

Large Local Agencies solicitation under the NCS-X or National Crime Statistics Exchange Program

ALEXIA COOPER: My name is Alexia Cooper and I'm a program manager and statistician here with the Bureau of Justice Statistics. If you're not sure what you called in to then this is the teleconference for the Large Local Agencies solicitation under the NCS-X or National Crime Statistics Exchange Program. The intent behind today's teleconference is to provide you with a little bit of background on the solicitation and to provide opportunities for you all to ask any questions you might have either about eligibility, what's fundable under the solicitation, processes for applying, pretty much anything you might have questions about, we would have to answer them. I'm going to go through in a second just after a quick roll call, but before we do that, I do want to let you all know that we are going to be recording the audio for this teleconference and we will be making it available on our website for anyone who might want to apply but cannot participate in today's teleconference. So if you have any issues or concerns about that, let us know, but we are going to be doing that going forward. Like I said, my name is Alexia Cooper. I'm going to be facilitating today's teleconference. I'm going to go ahead and have my fellow BJS staff who is in the room with me introduce themselves and then I'm going to ask the FBI representative to introduce themselves and then the NCS-X team, and then we'll go through the states one by one. So Erica.

ERICA SMITH: Hi, I'm Erica Smith with the Bureau of Justice Statistics. I'm a Unit Chief here and over the Law Enforcement Incident-Based Statistics Unit and I oversee the implementation of the National Crime Statistics Exchange Initiative.

KIMBERLY MARTIN: Hi, this is Kimberly Martin. I am also in the Law Enforcement Incident-Based Statistics Unit here in BJS. In addition to being a statistician, I'm a grant manager for NCS-X.

DAVE ROBERTS: Hi, this is Dave Roberts, I'm actually with IACP but I'm on an assignment to BJS for a couple of years providing support for this program.

ALEXIA COOPER: And I know we have a few BJS staff members on the phone, if you can just go ahead and introduce yourself?

ANDREA GARDNER: Hi, this Andrea Gardner. I'm in the same unit as the statistician and the grant manager.

SHANNAN CATALANO: And this is Shannan Catalano, I'm moving over to this unit beginning on June 12th, so I thought I would get ahead of the curve and join you all for this call.

ALEXIA COOPER: Okay. Thank you, guys. So that is just to give you guys the names of some of the BJS staff members that you'll be working with. We also have representative of our--of our FBI partners on the phone. So if our FBI partners could ahead and introduce themselves?

JOHN QUINLAN: Hi, my name is John Quinlan. I'm here at FBI CJIS, assigned to--a Supervisor to CSMU.

CARLA ORWELL: And Carla Orwell from the Budget Office of the FBI CJIS.

JOHN QUINLAN: That's all for FBI.

ALEXIA COOPER: Okay. Thank you. And last but certainly not the least, for our NCS-X partners, I know there is another Implementation Team partners on the phone. Could you guys go ahead and introduce yourself starting with RTI?

KAREN LESLIE: Hi, this is Karen...

MARK POPE: Hi, this is--go ahead, Karen.

KAREN LISSY: This is Karen Lissy Sorry. This is Karen Lissy from RTI. I'm part of the NCS-X team.

MARK POPE: Hi, this is Mark Pope also with RTI, part of the NCS-X Implementation team.

MICHELLE CASPER: And this is Michelle Casper also from RTI with the NCS-X team.

ALEXIA COOPER: Okay. I think that's pretty much fills up. So the next thing I'd like to do is I just like to get an idea of which agencies might have representatives on the phone, so if you can just let me know, do we have any representatives from Tucson on the phone? Alameda? Kern? Fresno? Riverside? I'm beginning to think not all of California has called in. But Sacramento, I know you're there, right?

ALFREDO GONZALES: Yes, ma'am.

ALEXIA COOPER: And can I get your name, please?

ALFREDO GONZALES: Alfredo Gonzales from Sacramento, California, SAC Sheriff.

ALEXIA COOPER: Oh, thank you so much for calling in and welcome to the call. Do we have anyone from San Bernardino or San Francisco on? Santa Clara? San Jose? Okay. Do we have any representative from DC on the phone? Anyone from Georgia? Indiana? Anybody from Maryland?

SERGEANT BATES: Sergeant Bates, Indiana State Police.

ALEXIA COOPER: Hello, Sergeant.

SERGEANT BATES: Hello.

ALEXIA COOPER: Baltimore County?

SERGEANT FLATTERY: Baltimore County Police--Baltimore County Police Department, Sergeant Flattery.

ALEXIA COOPER: Orange County did you say?

SERGEANT FLATTERY: Baltimore County.

ALEXIA COOPER: Oh, my apologies, Baltimore County, welcome.

SERGEANT FLATTERY: Thank you.

ALEXIA COOPER: Okay. Do we have anyone from Missouri? Okay. New York? Pennsylvania? Texas? Okay. Well, we are going to have more of these, so if they aren't here today they'll have another opportunity, but we do have a few designs. So what we wanted to do is just give you guys the opportunity to ask any questions you might have for us regarding this solicitation. To give you guys little bit of background, the current solicitation, this is the second time we'll release the solicitation aimed at the Large Local Agencies under the NCS-X Program Initiative. That is an initiative that BJS have started a number of years ago that's aimed at the developing a national sample with which we can do crime statistics. Working with the FBI, we are planning on doing that using the NIBRS data and so the efforts of this program are designed to help states and local agencies begin moving towards NIBRS compliance, and helping states to be able to collect those data and submit them to the FBI. Like I said, this is the second time we've done the Large Agencies solicitation and it--we are expecting good results from it. We did have a quite a few agencies applied when we opened it up the first time. I believe we gave out 15 or 16 agencies' worth of awards in the last round and we're hoping to do as well this time.

The solicitation was released sometime in the last week or so, it is going to be open until June 30th. That is the date where it's closed and so you will, if you are intending to put in an application, you have to have your application submitted by June 30th. We'll then go ahead and put it through the review process, make decisions about who will be awarded funding and how much they'll be awarded funding and those decisions will go out, you'll be informed of those decisions sometime in September. Usually, towards the end of September but sometimes it happens a little earlier, but it won't be before September. Once those award notifications have gone out, we expect that--there's a number of budget processes and the like that people have to go through and so I believe this solicitation indicates that we don't anticipate people being able to start work until, -so you should aim their projects starts for January 1st of the following year just to be sure. So that is just to give you guys a very high level, sort of, what this is and why we're doing it. So we'll--I guess I'll start by opening it to you guys and ask if you guys have any questions for us about anything with regards to the program, the solicitation, the mechanics of applying, anything.

JOSIE QUINN: Hi, yes, this is--pardon, Josie Quinn, Miami PD.

ALEXIA COOPER: Hello,

JOSIE QUINN: Hi, can you hear me?

ALEXIA COOPER: I... Yeah, I can hear you.

JOSIE QUINN: Okay. Great. So I noticed on the list that there's a list of agencies and our department is listed in there, I believe in the sample agency--the sample agencies. Although we were working with the state, Florida Department of Law Enforcement, we haven't received any funding, so we wanted to know if we would still be able to participate in this solicitation.

ALEXIA COOPER: The answer to that is not exactly, which is to say you are eligible for funding. However, Florida's UCR Program wants to work directly with the agencies which means that while you will be eligible for funding, we're going to be doing it through the state program which means you don't have to reply directly to this open solicitation. The way that's going to work is we're going to work with your state program and with you to develop that funding path through the state program. So what we can do is I can email you after this call. We'll usually--I don't know exactly who the point of contact that--for that is at the moment, I know it's through Charlie Shaffer's office, but I don't know if it's April Cross directly or whether or not Sue Burton is the primary POC for arranging those things. But there is going to be a process by which you can apply for funding under this project through your state.

JOSIE QUINN: Okay. Perfect. Thank you so much.

ALEXIA COOPER: So some of the things we'll talk--we might talk about today would apply for example, what you can ask for and things like that, but the timelines for this open solicitation do not apply to you and you will not apply directly to the solicitation. But if you wish, let me know, I can--if you want to email me, my email address is alexia, A-L-E-X-I-A, .cooper, C-O-O-P-E-R @ usdoj.gov. I can set up a phone call to talk with you separately about what that process is going to look like.

JOSIE QUINN: Sounds great. Thank you so much, Ms. Cooper.

ALEXIA COOPER: Not a problem. Are there any other questions for us about the--sort of the process for applying for funding or what kinds of items can be requested under the solicitation?

ALFREDO: Hello, Ms. Cooper. This is Alfredo from Sacramento County. We were planning to do a separate conference call with you and the team but before that, I wanted to find out if it was too late for our agency to submit the solicitation? We understand June 30th is the deadline. So knowing that our systems, you know, are already NIBRS-compliant and we are submitting crime statistics to the FBI. I'm not quite sure, you know, I came late to this project so I'm just trying to work on the assessment part of it. And it seems that my agency may not necessarily need to do a whole assessment again.

ALEXIA COOPER: Yeah, we had a call with you--or I had an email conversation. We went out and [INDISTINCT] which is like a couple--a year, year and a half ago. And [INDISTINCT] of your systems are pretty close to compliance and at the time, the concern had been that you guys were potentially going to be getting a new system. It sounds like you've decided to stay with this current system which means you do not need to do a full assessment. What we're going to do is we'll talk with you a little bit about where you are right now on the phone and sort of what kinds of issues or items that might need to be done with your system in order to become fully NIBRS-compliant. And then we can talk with you guys. Basically you're--you would be eligible to ask for funding to cover those kinds of issues. I would expect, given my memory of where you guys were before, a major thing that you would have to do would be confirm that the coding is appropriate in terms of the items being appropriately extractable. And then the process to produce the extraction to send to the state program or in this case the FBI for now until state program is up and running. And so that's the kind of thing that you will be able to ask for funding for under the solicitation. Yes, you do still have time to do that. We obviously would want to talk with you pretty soon because the [INDISTINCT] like offered on June 30th and then it's one of the very, very few things we cannot--we'll have no leeway on. If you do not have an application submitted on that date, you won't be able to [INDISTINCT] for funding under the current solicitation. But we can definitely talk with you about a little bit more detail on a separate call about sort of where you are and where you need to go.

ALFREDO: Yeah. I would like that and I can have my developers and my key players in the call. That way, they can provide all the great details on the system.

ALEXIA COOPER: That sounds great. Myself and Dave Roberts are actually the representatives for California. So if you want to just send me an email and let me know when you guys want to have that call, I'm sure Dave and I, one or the other at the very least can be available for that call and confirm sort of what you need to put in that solicitation in terms of where you are.

ALFREDO: Thank you, ma'am. Appreciate it.

ALEXIA COOPER: Not a problem. So Baltimore do you guys have any questions for us? Since I know you're on the phone and just want to make sure we cover everything that anyone might need.

FEMALE: We do not have any questions. We were just--we listened in to see if there was anything we were missing but at this point, we do not have any questions.

ALEXIA COOPER: Okay.

ERICA SMITH: This is Erica Smith. I would just take a chance since it sounds like we don't have a ton of specific questions about the application process to answer. I just wanted to point out a couple of things in the solicitation itself. On page 11 of the solicitation under the statement of work and deliverables, you'll see an alphabetical list

of items that we are asking applicants to address in the program narrative and in the-- and when you're costing out, budgeting for this project. I just want to draw attention to those items so that everyone knows that there's a list there to reference as you're ensuring that you've included all the relevant items in your application. And then perhaps even more importantly, draw your attention to the items on which the application will actually be ranked in--during the peer review process. This is under the section titled program narrative and it begins on page 17 of the solicitation. Under program narrative, you'll see several subheadings referring to the statement of the problem, the project design, capabilities and competencies, and the plan for collecting performance measure data. Statement of the problem, project design, and capabilities and competencies section should be where you're focusing most of your attention. And if you guys, in your application process could call out those sections specifically in the program narrative that would really help us during the review process to ensure that you've hit upon all of the requirements that we've laid out in the solicitation.

ALEXIA COOPER: The other thing I want to add on that is that there may well be at this point we know things you're not sure about. That's fine. What we're asking you to do is write out what your plans are and write out how you intend to meet those plans. So for example, the biggest example of this--that we hear, is we do ask people for their capabilities and competencies, who is going to work on the project, and what job are they going to fulfill, why are they qualified to do that job. Now obviously if you have those staff already, you can describe why they're good at what they do and include a resume to prove that. However, it may well be in many cases that you don't know who that staff member or people are going to be. For example, if you want to or need to hire a contractor to come in and make changes to your computer systems, you may not know who that contractor is going to be yet. That is completely okay. Instead, what you need to write in that section is, how are you going to acquire that contractor, what are the requirements in terms of their skills, knowledge, competencies that you're going to require that individual to have in order to ensure that you get someone who's capable of performing the work. That is what we'll evaluate you on if you do not know exactly who's going to do the work. And it is very, very important that you call out those kinds of information because if you just put in there, we're going to hire some people to do the work, we're not going to be able to appropriately and accurately assess that you're--you have a plan or a method to get the right people in a timely manner. So just keep that in mind as you're thinking about putting these together and sort of how you're going to match staff to the tasks that you're calling out that you're going to do. It is okay if you don't have full plans for everything but if you don't have the people or you don't have the plan, you need to describe how they're going to develop those things and what the steps are going to be in that process. And if you do that, we can accurately score and approach a plan and look at it with that in mind. The other thing that you should be aware of with this solicitation is the solicitation is being funded under a special kind of grant called Cooperative Agreement. We don't know how familiar you are with Cooperative Agreements. It is the primary vehicle by which BJS provides funding out. It is a little bit different than some of the more standard types of grants. For example, the Byrne JAG Grant which you probably are much more familiar with. The major difference with the Cooperative Agreement, Cooperative Agreement is used in cases where it's expected that the federal agency providing the work and that's BJS and our

FBI partners are going to remain a partner with you in the process. That is to say we will anticipate supporting you through this project being available for you, having monthly meetings with you, and generally remaining involved. That's not to say we're going to tell you what to do and tell you exactly how to do your job. That's not the point of the Cooperative Agreement. But we do expect to remain involved and aware of sort of how things are progressing so that we can support you as you move forward. The other major advantage of the Cooperative Agreement vehicle is that it does allow for a little more flexibility. Like I said, for things like, if you may not know exactly how you're going to acquire a staff member but you know what kind of staff you're going to acquire or what kind of contract you're going to get under the Cooperative Award vehicle, we have the ability to let that be a little looser when we make the award and let you determine that afterwards and then you can get the funds that's based on your actual determination. Whereas, if this were a contract vehicle where some of the other more standard grants, we have less flexibility there. So we do think that this is the best vehicle to do this but we just want you to be aware that it is a little bit different and it does mean that we are asking to remain a closer partner with this that you might have had on other grants that you may be more familiar with.

JOHN QUINLAN: Thank you.

ALEXIA COOPER: The other thing about these as well is we talk a lot of solicitation that I mentioned here about all of our partners on this. Obviously as it says in the solicitation, although BJS is leading this team, the FBI is our close partner on this. They've provided the funding under which this program is being awarded, obviously, the NIBRS program is the FBI's data collection program and we are not interfering in any way with a sort of how the data are collected or anything like that.

But we also have a close partnership with what we called the NCS-X Implementation Team, which is a group of contractors that work on our behalf to help promote this effort. These include the Research Triangle Institute or RTI, SEARCH, PERF, IACP and IJIS. All of whom are available to assist you in your efforts as you move forward. In conjunction with the FBI and BJS, there's a number of both technical assistance supports as well as the programmatic type--informatic and a number of other things. So this team is available to provide you whether you're applying for funding immediately or not. We--at the end of the day, we all want you guys to see this transition and we want to support you in that. And so I want to make sure, you know, that our team members are available to answer questions, help you figure out where you stand and where you might going--with [INDISTINCT] plans, we have a whole host of documents that have been put together to help you assess where you might be in terms of our readiness assessment documents. We also have planning documents including some project implementation planning guides if you're not quite sure where you are or what kinds of things you might want to consider. We have a state level playbook which isn't necessarily appropriate for local agencies. We're working on a local version but a number of the items in it may help you when you're thinking through your processes we also have media kits available or we're developing them. We have some documents available that will help tell you about how other agencies have approached these problems and just generally, we're developing a network by which you can rely on us

and others, like few other agencies who have resolved this process, or done with it, or at the same place you were at the very beginning, help provide you with guidance and support as you move forward. Obviously, we would like to apply for funding, we want you guys to apply for funding, but even if you're not quite ready or you're not sure, please do let us know, and these implementation and support resources are available for you one way or the other. And we're more than happy at any point to talk with you guys about how to move forward in what we have that might assist you. The other thing we've done is every state has an individual representative that's been assigned from our team so you will have one primary point of contact moving forward. Right now, I'm the contact, as I said, Alexia Cooper for the solicitation. But if you wish, we can also let you know who your individual state level representative from BJS is and you can work with that individual going forward knowing that they're going to be the primary person working with every agency in your state and the state program. So we hope in that way, we can provide some continuity and provide supports sort of across the board.

DAVE ROBERTS: There is also--this is Dave Roberts. There is also some technical assistance that can be provided at no cost to your agencies. The implementation team that works with your agency beginning with the state providing technical assistance above and beyond what you request in the actual application. FBI is going to have some very technically focused individuals available for technical assistance as well and there are some classes that are being organized by the FBI, regional class on NIBRS and two persons from every one of the agencies that are part of the solicitation are invited to attend these sessions. We've already held one in Florida but we are going to be having one for the California region the first week of August in Phoenix because that was just the hottest place that we could find in the country. And we have one in Baltimore, actually the last week of June. So we will be reaching out, FBI will be reaching out to you in making specific invitations to each of the sample agencies. It's a three-day training class where you'll come in and you'll listen to FBI and BJS and some of the implementation team and some other agencies on how they moved through this transition and what they can do and as I said, technical assistance, a lot of resource as Alexia said. So there's lots and lots of support for you. And you don't have to build that into your application, it's simply going to be available to you.

ALEXIA COOPER: And I want to please provide you with little information, I heard a couple of bleeps, I hope that was people joining the call and not leaving the call. Does anyone have any additional questions or want to follow up on anything we brought up?

Okay. Well, and just to--I guess, we're getting pretty close to closing out, like we said, the applications are due on June 30th. Please let us know if you have any specific questions. I know a lot of times no one has any questions early on but you get two pages into the application and you find eighteen different things, we do ask that you give us a call. My contact information is included in the point of contact in the solicitation. Or you can reply to anybody on the team if you have to have a team member's contact or FBI, we will make sure that your questions or issues are routed to the right people to answer those kinds of things. The other thing I will advise, if you are considering applying and we do hope that you do, please go in and work--the beginning of the solicitation has instructions for how to sign up in grants.gov to submit the

application and make sure that you have access. I would highly, highly recommend that you do so soon, well before the deadline and that's because, unfortunately, as all things happen, the closer we get to the deadline, the more likely it is that the system will decide to have some weird twitch and not work- properly the last day. So we do ask that you go in and just check to make sure that you have access that the right people who need to submit your application should you choose to apply to do so, I want also to call out for our West Coast friends on the phone that the applications are due by 11:59 P.M. East Coast Time. That is significantly earlier for you guys. And the other thing I will say is that, if you do experience difficulties with the system, either logging in, please do call the grants.gov helpline. It is included on the third paragraph or so of page two of the solicitation. We ask you to do that because it documents the issues you're having and if those kinds of issues have been documented then it allows us an easier way of negotiating if your application is late or something like that. If you try to submit something but don't document it through grants.gov's helpline, we have no way to assist you after the fact if there are any problems. So please do go through that. Try to make sure you have access, please review the application. Let us know if you guys have any questions whatsoever, and otherwise, just let us know, we're excited to be working with you guys. We're very grateful you're on the call today. And we hope that we will be hearing from you again soon. Does any of my partners on the phone have anything they want to add?

JOHN QUINLAN: FBI, no.

ALEXIA COOPER: Okay. Well, if there are no more questions, thank you guys again. We will be holding a second teleconference on this at 3:30. We'll be doing basically the same thing. Obviously, if you want to call into that one to see if there's any new people or any new discussion, feel free. But we will be covering basically the same information. So thank you guys all and we look forward to receiving your applications.

ALFREDO GONZALES: Thank you, Ms. Cooper. Sacramento out. Bye-bye.

MALE: [INDISTINCT]

ALEXIA COOPER: Bye-bye. Thank you.