

## Small and Medium Sized Agencies NCS-X

ERICA SMITH: I will let you all know that we're recording this call so that we can transcribe it and put it online just in case there are folks who want--who were not able to make the call but want to be able to peruse any of the information that we discuss. And then also, if I could remind everyone on the line to mute your phones when you are not speaking, it helps to keep the static on the line down which obviously helps the call but then also helps them on the back end for transcribing the text.

I'd like to--my name is Erica Smith. I am a Unit Chief here at the Bureau of Justice Statistics, overseeing the law enforcement incident base statistics unit. This is the unit that runs the National Crime Statistics Exchange Program under which this particular solicitation sits. I'm --I also have in the room with me another BJS person. I'm going to have him introduce himself and then we'll go around on the phone for the BJS staff.

DAVE ROBERTS: Hi. This is Dave Roberts. I'm actually with International Association of Chiefs of Police but I'm on a multiyear assignment to BJS working on this project.

ERICA SMITH: Alexia, would you like to introduce yourself?

ALEXIA COOPER: Hi. Yeah, my name is Alexia. I am also a statistician with the Bureau of Justice Statistics and I'm one of the primary Program Managers for the NCS-X Project and we'll be working hopefully with a lot of you.

ERICA SMITH: Andrea?

ANDREA GARDNER: Hi. I'm Andrea--I'm Andrea Gardner. I also work with Erica and Alexia as a statistician and NCS-X Program Manager.

ERICA SMITH: One of our primary partners on the NCS-X initiative is the FBI Criminal Justice Information Services Division. Hopefully, we have some FBI folks who are able to join us this morning.

JOHN QUINLAN: Yes, we do.

ERICA SMITH: If so, would you guys mind introducing yourself?

JOHN QUINLAN: Yes, you do. My name is John Quinlan. I'm with the FBI CJIS Division, representing CSMU and...

SPEAKER 1: And you got the Financial Management Unit as well.

ERICA SMITH: Great. Welcome. Thank you for joining us.

JOHN QUINLAN: Thank you.

ERICA SMITH: NCS-X is also supported in the implementation through a group called the NCS-X Implementation Team, and this is a team of subject-matter experts and contractors led by RTI International and supported by the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Police Executive Research Forum, SEARCH, and the IJIS Institute. If we have any of the implementation team members on the line, if you could introduce yourself, that would be great.

KAREN LISSY: Good morning. This is Karen Lissy from RTI.

MARK POPE: Hi. This is Mark Pope of RTI.

BRIAN ACKEN: Hello, everybody. This is Brian Acken from RTI.

MICHELLE CASPER: Michelle Casper from RTI.

BRIAN NYGARD: And this is Brian Nygard from RTI.

BOB MAY: This is Bob May IJIS.

ERICA SMITH: Great. Welcome. Thank you for joining us this morning. Rather than doing a roll call of agencies, I think I'll just kind of launch into a little bit of the content that I wanted to cover during this phone call, and then--I'll try to go through that relatively quickly, and then open it up to any of the local agencies that we're able to call in to ask questions about the solicitation, the program generally, any of the components of an application, et cetera.

I just had a few things that I wanted to touch on at the offset and hopefully that will either answer your questions or generate a few more. We'll see how it goes, but I wanted to draw your attention to a couple of the items in the solicitation itself that are pretty critical for you to touch upon during the application process. I want to make sure I have all the right page numbers here. On page 10 of the solicitation, that is where the statement of work and deliverable section begins, and I would draw your attention to the alphabetical list that starts there on page 10 about what the application should address. There are a number of items there--six, seven, eight, nine, ten. I think it's 10 items if I counted those quickly enough. Ten items that you should--that this application should address, including--it includes things like a review of your current and anticipated technical capacity, staffing needs, the types of technical assistance you might need during the course of your project, et cetera. Just to make sure that we know we're talking about the same list there. And then I would draw your attention to the component that is labeled the Program Narrative that starts on page 17 of the application. This is where you're going to take all those--all those items that are indicated that the application should address from page 10 and put them into your program narrative. And this--what begins on page 17 is--are the sections of the application that we need you to address. So the statement of the problem, the project design and implementation, and the capabilities and competencies are the critical components of the program narrative and are what you will be scored on. The scoring

criteria are also include--included later on in the--or in the solicitation as well. Just so that you can clearly define your program narrative that you submit under the application by these sub-headers, and address these particular items that are listed here, beginning on page 17, and make sure that they reference back to those critical components of what you're trying to accomplish which are listed on page 10. So there's some synergy between the two that might not be clear when you're reading through the solicitation and just to try to marry those two components up would be--would really help us in the review process and I think would make the application stronger and more clear generally for us to evaluate.

The other--the other items that I would draw your attention to, relate to how to actually apply for the funding. The reason I draw your attention to this is because there are a number of administrative components here that have to be addressed to ensure that you have access to Grants.gov fully and completely in order to make your application. That information begins on page 26 of the solicitation and it's thankfully labeled very clearly, How To Apply, so hopefully, that will be a useful section for you. It's got a number of components in there, like, you know, completing your SAM registration. To be honest with you, I don't even remember what SAM means anymore, but I know that's a critical component of making sure that you have access to--that you're going to be able to access Grants.gov appropriately, making sure that you have a DUNS number.

There's a number of steps in there that the solicitation lists out that are required for making the application. We are suggesting to everyone that you begin that--if you know you're going to make the application or even if you're on the fence and you're thinking it's a possibility, we suggest ensuring that you verify you have these components in place, the DUNS number, the SAM--the active SAM registration, and these other components, because if it gets down to the wire, some of these registrations and updating of them or getting new registrations can take a little while. I would say I would give yourselves no less than a week to ensure that you can get these up and running. So that's an administrative hurdle that is not really related to the program itself and the project that you're going to be asking to complete but is very important to actually even get the application in. There's not a lot we can do if something comes in late because one of these steps was missed. We really don't have a lot of latitude at the program office level to make any exceptions to that. If there was some sort of problem getting Grants.gov to take your application that wasn't related to these steps, there may--you know, we may have some wiggle room, but generally, if an application isn't made on time and it's because one of these steps was missed or there was a registration missing then we have very little latitude to do anything to support the prospective applicant at that point.

One additional item that is in this solicitation that is a little unique compared some of the other NCS-X solicitations that we have put out in the past couple of years is that we are requiring applicants to include a completed readiness assessment form as part of the application process. Information about the readiness assessment begins on page six of the solicitation, and you'll see links within the solicitation to those readiness assessment forms online. If you run into any problems pulling those readiness assessment forms

down, please get in touch with us. You can contact the [ncsx@rti.org](mailto:ncsx@rti.org) email address that is listed in several different places in the application--or in the solicitation I should say. You can also contact the [askbjs@usdoj.gov](mailto:askbjs@usdoj.gov) email address that's listed on the second page of the solicitation. If you have any of the emails that have come out letting you know about the solicitation, you can contact any of the folks on that list as well. One--trying to give multiple routes, so then if you run into any problems with any of the application components, you have a way to let us know. And you can also--if you go to the [bjs.gov](http://bjs.gov) website and look-up NCS-X, you'll get a web page, and the readiness assessment forms are also linked there as well, and I believe there on the IACP NCS-X website. So we got a lot of different routes to get you to the readiness assessment forms. So you understand what--a little bit--you probably read through the document already, but we do have some information about what a readiness assessment typically covers when we do them on sites. That is listed on page seven of the solicitation. We are happy to talk through any of the components of the readiness assessment forms with you. If you fill it out and send it over to us and want to talk about the implications of what you have found during that process, we can schedule that with you as well and try to get that done in advance of, you know, you needing that information for the application process. I think that that is all I really wanted to cover.

We do have listed beginning on page eight of the solicitation, a section about the costs that are considered allowable under the solicitation. And then at the top of page nine are going to be some--it's going to be a short list of costs that are not allowable. These are relatively broad categories. It's sometimes really hard to figure out what will and will not be covered, and because we are--because we are approaching the--or the mechanism that we're using to make these awards is through a cooperative agreement, we have generally, over the past couple of years, negotiated what will and won't be covered if there are items that we determine are out of scope based on the source of the funding that we're using for this program, and we definitely won't just say, "We're cutting this and you have no wiggle room." It'll be a negotiation with you. You know, there are certain things that we can't cover and we'll try to figure out what implications that has for your project moving forward as quickly as we possibly can. Because these solicitations came out later in the year than we had originally planned for them to, we are a little bit pressed for time in terms of being able to do that negotiation prior to asking you to accept the award, but we will do everything that we can on the back end to ensure that we--that you all have a project plan in place that you're comfortable with, and that if anything significant was cut from the project plan, that we--it's still something that you can succeed with and that we haven't cut a component that would really just cripple your ability to implement the project successfully.

So, hopefully, I didn't miss anything. If I did, and anyone from BJS or CJIS or the implementation team, please pipe up and let us know. Make sure to say something about it. With that, I think I'll open it up to any of the local agencies that are on the line to ask any questions or make any--ask any clarifying questions that you might have.

LESLIE BRIMAGE: Hi. This is Leslie Brimage with the City of Cody representing the Cody Police Department in Wyoming.

ERICA SMITH: Hi. How are you?

LESLIE BRIMAGE: Hi. Good. How are you?

ERICA SMITH: Good. Thank you.

LESLIE BRIMAGE: Our administrative person who would normally do this type of grant has left employment with us, so I'm a little new to this. So I apologize if this question seems silly. What's the...

ERICA SMITH: No silly question.

LESLIE BRIMAGE: Thank you. On page six where it lists the chart of the eligible agencies and the total number of foreign officers.

ERICA SMITH: Sure, yeah.

LESLIE BRIMAGE: It does said a county or township of zero to thirty-five and thirty-six to seven hundred and forty-nine. When I look on page 35 at the appendix, in Wyoming, it lists the Cody Police Department but not the Park County Sheriff's Office. Would we not be eligible then to do a joint application with the Sheriff's Office?

ERICA SMITH: Oh, I would say that you would be eligible because it--that would be--it--is it a consortium that you're working through that you're both on the same RMS?

LESLIE BRIMAGE: No.

ERICA SMITH: Oh.

DAVE ROBERTS: We--this is Dave Roberts. And I, together with Mark Pervicks and Brian Nygard actually made the site visit and did readiness assessment with your agency a while ago, so we're aware of the fact that--of who your software solution provider is and--in both in Evanston and in Cody, I think there were--was some shared resource that where your RMS is being shared with other agencies, isn't that true?

LESLIE BRIMAGE: Yes. That's correct.

DAVE ROBERTS: Yes.

LESLIE BRIMAGE: Cody and the Sheriff's Office are both on the RIM system.

DAVE ROBERTS: Right. So, recognizing that we said--we certainly need Cody on [INDISTINCT] and Evanston, we need those individual agencies. So, it can be an application to upgrade that Records Management System that supports your agency as well as other agencies. We can't buy equipment for other agencies per se but we can

certainly build the capacity of the Records Management System whether it is the home residence of that system is in your agency or in a consortium.

LESLIE BRIMAGE: Okay. Thank you.

ERICA SMITH: And I would say it wasn't--if you have any questions about those components and you want to, kind of, run them pass us, feel free to get in touch. I don't know whose contact information you may have or not. If you don't have any email addresses right now, I would suggest contacting one of the emails that is listed in the solicitation. In that way, we can loop you in with Dave, with Andrew Gardiner who's the Program Manager for the agencies in Wyoming for--and the Wyoming State Program and with Brian Nygard who's also from RTI, who's also doing work in Wyoming as well. So we can--we can perhaps review what you're requesting and figure out, like, what we--you know, base on our understanding of what can be covered, how that might impact your bottom line request, and the project plan going forward.

DAVE ROBERTS: The other is--and it goes for the other agencies as well. You can also go reach out to your state UCR Program Manager. We're working closely with them, and in the case of Wyoming, we're working closely with Samantha. I just talked with her yesterday. She's aware of what's going on and what can be a reasonable approach and contact information for everybody. So, feel free to reach--for all the agencies, reach back to your state UCR Program Manager as well.

LESLIE BRIMAGE: Thank you.

ERICA SMITH: Do we have any other questions?

DAVE ROBERTS: Great.

ERICA SMITH: I guess they let us off easy. We've had several of these so far this week and have not have a lot of questions, so...

DAVE ROBERTS: [INDISTINCT]

FEMALE: [INDISTINCT] technical. It's a very technical grant, and I guess my question from Buffalo, New York is, you know, we just put our budget together and there's no, like, limit to our--you know, we describe the program. I'm a little confused on a lot of this.

ERICA SMITH: Oh, so you put your--you put a budget together that you--that would support your NCS-X Project, is that what you mean?

FEMALE: Yeah. Uh-huh. And then like you said, if--you know, usually, we're given a cap and submission of some grants. So, I didn't see a cap really on this.

ERICA SMITH: Correct. Yeah, we did not put a cap. I--it--I know sometimes, it's almost easier to be constrained by a cap. Would you--would it be helpful if we scheduled an offline call to kind of talk through those components? Would that be something that you would find helpful?

FEMALE: Yes, probably. Yeah.

ERICA SMITH: Okay. Do you have contact information for the team or maybe you want to take my email address and get in touch with me and we can set something up?

FEMALE: Yeah, I can take your email. I'm not real sure about--that was my other question, on page six. [INDISTINCT] about--where it talks about, you know, in the application that you're going to be working with the team, exactly what does that mean? If somebody is awarded a grant, then you're going to be working with a team at the Bureau of Statistics?

ERICA SMITH: So, that was actually something I should have--I should have mentioned upfront that I did forget from my list. That we have a--we have requirements that you--that each of the agencies we say have a plan "for working with the State UCR Program and then working with the NCS-X Implementation Team." It basically just means to include as a component of your project that you're going to make sure that you're keeping both the NCS-X Team, which is BJS, FBI-CJIS, and a team of contractors, going to keep them abreast of your project status through those monthly calls using them as--using all of us, I should say, as a resource. If you run into any kinds of hurdles, honestly, for the project, and, you know, it's part of keeping us apprised of the project status, but then also if we are able to provide any help for whatever it is that you're dealing with at that moment, we can let you know at that time. And then working with the state program is letting them know of the status of your project, too, just so that they're aware of when you may be coming in for certifications, to start passing data with the state program, etcetera.

We offer technical and implementation assistance through the NCS-X Team. FBI-CJIS has a number of TA resources as well. I was trying to think of the word that I needed there. And so between all of the components--or across all of the components of this particular project, there are--there's expertise that you can draw upon that you wouldn't have to pay for through the grant process, essentially. So the readiness assessment was one thing we came on site in Buffalo and did. That would--that would be one thing that would be included.

FBI-CJIS is bringing onboard some data integration specialists, people who can help work through some of the issues that you may have with integrating information across different systems. So if you don't keep all of the NIBRS--all of the data required for NIBRS in one place, in one RMS, that you have it in maybe a couple of different databases, they may be able to provide support to you all for that purpose. Those are things that you wouldn't have to pay for through the grant process. They would be covered under, you know, regular, sort of, government contracts here at the federal level. So if you--I think--it sounds it would be helpful if we had an offline discussion of

the components that you're including now and we can kind of talk through whether there's anything that we think will be allowable, but then also any places where we might be able to provide some of that technical assistance and program support.

FEMALE: Okay. Thank you. You're going to give me your email?

ERICA SMITH: Oh, yeah. So it's erica, E-R-I-C-A, ., L as in Lee, .smith, S-M-I-T-H, @usdoj.gov.

FEMALE: Okay. Thank you.

ALEXIA COOPER: Also...

ERICA SMITH: Sure.

ALEXIA COOPER: If you have any trouble getting ahold of her through that email--this is Alexia Cooper. My email's the one that's listed in the contact in the solicitation. You can email me, too, and we'll just make sure to get you in contact with the right people.

FEMALE: Okay. Thank you. I actually...

ALEXIA COOPER: Sure.

FEMALE: ...got this from our commander, so I'll have to look through and see what they sent me and what they didn't.

ERICA SMITH: Got it. Well, hopefully, if they forwarded you the email. I don't know if you'll get the full email addresses in there or not, but one way or the other, if you look through the solicitation, there's lots of email addresses, and then--and then mine there, too. So we can make sure that you get to the right place.

DAVE ROBERTS: Also, so that everybody is aware as part of this overall process, as Erica indicated earlier on the IACP site and on the BJS site, there are a whole host of other resources available, agencies. We're putting up a draft media kit, some draft planning documents, other research that has been used--where agencies have used NIBRS data. And so all of that is available to you. And all of the agencies, all the sample agencies are going to be invited and have their travel paid to attend a three-day regional training session that the FBI and BJS are organizing.

We've already helped two of those, one in Florida for the Florida Regional Agency, one in Tulsa, Oklahoma. We're going to have one in Baltimore the end of June. One in Phoenix, Arizona for California and Arizona and western agencies the first week of August, and one in St. Louis in September. And FBI will be reaching out to every one of these agencies, all the agencies that are part of the sample, and give you instructions on what region you're in, where the--where the three-day workshop is going to be held,

and how you can make all of your reservations and so forth. But just be aware of the fact, if haven't already been contacted, you certainly will be contacted.

ERICA SMITH: For the--for the contacts that we were just speaking to at Buffalo--at the Buffalo PD. The Baltimore training is for the New York region agencies, so hopefully, someone from the Buffalo PD has responded. The FBI is paying for two staff from each of the NCS-X sample agencies to attend. So hopefully, someone from your agency is able to make the training. It won't help a lot in terms of making the application because it's taking place that last week of June right before the applications are due, but it is a resource available to you all. And so if that's something you want to check on, that might be helpful in this process as well.

Do we have any other questions from folks who are on the line?

JOEL MERES: Yes, I have a question.

ERICA SMITH: Sure.

JOEL MERES: Yeah. Joel Meres, Sagadahoc County Sheriff's Office up in Maine. And questions concerned of the readiness assessment. We actually completed one last November, and you folks came out there and did a visit, an introduction with us. It's--is this the same one that you're requiring to be submitted with the grant application or do we have to re-submit a new one?

ERICA SMITH: No, that is the same one. So the reason it's listed that way in the solicitation is that we only have probably a handful, I would say, of the agencies eligible for the solicitation that we were able to go on site with and do those readiness assessments. So for those agencies that didn't have one completed by our team, we wanted to make sure that they submitted something. So, you know, the one that you had done in November is absolutely--is absolutely the right one. You can just include--you can either include the readiness assessment form itself or the report that you received back. And if you need any additional information, get in touch with us, and we'll make sure that you get it before the application is due.

JOEL MERES: Great. Thank you very much.

ERICA SMITH: Sure. Are there any other questions? Okay, well, great. Thanks to everyone who was able to make the call, and again, there are a number of different ways listed in the solicitation that you can get in touch with us. We do have contact information online as well for you to reach out and get a response to some--any of the questions that you might have about the solicitation. So feel free to contact us as you move through the process of putting your application together. Buffalo, feel free to get in touch with me and we'll figure out a time to have an offline conversation.

FEMALE: Okay. Perfect.

ERICA SMITH: And...

DAVE ROBERTS: [INDISTINCT]

ERICA SMITH: Great. Yeah.

DAVE ROBERTS: And we are going to have another one of these calls for these agencies, for your agencies at 2:00 today. So if after this call and reviewing any of the documents if you have any other questions, feel free to call in on the 2:00 PM call--2:00 PM Eastern call, today, and we can resolve those questions there.

ERICA SMITH: Well, thank you all very much for joining us, and we look forward to being able to work with you later on this year. Thank you.

DAVE ROBERTS: Thank you.

FEMALE: Thank you.

ERICA SMITH: Bye.

FEMALE: Thanks.