



National Institute of Justice

S O L I C I T A T I O N

Sarah V. Hart, Director

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Office of Research and Evaluation 2003 Solicitation for Investigator-Initiated Research

Notice: NIJ continues to experience delays in delivery of U.S. mail. If you are sending time-sensitive materials to NIJ, and in particular proposals responding to NIJ solicitations, we recommend that you use an alternative to the U.S. Postal Service. For delivery by commercial carriers and courier services, our zip code is 20001.

APPLICATION DEADLINE:
March 11, 2003

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs
810 Seventh Street N.W.
Washington, DC 20531

John Ashcroft
Attorney General

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For grant and funding information, contact:
Department of Justice Response Center
800-421-6770

Office of Justice Programs
National Institute of Justice
Web Site:
<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij>

**Office of Research and Evaluation
2003 Solicitation for Investigator-Initiated Research**

Please Note

- T Priority will be given to proposals for research that will inform State and local criminal justice policy and practice.**

- T Proposals concerning science & technology development proposals are not eligible under this solicitation.** NIJ's Office of Science and Technology has a separate solicitation for science and technology development research.

- T** The application package has been revised and rearranged. Now required is a section in the narrative discussing how the proposed research will inform policy and practice, a Topics Designation Form, a detailed listing of previous NIJ grant award performance, a privacy certificate, and a Protection of Human Subjects Assurance Form.

- T** Performance requirements are being reinforced including final technical reports, data sets, as well as standard progress and financial reports. Grant drawdowns are not permitted if reports are not up to date.

I. Introduction

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) is seeking proposals for investigator-initiated research on topics of relevance to State or local criminal justice policy and practice with potential for informing policy and practice on a national basis. In recent years, the investigator-initiated solicitation has focused on community crime prevention, policing research, juvenile and criminal justice systems improvement, corrections, alcohol- and drug-related crime and treatment, and criminal behavior.

The Institute's specific research and evaluation interests are continually evolving in response to the needs of the field. However, themes and topic areas presented below represent directions that the Institute intends to pursue during the next few years. Applicants may wish to direct their proposed research to the topics articulated in the following sections or to develop research concepts that build on them.

II. Background

NIJ, a component of the Office of Justice Programs, is the independent research, development, and evaluation arm of the U.S. Department of Justice. Created by Congress in 1968, the Institute is charged with investing public funds to develop knowledge that will reduce crime, enhance public safety, and improve the administration of justice. NIJ assists State and local justice systems in the following ways:

- !** By conducting and sponsoring basic and applied research into the causes, prevention, and detection of crime.

- !** By sponsoring evaluations of major Federal initiatives concerning crime and justice.

- ! By supporting research and demonstrations to develop new approaches, techniques, systems, and equipment to improve law enforcement and the administration of justice.
- ! By developing, validating, and evaluating new technologies to deter crime and enhance criminal justice operations.
- ! By making recommendations to Federal, State, and local governments.
- ! By collecting and disseminating both domestic and international criminal justice information.

NIJ encourages researchers from all disciplines to explore opportunities for collaborative efforts. Partnerships between researchers and practitioners are encouraged. Collaboration is a critical element of a researcher-practitioner partnership. Applications should address management of partnership activities such as problem definition; development of assessment tools; collection of data; and issues of privacy, confidentiality, and research involving human subjects. Additionally, while a proposed partnership may have State or local utility, it should also have implications for national knowledge building.

NIJ has identified priority topic areas for research. Although any specific topic may be proposed, NIJ is requesting that proposals be submitted on a priority topic within one of the following general areas.

Law enforcement/policing: ways that police and law enforcement agencies can improve their effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity; enhancing officer safety; improving the ability of police organizations to collect, analyze, disseminate, and use information effectively and to communicate reliably and securely; procedures, policies, technologies, and basic knowledge that will maximize appropriate and lawful police actions.

Justice systems (sentencing, courts, prosecution, defense): trial court organization, structure, and leadership to improve the fairness,

effectiveness, and efficiency of trial courts; evaluating specialized courts and specialized prosecution strategies; sentencing strategies, plea bargaining, time served, and specialty courts; evaluating court services for litigants and other participants with special needs; how the introduction of new, sophisticated scientific evidence into court systems affects the system.

Corrections: how prisons, jails, and community corrections can be better managed to provide safe, secure, and cost-effective operations; how best to assess and manage special offender populations in prisons, jails, and in the community; treatment/intervention strategies that enhance public safety by maximizing the successful re-entry of offenders into communities.

Crime prevention/causes of crime: factors that may lead to delinquent/criminal behavior; programs, interventions, and strategies that prevent crime by at-risk populations; improving the ability to prevent crime in specific contexts, including schools, using selected physical design, access control strategies, and technologies; community-based and faith-based approaches that prevent crime; deterrence mechanisms that prevent crime.

Violence and victimization, including violent crimes: strategies to prevent sexual assaults and victimization of children; practical approaches to reduce domestic/intimate partner violence; ways to prevent repeat victimization; the nature of white collar crime, identity theft, and elder fraud and strategies to prevent victimization; approaches to reduce community violence; evaluating policies and interventions to address crime victims' needs.

Drugs, alcohol, and crime: the relationships between drugs, alcohol, and crime; identifying ways to disrupt/deter drug markets and drug sales; strategies to prevent or detect drug or alcohol-related crime; evaluating strategies to reduce drug dependency among offenders, including drug courts and drug treatment in correctional settings.

The objectives above denote NIJ's priority areas for FY 2003. They do not exclude consideration of proposals dealing with other important crime and justice problems.

In addition to basic and applied research, NIJ is interested in program evaluations that improve the quality and utility of programs in every aspect of criminal justice. NIJ is also interested in improving the quality and utility of evaluations through methodological research in cost-benefit analysis, evaluability assessment, and evaluation design that are pertinent to criminal justice problems. These advances may be proposed as methodology research or as integral parts of an empirical evaluation.

III. Selection Criteria

NIJ is firmly committed to a competitive process in making grant awards. External peer review panelists consider both technical and programmatic merits of a proposed topic. Successful applicants must demonstrate to an independent peer review panel that: (1) the gap in knowledge they seek to fill is critical to understanding crime and justice and is relevant to policy and/or practice; (2) the proposed research design is rigorous and appropriate to posited research questions; and, (3) principal investigators are highly qualified to execute the design within the proposed budget and time lines. Institute staff then make recommendations to the NIJ Director based on the results of the independent reviews. Final decisions are made by the NIJ Director after consultation with Institute staff. Reviews of grant applications are based upon the following criteria:

Impact of the Project

- P Importance of the problem.
- P Potential for significant advances in areas such as violence and victimization, drugs and crime, crime prevention, law enforcement, courts, corrections.
- P Potential for advancement of scientific understanding of the problem area.
- P Relevance to improving the policy and practice of criminal justice and related agencies and for

improving public safety, security, and quality of life.

P Quality and Technical Merit

- P Awareness of existing research.
- P Soundness of methodology, analytic, or technical approach.
- P Innovation and creativity, where appropriate.
- P Feasibility of proposed project and awareness of pitfalls.

Capabilities, Demonstrated Productivity, and Experience of Applicants

- P Qualifications and experience of personnel to proposed project.
- P Demonstrated ability to manage proposed effort.
- P Adequacy of proposed budget including time and personnel.
- P Past performance on NIJ grants and contracts.

Budget Considerations

- P Total cost relative to perceived benefit.
- P Budget appropriate to level of effort.
- P Use of existing resources to conserve costs.

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

IV. How to Apply

Individuals interested in submitting proposals in response to this solicitation must complete the required application forms and related documents. Applicants must include all of the following information and completed forms to qualify for consideration:

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

PART A:

- Application for Federal Assistance - Standard Form (SF 424).
- Topics Designation Form.
- Proposal abstract.
- Table of contents.
- Budget Detail Worksheet.
- Budget Narrative.
- Negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (if appropriate).
- Program narrative.
- References/Bibliography.
- Names and affiliations of all key persons including applicants and subcontractor(s), advisors, consultants, and advisory board members. Include name of principal investigator, title, organizational affiliation, department (if institution of higher education), address, phone, fax, and e-mail address.
- List all previous and current NIJ awards made to principal investigators including grant numbers, information on final reports and other deliverables to NIJ (whether submitted or outstanding), and a listing of all publications (by NIJ or other publishers) resulting from each grant award.

PART B:

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

The Application Package is available at:

http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/funding_app.htm

The Application for Assistance. The Standard Form 424 should be the first page of the application. Please follow the instructions in completing the Standard Application for Assistance Form.

In item 10 of the Application, be sure to include 16.560 as the Catalog for Federal Domestic Assistance Number. Indicate the Title to be the "FY2003 ORE Investigator-Initiated Solicitation."

Enter the title of your proposal in item 11. Start and end dates in item 13 should be adjusted to accommodate a 6 month grant making process. For this solicitation, proposed projects should not have a start date earlier than September 12, 2003.

The Topics Designation Form. The Topics Designation Form should be the second page of the application package and indicate the specific area under which the proposal may be reviewed.

The Proposal Abstract. The proposal abstract is a very important part of the application. Along with the Topics Designation Form, the abstract is used in sorting applications for review by the appropriate independent peer panel. Once an award has been granted, the abstract is computerized and serves as a summary available to all interested parties for the duration of the grant. When read separately from the rest of the application, the abstract should serve as a succinct and accurate description of the proposed work. Applicants should concisely describe research goals and objectives, research design, and methods for achieving the goals and objectives. Length is not to exceed 400 words. Use the following two headers and instructions in developing the abstract.

Research Goals and Objectives:

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

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

Proposed Research Design & Methodology:

Methods. Describe the research method and/or design including data to be used in addressing research questions, data collection procedures and instrumentation, access to data, and other methods or procedures unique to the proposed study.

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

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

- Purpose, Goals and Objectives.
- Review of Relevant Literature.
- Methodology.
- Data Analysis, Anticipated Results and Products.
- Implications of the proposed research for policy and practice.
- Staff/Research Management Plan.
- *Tables, Charts, Figures & Research Time -line (not included in page limit).*

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

Due date. Ten (10) copies (one unbound) of complete proposals **must be received** at the National Institute of Justice by 4:30 p.m. on **March 11, 2003**. Extensions to this deadline are not permitted. Faxed or electronically transmitted copies are not accepted. NIJ reserves the right to return incomplete applications, those not responsive to the scope of this solicitation, or those not complying with format requirements.

Names and affiliations of the author(s) of the proposal should be clearly identified. Proposals that are incorrectly collated, incomplete, or handwritten may be considered as submitted or, at NIJ's discretion, may be returned without further review. Proposals exceeding the page limit will not be reviewed. No additions to the original submission are allowed.

Under the investigator-initiated solicitation, NIJ has recently awarded grants ranging from less than \$100,000 to \$300,000 and occasionally more.

The length of the research study being proposed should be appropriate to the study design. However, to ensure results are useful they must be available to inform policy in a timely fashion. Therefore, study time frames of two years or less are encouraged.

Application Materials. Applicants should obtain two packets: 1) application forms (including a sample budget worksheet); and, 2) guidelines for submitting proposals (including requirements for proposal writers and requirements for grant recipients). To receive them, applicants can:

- Access NIJ Web site and download application information at:

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/funding.htm>

- Request hard copies of the forms and guidelines by mail from the Department of Justice Response Center at 800-421-6770 (in the Washington, D.C., area, at 202-307-1480) or from the NCJRS at 800-851-3420.

- Request copies by fax. Call 800–851–3420 and select option 1, then option 1 again for NIJ. Code is 1023.
- **Please note that instructions provided in this announcement supersede those outlined in the document: *Guidelines for Submitting Proposals for National Institute of Justice-Sponsored Research.***

V. Performance Guidelines

To ensure compliance with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), Public Law 103-62, this solicitation notifies successful applicants that they will be required to collect and report information and data that measure the results of the grant. In order to ensure accountability, the following performance standards are established for all NIJ grantees under this solicitation including deliverables and other required reports as explained below.

Research & Evaluation Performance Standards

Grantees are required to submit in draft form the following deliverables ninety (90) days before the grant end date. NIJ reserves the right to waive any of the following requirements.

Deliverables Required 90 Days Before the Grant End Date

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

All NIJ draft research reports are peer reviewed upon submission. The reviews are forwarded to the principal investigator with suggestions for revisions. The principal investigator is then required to submit the revised final report, abstract, executive summary, final data set and codebook/data dictionary by the end

date of the grant. The abstract, executive summary and final report are to be submitted in both paper and electronic/diskette versions. The data set and codebook/dictionary are also to be submitted in electronic form.

Data sets must be received by the grant end date. Grant applicants should ensure that the proposed time line and budget accommodates these requirements.

In addition to the abstract, executive summary, research report and data set, grantees are required to submit financial status reports and progress reports.

Other Required Reports

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

Financial Status Reports

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

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

Progress Reports

Recipients of funding are also required to submit semi-annual Categorical Assistance Progress Reports (OJP Form 4587). Two copies of the progress report must be submitted to the Office of the Comptroller

twice a year even if there has been no substantive activity during the reporting period. The progress report should describe activities during the reporting period and status or accomplishment of objectives as set forth in the approved application for funding. For the duration of the award, progress reports must be submitted within 30 days after the end of the reporting periods (January 1 through June 30 and July 1 through December 31).

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

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

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

Research Report

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

Evaluation Report

For *evaluation* studies, the research report should also include a section on **Measuring Program Performance**. This section should outline the measures used to evaluate program effectiveness, modifications made to those measures as a result of the evaluation, and recommendations regarding these

and other potential performance measures for similar programs. (This information will be particularly valuable to NIJ and other federal program agencies in implementing performance measures for federally funded criminal justice programs.)

CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION AND HUMAN SUBJECT PROTECTION

The Department of Justice (DOJ) regulations at 28 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 22 require recipients of NIJ research funds to protect personally identifiable information. In addition, regulations at 28 CFR Part 46 requires that all research involving human subjects be reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (IRB). Applicants for NIJ funding must submit a Privacy Certificate, consistent with 28 CFR 22, outlining specific procedures for protecting private information with the application package and a copy of the IRB's approval must be submitted to NIJ prior to initiating any research activities involving human subjects.

Information regarding Confidentiality and Human Subjects Protections, including instructions and forms, may be found at:

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/humansubjects/index.html>.

Guidance and information. Applicants who wish to receive additional guidance and information may contact the U.S. Department of Justice Response Center at 800-421-6770. Center staff can provide assistance or refer applicants to an appropriate NIJ professional.

Send applications to:

Office of Research and Evaluation
Solicitation for Investigator-Initiated Research
National Institute of Justice
810 Seventh Street N.W., Rm. 7324
Washington, DC 20531
[overnight courier ZIP code 20001]

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

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

National Criminal Justice Reference Service

Box 6000

Rockville, MD 20849-6000

800-851-3420

e-mail: askncjrs@ncjrs.org

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

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**Office of Research and Evaluation
Investigator-Initiated Solicitation
Topics Designation Form**

Please indicate one primary topic area under which this proposal should reviewed.

- 9 Violence and Other Criminal Behaviors
- 9 Sex Offenders/Offenses
- 9 Victims of Crime
- 9 Crime and Delinquency Prevention
- 9 Child Abuse and Neglect
- 9 Juvenile Delinquency
- 9 Policing Practices, Organization, and Administration
- 9 Firearms
- 9 Drugs, Drugs and Crime, and Alcohol and Drug Testing
- 9 Drug Treatment
- 9 White-Collar Crime and Cybercrime
- 9 Transnational Crime and Organized Crime
- 9 Court Operations and Specialized Courts
- 9 Adjudication and Sentencing
- 9 Corrections Q Juvenile Q Adult
- 9 Crime-mapping and Spatial Analysis
- 9 Terrorism or Counterterrorism
- 9 Other Thematic Areas:

(Include this form as the second page to the application)
