

## **2005 Census of Publicly Funded Forensic Crime Laboratories**

### **SUMMARY**

The purpose of this notice is to announce a public solicitation to obtain a data collection agent for the 2005 Census of Publicly Funded Forensic Crime Laboratories.

### **SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS**

The Office of Justice Programs (OJP) requires that all discretionary, competitive grant programs be administered through Grants.gov. Using an established Internet account, go to [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).

Registering with Grants.gov is a one-time process; however, if you are a first time registrant it may take 3-5 business days to have your registration validated and confirmed, and to receive your user name and password.

Proposals must be submitted to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) through Grants.gov on or before 5:00 p.m. EDT, November 14, 2005.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

For additional information contact Matthew J. Hickman, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 810 Seventh Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20531; Phone (202) 353-1631.

### **AUTHORITY**

Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, Sections 302, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 3732.

### **PROGRAM GOALS**

The purpose of this award is to provide funding to administer the 2005 Census of Publicly Funded Forensic Crime Laboratories. The census will obtain information about the personnel, functions, workload, and needs of public crime laboratories operating in the United States. A draft census data collection instrument and preliminary respondent list (approximately 375 respondents) will be provided by BJS. Based on availability of funds, BJS anticipates making one award for a 12-month period under this solicitation, with an award date on or after December 1, 2005.

### **BACKGROUND**

The 2005 Census of Publicly Funded Forensic Crime Laboratories is part of a continuing effort by BJS to expand statistical activities related to the forensic sciences. The first crime lab census, administered in 2002, established baseline information on the operations and workload of the Nation's public crime laboratories. The 2005 census will document changes in workload and backlog since the 2002 census, and will include an additional range of more detailed questions relating to DNA analysis. Information generated by this data collection will help to improve the Nation's understanding of the level of work performed and resources committed to criminal forensic science analyses.

The information will be useful for Federal, State and local governments to assess the areas in which additional resources for development, improvement, or expansion of forensic capabilities may be necessary. The information will also assist State and local laboratories in identifying technology disparities and targeting equipment, supplies, training and technical assistance to such labs.

## **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

Both profit-making and nonprofit organizations may apply for funds. Consistent with OJP fiscal requirements, however, no fees may be charged against the project by profit-making organizations.

Consistent with President George W. Bush's Executive Order 13279, dated December 12, 2002, and 28 C.F.R. Part 38, it is OJP policy that faith-based and community organizations that statutorily qualify as eligible applicants under OJP programs are invited and encouraged to apply for assistance awards to fund eligible grant activities. Faith-based and community organizations will be considered for awards on the same basis as any other eligible applicants and, if they receive assistance awards, will be treated on an equal basis with all other grantees in the administration of such awards. No eligible applicant or grantee will be discriminated for or against on the basis of its religious character or affiliation, religious name, or the religious composition of its board of directors or persons working in the organization. Faith-based organizations receiving OJP assistance awards retain their independence and do not lose or have to modify their religious identity (e.g., removing religious symbols) to receive assistance awards. OJP grant funds, however, may not be used to fund any inherently religious activity, such as prayer or worship. Inherently religious activity is permissible, although it cannot occur during an activity funded with OJP grant funds; rather, such religious activity must be separate in time or place from the OJP funded program. Further, participation in such activity by individuals receiving services must be voluntary. Programs funded by OJP are not permitted to discriminate in the provision of services on the basis of a beneficiary's religion.

## **SCOPE OF WORK**

The objective of this project is to conduct data collection activities for the 2005 Census of Publicly Funded Forensic Crime Laboratories. This includes extensive follow-up, data verification, data entry, and delivery of a final data set and documentation. The census data collection instrument and preliminary respondent list will be provided by BJS. In preparing proposals for this solicitation, applicants are strongly encouraged to review the data collection instruments, datasets, and statistical reports from the 2002 Census of Publicly Funded Crime Laboratories as well as the 2001 Survey of DNA Crime Laboratories, available on the BJS website at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs).

The data collection agent will have routine contact information with the laboratories and must be knowledgeable of the various areas of forensic science analysis, laboratory organization and relations with various components of the criminal justice system. The recipient of funds will:

1. Develop a detailed timetable for each task in the project. Data collection should begin in February 2006 and be completed within the twelve month project period. After the BJS project manager has agreed to the timetable, all work must be completed as scheduled.
2. Provide a final review of the data collection instrument drafted by BJS for form and content.
3. Verify and update (as needed) the names, addresses, and appropriate contact information from the respondent list provided by BJS. Using a wide variety of information sources (including public and commercial databases, as well as membership lists of professional associations), conduct a search for additional laboratories that may be in-scope since the 2002 census.
4. Mail surveys to respondents and provide extensive follow-up to respondents that require assistance, clarification, or encouragement to complete the survey. This may involve multiple follow-up telephone calls, re-mailing or re-faxing surveys, and e-mail correspondence.
5. Create and maintain a web site which respondents can use to submit their data. Electronic submission will be the preferred method of response, and respondents should be encouraged to use this method.
6. Implement and maintain an automated system to provide ongoing status of each survey's respondent, complete documentation, and an inventory of follow-up communication and procedures for each case. Respondents' method of response (website, mail, fax, or phone) shall be included in this system. This automated tracking system should remain current and accessible to the BJS project monitor at all times.
7. Identify techniques necessary to achieve a 95% or better survey response rate and a 100% item response rate.
8. Deliver to BJS electronic versions of the survey data, and documentation on diskette and in ASCII file format. Survey documentation should include, but is not limited to, a comprehensive codebook detailing variable positions, data coding, variable and value labels, any recoding implemented during the data cleaning process, methods used for dealing with missing data, and copies of all program code used to generate data or published statistics. All data and documentation from this survey will be posted on the BJS website, and the data will be archived at the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data, operated by the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR).

9. All project requirements must be completed within one year of project start date, with monthly progress reports to be provided to BJS that provide evidence of consistent advancement toward meeting the performance measures outlined herein.

**AWARD PROCEDURES AND EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Proposals should describe the plan and implementation strategies outlined in the Scope of Work. Information on staffing levels and qualifications should be included for each task and descriptions of experience relevant to the project. Resumes of the proposed project director and key staff should be submitted with the proposal.

Applications will be reviewed competitively with the final award decision made by the Director of BJS. The applicant will be evaluated on the basis of:

1. Content of the proposal and how it addresses the tasks in the Scope of Work.
2. Demonstrated knowledge of applied survey research, including survey construction, interview techniques, data collection, data coding, entry and verification, and the production of public-use data files. This includes availability of an adequate computing environment, knowledge of standard social science data processing software, and demonstrated ability to produce SPSS readable data files for analysis and report production.
3. Demonstrated ability and experience in collecting data from a large number of criminal justice related agencies or similar entities.
4. Demonstrated fiscal, management, staff, and organizational capacity to provide sound management for this project. Applicant should include detailed staff resources and other costs by project tasks.

**PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

To ensure compliance with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), Public Law 103-62, this solicitation notifies applicants that they are required to provide performance data used to measure the results of the programs implemented with this grant, as well as contribute to the achievements of BJS’s overall statistical program. BJS’s mission is to produce and disseminate accurate, objective, and independent national statistics. OJP/BJS is responsible for measuring the relevance, utility, and accessibility of its information by the following outcomes: (1) demand for statistical data, and (2) utilization of the data. To ensure accountability of these data, for which OJP is responsible, the following performance measures are provided:

<b>Program Objective</b>	<b>Performance Measures</b>	<b>Data to be Provided by Grantee</b>
To conduct a comprehensive census of all	Quality of data (accuracy, validity, and reliability of	Achieve a 95% or better survey response rate.



**Attachment 2 - Project Narrative.** The project narrative should describe activities as discussed in the Scope of Work and address the evaluation criteria. The project narrative should contain a detailed time line for project activities, a description of the survey methodology to be used including defined geographic boundaries, data collection method, data entry, and data documentation procedures.

**Attachment 3 - Other Program Requirements (Key staff information, Privacy Certification, and Human Subjects Protection Certification of Compliance).**

Information on key staff includes a staff loading chart, by task and contract year, showing the role and number of hours (per year) committed for proposed staff; identification of proposed key personnel and their qualifications for the significant functions in this project, along with concise descriptions of the duties each will perform under the grant; and an identification by name of all key personnel with decision making authority.

The **Privacy Certificate** is a certification of compliance with Federal regulation relating to the confidentiality of information identifiable to a private person collection for research and statistical purposes. It includes a description of procedures to be followed to protect identifiable data. (A model certificate is located at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/bjsmpc.pdf](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/bjsmpc.pdf)).

The **Human Subjects Protection Certification of Compliance** is a certification of compliance with Federal regulation relating to research and statistical projects to ensure the protection of human subjects against undue and unnecessary risks. (A model certificate is located at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/bjssspshs.pdf](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/bjssspshs.pdf)).

**Assurances.** The applicant must comply with the assurances in order to receive Federal funds under this program. It is the responsibility of the recipient of Federal funds to fully understand and comply with these requirements. Failure to comply may result in withholding of funds, termination of the award, or other sanctions.

**Certifications Regarding Lobbying; Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace.** Applicants are required to review and check off the box on the certification form included in their online application process. This form commits the applicant to compliance with the certification requirements under 28 CFR Part 69, "New Restrictions on Lobbying," and 28 CFR Part 67, "A Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-procurement) and Government-wide Requirements for a Drug-Free Workplace (Grants)."

## **HOW TO APPLY**

Applications must be submitted through the Grants.gov process. To learn how to begin the online application process, please refer to “How to Apply” at:  
<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/html/howtoapply.htm>

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Director  
Bureau of Justice Statistics