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

NIJ FY 2023 Invited to Apply - Forensic Technology Center of Excellence

Assistance Listing Number #   16.560

Grants.gov Opportunity Number: O-NIJ-2023-171859

Solicitation Release Date: August 14, 2023 2:30 PM ET

Application Grants.gov Deadline: August 17, 2023 11:59 PM ET

Application JustGrants Deadline: August 25, 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 funding for Forensic Technology Center of Excellence. This program furthers the Department's mission by improving the safety and effectiveness of criminal justice technology and providing better access to this technology for law enforcement and other criminal justice agencies.

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:
Other

Other

Only the applicants that received an official invitation letter from NIJ are able and eligible to apply. Please refer to that letter for the eligibility requirements.

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.

For any additional assistance with requirements of this solicitation, contact Jennifer Love, NIJ Physical Scientist, by email at jennifer.love@usdoj.gov, or by telephone at (202) 598-7382.

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 an 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 then submit the **full application,** including attachments, in JustGrants at JustGrants.usdoj.gov by the JustGrants deadline. To be considered timely, the full application must be submitted in JustGrants 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

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 from qualified applicants to establish and operate a Forensic Technology Center of Excellence (FTCOE) to support NIJ's research, development, testing, and evaluation (RDT&E) process and technology transition activities in all areas of forensic science. The FTCOE should focus on specific efforts to include, but not be limited to:

- Providing scientific and technical support to NIJ's forensic science research, development, and technology transition efforts.

- Facilitating demonstration, testing, evaluation, transfer, and adoption of appropriate technology into practice by crime laboratories, medical examiner/coroner offices, law enforcement, and other criminal justice agencies and forensic science service providers.

- Providing technology transition assistance, knowledge transfer, and support to forensic science researchers and practitioners.

- Developing and providing access to resources for research dissemination, education, and evidence-based best practices in the forensic science and criminal justice communities.

- Working closely with NIJ program managers to assess and communicate the impact of forensic science RDT&E, evidence-based best practices, and systems-based approaches for the criminal justice system.

- Develop national forensic science library services to identify, curate, and make available scholarly literature relevant to the forensic science research and practitioner community.

Statutory Authority: Title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (sections 201 and 202); the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (sections 231-233, 235); and 28 U.S.C. 530C.

Specific Information

NIJ is the federal government's lead agency for forensic science research, development,

and evaluation. 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 that incorporates the investigation, analysis, and prosecution of crime (including violent crime). It includes methods and tools for collecting, preserving, and examining evidence, as well as related resources to build capacity and quality practices for implementing forensic practice in a timely, cost-effective, and efficient manner. The FTCOE will coordinate and facilitate the transition of forensic technology, particularly the current and emerging products from NIJ's research and development portfolios to state and local criminal justice agencies. Through these efforts, the FTCOE will increase the capabilities of these agencies to effectively and efficiently serve the public in matters involving forensic science.

Although Federal agencies are part of its constituency, NIJ's primary focus is on the needs and activities of state and local agencies.

Ideally, the FTCOE should have established collaborations with partners including, but not limited to, institutions of higher learning, agencies performing forensic science research, and public forensic science laboratories.

Note: For the purposes of this solicitation, higher education institutions are defined as colleges and universities recognized as accredited by the U.S. Department of Education (https://www.ed.gov/accreditation). Proposals will be strengthened by collaborations with institutions that have additionally obtained accreditation from the Forensic Science Education Programs Accreditation Commission (FEPAC) (https://www.fepac-edu.org/) or other institutions with a forensic science component.[1]

As part of the program proposal, an applicant should designate a Center Director who has the knowledge, skills, experience, and vision to lead the FTCOE; and should outline an internal management structure capable of supporting the research, development, evaluation, education, technology transition, and outreach missions of the FTCOE.

Goals, Objectives, and Deliverables

The FTCOE should support the dissemination and technology transition of the products of NIJ's forensic science RDT&E programs. The FTCOE and its partners will use their capabilities to advance forensic science practice through, but not limited to, the following goals, objectives, and deliverables:

Goals

- **Providing scientific and technical support to NIJ's forensic science research, development, and technology transition efforts.** The FTCOE will assist NIJ by identifying evidence-based knowledge and tools to meet the challenges of criminal justice. The FTCOE, in close coordination with NIJ program managers, will review the outcomes of NIJ forensic science R&D projects and facilitate the technology transition and implementation of these research products to operational environments. The FTCOE is expected to assist NIJ program managers in implementing NIJ R&D program objectives and assessing ongoing and completed

R&D project outcomes. The FTCOE will identify and facilitate collaborations between NIJ-funded researchers, forensic practitioners, and technology developers. It will participate in national and regional groups, conferences, and symposia that support the adoption of technology, and will provide general logistical support for those meetings, as needed.

- **Facilitating demonstration, testing, evaluation, transfer, and adoption of appropriate technology into practice by crime laboratories, medical examiner/ coroner offices, law enforcement, and other criminal justice agencies and forensic science service providers.** The FTCOE will facilitate the effective transfer into practice of new tools and technologies, including those funded by NIJ and others. In supporting these efforts, the FTCOE will, in close coordination with the relevant NIJ program managers, identify evidence-based technologies ready for transition, and identify key agencies, professional organizations, and individual researchers and practitioners that should participate. Efforts are to include introducing new tools and technologies to practitioners, introducing practitioner requirements to developers, and assisting developers in the commercialization of their products. Demonstrations and pilot projects must be designed to determine whether a technology meets all of the assessment criteria for a technology need area and develop guidelines for the adoption of the technology by other practitioners through increased coordination with stakeholders. To the greatest extent feasible, demonstrations should also be designed to assess implementation strategies and feasibility through evaluation research in collaboration with NIJ staff (from both the Office of Investigative and Forensic Sciences and the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Technology). Findings (including strategic implementation plans) will be disseminated through reports and scholarly articles, conferences, best practices, and technology assistance activities.

  The FTCOE will facilitate and support NIJ working group activities (such as the Forensic Laboratory Needs Technology Working Group[2]) and other efforts for the forensic science community and their stakeholders. These activities will focus on assessing current and future technology and technology transition needs and develop advice, guidance, and strategies to enhance the policy and practice and improve the reliability of forensic science to meet the increasing demands generated by the criminal justice system. These efforts may include participation from crime laboratories, medical examiner/coroner offices, researchers, law enforcement, forensic science service providers (supporting criminal justice applications), and other criminal justice agencies and relevant stakeholders. In supporting these efforts, the FTCOE will provide administrative and logistical support for meetings.

- **Providing technology transition assistance, knowledge transfer, and support to forensic science researchers and practitioners.** The FTCOE is expected to provide high-quality, specialized technology transition assistance. These efforts may include providing support to assist first-adopter law enforcement, crime laboratories, forensic science service providers and other criminal justice agencies with the use of new technologies or the adaptation of existing technologies to enhance their effectiveness, efficiency, and safety. The FTCOE will provide

national expertise for the criminal justice community's ongoing efforts to continuously improve operations through the adoption of new tools and methods. The FTCOE will support related knowledge transfer activities and support the implementation of related policy and practice.

(**Note**: The FTCOE will not fund or provide assistance to agencies that are adopting technologies that are already widely established in practice.) Appropriate assistance will be provided to all facets of the criminal justice community, including small, rural, and tribal law enforcement, corrections, forensic service providers, school resource officers, or other state and local practitioner communities.

- **Developing and providing access to resources for research dissemination, education, and evidence-based best practices in the forensic science and criminal justice communities.** FTCOE efforts should include the development of evidence-based guides or best practices for crime laboratories, forensic science practitioners, law enforcement, and other appropriate criminal justice practitioners based on sound research and development and science. Topics for guides may be discussed with NIJ and initiated with its approval. FTCOE should also engage with forensic science academic programs, academic professional organizations, and professional accreditation and certification bodies to ensure that FTCOE resources, including information on new forensic innovations, emerging technologies, and operational approaches, are disseminated to develop current and future forensic science practitioners. In developing FTCOE electronic products as part of its dissemination activities (and consonant with Section 508), the recipient should seek to ensure accessibility to people with disabilities.[3]

- **Working closely with NIJ program managers to assess and communicate the impact of forensic science RDT&E, evidence-based best practices, and systems-based approaches for the criminal justice system.** NIJ has made significant investments in social science research on forensic science, as well as research and evaluation for the testing and interpretation of physical evidence in publicly funded forensic laboratories. The Needs Assessment of Forensic Laboratories and Medical Examiner/Coroner Offices recommends that systems-based approaches be adopted to address workload challenges – "where law enforcement, laboratory personnel, medical examiners/coroners, and prosecutors collaborate on cases, are properly educated and trained in the science, and work together to serve justice in a timely and efficient manner."[4] NIJ is interested in assessing the impact of past research (both NIJ-funded and non-NIJ-funded) on the criminal justice system and the development of recommendations for improving the impact of such research. NIJ is also interested in the implementation of evidence-based best practices and systems-based approaches and disseminating such information in peer-reviewed, scholarly literature.

There have been studies by NIJ and others that look at the costs and efficiencies of various forensic analytical procedures applied to physical evidence and issues related to the cost-effectiveness of forensic evidence in criminal investigations. NIJ is interested in cataloging, synthesizing, and conducting meta-analyses of cost-benefit analyses related to forensic science, as cost/benefit analyses provide

valuable and practical information for practitioners and policymakers that aids decision-making. Also, the FTCOE will be asked to assist in the facilitation of knowledge transfer from forensic science-related social science, operational and managerial research, and evaluation to crime laboratories and other criminal justice agencies.

- **Develop national forensic science library services to identify, curate, and make available scholarly literature relevant to the forensic science research and practitioner community.** Forensic science practitioners often find it challenging find and gain access to scientific research literature.[5] In order to enhance access and promote the dissemination of forensic science research, the FTCOE will develop and facilitate an online library infrastructure to support the identification and management of research publications, citations, databases, foundational literature, reference materials, and other primary or secondary source materials. The FTCOE will identify and implement ways to proliferate research findings and best practices and to promulgate access of forensic science and other scientific literature to forensic science practitioners, particularly at the state and local levels. The FTCOE may also conduct literature reviews as part of these efforts. The FTCOE should seek ways to coordinate with the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS)[6] and other appropriate services to avoid any duplicative efforts and develop strategies to provide open access for forensic science research within applicable copyright protections.

Objectives

Through established collaborations with partners such as institutions of higher learning, agencies performing forensic science research, and public forensic science laboratories, the FTCOE shall create avenues for the transition of technologies from development to application. These avenues may include, but not limited to, field-wide surveys of novel technologies, written guides for implementation of novel technologies, training webinars, podcast, development of virtual application tools, and interactive reference websites.

Deliverables

Final Progress Report. Any recipient of an award under this solicitation will be expected to submit a final progress report.

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.

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.

Evidence-Based Programs

OJP strongly encourages the use of data and evidence in policymaking and program development for criminal justice, juvenile justice, and crime victim services. For additional information and resources on evidence-based programs or practices, see the OJP Grant Application Resource Guide.

Information Regarding Potential Evaluation of Programs and Activities

OJP may conduct or support an evaluation of the programs and activities funded under this solicitation. For additional information and applicable documentation to be included in the application, see the OJP Grant Application Resource Guide section entitled "Information Regarding Potential Evaluation of Programs and Activities."

Federal Award Information

General Guidance for Federal Award

Anticipated number of awards NIJ expects to make: 2
Anticipated maximum dollar amount for each award: One award will be $300,00 and one award will be for $2,200,000
Period of performance start date: 03/01/2024
Period of performance duration: 12-month
Anticipated Total amount to be awarded under solicitation: $2,500,000

Solicitation Categories

This solicitation does not include Solicitation Categories.

Awards, Amounts and Durations

Type of Award

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 for additional Information.

Financial Management and System 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.

Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

This solicitation does not require a match.

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.

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.

Eligibility Information

For eligibility information, see the solicitation cover page.

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

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

Application and Submission Information

Content of Application Submission

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 is nonresponsive to the scope of the solicitation.

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 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. 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 Organization Representative; and verify and confirm the organization's unique entity identifier, legal name, and address.

Proposal Abstract

A Proposal Abstract (no more than 400 words) summarizing the proposed project—including its purpose, primary activities, expected outcomes, the service area, intended beneficiaries, and subrecipients (if known) — must be completed in the JustGrants web-based form. This abstract should be in paragraph form without bullets or tables, written in the third person, and exclude personally identifiable information. Abstracts will be made publicly available on the OJP and USASpending.gov websites if the project is awarded. See the 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 be double-spaced, using a standard 12-point 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 restrictions, NIJ may consider such noncompliance in final award decision.

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

<u>Title Page</u> (not counted against the program 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.
- Contact information (that is, name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address) for both the applicant and the principal investigator.

<u>Table of Contents and Figures</u> (not counted against the program narrative page limit)

<u>Main Body</u>

Within this section, the narrative should address:

- Purpose, goals, and objectives. Review of relevant literature.
- Implications for criminal justice policy and practice in the United States.
- Management plan and organization.
- Plan for Dissemination to Broader Audiences (if applicable to the proposed project). Applicants should identify plans (if any) to produce or to make available to broader interested audiences – such as criminal/juvenile justice practitioners or policymakers. Applicants are expected to address Section 508 compliance in the Plan for Dissemination to ensure that FTCOE electronic products are accessible to people with disabilities.

  This section should include:

  a. Statement of the Problem

  The description should address the need for activities in this area. Applicants should discuss current gaps in data, knowledge, and technology transition and

implementation, including those for particular forensic science disciplines and justice sectors, 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 efforts or activities related to these problems.

b. Project Design and Implementation

Applicants should provide a detailed description of the strategies to implement the activities associated with this project. Design elements should follow directly from the project's goals and objectives and address the program-specific information noted in the solicitation. Applicants should describe the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project and address the feasibility of the proposed project activities.

Applicants should consider the rigor and soundness of the methodology and analytical and technical approaches for the proposed activities. Applicants should consider ways to measure the effectiveness or impact of adopting technologies, relevant cost/benefit analyses, and potential challenges or problems in carrying out the activities. Applicants should include how information will be collected, analyzed, evaluated and interpreted as well as the data archiving plan as appropriate.

c. 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 project, its objectives, 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 support RDT&E processes and technology transition activities in the conduct of similar efforts.
- Experience and capacity to design and implement strategies to achieve program-specific goals and objectives.

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

Describe the process for measuring project performance. Identify who will collect the data; who is responsible for performance measurements; and how the

information will be used to guide and evaluate the project's impact. Describe the process to accurately report data.

Note: The applicant is not required to submit performance data with the application. Rather, performance measure information is included as an alert that each successful applicant will be required to submit performance data as part of each award's reporting requirements.

OJP will require each successful applicant 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. The applicant can also visit OJP's performance measurement page at www.ojp.gov/performance for an overview of performance measurement activities at OJP.

NIJ will require award recipients to submit performance measure data and performance reports in JustGrants. NIJ will provide further guidance on the post-award submission process, if 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

Applicants will submit the Forensic Technology Center of Excellence goals, objectives, deliverables and timelines in the JustGrants Web-based form. The projected fiscal year and quarter the objectives and deliverables will be completed is also entered into the form. Please refer to the Application Submission Job Aid for step-by-step directions.

Budget and Associated Documentation

Budget Worksheet and Budget Narrative (attachment)

The applicant will complete the budget worksheet attachment and submit it by uploading it as an attachment in JustGrants. See the OJP Grant Application Resource Guide for additional 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 additional information.

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 additional information and the link to the questionnaire.

Disclosure of Process Related to Executive Compensation

If applicable, the applicant will upload a description of the process used to determine executive compensation as an attachment in JustGrants. See the "Application Attachments" section of the OJP Grant Application Resource Guide for information.

Additional Application Components

The applicant will attach the requested documentation in JustGrants.

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.

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.

Human Subjects Protection

If an application proposes activities that includes human subjects, Human Subjects Protection paperwork must be completed and submitted 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.

Disclosure 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; and 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; and Law Enforcement and Community Policing in JustGrants. See the OJP Grant Application Resource Guide for additional information.

Applicant Disclosure and Justification – DOJ High Risk Grantees (if applicable)

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 an **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 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 August 17, 2023.

The full application must be submitted in JustGrants by 8:59 p.m. eastern time on August 25, 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 a request 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 Process

OJP reviews the application to make sure that the information presented is reasonable, understandable, measurable, achievable, and consistent with the solicitation. For invited applications, OJP reviews for consistency with the invitation letter and invited applicant guidance. See the OJP Grant Application Resource Guide for information on the application review process.

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, at its option, 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 such comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in FAPIIS, in its assessment of the risk posed by the applicant.

Final award decisions for research and statistics programs will be made by the Director of the National Institute of Justice. For purposes of this Guidance for Invited Applications, this "[final] award decisions" provision expressly modifies the "final award decisions" provision in the "Application Review Information" section of the OJP Grant Application Resource Guide.

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 (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.

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 progress reports, final financial and progress 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 measure data.

Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s)

For OJP contact(s), and contact information for Grants.gov and 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 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.

Application Checklist

NIJ FY 2023 Invited to Apply - Forensic Technology Center of Excellence

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 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/financialguidedoj/iii-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 Scope Requirement:

- The federal amount requested is within the allowable limit(s).

Review Eligibility Requirement:

- *Review the Eligibility section on the cover page and Eligibility Information section in*

the solicitation.

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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 NIJ or Grants.gov Customer Support Hotline at 800-518-4726, 606-545-5035, Grants.gov customer support, or 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

Budget and Associated Documentation

- Budget Worksheet and Budget Narrative (attachment)

- 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)

- Disclosure of Process related to Executive Compensation (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)

- Human Subject Paperwork (see Human Subjects Protection)

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; Law Enforcement and Community Policing (see OJP Grant Application Resource Guide)

- Applicant Disclosure and Justification – DOJ High Risk Grantees (if applicable) (see OJP Grant Application Resource Guide)

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

[2] Supporting Crime Lab Directors and the Formation of the Forensic Laboratory Needs Technology Working Group, https://nij.ojp.gov/speech/supporting-crime-lab-directors-and-formation-forensic-laboratory-needs-technology-working Forensic Laboratory Needs Technology Working Group — Opening a New Channel to Improve Forensics, https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/forensic-laboratory-needs-technology-working-group-opening-new-channel-improve.

[3] Section 508 Home Page, U.S. Department of Justice. https://www.justice.gov/crt/section-508-home-page-0.

[4] 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.

[5] Ibid, 135-138.

[6] National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS) https://www.ncjrs.gov/.