@usdoj.gov](mailto:JustGrants.Support@usdoj.gov) regarding technical difficulties. See the [Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information.



## Standard Solicitation Resources

[Application Resource Guide](#) provides guidance to assist OJP grant applicants in preparing and submitting applications for OJP funding.

[DOJ Grants Financial Guide](#) serves as the primary reference manual to assist award recipients in fulfilling their fiduciary responsibility to safeguard grant funds and to ensure funds are used for the purposes for which they were awarded. It compiles a variety of laws, rules, and regulations that affect the financial and administrative management of DOJ awards. This guide serves as a starting point for all award recipients and subrecipients of DOJ grants and cooperative agreements in ensuring the effective day-to-day management of awards.

[JustGrants Resources Website](#) is an entryway into information about JustGrants and the grants management system itself. Through this portal both award recipients and applicants can access training resources and user support options, find frequently asked questions, and sign up for the [JustGrants Update e-newsletter](#).

[JustGrants Application Submission Training page](#) offers helpful information and resources on the application process. This training page includes e-learning videos, reference guides, checklists, and other resources to help applicants complete an application.

[Virtual Q&A Sessions](#) are advertised here and provide opportunities for users to receive topic-specific training, direct technical assistance, and support on JustGrants system functionality.