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Office of Justice Programs
National Institute of Justice



NIJ National Center on Forensics, Fiscal Year 2021

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Overview

The [U.S. Department of Justice](#) (DOJ), [Office of Justice Programs](#) (OJP), National Institute of Justice ([NIJ](#)), is seeking applications for funding for competitive funding under the FY 2021 NIJ National Center on Forensics. This project furthers the Department's mission by providing resources to support development, education, and training opportunities in the forensic science, medico-legal, law enforcement, and legal communities.

This solicitation incorporates the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) by reference. The OJP Grant Application Resource Guide provides guidance to applicants on how to prepare and submit applications for funding to OJP. **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, 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, Other

Other

For purposes of this solicitation, the term "state" means any state of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virginia Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

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.)

To advance Executive Order 13929 Safe Policing for Safe Communities, as of October 28, 2020, the Attorney General determined that all 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 allocated FY 2021 DOJ discretionary grant funding, as either a recipient or a subrecipient. For detailed information on this new certification requirement, please visit <https://cops.usdoj.gov/SafePolicingEO>.

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

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 2021 solicitation in future fiscal years, dependent on, among other considerations, the merit of the applications and on the availability of appropriations.

Contact Information

For technical assistance with submitting the **SF-424 and SF- LLL** in Grants.gov, contact the Grants.gov Customer Support Hotline at 800-518-4726, 606-545-5035, at [Grants.gov customer support webpage](#), or email at support@grants.gov. The Grants.gov Support Hotline operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, except on federal holidays.

For technical assistance with submitting the **full application** in DOJ's Justice Grants System (JustGrants), contact the JustGrants Service Desk at JustGrants.Support@usdoj.gov or at 833-872-5175. The JustGrants Service Desk operates 5 a.m. to 9 p.m. EST Monday - Friday and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Sunday, and federal holidays.

An applicant that experiences unforeseen Grants.gov or JustGrants technical issues beyond its control that prevent it from submitting its application by the deadline must email the National Criminal Justice Reference Service Response Center (Response Center) at grants@ncjrs.gov **within 24 hours after the application deadline** to request approval to submit its application after the deadline.

For assistance with any other requirements of this solicitation, contact the Response Center by telephone at 800-851-3420 or TTY: 301-240-6310 (hearing impaired only) or by email at grants@ncjrs.gov. Response Center hours of operation are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. ET Monday through Friday, and 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET on the solicitation close date.

Submission Information

In FY 2021, applications will be submitted to DOJ in a **NEW** two-step process.

Step 1: Applicants will submit an **SF-424 and an SF-LLL** in Grants.gov at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html>. To register in Grants.gov, applicants will need to obtain a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) and System for Award Management (SAM) registration or renewal.

Step 2: Applicants will submit the **full application** including attachments in JustGrants at [JustGrants.usdoj.gov](https://www.justgrants.usdoj.gov).

To be considered timely, the full application must be submitted in JustGrants by the JustGrants application deadline.

OJP encourages applicants to review, the "How to Apply" section in the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#).

Contents

Contact Information	1
Program Description	5
Overview	5
Statutory Authority	5
Specific Information	5
Goals, Objectives, Deliverables, and Timeline	5
Priority Areas	6
Federal Award Information	7
Awards, Amounts and Durations	7
Continuation Funding Intent	7
Availability of Funds	7
Types of Awards	7
Financial Management and System of Internal Controls	7
Budget Information	7
Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement	7
Pre-agreement Costs (also known as Pre-award Costs)	8
Limitation on Use of Award Funds for Employee Compensation: Waiver	8
Prior Approval, Planning, and Reporting of Conference/Meeting/Training Costs	8
Costs Associated with Language Assistance (if applicable)	8
Eligibility Information	8
Application and Submission Information	8
Information to Complete the Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)	8
Standard Applicant Information (JustGrants 424 and General Agency Information)	8
Proposal Abstract	8
Proposal Narrative	8
Goals, Objectives, Deliverables, and Timeline	10
Budget and Associated Documentation	10
Budget Worksheet and Budget Narrative (Web-based Form)	10
Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)	10
Financial Management Questionnaire (including applicant disclosure of high-risk status)	10
Additional Application Components	10
Curriculum Vitae or Resumes	10
Tribal Authorizing Resolution	10
Timeline Form	11
Letters of Support	11
Research and Evaluation Independence and Integrity Statement	11
Bibliography/reference	11
Any tools/instruments, questionnaires, tables/chart/graphs, or maps	11
List of Individuals in the Application	11
Human Subjects Protection	11
Privacy Certificate	11
Request to Use Incentives or Stipends	11
Documentation of "New Investigator" Status	11
Consortium/Contractual Arrangements	11
Data Archiving Plan	11
Documentation of Advancing DOJ Priorities (if applicable)	12
Documentation of High-Poverty Areas or Persistent-Poverty Counties (if applicable)	12
Disclosures and Assurances	12
Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	12
DOJ Certified Standard Assurances	12
Applicant Disclosure of Duplication in Cost Items	12

DOJ Certifications Regarding Lobbying; Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements	12
Applicant Disclosure and Justification – DOJ High Risk Grantees (if applicable)	12
How to Apply	12
Submission Dates and Time	12
Application Review Information	12
Review Criteria	13
Review Process	14
Federal Award Administration Information	14
Federal Award Notices	14
Administrative, National Policy, and Other Legal Requirements	14
Information Technology (IT) Security Clauses	14
General Information about Post-Federal Award Reporting Requirements	14
Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s)	14
Other Information	15
Freedom of Information and Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552 and 5 U.S.C. 552a)	15
Provide Feedback to OJP	15
Performance Measures	15
Application Checklist	16
	18
Endnotes	19

Program Description

Overview

The Department of Justice is committed to advancing work that promotes civil rights, increases access to justice, supports crime victims, protects the public from crime and evolving threats, and builds trust between law enforcement and the community.

With this solicitation, NIJ seeks proposals from qualified applicants to establish and operate a National Center on Forensics at an accredited university of higher education, with medical and law schools affiliated within the same university system, and in partnership with a full-service and independent state department of forensic science with a medical examiner function, that is located in the same state as the partner accredited university.^[1] The center is to provide medico-legal learning opportunities for medical students to train as deputy medical examiners/coroners in underserved rural areas; provide forensic science and legal training to district attorneys, judges, and law enforcement; and develop opportunities, as appropriate, among the designated partners to benefit current and future practitioners in the field.

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.

Statutory Authority

Department of Justice Appropriations Act, 2021 (Public Law 116-260), 134 Stat 1182, 1257.

Specific Information

NIJ is the federal government's lead agency for forensic science research and development and the administration of programs that improve laboratory efficiency. The mission of NIJ's Office of Investigative and Forensic Sciences (OIFS) is to improve the quality and practice of forensic science through innovative solutions that support research and development, testing and evaluation, technology, information exchange, and the development of resources for the criminal justice community.

Forensic science is a multidisciplinary field involving the application of sciences such as physics, chemistry, biology, pathology, computer science, and engineering to matters of law. It, moreover, involves the methods and tools for collecting, preserving, examining, and interpreting evidence and the related educational/training programs that improve the science and the use of science within criminal justice agencies.

This National Center on Forensics, under the guidance of NIJ, will be charged with establishing collaborations and/or partnerships with agencies, including, but not limited to, institutions of higher learning with affiliate medical and law schools, publicly funded forensic science laboratories, and statewide district attorneys' associations to provide medico-legal learning opportunities for medical students to train as deputy medical examiners/coroners in underserved rural areas; provide forensic science and legal training to district attorneys, judges, law enforcement, and others with an appropriate background; and develop opportunities, as appropriate, amongst the designated partners to benefit current and future practitioners in the field, such as forensic pathologists/medical examiners, forensic scientists, district attorneys, and law enforcement, or others as approved by NIJ. NIJ anticipates that this National Center on Forensics will collaborate with the FY2020 National Center on Forensics^[2] to align goals, coordinate activities, maximize impact, and reduce redundancies, where appropriate and under the guidance of NIJ.

Goals, Objectives, Deliverables, and Timeline

- **Providing scientific and technical learning opportunities for the medico-legal community specifically targeted for medical students, and focused on underserved rural areas.** This National Center on Forensics will serve as a centralized innovative center to encourage engagement of medical students to train as deputy medical examiners/coroners in underserved rural areas. As outlined in the NIJ Needs Assessment of Forensic Laboratories and Medical Examiner/Coroner Offices Report to Congress in December 2019 (pg. 72), "*The overwhelming need identified by the medico-legal death investigator (MDI) community is the extreme national shortage of practicing board-certified forensic pathologists (BCFPs) who are trained and qualified to perform forensic autopsies*".^[3] Given the importance of this field and the difficulty of recruiting and retaining qualified individuals, this National Center on Forensics is expected to develop methods by which to provide effective learning opportunities with a focus on increasing the number of medical students pursuing a career in the forensic pathology field. This National Center on Forensics is also expected to analyze these learning methods, to the extent practicable, to identify best practices. Furthermore, various scientific and technical trainings will be developed to include topics relevant to underserved rural areas (including tribal lands), covering topics which may include preparing, applying, achieving, and maintaining appropriate accreditation and/or specialty certifications (ABMDI, ABC, etc.); opioid/NPS response; and/or mass fatality disaster management.

Providing forensic science and legal training, information, and support to law enforcement, district judges, and other appropriate criminal justice agencies. This National Center on Forensics is expected to provide specialized training relevant to the intersection of forensic science and law. These efforts may include providing workshops on emerging techniques used in forensic science, webinars, or peer-reviewed articles addressing forensic science in recent or relevant legal rulings and foundational information regarding legal considerations for the use of forensic science in the courtroom. This National Center on Forensics will provide national expertise for the criminal justice community's ongoing efforts to continuously improve the understanding and application of forensic science for law enforcement and the legal community. Under NIJ guidance, this National Center on Forensics may interface with

the DOJ National Advocacy Center (NAC) to coordinate forensic science information for the legal community.

- **Developing, consolidating, and providing access to resources and opportunities for education, training, and best practices in the forensic science community, structured to benefit current and future practitioners in the field.** This National Center on Forensics' efforts should include methods by which to understand the needs of forensic pathologists/medical examiners, forensic scientists, district attorneys, and law enforcement practitioners and, from this, develop comprehensive approaches that will benefit both current and future practitioners. Resources and opportunities will be referenced and developed in consideration of the variety of challenges facing forensic science in various communities, from small, rural, and/or tribal entities, to city, county, and state agencies. Training topics will include evidence-based research addressing topics in forensic science, including, but not limited to, advances in research, relevant implementation efforts, applicable court rulings, and standardization or best practices. Topics will be developed in coordination with partners within this National Center on Forensics and initiated with NIJ approval.

This National Center on Forensics should expect that the majority of its work will be on projects specifically defined and/or approved by NIJ, in support of the above-listed objectives, as well as those identified in the NIJ Needs Assessment of Forensic Laboratories and Medical Examiner/Coroner Offices Report to Congress.^[4] For this reason and others (such as changes in the availability of funds; changes to the legal landscape; promulgation of new forensic technologies, or the desire to capitalize on technology opportunities), applicants should expect that the level of effort may vary significantly during the project period (or from year-to-year, should supplemental funding be made available). The successful applicant, therefore, must demonstrate the ability to add or reduce capacity in relevant areas without adversely affecting the ability to provide services or incurring unacceptable additional costs. In this context, NIJ is very interested in entertaining applications that propose to leverage existing programs, facilities, and personnel.

Final Research Report. Any recipient of an award under this solicitation will be expected to submit a final research report. Additional information on the final research report requirement for the solicitation is posted on NIJ's webpage.

Required Data Sets and Associated Files and Documentation. Any recipient of an award under this solicitation will be expected to submit to the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data (NACJD) all data sets that result, in whole or in part, from the work funded by the award, along with associated files and any documentation necessary for future efforts by others to reproduce the project's findings and/or to extend the scientific value of the data set through secondary analysis.

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) law review journal articles, book chapter(s) or book(s) in the academic press, technological prototypes, patented inventions, or similar scientific products. NIJ expects that there will be an equal effort to make the research findings accessible to practitioner and policymaker audiences.

The Goals, Objectives, and Deliverables are directly related to the performance measures that demonstrate the results of the work completed.

Priority Areas

The Department of Justice is committed to advancing work that promotes civil rights, increases access to justice, supports crime victims, protects the public from crime and evolving threats, and builds trust between law enforcement and the community. In FY 2021, OJP will give priority consideration in award decisions to applications that demonstrate ways in which their projects will advance one or more of these areas.

To receive priority consideration for advancing one or more of the Department's priorities, the applicant must provide a sufficient narrative explanation as an attachment, that specifies how the project will advance the promotion of civil rights, access to justice, support to crime victims, protecting the public from crime and evolving threats, or building trust between law enforcement and the community.

In addition, OJP will give priority consideration, if applicable, to applicants that demonstrate that the individuals who are intended to benefit from the requested grant reside in high-poverty areas or persistent-poverty counties.

To receive priority consideration under the poverty priority, the applicant must provide information to demonstrate that the individuals who are intended to benefit from the requested grant reside in high-poverty areas or persistent poverty counties. For purposes of this priority consideration, the term "high-poverty area" means any census tract with a poverty rate of at least 20 percent as measured by the 2013–2017 5-year data series available from the American Community Survey of the Census Bureau (applicants may search by census tract at <https://www.census.gov/acs/www/data/data-tables-and-tools/narrative-profiles/2017/>) and the term "persistent poverty counties" means any county that has had 20 percent or more of its population living in poverty over the past 30 years, as measured by the 1990 and 2000 decennial censuses and the most recent Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (applicants may search by county at <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/dec/census-poverty.html> and at <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/saie.html>).

Priority consideration is one of many factors that OJP considers in making funding decisions and is not a guarantee of an award.

Federal Award Information

Awards, Amounts and Durations

Anticipated Number of Awards

1

Anticipated Maximum Dollar Amount of Awards

\$4,000,000.00

Period of Performance Start Date

1/1/22 12:00 AM

Period of Performance Duration (Months)

36

Anticipated Total Amount to be Awarded Under Solicitation

\$4,000,000.00

Additional Information

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 36 -month period of performance.

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 progress of award funded work, when making continuation award decisions.

Availability of Funds

This solicitation, and awards (if any are made) 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.

Types of Awards

NIJ expects to make awards under this solicitation as cooperative agreements, which provide for OJP to have substantial involvement in carrying out award activities. See the "Administrative, National Policy, and Other Legal Requirements" section of the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#).

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. The "Part 200 Uniform Requirements" means the DOJ regulation at 2 C.F.R. Part 2800, which adopts (with certain modifications) the provisions of 2 C.F.R. Part 200. See [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 2021, 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 2021 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 primarily to purchase equipment, materials, or supplies. (A budget may include these items if they are necessary to conduct research, development, demonstration, evaluation, or analysis.)
- Applications that are not responsive to the purposes of this specific solicitation.

Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

See "Co-funding" paragraph under item 5 ("Budget and Associated Documentation") under "Content of Application Submission" in Application and Submission Information.

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

See the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) 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](#) information on 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.

Eligibility Information

For eligibility information, see the title page.

For information on cost sharing or match requirements, see “Content of Application Submission” in Application and Submission Information.

Application and Submission Information

Content of Application Submission

The following application elements **MUST** be included in the application submission for an application to meet the basic minimum requirements (BMR) to advance to peer review and receive consideration for funding:

- Proposal Narrative,
- Budget Worksheet and Budget Narrative (web-based form), and
- Curriculum Vitae/Resumes for Key Personnel. (Curriculum Vitae for key personnel (For purposes of this solicitation, “key personnel” means the principal investigator, and any and all co-principal investigators.)

See the “Application Elements and Formatting Instructions” section of the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for information on what happens to an application that does not contain all the specified elements or that is nonresponsive to the scope of the solicitation.

Information to Complete the Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)

The SF-424 will be submitted in Grants.gov. The SF-424 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 F of the SF-424, please include the name and contact information of the individual who will complete application materials 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 12372](#). (In completing the SF-424, an applicant is to answer question 19 by selecting the response that the “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. Applicants will need to review the Standard Applicant Information in JustGrants and make edits as needed. Within this section, applicants will need to: add zip codes for areas affected by the project; confirm their Authorized Representative; and verify the organization's legal name and address.

Proposal Abstract

A proposal abstract (no more than 400 words) summarizing the proposed project including primary activities, products and deliverables, the service area, and who will benefit from the proposed project, will be completed in the JustGrants Web-based form.

Proposal Narrative

The proposal narrative should be submitted as an attachment in JustGrants. The attached document should be double-spaced, using a standard 12-point Times New Roman font; have no less than 1-inch margins; and should not exceed 30 pages. Pages should be numbered and submitted as an attachment. If the proposal narrative fails to comply with these length-related restrictions, NIJ may negatively consider such noncompliance in peer review and in final award decisions.

The following sections must be included as part of the proposal narrative:

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

The title page should include:

- Project title.
- Submission date.
- Funding opportunity number.
- Principal Investigator (and any co-principal investigators).
- Unique author identifier (e.g., ORCID, ResearcherID, Scopus Author ID), if available.
- Requests for consideration under “new investigator” and/or “priority areas of research” areas.
- Key words, including science focus areas.
- 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 presented previously 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.

2. Project Design and Implementation.

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.

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.

4. Capabilities and Competencies.

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

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

Applicants should also outline the management plan and organization that connects to the goals and objectives of the project.

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

- The project management plan.

- If the application (including the budget) identifies any proposed non-competitive agreements that are, or may be considered, procurement "contracts" (rather than subawards), for purposes of federal grants administrative requirements, the applicant also must list the entities with which the applicant proposes to contract.
- List of other agencies, organizations, or funding sources to which this application has been submitted (if applicable).

Note: applicants are **not** required to submit performance data with the application. Rather, performance measures information is included as an alert that successful applicants will be required to submit performance data as part of the reporting requirements under an award.

OJP will require each successful applicant to submit regular performance data that demonstrate the results of the work carried out under the award. The performance data directly relate to the goals, objectives, and deliverables identified on page 5.

A list of performance measure questions for this program can be found on pages 15.

Applicants can also visit OJP's performance measurement page at www.ojp.gov/performance for an overview of performance measurement activities at OJP.

Award recipients will be required to submit performance measure data in quarterly financial reports, semi-annual progress reports, and the Final Research Report. Further guidance on the post-award submission process will be provided, if selected for award.

Goals, Objectives, Deliverables, and Timeline

Applicants will submit the project's goals, objectives, deliverables, and timelines in the JustGrants Web-based form. See the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information.

Budget and Associated Documentation Budget Worksheet and Budget Narrative (Web-based Form)

Applicants will complete the JustGrants web-based budget form. See the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information.

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.

Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)

Applicants will submit their indirect cost rate agreement by uploading the agreement as an attachment in JustGrants. See the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information.

Financial Management Questionnaire (including applicant disclosure of high-risk status)

Applicants will download the questionnaire in JustGrants and submit by uploading the completed questionnaire as an attachment in JustGrants. See the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information.

Additional Application Components

Applicants will attach the additional requested documentation in JustGrants.

Curriculum Vitae or Resumes

Curriculum vitae or resume of the principal investigator and any and all co-principal investigators. In addition, curriculum vitae, resume, or biographical sketches of all other individuals (regardless of "investigator" status) who will be significantly involved in substantive aspects of the proposed project (including, for example, individuals such as statisticians used to conduct proposed data analysis).

Tribal Authorizing Resolution

If applicable, applicants will submit the Tribal Authorizing Resolution by uploading the resolution as an attachment in JustGrants. An

application in response to this solicitation may require inclusion of information related to a tribal authorizing resolution as an attachment. 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. Applicants will submit a description of their research and evaluation independence and integrity by uploading the document as an attachment in JustGrants. For additional information regarding demonstrating research/evaluation independence and integrity, including appropriate safeguards, see the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#).

Bibliography/reference

Bibliography/references. Provide a bibliography of any references cited in the Project Narrative.

Any tools/instruments, questionnaires, tables/chart/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 (documentation and forms related to Institutional Review Board [IRB] review). See <https://nij.ojp.gov/funding/human-subjects-and-privacy-protection>. **Note:** Final IRB approval is not required at the time an application is submitted.

Privacy Certificate

Privacy Certificate (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 stipends 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-scienceresearch>.

Documentation of "New Investigator" Status

Documentation of "new investigator" status, if applicable.

Consortium/Contractual Arrangements

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

Data Archiving Plan

Applicants should anticipate that NIJ will require, through special award conditions, that data sets resulting, in whole or in part, from projects funded under this solicitation be submitted for archiving with the NACJD. See <https://nij.ojp.gov/funding/data-archiving-plans-nij-funding-applicants>.

Applications should include, as an appendix, a brief plan — labeled "Data Archiving Plan" — to comply with data archiving requirements. The plan should provide brief details about proposed data management and archiving, including submission to NIJ (through NACJD) of **all files and documentation** necessary to allow for future efforts by others to reproduce the project's findings and/or to extend the scientific value of the data set through secondary analysis. Pertinent files and documentation include, among other things, qualitative and quantitative data produced, instrumentation and data collection forms, codebook(s), any specialized programming code necessary to reproduce all 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.

Note that recipients are strongly encouraged to submit required data sets at least 90 days before the end of the period of performance.

Documentation of Advancing DOJ Priorities (if applicable)

As is mentioned above, OJP will give priority consideration in award decisions to applications that specify how the project will advance one or more of the following DOJ priorities: the promotion of civil rights, access to justice, support to crime victims, protecting the public from crime and evolving threats, or building trust between law enforcement and the community. Applicants will submit the narrative by uploading the document as an attachment in JustGrants.

Documentation of High-Poverty Areas or Persistent-Poverty Counties (if applicable)

As mentioned above, OJP will give priority consideration in award decisions to applications that demonstrate that the individuals who will benefit from the requested grant reside in high-poverty areas or persistent-poverty counties as defined above. Each applicant proposing to receive consideration under the High-Poverty Areas or Persistent Poverty Counties priority must provide a sufficient narrative explanation to identify each specific High-Poverty Area (by census tract number(s)) and/or each specific Persistent-Poverty County where individuals are intended to benefit from the requested grant and how the requested grant will address specific challenges in each such identified area and/or county. Applicants will submit the narrative by uploading the document as an attachment in JustGrants.

Disclosures and Assurances

Applicants will complete the following disclosures and assurances.

Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

Applicants will complete and submit the SF-LLL in Grants.gov. See the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information.

DOJ Certified Standard Assurances

See the DOJ Certified Standard Assurances in the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#).

Applicant Disclosure of Duplication in Cost Items

Applicants will 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; and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements

Applicants will review and accept the DOJ Certified 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)

If applicable, applicants will submit as an attachment in JustGrants. See the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information. A DOJ High Risk Grantee is a 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, or noncompliance with award terms and conditions on prior awards, or that is otherwise not responsible.

How to Apply

Applicants will submit an SF-424 and an SF-LLL in Grants.gov at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html>.

Applicants will submit the **full application** including attachments in JustGrants at [JustGrants.usdoj.gov](https://www.justgrants.usdoj.gov).

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

Submission Dates and Time

The SF-424 and the SF-LLL will be submitted in Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. eastern time on June 10, 2021. OJP urges applicants to submit applications at least 72 hours prior to the application due date to allow time for the applicant to receive validation messages or rejection notifications from Grants.gov and to correct in a timely fashion any problems that may have caused a rejection notification.

The **full application** will be submitted in JustGrants by 11:59 p.m. eastern time on June 17, 2021.

To be considered timely, the full application must be submitted in JustGrants by the JustGrants application deadline.

Application Review Information

Review Criteria

a. Merit Review Criteria

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

1. Statement of the Problem (understanding of the problem, (5%))
 - Demonstrated understanding of the problem.
 - Demonstrated importance of research questions, goals and objectives, including alignment with the aims of the solicitation.
 - Demonstrated awareness of the state of current research.
2. Project Design and Implementation (quality and technical merit) (45%)
 - Feasibility of proposed project.
 - Soundness of methods and analytic and technical approach to addressing the stated aim(s) of the proposed 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.
3. Capabilities and Competencies (capabilities, demonstrated productivity, and experience of the applicant organization and proposed project staff) (30%)
 - Qualifications and experience of proposed project staff (that is, the principal investigator, any and all co-principal investigators, and all other individuals (and organizations) identified in the application (regardless of "investigator" status) who will be significantly involved in substantive aspects of the proposed project).
 - Demonstrated ability of the applicant organization to implement the proposed strategies and manage the effort.
 - Relationship between the capabilities/competencies of the proposed project staff (including the applicant organization) and the scope and strategies of the proposed project.
4. Potential Impact (20%)
 - Potential for a significant scientific or technical advance(s) that will improve criminal/juvenile justice in the United States.
 - Potential for significantly improved understanding of the stated criminal/juvenile justice problem.
 - Potential for innovative solution to address (all or a significant part of) the stated criminal/juvenile justice problem.
 - Strength and feasibility of the proposed dissemination plan to produce scholarly products (such as published, peer-reviewed, scientific journal articles, book chapter(s) or book(s) in the academic press, technological prototypes, patented inventions, databases, standards or similar scientific products) as well as make summary information available to broader interested audiences, such as criminal justice practitioners or policymakers.
5. Budget (0%)

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.
- Total cost of the project relative to the perceived benefit (cost effectiveness).
- Appropriateness of the budget relative to the level of effort.
- Use of existing resources to conserve costs.

b. Other Review Criteria/Factors

Other important considerations for NIJ include geographic diversity, strategic priorities (specifically including, but not limited to, those mentioned above relating to priority areas), available funding, past performance, and the extent to which the Budget Worksheet and Budget Narrative (Web-based form) accurately explain 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 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 stated review criteria above.

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

- 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.
- The application, if submitted by an applicant that is a DOJ High Risk Grantee, or is designated “high risk” by a federal grant-making agency outside of DOJ, must not have been determined by the NIJ Director to pose a substantial risk of program implementation failure, based on 1) the applicant’s lack of sufficient progress in addressing required corrective actions necessary for removal of the DOJ High Risk Grantee (or non-DOJ high risk) designation, 2) the nature and severity of the issues leading to or accompanying the DOJ High Risk Grantee (or non-DOJ high risk) designation, and/or 3) the applicant’s expected ability to manage grant funds and achieve grant goals and objectives.

Pursuant to the Part 200 Uniform Requirements, before award decisions are made, OJP also reviews information related to the degree of risk posed by the applicant. Among other things to help assess whether an applicant that has one or more prior federal awards has a satisfactory record with respect to performance, integrity, and business ethics, OJP checks whether the applicant 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 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 itself that currently appears in FAPIIS and was entered by a federal awarding agency. OJP will consider any such comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in FAPIIS, in its assessment of the risk posed by the applicant.

Absent explicit statutory authorization or written delegation of authority to the contrary, all final award decisions will be made by the Assistant Attorney General, 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

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 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 (IT) 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 information on information technology security.

General Information about Post-Federal Award Reporting Requirements

In addition to the deliverables described in the Program Description section, any recipient of an award under this solicitation will be required to submit certain reports and data.

Required reports. Recipients typically must submit *semi-annual* progress reports, final financial and progress reports, final research reports, 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 measures data.

Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s)

For questions directed to the Federal Awarding Agency, see NCJRS contact information on page 2.

For contact information for Grants.gov, see page 2.

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 Freedom of Information and Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552 and 5 U.S.C. 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)	Data Recipient Provides
Develop and disseminate medico-legal training opportunities for medical students to train as deputy medical examiners/coroners in underserved rural areas.	Number of curricula developed	Number of training curricula: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed • Pilot tested • Revised after
	Number of trainings conducted	Number of trainings (by type): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-person • Web-based/remote • CD/DVD • Peer-to-peer • Workshop • Other
	Number of participants who attended the trainings	Number of individuals who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended the training (in-person) or started the training (web-based) • Completed the training • Completed an evaluation at the conclusion of the training • Completed an evaluation and rated the training as satisfactory or better
	Percentage of participants who successfully completed the training	
Percentage of participants who rated the training as satisfactory or better		

Objective	Performance Measure(s)	Data Recipient Provides
Provide forensic science and/or legal training to district attorneys, judges, and law enforcement.	Number of curricula developed	Number of training curricula: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed • Pilot tested • Revised after
	Number of trainings conducted	Number of trainings (by type): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-person • Web-based/remote • CD/DVD • Peer-to-peer • Workshop • Other
	Number of participants who attended the trainings	Number of individuals who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended the training (in-person) or started the training (web-based) • Completed the training • Completed an evaluation at the conclusion of the training • Completed an evaluation and rated the training as satisfactory or better
	Percentage of participants who successfully completed the training	
Percentage of participants who rated the training as satisfactory or better		
Develop opportunities as appropriate amongst the designated partners to benefit current and future practitioners in the field.	Number and type of training/opportunity developed	Number of each type of curricula developed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational • Career enhancement • Entry level
	Number of trainings/opportunities produced	Number of trainings/opportunities (by type): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-person • Web-based/remote • CD/DVD • Peer-to-peer • Workshop • Other
	Number of participants who attended the trainings	Number of individuals who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended the training (in-person) or started the training (web-based) • Completed the training • Completed an evaluation at the conclusion of the training • Completed an evaluation and rated the training as satisfactory or better
	Percentage of participants who successfully completed the training	
Percentage of participants who rated the training as satisfactory or better		

Application Checklist

NIJ National Center on Forensics, Fiscal Year 2021

This application checklist has been created as an aid in developing an application.

What an Applicant Must Do:

Prior to Registering in Grants.gov:

- Acquire a DUNS Number (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- Acquire or renew registration with SAM (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))

To Register with Grants.gov:

- Acquire AOR and Grants.gov username/password (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- Acquire AOR confirmation from the E-Biz POC (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))

To Find Funding Opportunity:

- Search for the Funding Opportunity on Grants.gov
- Access Funding Opportunity and Application Package (see [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, reporting available at [ojp.gov/financialguide/DOJ/PostawardRequirements/chapter3.10a.htm](#) (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))

Overview of Post-Award Legal Requirements:

- Review the “[Overview of Legal Requirements Generally Applicable to OJP Grants and Cooperative Agreements - FY 2021 Awards](#)” in the [OJP Funding Resource Center](#).

Scope Requirement:

- The federal amount requested is within the allowable limit(s) of *\$4M*.

Eligibility Requirement:

- State governments.
- Special district governments.
- City or township governments.
- Public and State controlled institutions of higher education.
- County governments.
- Public housing authorities/Indian housing authorities.
- Native American tribal organizations (other than Federally recognized tribal governments).
- Native American tribal governments (Federally recognized).
- Nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education.
- Nonprofits that do not have a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education.
- Private institutions of higher education.
- For profit organizations other than small businesses.
- Independent school districts.
- Small businesses.

For purposes of this solicitation, the term “State” means any State of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virginia Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

- Submit **SF-424** and **SF-LLL** in Grants.gov

After SF-424 and SF-LLL Submission in Grants.gov, Receive Grants.gov Email Notifications That:

- Submission has been received in Grants.gov
- Submission has either been successfully validated or rejected with errors (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))

If No Grants.gov Receipt, and Validation or Error Notifications are Received:

- Contact *the* NCJRS Response Center regarding technical difficulties (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))

Receive email notification to complete application in JustGrants:

- Complete Application in JustGrants

Content of Application Submission:

The following items are critical application elements required to pass Basic Minimum Requirements review. An application that OJP determines does not include the application elements that must be included in the application submission in order for the application to meet the basic minimum requirements, will neither proceed to peer review, nor receive further consideration.

- Proposal narrative (see page 8)
- Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative (see page 10)
- Curriculum Vitae/Resumes for Key Personnel (see page 10)

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**Content of Application Submission**

- Information to Complete the Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) in Grants.gov
- Standard Applicant Information (SF-424 info from Grants.gov)
- Proposal Abstract
- Proposal Narrative

**Budget and Associated Documentation**

- Budget Worksheet and Budget Narrative (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](#))
- Documentation of Advancing DOJ Priorities (if applicable)
- Documentation of high-poverty areas or persistent poverty counties (if applicable)

**Disclosures and Assurances**

- [Disclosure of Lobbying Activities \(SF-LLL\)](#) (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- Applicant Disclosure of Duplication in Cost Items (Pending Applications) (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- DOJ Certified Standard Assurance (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](#))

*Submit Application in JustGrants:*

- Application has been successfully submitted in JustGrants

*If No JustGrants Application Submission, Validation, or Error Notifications are Received:*

- Contact [JustGrants.Support@usdoj.gov](mailto:JustGrants.Support@usdoj.gov) or 833-872-5175 regarding technical difficulties

## Endnotes

[1] Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021. Pub. L. No. 116-260 (2020). Retrieved from: <https://crsreports.congress.gov/AppropriationsStatusTable/Index/AppropriationsStatusTable?id=2021>.

[2] NIJ National Center on Forensics. (2020). Retrieved from: <https://nij.ojp.gov/funding/awards/2020-mu-cx-0001>

[3] National Institute of Justice, (2019). Report to Congress: Needs Assessment of Forensic Laboratories and Medical Examiner/Coroner Offices, Report prepared for U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, D.C. Retrieved from <https://www.justice.gov/olp/page/file/1228306/download>.

[4] Ibid.