



The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of Justice Programs (OJP), National Institute of Justice (NIJ) is pleased to announce that it is seeking applications for funding for validation projects resulting in the implementation of novel DNA technologies for forensic application. This solicitation focuses on the validation of technologies that result in faster, more robust, more informative, less costly, or less labor-intensive identification, collection, preservation, and/or analysis of biological evidence. This program furthers the Department's mission by facilitating the implementation of novel technologies to increase the capacity of the DNA laboratories of States and units of local government. These improvements are critical to preventing future DNA backlogs and to helping the criminal justice system realize the full potential of DNA technology.

# Solicitation: Forensic DNA Unit Efficiency Improvement Program

## Eligibility

(See "Eligibility," page 3.)

## Deadline

Registration with [OJP's Grant Management System \(GMS\)](#) is required prior to application submission. (See "How to Apply," page 8.)

All applications are due by **11:45 p.m. eastern time on May 14, 2010.**

(See "Deadlines: Registration and Application," page 4.)

## Contact Information

For technical assistance with submitting the application, contact the Grants Management System Support Hotline at 1-888-549-9901, option 3, or via e-mail to [GMS.HelpDesk@usdoj.gov](mailto:GMS.HelpDesk@usdoj.gov).

**Note:** The [GMS](#) Support Hotline hours of operation are Monday-Friday from 6:00 a.m. to midnight eastern time, except for Federal holidays.

For assistance with any other requirement of this solicitation, contact Mark S. Nelson, Senior Program Manager, at 202-616-1960 or by e-mail to [Mark.S.Nelson@usdoj.gov](mailto:Mark.S.Nelson@usdoj.gov), or Minh Nguyen, Program Manager, at 202-305-2664 or by e-mail to [Minh.Nguyen@usdoj.gov](mailto:Minh.Nguyen@usdoj.gov).

SL# 000906

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# Forensic DNA Unit Efficiency Improvement Program

## CFDA No. 16.741

### Overview

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) is the research, development, and evaluation agency of the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and a component of the Office of Justice Programs (OJP). NIJ provides objective, independent, evidence-based knowledge and tools to enhance the administration of justice and public safety. NIJ solicits applications to inform its search for the knowledge and tools to guide policy and practice.

The goal of NIJ's Forensic DNA Unit Efficiency Improvement Program is to identify and facilitate implementation of novel technologies resulting from ongoing research and development projects in the field of forensic DNA, as well as in other fields such as molecular biology, genetics, and biotechnology that may improve the capacity and/or efficiency of forensic DNA laboratories. Specifically, this program is designed to fund the incorporation of such novel technologies, through validation studies, into State and local government forensic laboratories that are currently performing DNA analysis. Priority consideration will be given to proposals that focus on technologies developed as a result of NIJ's Forensic DNA Research and Development Program. Additionally, technologies intended to improve the efficiency of analyzing DNA samples will be given priority consideration over those that improve the identification, collection, and/or preservation of biological evidence/samples.

**Authorizing Legislation:** Department of Justice Appropriations Act, 2010 (Public Law 111-117).

### Deadlines: Registration and Application

Registration is required prior to submission. The deadline to register in **GMS is 11:45 p.m. eastern time on May 14, 2010**, and the deadline for applying for funding under this announcement is **11:45 p.m. eastern time on May 14, 2010**. Please see the "How to Apply" section, page 8, for more details.

### Eligibility

States<sup>1</sup> and units of local government with existing crime laboratories that conduct DNA analysis that undergo external audits not less than once every 2 years to demonstrate compliance with DNA Quality Assurance Standards established by the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and are accredited by a nonprofit professional association of persons actively involved in forensic science that is nationally recognized within the forensic science community.

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<sup>1</sup> For purposes of this announcement, the term "State" includes the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the U.S. territories of American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Virgin Islands.

# Specific Information—Forensic DNA Unit Efficiency Improvement

## Award Purposes, Goals and Objectives, and Deliverables

The purpose of the FY 2010 Forensic DNA Unit Efficiency Improvement Program is to provide Federal assistance to States and units of local government to perform validation studies with the objective of implementing novel, capacity-enhancing technologies into their DNA laboratories. Prior to using novel analysis techniques on forensic casework or DNA databasing samples, DNA laboratories are required by the Quality Assurance Standards for Forensic DNA Testing Laboratories<sup>2</sup> and/or the Quality Assurance Standards for DNA Databasing Laboratories<sup>3</sup> (both quality assurance documents will be referred to hereafter as QAS) established by the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, to use validated methods and procedures for DNA analyses. In order to validate methods and procedures, two types of validation studies must be performed:

- Developmental validation is the acquisition of test data and determination of conditions and limitations of a new or novel DNA methodology for use on samples.
- Internal validation is an accumulation of test data within the laboratory to demonstrate that established methods and procedures perform as expected in the laboratory.

All developmental validation studies performed with funds awarded under this program must comply with Standard 8.2 of the QAS:

STANDARD 8.2 Developmental validation shall precede the use of a novel methodology for [forensic DNA analysis or DNA database analysis, as applicable].

8.2.1 Developmental validation studies shall include, where applicable, characterization of the genetic marker, species specificity, sensitivity studies, stability studies, reproducibility, [case-type or database-type] samples, population studies, mixture studies, precision and accuracy studies, and PCR-based studies. PCR-based studies include reaction conditions, assessment of differential and preferential amplification, effects of multiplexing, assessment of appropriate controls, and product detection studies. All validation studies shall be documented.

8.2.2 Peer-reviewed publication of the underlying scientific principle(s) of a technology shall be required.

Applicants proposing projects for internal validation of existing validated technologies that are novel to the analysis of forensic samples must provide sufficient justification that developmental validation studies previously performed in other fields sufficiently address forensic applications.

All internal validation studies performed with funds awarded under this program must comply with Standard 8.3 of the QAS:

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<sup>2</sup> Quality Assurance Standards for Forensic DNA Testing Laboratories; version effective July 1, 2009 (<http://www.fbi.gov/hq/lab/html/codis5.htm>).

<sup>3</sup> Quality Assurance Standards for DNA Databasing Laboratories; version effective July 1, 2009 (<http://www.fbi.gov/hq/lab/html/codis5.htm>).

STANDARD 8.3 Except as provided in Standard 8.3.1.1, internal validation of all manual and robotic methods shall be conducted by each laboratory and reviewed and approved by the laboratory's technical leader prior to using a procedure for [forensic/database, as applicable] applications.

8.3.1 Internal validation studies... shall include as applicable: [known and non-probative evidence samples or mock evidence samples or database-type samples], reproducibility and precision, sensitivity and stochastic studies, mixture studies [for forensic DNA testing laboratories only], and contamination assessment. Internal validation studies shall be documented and summarized. The technical leader shall approve the internal validation studies.

8.3.1.1 Internal validation data may be shared by all locations in a multi-laboratory system. Each laboratory in a multi-laboratory system shall complete, document and maintain applicable precision, sensitivity, and contamination assessment studies. The summary of the validation data shall be available at each site.

8.3.2 Internal validation shall define quality assurance parameters and interpretation guidelines, including as applicable, guidelines for mixture interpretation [for forensic DNA testing laboratories only].

8.3.3 A complete change of detection platform or test kit (or laboratory assembled equivalent) shall require internal validation studies.

In addition to applicable sections of the QAS, all validation studies should be performed in accordance with the FBI's Scientific Working Group on DNA Analysis Methods (SWGDM), Revised Validation Guidelines. These revised guidelines were published in *Forensic Science Communications* Volume 6 – Number 3 in July 2004 and are available at the FBI's website: [http://www.fbi.gov/hq/lab/fsc/backissu/july2004/standards/2004\\_03\\_standards02.htm](http://www.fbi.gov/hq/lab/fsc/backissu/july2004/standards/2004_03_standards02.htm)

Priority consideration will be given to proposals that focus on technologies developed as a result of NIJ's Forensic DNA Research and Development Program. A list of research articles and reports from NIJ-funded research can be found at [http://static.dna.gov/tables/articles\\_all.htm](http://static.dna.gov/tables/articles_all.htm), and general information on projects funded under NIJ's Forensic DNA Research and Development Program can be found at <http://www.dna.gov/research/>. Information on NIJ-funded research and development projects conducted by the National Institute of Standards and Technology can be found at the website <http://www.cstl.nist.gov/biotech/strbase/NIJprojects.htm>. Applicable technologies developed through other initiatives, such as research and development in academia or in the private sector, and technologies established in other industries (e.g., clinical laboratory testing) that may be readily transferred to DNA laboratories, may also be considered.

Additionally, technologies that will improve the efficiency of analysis of forensic DNA samples will be given priority consideration over those that improve the identification, collection and/or preservation of biological evidence.

The goal of the program is to facilitate the evaluation and implementation of novel technologies that will improve the capacity and efficiency of the applicant's DNA laboratories. Applicants are expected to publish validation studies and standard operating procedures resulting from successful projects. Such publications will assist other State and units of local government in implementing similar novel technologies to increase their efficiency and capacity.

## **Award Period**

Any awards will start on the same date of October 1, 2010. In general, NIJ will limit its awards under this program to a maximum period of 18 months after the start of the award (from October 1, 2010 to March 31, 2012). Requests for no-cost extensions of award periods submitted through the Grants Management System will, if necessary, be considered. Applicants should be aware, however, that the total period of an award, including one that receives a project period extension(s), ordinarily will not exceed 3 years.

**Please note:** All applicants under this solicitation must comply with Department of Justice regulations on confidentiality and human subjects protection. See "Other Requirements for OJP Applications" at [http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/other\\_requirements.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/other_requirements.htm).

## **What will *not* be funded:**

Funds awarded through this program may not be used to validate existing commercial kits, robotic platforms, or automation schemes that are already in use in the forensic DNA community; rather, this program seeks to fund novel technologies that have not yet been widely implemented in forensic DNA testing laboratories or DNA databasing laboratories. Funding for general validation studies to implement existing (non-novel) technologies may be available through NIJ's Forensic DNA Backlog Reduction Program.

This program is not intended to supplement awards made under the Forensic DNA Backlog Reduction Program in the current or previous fiscal years and, in general, funding will **not** be provided for:

1. Handling, screening, and/or analysis of actual forensic DNA casework or convicted offender and/or arrestee samples.\*
2. Personnel costs (employee and contract labor, including overtime) to handle, screen, or analyze forensic DNA casework or convicted offender and/or arrestee samples.\*
3. Laboratory instruments, including robotic workstations, hardware, software, or laboratory consumables as standalone requests for which funding is available through another source.\*
4. Continuing education costs and associated travel costs.
5. Accreditation costs and fees.

\*These activities may be considered for funding if they are required for validation studies and/or implementation of the proposed, novel technology.

**Amount and length of awards:** Total funding for this solicitation and the number of awards made will depend on the availability of funds, the quality of the applications, and other pertinent factors. **All awards are subject to the availability of appropriated funds and to any modifications or additional requirements that may be imposed by law.**

A grant made by NIJ under this solicitation may account for up to 100 percent of the total cost of the project. See "Cofunding" under "What an Application Must Include."

## Budget Information

**Limitation on Use of Award Funds for Employee Compensation; Waiver:** With respect to any award of more than \$250,000 made under this solicitation, Federal funds may not be used to pay total cash compensation (salary plus bonuses) to any employee of the award recipient at a rate that exceeds 110 percent of the maximum annual salary payable to a member of the Federal Government's Senior Executive Service (SES) at an agency with a Certified SES Performance Appraisal System for that year. (The 2010 salary table for SES employees is available at <http://www.opm.gov/oca/10tables/indexSES.asp>.) Note: A recipient may compensate an employee at a higher rate, provided the amount in excess of this compensation limitation is paid with non-Federal funds. (Any such additional compensation will not be considered matching funds where match requirements apply.)

The limitation on compensation rates allowable under an award may be waived on an individual basis at the discretion of the Director of the National Institute of Justice. An applicant that wishes to request a waiver must include a detailed justification in the budget narrative of its application. Unless the applicant submits a waiver request and justification with the application, the applicant should anticipate that OJP will request that the applicant adjust and resubmit its budget.

## Performance Measures

To assist in fulfilling the Department's responsibilities under the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), P.L. 103-62, applicants who receive funding under this solicitation must provide data that measure the results of their work. Applicants who receive funding under this solicitation are required to provide the data requested in the "Data Grantee Provides" column so that OJP can calculate values for the "Performance Measures" column. Performance measures for this solicitation are as follows:

Objective	Performance Measures	Data Grantee Provides
Validation and/or implementation of novel tools and technologies that improve DNA analysis capacity of State and local government crime laboratories that conduct DNA analysis.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Demonstrated proof that the scope of the project did not deviate from the funded proposal or any subsequent modification(s) by NIJ to the scope; this performance measure is intended to substantiate relevance to the needs of the field.</li> <li>2. Number of implemented technologies, if applicable.</li> <li>3. Number of NIJ final grant reports, NIJ research documents, grantee research documents, and grantee validation studies published, if applicable.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A final report that includes: (1) an overview of the project, (2) a detailed description of the project design, data, and methods; (3) a comprehensive discussion of the scientific findings, if applicable, and (4) a clear and well-articulated discussion of the potential implications of the findings for criminal justice practice and policy in the United States.</li> <li>2. Description of implemented technologies, If applicable.</li> <li>3. Citation to all other reports/documents in addition to the final report, described, above. If applicable, publications, galley proofs of pending publications, or manuscripts ready for publication for technologies that have been successfully validated.</li> </ol>

## How to Apply

Applications will be submitted through OJP's Grants Management System ([GMS](#)). [GMS](#) is a Web-based, data-driven computer application that provides cradle to grave support for the application, award and management of grants at OJP. Applicants should begin the process immediately to meet the GMS registration deadline, especially if this is the first time they have used the system. Complete instructions on how to register and submit an application in GMS can be found at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/gmscbt/](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/gmscbt/). If you experience technical difficulties at any point during this process, please e-mail [GMSHelpDesk@usdoj.gov](mailto:GMSHelpDesk@usdoj.gov), or call 1-888-549-9901 (option 3), Monday-Friday from 6:00 a.m. to midnight eastern time, except for Federal holidays. OJP highly recommends starting the registration process as early as possible to prevent delays in the application submission by the specified deadline.

All applicants are required to complete the following steps.

- 1. Acquire a DUNS Number.** A DUNS number is required to submit an application in GMS. The Office of Management and Budget requires that all businesses and nonprofit applicants for Federal funds include a DUNS (Data Universal Numbering System) number in their application for a new award or renewal of an existing award. A DUNS number is a unique nine-digit sequence recognized as the universal standard for identifying and keeping track of entities receiving Federal funds. The identifier is used for tracking purposes and to validate address and point of contact information for Federal assistance applicants, recipients, and subrecipients. The DUNS number will be used throughout the grant life cycle. Obtaining a DUNS number is a free, one-time activity. Obtain a DUNS number by calling 1-866-705-5711 or by applying online at [www.dunandbradstreet.com](http://www.dunandbradstreet.com). Individuals are exempt from this requirement.
- 2. Acquire or Renew Registration With the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) Database.** CCR registration is required to receive funding. OJP requires that all applicants (other than individuals) for Federal financial assistance maintain current registrations in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database. The CCR database is the repository for standard information about Federal financial assistance applicants, recipients, and subrecipients. Organizations that have previously submitted applications via Grants.gov are already registered with CCR, as it is a requirement for Grants.gov registration. Please note, however, that applicants must update or renew their CCR registration at least once per year to maintain an active status. Information about CCR registration procedures can be accessed at [www.ccr.gov](http://www.ccr.gov).
- 3. Acquire a GMS Username and Password.** If you are a new user, please create a GMS profile by selecting the first time user link under the sign-in box of the [GMS](#) home page. For more information on how to register in GMS, go to [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/gmscbt/](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/gmscbt/).
- 4. Search for the Funding Opportunity on GMS.** After you log in to GMS or complete your GMS profile for your username and password, go to the Funding Opportunities link on the left hand side of the page. Please select "National Institute of Justice" and then "NIJ FY 10 Forensic DNA Unit Efficiency Improvement Program."
- 5. Select the Apply Online Button Associated with the Solicitation Title.** The search results from step 4 will display the solicitation title along with the Registration and



Application Deadlines for this funding opportunity. Please select the Apply Online button in the Action Column to create an application in the system.

6. **Submit an Application Consistent with this Solicitation by Following the Directions in GMS.** Once submitted, GMS will display a confirmation screen stating your submission was successful. **Important:** You are urged to submit your application at least 72 hours prior to the due date of the application.

**Note: OJP's Grants Management System (GMS) does not accept executable file types as application attachments.** These disallowed file types include, but are not limited to, the following extensions: ".com," ".bat," ".exe," ".vbs," ".cfg," ".dat," ".db," ".dbf," ".dll," ".ini," ".log," ".ora," ".sys," and ".zip."

### **Experiencing Unforeseen GMS Technical Issues**

If you experience unforeseen GMS technical issues beyond your control which prevent you from submitting your application by the deadline, you must contact the NIJ staff member listed on the title page **within 24 hours after the deadline** and request approval to submit your application. At that time, NIJ staff will require you to e-mail the complete grant application, your DUNS number, and provide a GMS Help Desk tracking number(s). After the program office reviews all of the information submitted, and contacts the GMS Helpdesk to validate the technical issues you reported, OJP will contact you to either approve or deny your request to submit a late application. If the technical issues you reported cannot be validated, your application will be rejected as untimely.

To ensure a fair competition for limited discretionary funds, the following conditions are not valid reasons to permit late submissions: (1) failure to begin the registration process in sufficient time; (2) failure to follow GMS instructions on how to register and apply as posted on its Web site; (3) failure to follow all of the instructions in the OJP solicitation; and (4) technical issues experienced with the applicant's computer or information technology (IT) environment.

Notifications regarding known technical problems with GMS are posted on the OJP funding Web page, [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/solicitations.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/solicitations.htm).

### **What an Application Must Include**

This section describes what an application is expected to include and sets out a number of elements. Applicants should anticipate that failure to submit an application that contains all of the specified elements may negatively affect the review of the application and, should a decision nevertheless be made to make an award, may result in the inclusion of special conditions that preclude access to or use of award funds pending satisfaction of the conditions.

Moreover, applicants should anticipate that applications that are not responsive to the scope of the solicitation, or do not include a Program Narrative, Budget Detail Worksheet, Budget Narrative, and Resumes/Curriculum Vitae of Key Personnel will not proceed to peer review and will not receive further consideration.

OJP strongly recommends use of appropriately descriptive file names (e.g., "Program Narrative," "Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative," "Timelines," "Memoranda of

Understanding,” “Resumes”) for all attachments. OJP recommends that resumes be included in a single file.

### Standard Form 424

Please see [www07.grants.gov/assets/SF424Instructions.pdf](http://www07.grants.gov/assets/SF424Instructions.pdf) for instructions on how to complete your SF424.

- **Item 8:** Type of Application—“New.”
- **Item 9:** Name of Federal Agency—“National Institute of Justice.”
- **Item 10:** Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA)—For this Program, the number is 16.741.
- **Item 11:** Descriptive Title of Applicant’s Project—“FY 2010 Forensic DNA Unit Efficiency Improvement Program—[YOUR AGENCY NAME].”
- **Item 13:** Proposed Project Dates—For this program, the proposed project dates should be “October 1, 2010 to March 31, 2012.”
- **Item 16:** Is Application Subject to Review by State Executive Order 12372 Process?—A listing of States that have participated in this process can be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html>.

### Program Narrative

The Program Narrative includes:

- a. Cover page
- b. Abstract (not to exceed 600 words).
- c. Table of contents.
- d. Main body, which includes:
  - Purpose, goals, and objectives.
  - Review of relevant literature.
    - If an applicant does not intend to perform one or more developmental validation studies on the premise that this work has been previously completed, the applicant **must** provide appropriate citations for the developmental validation work that has been completed by the relevant scientific community for the novel technology they are interested in pursuing.
    - If the proposed novel method or process is the result of NIJ funded research and development, the applicant must include appropriate citations including NIJ award numbers.
  - Project design and methods including the plan for data analysis, if applicable. At a minimum, this should include:
    - A description of each validation study that will be performed, and
    - The proposed number and type of samples for each validation study.
    - Applicants should demonstrate an appreciation of and general familiarity with the technologies currently used for analyzing DNA evidence. Applicants also should demonstrate an appreciation of

the costs and the training required to implement and maintain the proposed technology.

**Note:** NIJ encourages applicants to seek guidance from, or partner with, appropriate research laboratories; however, if developmental validation studies are performed outside of a grantee's DNA laboratory, subsequent internal validation studies must also be performed as part of the funded project.

- Research independence and integrity (see "Selection Criteria," below).
  - Implications for criminal justice policy and practice in the United States.
  - Management plan and organization.
  - Dissemination strategy.
- e. Appendices (not counted against program narrative page limit) include:
- Bibliography/References (if applicable).
  - List of key personnel.
  - Resumes of key personnel.
  - List of previous and current NIJ awards to applicant organization.
  - Letters of cooperation/support or administrative agreements from organizations collaborating in the project (if applicable).
  - Chart for timeline or milestones.
  - Human Subjects Protection Paperwork including Institutional Review Board (IRB) documentation and forms (see <http://www.ojp.gov/nij/funding/humansubjects/human-subjects.htm>).
  - Privacy Certificate (for further guidance go to <http://www.ojp.gov/nij/funding/humansubjects/privacy-certificate-guidance.htm>).
  - List of other agencies, organizations, or funding sources to which you have submitted this proposal (if applicable).
  - Other materials specified by the solicitation.

The program narrative section of your application is expected not to exceed 15 double-spaced pages in 12-point font with 1-inch margins. Abstract, table of contents, charts, figures, appendices, and government forms do not count toward the 15 pages for the narrative section.

### **Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative**

A sample Budget Detail Worksheet can be found at [www.ojp.gov/funding/forms/budget\\_detail.pdf](http://www.ojp.gov/funding/forms/budget_detail.pdf). If you submit a different format, you must include the budget categories as listed in the sample budget worksheet. NIJ encourages the use of a Microsoft Excel budget detail worksheet template that is available from the program managers listed on page 2 of this solicitation.

For questions pertaining to budget and examples of allowable and unallowable costs, please see the OJP Financial Guide at [www.ojp.gov/financialguide/index.htm](http://www.ojp.gov/financialguide/index.htm).

The Budget Narrative is a plain-language description of each of the proposed expenditures listed in the Budget Detail Worksheet. It should clearly explain the purpose and reason for all expenditures in the budget. There should be no ambiguities about any budget item. The narrative also should include details for calculated rates or other

figures. As with the Budget Detail Worksheet, the Budget Narrative must be broken down on a year-by-year basis.

**Cofunding:** A grant made by NIJ under this solicitation may account for up to 100 percent of the total cost of the project. You must indicate whether you believe it is feasible for you to contribute cash, facilities, or services as non-Federal support for the project. Your application should identify generally any such contributions that you expect to make and your proposed budget should indicate in detail which items, if any, will be supported with non-Federal contributions.

#### **Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)**

Applicants that do not have a federally negotiated indirect cost rate and wish to establish one can submit a proposal to their “cognizant” Federal agency. Generally, the cognizant Federal agency is the agency that provides the preponderance of direct Federal funding. This can be determined by reviewing an organization’s schedule of Federal financial assistance. If DOJ is your cognizant Federal agency, obtain information needed to submit an indirect cost rate proposal at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/financialguide/part3/part3chap17.htm>.

#### **Program-Specific Attachment**

Submit an electronic (scanned) copy of the current accreditation certificate of the applicant’s DNA laboratory.

#### **Other Standard Forms**

Additional forms that may be required in connection with an award are available on OJP’s funding page at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/forms.htm>. Please note in particular the following forms.

1. [Certifications Regarding Lobbying; Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements](#) (required of all applicants as part of the GMS application process)
2. [Disclosure of Lobbying Activities](#) (required for any applicant that expends any funds for lobbying activities)
3. [Accounting System and Financial Capability Questionnaire](#) (required for any applicant that is a nongovernmental entity and that has not received any award from OJP within the past 3 years)
4. [Standard Assurances](#) (required of all applicants as part of the GMS application process)

**Note:** Attachments to the application should be included in one of the following four categories: 1) Program Narrative; 2) Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative; 3) Appendices; and 4) Other.

## Selection Criteria

Successful applicants must demonstrate the following:

### **Statement of the Problem** (Understanding of the problem and its importance)—15%

Include appropriate citations and other information to demonstrate an understanding of the problem, both within the areas affected by the applicant's laboratory and throughout the Nation's forensic community. This statement should also address the importance of the problem and include a discussion on the need for resolution for the overall forensic community.

### **Project/Program Design and Implementation** (Quality and technical merit)—30%

1. Awareness of the state of current research or technology being proposed for validation.
2. Soundness of methodology and analytic and technical approach.
3. Feasibility of proposed project and awareness of pitfalls.
4. Compliance of validation studies with QAS and SWGDAM Revised Validation Guidelines. This should include:
  - Adequate justification for any studies that will not be performed by the applicant's laboratory, and
  - If developmental validation studies were/will be performed outside of the applicant's DNA laboratory, clearly defined plan for the completion of subsequent internal validation studies required for implementation.
5. Innovation and creativity (when appropriate).
6. If applicable, references to NIJ award numbers to demonstrate that proposed novel methods are based on previous NIJ funded research and development.

### **Capabilities/Competencies** (Capabilities, demonstrated productivity, and experience of applicants)—20%

1. Qualifications and experience of proposed staff.
2. Demonstrated ability of proposed staff and organization to manage the effort.
3. Adequacy of the plan to manage the project, including how various tasks are subdivided and resources are used.
4. Demonstrated appreciation of and general familiarity with the technologies currently used for analyzing DNA evidence.
5. Successful past performance on NIJ grants and contracts.

### **Budget**—15%

1. Total cost of the project relative to the perceived benefit.
2. Appropriateness of the budget relative to the level of effort.
3. Use of existing resources to conserve costs.

### **Impact/Outcomes and Evaluation** (Relevance to policy and practice)—15%

1. Potential for significant advances in scientific or technical understanding of the problem.
2. Potential for significant advances in the field; specifically, increasing capacity and efficiencies of DNA forensic unit operations.
3. Potential for improvement to the efficiency of DNA sample analyses (versus improvements to the identification, collection, and/or preservation of biological evidence/samples.)

4. Relevance for improving the policy and practice of criminal justice and related agencies in the United States and improving public safety, security, and quality of life.
5. Affordability and cost-effectiveness of proposed end products, when applicable (e.g., purchase price and maintenance costs for a new technology, or cost of training to use the technology).
6. Perceived potential for implementation of a new technology (when applicable).

### **Relevance of the project for policy and practice in the United States**

Higher quality applications clearly explain the practical implications of the project. They connect technical expertise with criminal justice policy and practice. To ensure that the project has strong relevance for policy and practice, some applicants may collaborate with researchers and other external organizations. You may include letters showing support from these researchers or external organizations, but they carry less weight than clear evidence that you understand why the field would benefit from the work and how beneficiaries would use it. While a partnership may affect State or local activities, it should also have broader implications for others across the country.

### **Dissemination Strategy—5%**

1. Well-defined plan for the grant recipient to disseminate results to appropriate audiences, including researchers, practitioners, and policymakers.
2. Demonstration of ability, or past performance, to publish scientific research.
3. Suggestions for print and electronic products NIJ might develop for practitioners and policymakers.

### **Research Independence and Integrity**

Regardless of a proposal's rating under the criteria outlined above, in order to receive funds, the applicant's proposal must demonstrate research independence, including appropriate safeguards to ensure research objectivity and integrity.

Considerations in evaluating research independence and integrity will include, but may not be limited to, the adequacy of the applicant's efforts to identify factors that could affect the objectivity/integrity of the proposed staff and/or the organization in carrying out the research, development, or evaluation activity; and the adequacy of the applicant's existing or proposed remedies to control any such factors.

### **Review Process**

OJP is committed to ensuring a fair and open process for awarding grants. NIJ reviews the application to make sure that the information presented is reasonable, understandable, measurable, and achievable, as well as consistent with the solicitation.

Peer reviewers will be reviewing the applications submitted under this solicitation that meet basic minimum requirements. NIJ will use external peer reviewers to review the applications under this solicitation. An external peer reviewer is an expert in the field of the subject matter of a given solicitation who is NOT a current U.S. Department of Justice employee. Eligible applications will be evaluated, scored, and rated by a peer review panel. Peer reviewers' ratings and any resulting recommendations are advisory only. In addition to peer review ratings, considerations for award recommendations and decisions may include, but are not limited to,

underserved populations, geographic diversity, strategic priorities, past performance, and available funding.

The Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO), in consultation with NIJ, conducts a financial review of applications for potential discretionary awards and cooperative agreements to evaluate the fiscal integrity and financial capability of applicants; examines proposed costs to determine if the budget and budget narrative accurately explain project costs; and determines whether costs are reasonable, necessary, and allowable under applicable Federal cost principles and agency regulations.

Absent explicit statutory authorization or written delegation of authority to the contrary, all final grant award decisions will be made by the Director of the National Institute of Justice, who may also give consideration to factors including, but not limited to, underserved populations, geographic diversity, strategic priorities, past performance, and available funding when making awards.

## **Additional Requirements**

Applicants selected for awards must agree to comply with additional legal requirements upon acceptance of an award. We strongly encourage you to review the information pertaining to these additional requirements prior to submitting your application. Additional information for each can be found at [http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/other\\_requirements.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/other_requirements.htm).

- Civil Rights Compliance
- Faith-Based and Other Community Organizations
- Confidentiality and Human Subjects Protection (if applicable)
- Anti-Lobbying Act
- Financial and Government Audit Requirements
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (if applicable)
- DOJ Information Technology Standards (if applicable)
- Single Point of Contact Review
- Nonsupplanting of State or Local Funds
- Criminal Penalty for False Statements
- Compliance with [Office of Justice Programs Financial Guide](#)
- Suspension or Termination of Funding
- Nonprofit Organizations
- For-Profit Organizations

- Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA)
- Rights in Intellectual Property
- Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) of 2006
- Awards in excess of \$5,000,000 – Federal taxes certification requirement

If your proposal is funded, you will be required to submit several reports and other materials, including:

**Final substantive report:** The final report should be a comprehensive overview of the project and should include a detailed description of the project design, data, and methods; a full presentation of applicable scientific findings (e.g., characterization of genetic markers, species specificity, stability, reproducibility, population studies, precision and accuracy, PCR-based procedures, results of testing on known and nonprobative evidence samples as well as case-type samples, match criteria, sensitivity and stochastic studies, mixture studies, contamination); requirements for implementation (e.g., a description of the training and qualifying test requirements for implementation); a thorough discussion of the implications of the project findings for criminal justice practice and policy in the United States; etc. It must contain an abstract of no more than 600 words and an executive summary of 2,500 to 4,000 words.

A draft of the final report, abstract, and executive summary must be submitted 90 days before the end date of the grant. The draft final report will be peer reviewed upon submission. The reviews will be forwarded to the appropriate project key personnel with suggestions for revisions. The author must then submit the revised final report, abstract, and executive summary by the end date of the grant. The abstract, executive summary, and final report may be submitted in electronic formats.

For program evaluation studies, the final report should include a section on measuring program performance. This section should outline the measures used to evaluate program effectiveness, modifications made to those measures as a result of the evaluation, and recommendations regarding these and other potential performance measures for similar programs. (This information will be particularly valuable to NIJ and other Federal program agencies in implementing performance measures for federally funded criminal justice programs.)

**Interim reports:** Grantees must submit quarterly financial reports, semi-annual progress reports, a final progress report, and, if applicable, an annual audit report in accordance with Office of Management and Budget Circular A-133. Future awards and fund drawdowns may be withheld if reports are delinquent.



# Application Checklist

## Forensic DNA Unit Efficiency Improvement Program

The application checklist has been created to aid you in developing your application.

### Application Components:

- Program Narrative (see pages 10–11 and “Selection Criteria,” pages 13–14)
- Appendices to the Program Narrative
  - Bibliography/References (if applicable)
  - List of key personnel
  - Resumes of key personnel
  - List of previous and current NIJ awards to applicant organization
  - Letters of cooperation/support or administrative agreements from organizations collaborating in the project (if applicable)
  - Chart for timeline or milestones
  - Human Subjects Protection Paperwork
  - Privacy Certificate
  - List of other agencies, organizations, or funding sources to which you have submitted this proposal (if applicable)
- Budget Narrative
- Budget Detail Worksheet
- Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)

### Program Narrative/Abstract Format:

- Double-spaced
- 12-point standard font
- 1” standard margins

### Other:

- Standard Form 424
- DUNS number
- Program-Specific Attachment (see page 12):
  - Proof of accreditation certificate (see page 12)
- Other Standard Forms as applicable (see page 12), including
  - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable)