



NIJ FY23 Research and Evaluation for the Testing and Interpretation of Physical Evidence in Publicly Funded Forensic Laboratories

Assistance Listing Number # 16.560

Grants.gov Opportunity Number: O-NIJ-2023-171560

Solicitation Release Date: February 02, 2023 2:30 PM ET

Version: 3

Step 1: Application Grants.gov Deadline: April 26, 2023 11:59 PM ET

Step 2: Application JustGrants Deadline: May 03, 2023 8:59 PM ET

Overview

The [U.S. Department of Justice](#) (DOJ), [Office of Justice Programs](#) (OJP), [National Institute of Justice](#) (NIJ) seeks applications for research and evaluation studies to produce practical knowledge that has the potential to improve the examination and interpretation of physical evidence in forensic science laboratories across the community of practice. This program furthers the DOJ's mission by supporting the development of new knowledge and tools to address the challenges of crime and justice in the United States. [NIJ's Forensic Science Strategic Research Plan](#) and [Forensic Science 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 solicitation incorporates guidance provided in the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) which provides additional information for applicants to prepare and submit applications to OJP for funding. **If this solicitation expressly modifies any provision in the OJP Grant Application Resource Guide, the applicant is to follow the guidelines in this solicitation as to that provision.**

Solicitation Categories

This solicitation does not include Solicitation Categories.

Eligible Applicants:

City or township governments, County governments, For profit organizations other than small businesses, Independent school districts, Individuals, Native American tribal governments (Federally recognized), Native American tribal organizations (other than Federally recognized tribal governments), 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, Public and State controlled institutions of higher education, Public housing authorities/Indian housing authorities, Small businesses, Special district governments, State governments, Unrestricted (open to any type of entity above), subject to any clarification in text field entitled as Additional Information on Eligibility

An applicant entity 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 would carry out the federal award; however, only one entity may be the applicant. Any others must be proposed as subrecipients (subgrantees). For additional information on subawards, see the OJP Grant Application Resource Guide.

NIJ may elect to fund applications submitted under this FY 2023 solicitation in future fiscal years, dependent on, among other considerations, the merit of the applications and the availability of appropriations.

Contact Information

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

Submission Information

Registration: Before submitting an application, all applicants must register with the System for Award Management (SAM). You must renew and validate your registration every 12 months. If you do not renew your SAM registration, it will expire. An expired registration can delay or prevent application submission in Grants.gov and JustGrants. Registration and renewal can take up to 10 business days to complete.

Submission: Applications must be submitted to DOJ electronically through a two-step process via Grants.gov and JustGrants.

Step 1: The applicant must submit by the Grants.gov deadline the required **Application for Federal Assistance standard form (SF-424)** and a **Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)** form when they register in Grants.gov at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html>. **Submit the SF-424 and SF-LLL as early as possible, but no later than 48 hours before the Grants.gov deadline. If an applicant fails to submit in Grants.gov, they will be unable to apply in JustGrants.**

For technical assistance with submitting the SF-424 and a 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. The Grants.gov Support Hotline operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, except on federal holidays.

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

For technical assistance with submitting the **full application** in JustGrants, contact the JustGrants Service Desk at 833-872-5175 or JustGrants.Support@usdoj.gov. The JustGrants Service Desk operates 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. ET Monday–Friday and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET on Saturday, Sunday, and Federal holidays.

OJP encourages applicants to review the “[How To Apply](#)” section in the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) and the [JustGrants website](#) for more information, resources, and training. Applicants should maintain all receipts and confirmations received from SAM.gov, Grants.gov, JustGrants systems.

Contents

Overview	1
Contact Information	1
Submission Information	2
Program Description	5
Overview	5
Statutory Authority	5
Specific Information	5
Goals, Objectives, and Deliverables	6
Priority Areas	8
Federal Award Information	8
Awards, Amounts and Durations	9
Continuation Funding Intent	9
Availability of Funds	9
Type of Award	9
Financial Management and System of Internal Controls	9
Budget Information	9
Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement	10
Pre-agreement Costs (also known as Pre-award Costs)	10
Limitation on Use of Award Funds for Employee Compensation: Waiver	10
Prior Approval, Planning, and Reporting of Conference/Meeting/Training Costs	10
Costs Associated with Language Assistance (if applicable)	10
Anticipated Maximum Dollar Amount of Awards	10
Period of Performance Duration	10
Eligibility Information	11
Application and Submission Information	11
Content of Application Submission	11
Information to Complete the Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) in Grants.gov	11
Standard Applicant Information (JustGrants 424 and General Agency Information)	12
Proposal Abstract	12
Proposal Narrative	12
Goal, Objective and Deliverables	15
Budget and Associated Documentation	15
Budget Worksheet and Budget Narrative (Web-based Form)	15
Pre-agreement Costs (also known as Pre-award Costs)	16
Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)	16
Consultant Rate	16
Limitation on Employee Compensation; Waiver	16
Financial Management and System of Internal Controls Questionnaire (including applicant disclosure of high-risk status)	16
Disclosure of Process Related to Executive Compensation	16
Additional Application Components	16
Curriculum Vitae or Resumes	16
Tribal Authorizing Resolution	17
Timeline Form	17
Letters of Support	17
Research and Evaluation Independence and Integrity Statement	17
Bibliography/reference	17
Any Tools/Instruments, Questionnaires, Tables/Charts/Graphs, or Maps	17

List of Individuals in the Application	17
Human Subjects Protection	17
Privacy Certificate	18
Request to Use Incentives or Stipends	18
Proof of Forensic Laboratory Accreditation including Scope	18
Consortium/Contractual Arrangements	18
Data Archiving Plan	18
Performance Report for Continuing Lines of Research	18
Potential Environmental Impact Coversheet and Checklist — National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)	18
Current and Pending (Other) Support	19
List of Any Previous and Current NIJ Awards	19
Disclosures and Assurances	19
Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	19
DOJ Certified Standard Assurances	19
Applicant Disclosure of Duplication in Cost Items	19
DOJ Certifications Regarding Lobbying; Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters; Drug-Free Workplace Requirements; Law Enforcement and Community Policing	19
Applicant Disclosure and Justification - DOJ High Risk Grantees	19
How to Apply	20
Submission Dates and Time	20
Experiencing Unforeseen Technical Issues Preventing Submission of an Application	20
Application Review Information	21
Review Criteria	21
Review Process	23
Federal Award Administration Information	23
Federal Award Notices	23
Administrative, National Policy, and Other Legal Requirements	24
Information Technology Security Clauses	24
General Information about Post-Federal Award Reporting Requirements	24
Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s)	24
Other Information	24
Freedom of Information and Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552 and 5 U.S.C. 552a)	24
Provide Feedback to OJP	24
Performance Measures	24
Application Checklist	25
Standard Solicitation Resources	28
Endnotes	29

Program Description

Overview

OJP is committed to advancing work that promotes civil rights and racial 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 proposals for rigorous research and evaluation projects that will:

1. Identify and inform the forensic community of best practices through the evaluation of existing laboratory protocols; and/or
2. Have a direct and immediate impact on laboratory efficiency and assist in making laboratory policy decisions.

The intent of this program is to direct the findings of this research and evaluation toward the identification of the most efficient, accurate, reliable, and cost-effective methods for the identification, analysis, and interpretation of physical evidence for criminal justice purposes. Projects should address the challenges and needs of the forensic science community, including, but not limited to, the operational needs discussed at the 2021 and 2022 TWG meetings, which may be found on [NIJ.ojp.gov](https://www.nij.ojp.gov). NIJ's TWG assists in identifying and prioritizing operational needs and requirements of the field, which are intended to facilitate proposal development. Additional research needs of the forensic science community can be found at the Organization of Scientific Area Committees for Forensic Sciences [website](#).

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 and gender identity, race, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation, as applicable.

Applications proposing research involving partnerships with criminal justice or other agencies, should include a letter of support or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), signed by an appropriate decision-making authority from each proposed, partnering agency. A letter of support or MOU should include the partnering agency's acknowledgement that de-identified data derived from, provided to, or obtained through, an award funded by NIJ will be archived by the grant recipient in accordance with their data archiving plan (see Data Archiving Plan under "Application and Submission Information") at the conclusion of the award. Applicants and their potential partners are encouraged to review [NIJ's data archiving guidance](#). If selected for an award, grantees will be expected to have a formal agreement in place with partnering agencies by January 1, 2024. 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 agency is expected to conduct a majority of the work proposed.

Statutory Authority

Department of Justice Appropriations Act, 2023 (Pub. L. No. 117-328, 136 Stat. 4459, 4542-4543, 4536 and 4537); 28 U.S.C. 530C.

Specific Information

This solicitation seeks applications for research and evaluation studies to produce practical knowledge

that has the potential to improve the examination and interpretation of physical evidence in forensic science laboratories.

Proposals are expected to identify the forensic science discipline(s) intended to benefit from the project. The forensic science discipline(s) should be listed in the key words on the title page. Some of the forensic science disciplines are listed below.

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

Goals, Objectives, and Deliverables

Goals and Objectives

NIJ's Research and Evaluation for the Testing and Interpretation of Physical Evidence in Publicly Funded Forensic Laboratories program is intended to meet the following goals and objectives. Proposals should address at least one of the goals specified below:

1. Assessing Existing Laboratory Protocols — Improve the understanding of scientific rationale underpinning existing laboratory processes.

To achieve this goal, applicants should perform research and evaluation of existing laboratory schemes and methods to determine possible improvements. Examples of such projects include:

- Evaluation of minimum acceptance criteria of analytical data, such as mass spectra, generated in case samples.
- Evaluation of accuracy gained from additional orthogonal testing of controlled substance samples.
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of a blind verification program for technical reviews.
- Evaluation of implementation of software and statistical methods used for the interpretation of DNA mixtures.

2. Evaluating Emerging Methods — Assess the value of emerging laboratory processes.

To achieve this goal, applicants should conduct research to compare emerging methods to those currently used to accomplish the same purpose in publicly funded forensic laboratories. These evaluations should consider factors such as accuracy, reliability, cost, and analysis time. Examples of such projects include:

- Comparison of a newly developed comprehensive method to existing multi-step method(s).
- Comparison of methodology or instrumentation new to the laboratory or field to instrumentation that is currently used in the laboratory in order to investigate relative form factors such as accuracy, reliability, cost, analysis time, etc.

Proposals should employ a scientific approach to determine how to assess the testing and processing of physical evidence. These approaches should take into consideration general variables, such as accuracy, reliability, cost-effectiveness, and efficiency, and make clear which of these aspects may need improvement. Every effort should be made to validate the research using actual casework samples. If this is not possible, applications should describe barriers preventing the use of casework samples and detailed methodology for creating realistic proxy samples.

NIJ also strongly encourages applicants to seek guidance from a statistician in order to ensure that rigorous testing measures are employed. Areas that may benefit from a statistician include, but are not limited to, research design (e.g., experimental design, planning sample size or sampling designs, designing data collection methods), selection and application of appropriate statistical methods, and how to use software to perform data analyses. Such associations foster a greater understanding of the testing and validation issues unique to the field of forensic science and may strengthen the scope of the proposed application.

Information on this program (including previously funded projects) can be found at: <https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/forensics/research-and-evaluation-publicly-funded-forensic-laboratories>.

In order to foster collaboration between emerging forensic science researchers and forensic science laboratories, as well as to ensure the direct applicability of the results of this research to lab practice, non-publicly funded laboratory applicants must demonstrate a partnership with an appropriate lab.

To assist researchers in identifying appropriate practitioner collaborators, NIJ has developed a site for labs to indicate their interest in participating in research. Interested labs and researchers are encouraged to visit <https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/connecting-researchers-publicly-funded-forensic-laboratories> for more information.

Deliverables

Technical Summary. Any recipient of an award under this solicitation will be expected to submit a technical

summary. Additional information on the technical summary requirement for the solicitation is posted on NIJ's [webpage](#). Additionally, grantees under this solicitation will be expected to include all methods, standard operating procedures (SOPs), and validation summaries resulting from these awards in an appendix of the technical summary or indicate where these items are publicly available. All such summaries, SOPs, and methods produced as a result of each award under this solicitation may be made publicly available by NIJ.

Required Data Sets and Associated Files and Documentation. Any recipient of an award under this solicitation will be expected to submit all data sets in accordance with their data archiving plan (see Data Archiving Plan under "Application and Submission Information") that result in whole or in part from the work funded by the award, along with associated files and any documentation necessary for others to reproduce the project's findings.

In addition to these deliverables (and the required reports and data on performance measures), 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) 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: <https://www.forensiccoe.org>.

The goals, objectives, and deliverables are directly related to the performance measures that show the completed work's results, as discussed in the "Application and Submission Information" section.

Priority Areas

There is a body of evidence that racial and ethnic minority groups are underrepresented in science and engineering fields at all levels. [\[1\]](#) [\[2\]](#) NIJ will give special consideration in award decisions to proposals from Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs).

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.)

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. This factor will only be considered for proposals from non-publicly funded lab applicants. It is understood that publicly funded labs serve all within their jurisdiction.

Federal Award Information

Solicitation Categories

This solicitation does not include Solicitation Categories.

Awards, Amounts and Durations

Anticipated Number of Awards 1-7	Period of Performance Start Date 1/1/24
Period of Performance Duration (Months) 60	Anticipated Total Amount to be Awarded Under Solicitation \$1,500,000.00
	Additional Information Please see Anticipated Maximum Dollar Amount of Awards, and Period of Performance Duration sections below.

Continuation Funding Intent

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

Availability of Funds

This solicitation, and awards under this solicitation, are subject to the availability of appropriated funds and to any modifications 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 solicitation as grants. See the "Administrative, National Policy, and Other Legal Requirements" section of the [OJP Grant 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.

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 [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information.

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 2023, 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 2023 solicitation in future fiscal years, dependent on, among other considerations, the merit of the applications and on the availability of appropriations.

What will not be funded:

- 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 propose assessing current lab processes, evaluating an emerging method or instrument, or otherwise 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, or to contract or purchase training, validation, or other services that will complete the majority of the proposed research project. (A budget may include these items if they are necessary to conduct research, development, demonstration, evaluation, or analysis.) 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.
- Work that will be funded under another specific solicitation
- Proposals with the sole purpose of processing or analyzing casework samples.

Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

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

Pre-agreement Costs (also known as Pre-award Costs)

See the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for information on pre-agreement costs (also known as pre-award costs).

Limitation on Use of Award Funds for Employee Compensation: Waiver

See the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for information on the Limitation on Use of Award Funds for Employee Compensation; Waiver.

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

See the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for information on Prior Approval, Planning, and Reporting of Conference/Meeting/Training Costs.

Costs Associated with Language Assistance (if applicable)

See the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for information on Costs Associated with Language Assistance.

Anticipated Maximum Dollar Amount of Awards

The average FY 2022 NIJ grant award amount under this solicitation was approximately \$330,000; however, NIJ grant awards typically range from \$100,000 to \$1 million. Applicants are encouraged to propose budgets that match the research activities proposed. Cost estimates should be focused on maximizing the potential for success of the proposed project, rather than past averages.

Period of Performance Duration

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. However, applicants are encouraged to break out their budgets by project year or by phases, in the event that NIJ chooses to fund the project partially or incrementally.

Eligibility Information

For eligibility information, see the solicitation cover page.

For information on cost sharing or match requirements, see the "Federal Award Information" section.

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.) Applicants must be, or be partnered with, publicly funded forensic science laboratories that are currently accredited by an independent accrediting or certifying forensic science organization. Publicly funded forensic science laboratories include state, regional, county, municipal, and tribal agencies.

For the purposes of this solicitation, "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.

Notice regarding law enforcement agencies: State, local, and university or college law enforcement agencies must be certified by an approved independent credentialing body or have started the certification process to be eligible for FY 2023 DOJ discretionary grant funding. To become certified, the law enforcement agency must meet two mandatory conditions: (1) the agency's use-of-force policies adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, and (2) the agency's use-of-force policies prohibit chokeholds except in situations where use of deadly force is allowed by law. The certification requirement also applies to law enforcement agencies receiving DOJ discretionary grant funding through a subaward. For detailed information on this certification requirement, please visit <https://cops.usdoj.gov/SafePolicingEO> to access the Standards for Certification on Safe Policing for Safe Communities, the Implementation Fact Sheet, and the List of Designated Independent Credentialing Bodies.

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

Application and Submission Information

Content of Application Submission

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:

- Proposal Narrative
- Budget Web-Based Form (The web-based form includes the budget details and the budget narrative.)
- Curriculum Vitae/Resumes for Key Personnel. (For purposes of this solicitation, "key personnel" means the principal investigator, and any and all co-principal investigators.)
- Proof of Forensic Laboratory Accreditation, to include the scope of the accreditation for the involved publicly funded forensic laboratory.

If NIJ determines that an application does not include these elements, it will neither proceed to peer review, nor receive further consideration.

Information to Complete the Application for Federal Assistance (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 [OJP Grant 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 solicitation (“funding opportunity”) is not subject to [Executive Order \(E.O.\) 12372](#). In completing the SF-424, an applicant is to answer question 19 by selecting “Program is not covered by E.O. 12372.”

Standard Applicant Information (JustGrants 424 and General Agency 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

The proposal abstract is a very important part of the application, and serves as an introduction to the proposed project. NJ uses the proposal abstract for a number of purposes, including assignment of the application to an appropriate review panel. If the application is funded, the proposal abstract typically will become public information and be used to describe the project.

A Proposal Abstract (no more than 400 words) summarizing the proposed project—including its purpose, primary activities, and expected outcomes—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 website if the project is awarded. See the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for an example of a proposal abstract.

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, NJ may consider such noncompliance in peer review and in final award decision.

The Proposal Narrative should 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.
- Key words, including forensic science focus areas and accrediting body.
- Contact information (that is, name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address) for both the applicant 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 introduce the purpose, goals, and objectives of the proposed project.

The statement of the problem should:

- Explain the importance of the problem or critical barrier to progress in the field proposed.
- Explain how the proposed project may improve forensic practice through scientific knowledge and/or technical capability. Describe how concepts, methods, technologies, or services that drive the forensic science field will be changed if the proposed aims are achieved.

2. Project Design and Implementation (This section should account for a minimum of nine 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.

This section should:

- State concisely the goals of the proposed research.
- 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 any resource sharing plans, as appropriate.
- 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.

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 applicant should include a discussion of the proposed dissemination plan to produce scholarly products and to make information available to broader interested audiences, such as criminal justice practitioners or policymakers. Awardees are encouraged to publish their research using open access options. **Grant funds may be used for costs associated with open access publication.**

Applicants should:

- Summarize the expected outcome(s), including the impact that the results of the proposed research will exert on the discipline(s) involved.
- Explain the criminal justice significance of the proposed study.
- Explain how the application challenges and seeks to shift current forensic practice paradigms.

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:

- **Facilities & 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 member'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.
 - Senior/Key Personnel Profile: Any 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/ postgraduate role should be included.
 - 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 identified at an effort level of "zero person months" or "as needed." Individuals with measurable effort may not be listed 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:

- The project management plan. Applicants should outline the management plan and organization

that connects to the goals and objectives of the project. Among other factors, that plan should include the anticipated level of effort of key personnel.

- Letter of support from or MOU with a publicly funded laboratory, if applicable.
- 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.

6. Plan for Collecting the Data Required for this Solicitation's Performance Measures

Note: An applicant is not required to submit performance data with the application. Rather, performance measure information is included as a notification that award recipients will be required to submit performance data as part of each award's reporting requirements. Some measures are presented as examples, while others are the exact measures that every recipient will be expected to address.

OJP will require each award recipient to submit regular performance data that show the completed work's results. The performance data directly relate to the goals, objectives, and deliverables identified in the "Goals, Objectives, and Deliverables" discussion. Applicants can visit OJP's performance measurement page at www.ojp.gov/performance for an overview of performance measurement activities at OJP.

A list of performance measure questions for this program can be found in the 'Performance Measures' section below.

NIJ will require award recipients to submit performance measure data, quarterly financial reports, semi-annual performance reports, and the technical summary report in JustGrants. NIJ will provide further guidance on the post-award submission process if the applicant is selected for award.

Note on Project Evaluations

An applicant that proposes to use award funds through this solicitation to conduct project evaluations must follow the guidance in the "Note on Project Evaluations" section in the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#).

Goal, Objective and Deliverables

The applicant will submit the project's goals, objectives, deliverables and timeline in the JustGrants web-based form. 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 previous section and outline the project's goals.

Program Objectives. The applicant should explain how the program will accomplish its goals. Objectives are specific, quantifiable statements of the project's desired results. They should be measurable and clearly linked to the goal.

Deliverables. Project deliverables refer to outputs—tangible or intangible—that are submitted within the scope of a project.

Budget and Associated Documentation

Budget Worksheet and Budget Narrative (Web-based Form)

The applicant will complete the JustGrants web-based budget form. For additional information, see the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) and the [Complete the Application in JustGrants – Budget](#) training. **NIJ encourages the budgeting of grant funds for open access publication costs.**

The following paragraph (on "Cofunding") expressly modifies the "Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement" provisions in the [OJP Grant 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 percent 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.

For additional match information, see the "Cost Sharing or Match Requirement" section under Federal Award Information.

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.

Pre-agreement Costs (also known as Pre-award Costs)

See the section on Costs Requiring Prior Approval in the [DOJ Grants Financial Guide Post Award Requirements](#) for more information.

Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)

If applicable, the applicant will upload their indirect cost rate agreement as an attachment in JustGrants. See the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for more information on indirect costs.

Consultant Rate

See the [DOJ Grants Financial Guide](#) for information on the consultant rates which require prior approval from OJP.

Limitation on Employee Compensation; Waiver

See the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for information on the Limitation on Use of Award Funds for Employee Compensation for Awards over \$250,000; Waiver.

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

The applicant will download the questionnaire, complete it, and upload it as an attachment in JustGrants. See the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for the link to the questionnaire and additional information.

Disclosure of Process Related to Executive Compensation

This solicitation expressly modifies the OJP Grant Application Resource Guide by not incorporating its "Disclosure of Process Related to Executive Compensation" provisions. Applicants to this solicitation are not required to provide this disclosure.

Additional Application Components

The applicant will attach the additional requested documentation in JustGrants.

Curriculum Vitae or Resumes

Provide curriculum vitae, resumes, or biosketches of the principal investigator and all senior/key personnel (not counted against the proposal narrative page limit). Curriculum vitae, resumes, or biosketches of senior/

key personnel should not exceed five pages per person. For the purposes of this solicitation, "senior/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

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 [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for information on tribal authorizing resolutions.

Timeline Form

Proposed project timeline and expected milestones.

Letters of Support

Letters of cooperation/support or administrative agreements from organizations collaborating in the project, such as law enforcement and correctional agencies (if applicable).

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 [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#).

Bibliography/reference

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.

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/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-social-science-research>.

Proof of Forensic Laboratory Accreditation including Scope

Acceptable types of documentation of current accreditation include: an electronic (scanned) copy of the current accreditation certificate(s), a digital photograph of the current accreditation certificate(s), or a letter from the accrediting body that includes the certificate number. Additionally, if a certificate references another document that contains key information on the type or scope of the accreditation, **provide a copy of that supplemental documentation**. Independent accrediting or certifying organizations may include the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors/Laboratory Accreditation Board (ASCLD-LAB), Forensic Quality Services (FQS), the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA), ANSI National Accreditation Board (ANAB), or other appropriate accrediting bodies. Applicants should list the name of their accrediting body in the key words on the title page.

Consortium/Contractual Arrangements

Explain the programmatic, fiscal, and administrative arrangements to be made between the applicant organization and the consortium organization(s) (if applicable).

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 archived in accordance with the submitted plan as approved by NIJ. At a minimum, this plan should include submission of study-level information to the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data ([NACJD](https://nij.ojp.gov/funding/data-archiving)) that links to a publicly available data posting location. See <https://nij.ojp.gov/funding/data-archiving>.

Applications should include, as an appendix, a brief plan — labeled “Data Archiving Plan” — to comply with data archiving requirements. The plan should provide details about proposed data management and archiving of **all files and documentation** necessary for others to reproduce the project’s findings. Pertinent files and documentation may include, among other things, qualitative and quantitative data produced, instrumentation and data collection forms, codebook(s), any specialized programming code necessary to reproduce all constructed measures and the original data analysis, 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.

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.

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 the Programmatic Checklist](#).
- 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

For research proposed under this application, provide a list of any other agencies, organizations, or funding sources to which this application has been submitted. Also include any current support this line of research is receiving.

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.")

Disclosures and Assurances

The applicant will address the following disclosures and assurances.

Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

Complete and submit the SF-LLL in Grants.gov. Once the applicant submits in Grants.gov, this information will pre-pend into JustGrants. See the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information.

DOJ Certified Standard Assurances

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

Applicant Disclosure of Duplication in Cost Items

Complete the JustGrants web-based Applicant Disclosure of Duplication in Cost Items form. See the [OJP Grant 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 the DOJ Certified Certifications Regarding Lobbying; Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters; Drug-Free Workplace Requirements; Law Enforcement and Community Policing. See the [OJP Grant 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 [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information.

How to Apply

Registration: Before submitting an application, all applicants must register with the System for Award Management (SAM). You must renew and validate your registration every 12 months. If you do not renew your SAM registration, it will expire. An expired registration can delay or prevent application submission in Grants.gov and JustGrants. Registration and renewal can take up to 10 business days to complete.

Submission: Applications must be submitted to DOJ electronically through a two-step process via Grants.gov and JustGrants.

Step 1: After registering with SAM, the applicant must submit the **SF-424** and **SF-LLL** in Grants.gov at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html> by the Grants.gov deadline. **Submit the SF-424 and SF-LLL as early as possible, but no later than 48 hours before the Grants.gov deadline.** If an applicant fails to submit in Grants.gov, they will be unable to apply in JustGrants.

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

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 DIAMD-NoReply@usdoj.gov with instructions on how to create a JustGrants account. Register the Entity Administrator and the Application Submitter with JustGrants as early as possible but no later than 48-72 hours before the JustGrants deadline. Once registered in JustGrants, the Application Submitter will receive an emailed link to complete the rest of the application in JustGrants. The Entity Administrator also will need to log into JustGrants to review and invite the applicant's Authorized Representative(s) before an application can be submitted.

Submit the complete application package in JustGrants at least 24 – 48 hours prior to the JustGrants deadline. Some of the application components will be entered directly into JustGrants, and others will require uploading attached documents. Therefore, applicants will need to allow ample time before the JustGrants deadline to prepare each component. Applicants may save their progress in the system and revise the application as needed prior to hitting the Submit button at the end of the application in JustGrants.

For additional information, see the "How to Apply" section in the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) and the [DOJ Application Submission Checklist](#).

Submission Dates and Time

The **SF-424** and the **SF-LLL** must be submitted in Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. eastern time on April 26, 2023.

The **full application** must be submitted in JustGrants by 8:59 p.m. eastern time on May 03, 2023.

OJP urges applicants to submit their Grants.gov and JustGrants submissions prior to the due dates with sufficient time to correct any errors and resubmit by the submission deadlines if a rejection notification is received. 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 process in sufficient time (i.e., waiting until the date identified in this solicitation) is not an acceptable reason for late submission.

Experiencing Unforeseen Technical Issues Preventing Submission of an Application

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 application submission.

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 a tracking number 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 applicants are encouraged to email the appropriate service desk, even if they also intend to call the service desk for phone support. Experiencing wait times for phone support does 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 Help Desk \(Federal Service Desk\)](#), Monday – Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 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.
- JustGrants - contact the JustGrants Service Desk at JustGrants.Support@usdoj.gov or 833-872-5175, Monday – Friday from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. ET and Saturday, Sunday, and Federal holidays from 9 a.m. to 5 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 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 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,
- 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 who does not provide documentation of a technical issue or who 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 [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#).

Application Review Information

Review Criteria

Merit Review Criteria

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) (15%)

- Demonstrated understanding of the need to determine and employ best processes for a procedure currently used by a forensic science field/discipline.
- Demonstrated awareness of the state of current protocols widely used by the forensic science community within the proposed forensic science discipline of the application.

Project Design and Implementation (quality and technical merit) (35%)

- 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. Detailed description and justification of the sample type and sample size to be tested and 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.

Potential Impact (30%)

- Potential to determine and increase the awareness of best practices for the evaluation and interpretation of physical evidence for the forensic science community.
- Potential for significantly improved understanding of the scientific rationale underpinning existing laboratory processes.
- Potential for innovative solutions to protocols to increase the efficiency, accuracy, reliability, or cost-effectiveness for the analysis and interpretation of physical evidence.
- 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 forensic science criminal justice practitioners or policymakers.

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 senior/key personnel, 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).
- Relationship between the capabilities/competencies of the proposed project staff (including the applicant organization) and the scope and strategies of the proposed project.
- Strength of the scientific environment (e.g., laboratory support, equipment and other physical resources, or collaborative arrangements) in which the work will be done and its contribution to the probability of success.

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.

Other Review Criteria/Factors

Other important considerations for NIJ include strategic priorities (specifically including, but not limited to Minority Serving Institutions already mentioned, if applicable), available funding, past performance, planned scholarly products, 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.

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.

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 common requirements applicable to all OJP solicitations:

- The application must be submitted by an eligible type of applicant.
- The application must request funding within programmatic funding constraints (if applicable).
- The application must be responsive to the scope of the solicitation.
- The application must include all items necessary to meet the basic minimum requirements.

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.

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 entity. 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 entity is listed in SAM 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 entity that appears in the non-public segment of the integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (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 entity.

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 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 30th. See the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for information on award notifications and instructions.

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 [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#).

Information Technology Security Clauses

An application in response to this solicitation may require inclusion of information related to information technology security. See the [OJP Grant 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 typically 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 [OJP Grant 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 on cover page.

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

Other Information

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

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

Performance Measures

Objective	Performance Measure(s)	Description	Data Recipient Provides
Conduct research in science, technology, engineering, and/or mathematics having clear implications for criminal or juvenile justice policy and practice in the United States.	1. 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) law review journal articles, book chapter(s) or book(s) in the academic press, technological prototypes, patented inventions, or similar scientific products.		1. List of citation(s) to all scholarly products that resulted in whole or in part from work funded under the NIJ award.
	2. 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.		2. Quarterly financial reports, semi-annual and final performance reports, and products of the work performed under the NIJ award (including, at minimum, a technical summary). If applicable, an annual audit report.
	3. 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.		3. If applicable, each data set that resulted in whole or in part from work funded under the NIJ award.
	4. Number of technologies fielded as a result (in whole or in part) of work funded under the NIJ award.	A technology is defined as a tool to include, for example, test methods, software, hardware, etc. A fielded technology is one that remains in use at the conclusion of the grant or agreement.	4. Description of all technologies fielded as a result (in whole or in part) of work funded under the NIJ award.

Application Checklist

NIJ FY23 Research and Evaluation for the Testing and Interpretation of Physical Evidence in Publicly Funded Forensic Laboratories

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:

- Acquire or renew your Entity's [System Award Management \(SAM\) Registration Information](#) (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))

Register in Grants.gov

- Acquire an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and a Grants.gov username and password (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- Acquire AOR confirmation from the E-Business Point of Contact (E-Biz POC) (see [OJP Grant 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 [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- Sign up for Grants.gov email [notifications](#) (optional) (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- Read [Important Notice: Applying for Grants in Grants.gov](#)
- Read OJP policy and guidance on conference approval, planning, and reporting available at <https://www.ojp.gov/funding/financialguidedojoiii-postaward-requirements#6g3y8> (see [OJP Grant 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 2023 Awards](#)" in the [OJP Funding Resource Center](#).

Review the Scope Requirement

- The federal amount requested is within the allowable limit(s) of \$1.5 million.

Review Eligibility Requirement:

- Review the Eligibility section on the cover page and Eligibility Information section in the solicitation.

~~~~~

#### **Application Step 1**

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@ncjrs.gov](mailto:grants@ncjrs.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](http://Grants.gov/customer-support), or [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov) regarding technical difficulties (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))

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

- Standard Applicant information (SF-424 information from Grants.gov)
- Proposal Abstract
- **Proposal Narrative\***
  - The project management plan
  - Letters of cooperation/support or administrative agreements from organizations collaborating in the project, or letters of intent to establish agreements (if applicable)
  - List of entities with which the applicant proposes to contract

### Budget and Associated Documentation

- **Budget Web-Based form\***
- Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable) (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- Financial Management and System of Internal Controls Questionnaire (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))

### Additional Application Components

- Tribal Authorizing Resolution (if applicable) (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- Research and Evaluation Independence and Integrity (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- Request and Justification for Employee Compensation; Waiver (if applicable) (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- **Curriculum Vitae or Resumes\***
- Timeline Form
- Letters of Support
- Bibliography/references
- Any tools/instruments, questionnaires, tables/charts/graphs, or maps pertaining to the proposed study that supplement those in the narrative
- List of Individuals in the Application
- Human Subjects Protection
- Privacy Certificate
- Request to Use Incentives or Stipends (if applicable)
- **Proof of Forensic Laboratory Accreditation including Scope\***

- Consortium/Contractual Arrangements (if applicable)
- Data Archiving Plan
- Performance Report for Continuing Lines of Research (if applicable)
- List of any previous and current NIJ awards to applicant organization and investigator(s)
- Potential Environmental Impact Coversheet and Checklist — National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Current and Pending (Other) Support

#### Disclosures and Assurances

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

#### Standard Solicitation Resources

[OJP Grant 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 resource 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.

#### Endnotes

[1] 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://ncses.nsf.gov/pubs/nsb20223/>.

[2] 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://ncses.nsf.gov/wmpd>.