



The [U.S. Department of Justice](#) (DOJ), [Office of Justice Programs](#) (OJP), [Bureau of Justice Statistics](#) (BJS) is seeking applications for FY 2015 National Criminal History Improvement Technical Assistance Program (NCHIP TA). This program furthers the Department's mission to enhance the crime fighting and criminal justice capabilities of state and tribal governments by supporting efforts to improve the accuracy, utility, and interstate accessibility of criminal history records and enhancing records of protection orders involving domestic violence and stalking, relevant mental health information, automated fingerprint identification systems and other state systems supporting national records systems and their use for criminal history background checks.

FY 2015 National Criminal History Improvement Technical Assistance Program (NCHIP TA)

Eligibility

Eligible applicants are limited to for-profit commercial organizations, nonprofit organizations, faith-based and community organizations, institutions of higher learning, and consortia with demonstrated organization and community-based experience working with American Indian and Alaska Native communities, including tribal for-profit (commercial) and nonprofit organizations, tribal colleges and universities, and tribal consortia. However, consistent with OJP fiscal requirements, for-profit organizations are not allowed to make a profit as a result of this award or to charge a management fee for the performance of this award.

For additional eligibility information, see Section [C. Eligibility Information](#).

Deadline

Applicants must register with [Grants.gov](#) prior to submitting an application. All applications are due to be submitted and in receipt of a successful validation message in Grants.gov by 11:59 time p.m. eastern time on May 26, 2015.

All applicants are encouraged to read this [Important Notice: Applying for Grants in Grants.gov](#).

For additional information, see [How to Apply](#) in section D. Application and Submission Information.

Contact Information

For technical assistance with submitting an application, contact the Grants.gov Customer Support Hotline at 800-518-4726 or 606-545-5035, or via e-mail to support@grants.gov. The [Grants.gov](#) Support Hotline hours of operation are 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, except federal holidays.

Applicants that experience unforeseen Grants.gov technical issues beyond their control that prevent them from submitting their application by the deadline must e-mail the BJS contact identified below **within 24 hours after the application deadline** and request approval to submit their application. Additional information on reporting technical issues is found under “Experiencing Unforeseen Grants.gov Technical Issues” in the [How to Apply](#) section.

For assistance with any other requirements of this solicitation, contact Devon B. Adams, Chief, Criminal Justice Data Improvement Program, by telephone at 202-307-0765, or by e-mail at askbjs@usdoj.gov. Include “NCHIP15 TA” in the subject line.

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Contents

A. Program Description	4
Overview	4
Program-Specific Information	4
Goals, Objectives, and Deliverables	5
Evidence-Based Programs or Practices	9
B. Federal Award Information.....	9
Type of Award	10
Financial Management and System of Internal Controls	10
Budget Information	10
Cost Sharing or Match Requirement.....	10
Pre-Agreement Cost Approvals	11
Limitation on Use of Award Funds for Employee Compensation; Waiver.....	11
Prior Approval, Planning, and Reporting of Conference/Meeting/Training Costs	11
Costs Associated with Language Assistance (if applicable)	12
C. Eligibility Information.....	12
Cost Sharing or Match Requirement.....	12
Limit on Number of Application Submissions	12
D. Application and Submission Information	12
What an Application Should Include	12
How to Apply	21
E. Application Review Information.....	24
Selection Criteria	24
Review Process.....	25
F. Federal Award Administration Information	26
Federal Award Notices	26
Administrative, National Policy, and other Legal Requirements.....	26
General Information about Post-Federal Award Reporting Requirements.....	28
G. Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s)	28
H. Other Information.....	28
Provide Feedback to OJP	28
Application Checklist	29

FY 2015 National Criminal History Improvement Technical Assistance Program (NCHIP TA) (CFDA #16.554)

A. Program Description

Overview

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) is publishing this notice to announce the continuation of the Technical Assistance Program to support activities under the National Criminal History Improvement Program (NCHIP) and the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) Act Record Improvement Program (NARIP) in fiscal year 2015. BJS is authorized to issue this solicitation under 42 U.S.C. 3731, et seq. The NCHIP program was initiated in 1995 and has encompassed evolving efforts to support state activities for the establishment of records systems and the collection and use of criminal history and related records. The NARIP program was implemented in 2009 resulting from the passage of the NICS Improvement Amendments Act of 2007 (Pub. L. 110-180).

Program-Specific Information

Through this solicitation, BJS is seeking a national technical assistance service provider to support the goals and objectives of its National Criminal History Improvement Program (NCHIP) and NICS Act Record Improvement Program (NARIP). Direct technical assistance is provided to states, territories, and tribal jurisdictions to ensure that records systems are developed and managed to conform to FBI standards, ensure jurisdictions are using the most appropriate technologies, and adhere to the highest standards of practice with respect to privacy and confidentiality. An additional component of this program includes the routine collection and evaluation of performance measures to ensure that progress is being made in improving state and national records holdings and information sharing and exchanges. The NCHIP TA program has been supported by BJS since 1995.

To date, all states, the District of Columbia, and five U.S. territories have received funds under the NCHIP program. Beginning in FY 2011, federally recognized tribes have also been eligible to apply for funds under NCHIP. Detailed information about the history of the NCHIP program and its accomplishments is available at <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/index.cfm?ty=tp&tid=47>. NCHIP has provided support to states in the following areas:

- improving disposition reporting and support for courts
- facilitating participation in the Interstate Identification Index (III)
- improving record automation and fingerprint data
- increasing participation in the National Instant Criminal Background Check System
- improving identification and access to domestic violence records/protection orders
- creating, updating, and enhancing sex offender registries

Issues and needs to be addressed

Despite the tremendous progress made toward criminal record improvements, several significant shortcomings remain, including the following:

- According to available state and FBI data, many arrest records available through III—excluding those for the 18 states participating in the National Fingerprint File (NFF)—are missing case outcome information in the FBI’s Criminal History File. Missing case disposition information also continues to be a problem for many state record systems. It remains vitally important for the courts and prosecutors to improve and increase their submissions of records to criminal records systems. The involvement of these officials is key to helping ensure the timely and accurate transmittal of disposition information, including non-prosecution outcomes, to criminal record repositories.
- Many states and territories are not submitting all available qualifying records to the NICS Index, including relevant mental health data.
- Some states and territories are not submitting all qualifying records to the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) Protection Order File, and the FBI reports continued problems with the appropriate flagging of protection orders regarding the prohibition for firearm purchases.

Goals, Objectives, and Deliverables

The recipient of funds selected through this solicitation will be responsible for delivering technical assistance and training to local, state, and tribal justice agencies in the development, management, improvement, acquisition, and integration of their automated criminal history and related information systems. The recipient of funds must be able to work effectively with individual justice agencies (such as a state record repository implementing a new computerized criminal history system) and also with multidisciplinary groups of justice agencies to assist them in planning for and integrating their information systems at local, state, and regional/tribal levels.

The recipient of funds must have significant demonstrable expertise in certain specific areas, particularly as they relate to the creation, maintenance, and transmission of criminal history record information to and between repositories of this information at the local, state, and federal levels of government. Specifically, the recipient of funds should have demonstrated knowledge and experience in the following areas:

- State and Federal Criminal History Record Repositories
- Integration Planning and Requirements
- National Information Exchange Model (NIEM), Justice Reference Architecture, Web Services
- Privacy and Information Quality Policy Development and Implementation
- Interstate Identification Index
- NICS and Criminal History Background Checks.

State and Federal Criminal History Record Repositories

The NCHIP program is focused on improving the quality and completeness of criminal history record information to support effective criminal history background checks and the state and

federal level. A crucial aspect of BJS's national strategy has been to help identify and work toward solving the information management problems of state and local justice agencies confronted with the need to exchange information with other local agencies, state agencies, agencies in other states, or with the federal government. One of the most critical ways justice agencies exchange information is through criminal history record background checks. The recipient of funds must have significant experience in working with states and the federal government on legal, policy, and operational aspects of criminal history background checks. The recipient of funds must also have a demonstrable track record of providing effective assistance, guidance, and expertise on various criminal history background check initiatives.

Integration Planning and Requirements

Criminal history record information improvements relate directly to the effectiveness of local and state information-sharing practices. The success of information-sharing initiatives frequently depends on multiple independent partners, each with their own mission and capabilities, creating a shared vision for their common enterprise. They must build this shared vision on the basis of well understood, clearly documented requirements. It is the partners' consensus around these requirements that provides a stable foundation for design, implementation, and deployment of information-sharing solutions. Establishing this consensus is a key step in the planning of any information-sharing initiative. The recipient of funds must be experienced in assessing information exchange requirements and in planning, developing, and implementing integrated information-sharing projects.

National Information Exchange Model, Justice Reference Architecture, and Web Services

A key NCHIP strategy is to provide support for states to adopt the National Information Exchange Model (NIEM) in implementing criminal history record improvement initiatives. NIEM provides a vocabulary that practitioners use to represent the meaning and structure of the information they share. This vocabulary represents best practices and common understanding across the country, which allows NIEM to ensure interoperability across jurisdictions, while accelerating the definition of information requirements within a jurisdiction. The recipient of funds must have significant experience working with and promoting the use of NIEM (and its predecessor, the Global Justice XML Data Model) and be well placed to offer practitioners advice on its proper and efficient use.

Using NIEM involves building Information Exchange Package Documentation (IEPD) for specific exchanges (a process that involves several complex steps and tools). The recipient of funds must have significant experience in developing this process, and in assisting jurisdictions in navigating it. The recipient of funds must also be experienced in the utilization of pre-built IEPDs that are already available from the community and specialized NIEM tools such as the Law Enforcement Exchange Specification (LEXS), and have demonstrable experience in assisting jurisdictions in applying these off-the-shelf assets where appropriate. The recipient of funds should also have significant experience in utilizing service-oriented architecture for justice information-sharing projects, especially the Global Justice Reference Architecture (JRA) specifications and guidelines.

As justice and public safety practitioners use the NIEM to represent the semantics of their information exchanges, they also must address how they will transport the information between systems in a way that ensures interoperability and conformance with open standards. The Web Services stack of industry standards provides a flexible, comprehensive, and standards-based approach to messaging. The recipient of funds must have experience in delivering technical

assistance for web services implementations particularly any related to justice information-sharing initiatives.

Privacy and Information Quality Policy Development and Implementation

A critical component of NCHIP-supported information-sharing systems and strategies is to ensure such efforts include some examination of the policies that address criminal history record information quality and protect the privacy of the information maintained within criminal record systems. The primary objective of a privacy policy is to demonstrate how an agency intends to abide by existing laws and public expectations for handling personally identifiable information (PII). Effective privacy policies should address how a justice entity intends to deal with gaps or vulnerabilities in existing laws that govern PII management. A critical element of privacy protection is the adoption of sound operational policies and practices that promote information quality. The implementation of guidance and procedures that assure the quality of the Nation's criminal history records remains a key goal of BJS's NCHIP and NARIP programs. The recipient of funds must have experience in assisting justice entities in the development and implementation of such policies.

Interstate Identification Index (III)

The Interstate Identification Index (III) is an "index-pointer" system for the interstate and federal/state exchange of criminal history record information. Through the III system, the FBI makes available an index listing the names of individuals on whom it maintains criminal history record information. An agency seeking information on a specific individual will submit his or her name to the FBI. The Bureau will match the name against the index and then "point" the information request to the database (either state or federal) where the requested information is maintained. The index contains information on persons arrested for fingerprintable felonies and misdemeanors under state or federal law. It includes identification information (for example, name, birth date, race and gender), and FBI and state identification numbers from each state that has information about an individual. In many ways, III is the key technological infrastructure that supports national criminal history background checks. The recipient of funds must have extensive expertise on all operational aspects of III, including all of the policies and regulations which govern the use of III, particularly its use for such noncriminal justice purposes as background checks on persons seeking positions of responsibility involving national security, employment with vulnerable populations, money handling and other activities.

NICS and Criminal History Background Checks

The NICS is a computerized system that queries several national databases simultaneously in order to process a name-based background check. The databases include (1) the Interstate Identification Index (III), which provides access to the criminal history record information of more than 70 million people; (2) the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), which includes files of protection orders, convicted sex offenders, and wanted persons; (3) the NICS Index, which includes information relevant to firearm background checks that is not in the III or NCIC; and (4) in cases where the prospective transferee is a non-U.S. citizen, databases of the Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The NICS is designed to respond to a Federal Firearms Licensee (FFL) instantly with a determination of whether a prospective buyer is prohibited from receiving or possessing a firearm under federal or state law.

FBI personnel are responsible for processing NICS checks generated by most states, but the system is designed so that states can elect to serve as a point of contact (POC) for purchases occurring in their states. As a POC, a state-designated law enforcement agency processes

NICS checks for the FFLs in that state. Currently, 13 states serve as POCs for all firearms transactions within those states. An additional eight states serve as partial POCs for background checks for either handgun sales or handgun permits within those states, with the FBI conducting checks on long gun transfers. The recipient of funds must have significant expertise on all operational aspects of the NICS and be able to provide assistances to state, local, and tribal agencies regarding the types of records that qualify for entry into the NICS and minimum data entry requirements.

Deliverables

Technical assistance and training provided under this program includes:

- direct onsite visits
- telephone and web services
- national and regional conferences and workshops
- data collection and publication of criminal history related surveys and materials.

Direct onsite visits. The successful applicant will provide technical assistance to states, territories, and tribes to help respond to increasing demands at both the state and federal level for access to complete, accurate and timely criminal history record information, including efforts to meet the NCHIP goals; compliance with record and data provisions as specific in the NICS Improvement Amendments Act; and participation in NCIC, the Integrated Automated Identification Index (IAFIS) and Next Generation Identification (NGI). Technical assistance will be provided as needed to assist the National Crime Prevention and Privacy Compact Council on III-related issues and to support efforts to increase the number of states participating in the National Fingerprint File.

Telephone and web service. The successful applicant will have the capacity and resources to provide in-house technical assistance via phone and web in response to requests for information about issues related to the collection, maintenance, use, dissemination, quality, and protection of criminal history and related record information.

National and/or regional workshop(s). The successful applicant will develop, organize, and implement at least two national workshops focused on one or more issues of importance to criminal record repositories and other relevant criminal justice agencies that affect the quality and completeness of the Nation's criminal history record information. Proposals are to derive from an organized effort to solicit input from repository officials and other key stakeholders. Possible issues include—

- Data quality auditing and analysis practices to support repository operations and effective planning for the use of federal record improvement grant programs.
- Effective outreach and training programs to maintain the accuracy and completeness of criminal history records.
- Recommended practices for reporting/recording important criminal history events, such as—
 - Arrests on warrants
 - Violations of community supervision, probation, parole, etc.
 - Cite and Release, notifications to appear in court, etc.

- Revisiting the utility of the criminal history record – are the needs of users/consumers being effectively met?

Such work may result in one or more reports to BJS.

Data collection and publication of criminal history related surveys and materials. The successful applicant will work in collaboration with BJS to collect complete, comprehensive, and relevant data on the number and status of state-maintained criminal history records and on the increasing number of operations and services provided by state repositories. Such collaboration may result in one or more publication or other product to benefit repositories or other stakeholders.

Evidence-Based Programs or Practices

OJP strongly emphasizes the use of data and evidence in policy making and program development in criminal justice, juvenile justice, and crime victim services. OJP is committed to—

- improving the quantity and quality of evidence OJP generates;
- integrating evidence into program, practice, and policy decisions within OJP and the field; and
- improving the translation of evidence into practice.

OJP considers programs and practices to be evidence-based when their effectiveness has been demonstrated by causal evidence, generally obtained through one or more outcome evaluations. Causal evidence documents a relationship between an activity or intervention (including technology) and its intended outcome, including measuring the direction and size of a change and the extent to which a change may be attributed to the activity or intervention. Causal evidence depends on the use of scientific methods to rule out, to the extent possible, alternative explanations for the documented change. The strength of causal evidence, based on the factors described above, will influence the degree to which OJP considers a program or practice to be evidence-based. The [OJP CrimeSolutions.gov](http://OJP.CrimeSolutions.gov) website is one resource that applicants may use to find information about evidence-based programs in criminal justice, juvenile justice, and crime victim services.

B. Federal Award Information

Amount and Length of Awards

BJS will make one award of approximately \$700,000 for an 18 month project period. Subsequent to the initial 18 months, an annual award amount to be determined, subject to the availability of funds and satisfactory performance of the grantee, will be renewable annually for a period of 3 years.

BJS may, in certain cases, provide supplemental funding in future years to awards under this solicitation. Important considerations in decisions regarding supplemental funding include, among other factors, the availability of funding, strategic priorities, assessment of the quality of the management of the award (for example, timeliness and quality of progress reports), and assessment of the progress of the work funded under the award.

All awards are subject to the availability of appropriated funds and to any modifications or additional requirements that may be imposed by law.

Type of Award¹

BJs expects that it will make any award from this NCHIP TA solicitation in the form of a cooperative agreement, which is a particular type of grant used because BJs expects to have ongoing substantial involvement in award activities. Substantial involvement includes direct oversight and involvement with the grantee organization in implementation of the grant, but does not involve day-to-day project management. See [Administrative, National Policy, and other Legal Requirements](#), under Section [F. Federal Award Administration](#), for details regarding the federal involvement anticipated under an award from this NCHIP TA solicitation.

Financial Management and System of Internal Controls

If selected for funding, the award recipient must:

(a) Establish and maintain effective internal control over the Federal award that provides reasonable assurance that the non-Federal entity is managing the Federal award in compliance with Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the Federal award. These internal controls should be in compliance with guidance in “Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government” issued by the Comptroller General of the United States and the “Internal Control Integrated Framework”, issued by the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission (COSO).

(b) Comply with Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the Federal awards.

(c) Evaluate and monitor the non-Federal entity's compliance with statute, regulations and the terms and conditions of Federal awards.

(d) Take prompt action when instances of noncompliance are identified including noncompliance identified in audit findings.

(e) Take reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other information the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity designates as sensitive or the non-Federal entity considers sensitive consistent with applicable Federal, state and local laws regarding privacy and obligations of confidentiality.

In order to better understand administrative requirements and cost principles, award applicants are encouraged to enroll, at no charge, in the Department of Justice Grants Financial Management Online Training available [here](#).

Budget Information

Cost Sharing or Match Requirement

This solicitation does not require a match. However, if a successful application proposes a voluntary match amount, and OJP approves the budget, the total match amount incorporated into the approved budget becomes mandatory and subject to audit.

¹ See generally 31 U.S.C. §§ 6301-6305 (defines and describes various forms of federal assistance relationships, including grants and cooperative agreements (a type of grant)).

For additional cost sharing and match information, see Section [C. Eligibility Information](#).

Pre-Agreement Cost Approvals

OJP does not typically approve pre-agreement costs; an applicant must request and obtain the prior written approval of OJP for all such costs. If approved, pre-agreement costs could be paid from grant funds consistent with a grantee's approved budget, and under applicable cost standards. However, all such costs prior to award and prior to approval of the costs are incurred at the sole risk of an applicant. Generally, no applicant should incur project costs *before* submitting an application requesting federal funding for those costs. Should there be extenuating circumstances that appear to be appropriate for OJP's consideration as pre-agreement costs, the applicant should contact the point of contact listed on the title page of this announcement for details on the requirements for submitting a written request for approval. See the section on Costs Requiring Prior Approval in the [Financial Guide](#), for more 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, recipients may not use federal funds to pay total cash compensation (salary plus cash bonuses) to any employee of the award recipient at a rate that exceeds 110% 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.² The 2015 salary table for SES employees is available at the Office of Personnel Management [website](#). A recipient may compensate an employee at a greater 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 Director of BJS may exercise discretion to waive, on an individual basis, the limitation on compensation rates allowable under an award. An applicant requesting a waiver should include a detailed justification in the budget narrative of the application. Unless the applicant submits a waiver request and justification with the application, the applicant should anticipate that OJP will request the applicant to adjust and resubmit the budget.

The justification should include the particular qualifications and expertise of the individual, the uniqueness of the service the individual will provide, the individual's specific knowledge of the program or project being undertaken with award funds, and a statement explaining that the individual's salary is commensurate with the regular and customary rate for an individual with his or her qualifications and expertise, and for the work to be done.

Prior Approval, Planning, and Reporting of Conference/Meeting/Training Costs

OJP strongly encourages applicants that propose to use award funds for any conference-, meeting-, or training-related activity to review carefully—before submitting an application—the OJP policy and guidance on conference approval, planning, and reporting available at <http://www.ojp.gov/financialguide/PostawardRequirements/chapter15page1.htm>. OJP policy and guidance (1) encourage minimization of conference, meeting, and training costs; (2) require prior written approval (which may affect project timelines) of most such costs for cooperative agreement recipients and of some such costs for grant recipients; and (3) set cost limits, including a general prohibition of all food and beverage costs.

² This limitation on use of award funds does not apply to the non-profit organizations specifically named at Appendix VIII to 2 C.F.R. part 200.

Costs Associated with Language Assistance (if applicable)

If an applicant proposes a program or activity that would deliver services or benefits to individuals, the costs of taking reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to those services or benefits for individuals with limited English proficiency may be allowable. Reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to services or benefits may include interpretation or translation services where appropriate.

For additional information, see the "Civil Rights Compliance" section under "Solicitation Requirements" in the [OJP Funding Resource Center](#).

C. Eligibility Information

For additional eligibility information, see Title page.

Cost Sharing or Match Requirement

For additional information on cost sharing and match requirement, see Section [B. Federal Award Information](#)

Limit on Number of Application Submissions

If an applicant submits multiple versions of the same application, BJS will review only the most recent system-validated version submitted. For more information on valid versions, see [How to Apply](#).

D. Application and Submission Information

What an Application Should Include

Applicants should anticipate that if they fail to submit an application that contains all of the specified elements, it may negatively affect the review of their application; and, should a decision be made to make an award, it may result in the inclusion of special conditions that preclude the recipient from accessing or using award funds pending satisfaction of the conditions.

Moreover, applicants should anticipate that applications determined to be nonresponsive to the scope of the solicitation, or that do not include the application elements that BJS has designated to be critical, will neither proceed to peer review nor receive further consideration. Under this solicitation, BJS has designated the following application elements as critical: Program Narrative, Budget Detail Worksheet, and Budget Narrative. Applicants may combine the Budget Narrative and the Budget Detail Worksheet into a single document. However, if an applicant submits only one budget document, it must contain **both** narrative and detail information. Review the "Note on File Names and File Types" under [How to Apply](#) to be sure applications are submitted in permitted formats.

OJP strongly recommends that applicants use appropriately descriptive file names (e.g., "Program Narrative," "Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative," "Timelines," "Memoranda of Understanding," and "Resumes") for all attachments. Also, OJP recommends that applicants include resumes in a single file.

1. Information to Complete the Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)

The SF-424 is a required standard form used as a cover sheet for submission of preapplications, applications, and related information. Grants.gov and OJP's Grants

Management System (GMS) take information from the applicant's profile to populate the fields on this form. When selecting "type of applicant," if the applicant is a for-profit entity, select "For-Profit Organization" or "Small Business" (as applicable).

Intergovernmental Review: This funding opportunity is subject to [Executive Order 12372](#). Applicants may find the names and addresses of their state's Single Point of Contact (SPOC) at the following website: www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc/. Applicants whose state appears on the SPOC list must contact their state's SPOC to find out about, and comply with, the state's process under Executive Order 12372. In completing the SF-424, applicants whose state appears on the SPOC list are to make the appropriate selection in response to question 19 once the applicant has complied with their state's E.O. 12372 process. (Applicants whose state does not appear on the SPOC list are to make the appropriate selection in response to question 19 to indicate that the "Program is subject to E.O. 12372 but has not been selected by the State for review.")

2. Project Abstract

Applications should include a high-quality project abstract that summarizes the proposed project in 400 words or less. Project abstracts should be—

- Written for a general public audience;
- Submitted as a separate attachment with "Project Abstract" as part of its file name; and
- Single-spaced, using a standard 12-point font (Times New Roman) with 1-inch margins.

As a separate attachment, the project abstract will **not** count against the page limit for the program narrative.

All project abstracts should follow the detailed template available at ojp.gov/funding/Apply/Resources/ProjectAbstractTemplate.pdf

3. Program Narrative

This should describe the applicant's detailed plan for delivering the activities described in scope of work (pgs. 5-8) and address the evaluation criteria. The narrative should provide a proposed timeline and budget for project activities. The narrative should clearly demonstrate the applicant's knowledge experience administering technical assistance to state and tribal entities and capabilities to handle a national conference, and collection of criminal justice data. The page limit for the program narrative is limited to 30 pages (single-spaced, using standard 12-point font with 1-inch margins).

If the program narrative fails to comply with these length-related restrictions, BJS may consider such noncompliance in peer review and in final award decisions.

The following sections should be included as part of the program narrative:

1. Statement of the Problem
2. Project Design and Implementation
3. Capabilities and Competencies

4. Plan for Collecting the Data Required for this Solicitation’s Performance Measures

To assist the Department with fulfilling its responsibilities under the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA), Public Law 103-62, and the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010, Public Law 111–352, applicants that receive funding under this solicitation must provide data that measure the results of their work done under this solicitation. OJP will require any award recipient, post award, 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 Measure(s)	Data Grantee Provides
Improve criminal history record systems in the states and territories, through technical assistance activities, to support background checks for the purposes of identifying ineligible firearm purchases, as well as persons ineligible to hold positions involving children, the elderly, or the disabled.	Number of training and technical assistance requests received.	Number of technical assistance requests received during the reporting period. Number of technical assistance requests received during the reporting period.
	Number of training and technical assistance requests completed.	Number of in house training requests completed during the reporting period. Number of technical assistance requests completed during the reporting period.
	Number of agencies/organizations requesting technical assistance.	Number of agencies/organizations requesting technical assistance during the reporting period.
	Number of education/training modules developed.	Number of education/training modules developed during the reporting period.
	Number of program/conference materials developed.	Number of program/conference materials developed.
	Number of tribes or tribal organizations receiving technical assistance.	Number of tribes or tribal organizations receiving technical assistance during the reporting period.
	Number of tribes or tribal organizations receiving training.	Number of tribes or tribal organizations receiving training during the reporting period.

	Number of participants who completed training.	Number of participants who completed training during the reporting period.
	Number of participants receiving technical assistance.	Number of participants receiving technical assistance during the reporting period.
	Number of on-site visits completed.	Number of on-site visits completed during the reporting period.
	Percent of participants trained who reported an increase in knowledge, skills, and/or abilities.	Percent of participants trained who reported an increase in knowledge, skills, and/or abilities, as determined by pre- and post-testing, during the reporting period.
	Number of technical assistance contacts received.	Number of technical assistance contacts by telephone received during the reporting period. Number of technical assistance contacts by web services received during the reporting period.
	Number of technical assistance events/activities conducted.	Number of technical assistance events/activities conducted during the reporting period.
Conduct a bi-ennial survey of state/territory criminal history record repositories.	Percent of survey responses that are obtained by electronic means.	Number of responses that are obtained by electronic means. Number of responses.
	Achieve a 95% response rate.	Number of agencies participating in the survey Number of agencies that responded to the surveys.
	Number of data requests that are completed on time and adhere to data quality standards.	Number of data requests that are completed on time and adhere to data quality standards.

BJS does not require applicants to submit performance measures data with their application. Performance measures are included as an alert that BJS will require successful applicants to submit specific data as part of their reporting requirements. For the application, applicants should indicate an understanding of these requirements and discuss how they will gather the required data, should they receive funding.

Note on Project Evaluations

Applicants that propose to use funds awarded through this solicitation to conduct project evaluations should be aware that certain project evaluations (such as systematic investigations

designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge) may constitute “research” for purposes of applicable DOJ human subjects protection regulations. However, project evaluations that are intended only to generate internal improvements to a program or service, or are conducted only to meet OJP’s performance measure data reporting requirements likely do not constitute “research.” Applicants should provide sufficient information for OJP to determine whether the particular project they propose would either intentionally or unintentionally collect and/or use information in such a way that it meets the DOJ regulatory definition of research.

Research, for the purposes of human subjects protections for OJP-funded programs, is defined as, “a systematic investigation, including research development, testing, and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge” 28 C.F.R. § 46.102(d). For additional information on determining whether a proposed activity would constitute research, see the decision tree to assist applicants on the “Research and the Protection of Human Subjects” section of the [OJP Funding Resource Center](http://www.ojp.gov/funding/Explore/SolicitationRequirements/EvidenceResearchEvaluationRequirements.htm) Web page (www.ojp.gov/funding/Explore/SolicitationRequirements/EvidenceResearchEvaluationRequirements.htm). Applicants whose proposals may involve a research or statistical component also should review the “Data Privacy and Confidentiality Requirements” section on that Web page.

4. Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative

a. Budget Detail Worksheet

A sample Budget Detail Worksheet can be found at www.ojp.gov/funding/Apply/Resources/BudgetDetailWorksheet.pdf. Applicants that submit their budget in a different format should include the budget categories listed in the sample budget worksheet. (Work associated with satisfying data archiving requirements should be reflected.) BJS expects applicants to provide a thorough narrative to each section of the Budget Detail Worksheet.

For questions pertaining to budget and examples of allowable and unallowable costs, see the Financial Guide at www.ojp.gov/financialguide/index.htm.

b. Budget Narrative

The budget narrative should thoroughly and clearly describe every category of expense listed in the Budget Detail Worksheet. OJP expects proposed budgets to be complete, cost effective, and allowable (e.g., reasonable, allocable, and necessary for project activities).

Applicants should demonstrate in their budget narratives how they will maximize cost effectiveness of grant expenditures. Budget narratives should generally describe cost effectiveness in relation to potential alternatives and the goals of the project. For example, a budget narrative should detail why planned in-person meetings are necessary, or how technology and collaboration with outside organizations could be used to reduce costs, without compromising quality.

The narrative should be mathematically sound and correspond with the information and figures provided in the Budget Detail Worksheet. The narrative should explain how the applicant estimated and calculated all costs, and how they are relevant to the completion of the proposed project. The narrative may include tables for clarification purposes but need not be in a spreadsheet format. As with the Budget Detail Worksheet, the Budget Narrative should be broken down by year.

c. Non-Competitive Procurement Contracts In Excess of Simplified Acquisition Threshold

If an applicant proposes to make one or more non-competitive procurements of products or services, where the non-competitive procurement will exceed the simplified acquisition threshold (also known as the small purchase threshold), which is currently set at \$150,000, the application should address the considerations outlined in the [Financial Guide](#).

d. Pre-Agreement Cost Approvals

For information on pre-agreement costs, see Section [B. Federal Award Information](#).

5. Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)

Indirect costs are allowed only if the applicant has a current federally approved indirect cost rate. (This requirement does not apply to units of local government.) Attach a copy of the federally approved indirect cost rate agreement to the application. Applicants that do not have an approved rate may request one through their cognizant federal agency, which will review all documentation and approve a rate for the applicant organization, or, if the applicant's accounting system permits, costs may be allocated in the direct cost categories. For the definition of Cognizant Federal Agency, see the "Glossary of Terms" in the [Financial Guide](#). For assistance with identifying your cognizant agency, please contact the Customer Service Center at 1-800-458-0786 or at ask.ocfo@usdoj.gov. If DOJ is the cognizant federal agency, applicants may obtain information needed to submit an indirect cost rate proposal at <http://www.ojp.gov/funding/Apply/Resources/IndirectCosts.pdf>.

6. Tribal Authorizing Resolution (if applicable)

Tribes, tribal organizations, or third parties proposing to provide direct services or assistance to residents on tribal lands should include in their applications a resolution, a letter, affidavit, or other documentation, as appropriate, that certifies that the applicant has the legal authority from the tribe(s) to implement the proposed project on tribal lands. In those instances when an organization or consortium of tribes applies for a grant on behalf of a tribe or multiple specific tribes, the application should include appropriate legal documentation, as described above, from all tribes that would receive services or assistance under the grant. A consortium of tribes for which existing consortium bylaws allow action without support from all tribes in the consortium (i.e., without an authorizing resolution or comparable legal documentation from each tribal governing body) may submit, instead, a copy of its consortium bylaws with the application.

Applicants unable to submit an application that includes a fully-executed (i.e., signed) copy of appropriate legal documentation, as described above, consistent with the applicable tribe's governance structure, should, at a minimum, submit an unsigned, draft version of such legal documentation as part of its application (except for cases in which, with respect to a tribal consortium applicant, consortium bylaws allow action without the support of all consortium member tribes). If selected for funding, BJS will make use of and access to funds contingent on receipt of the fully-executed legal documentation.

7. Applicant Disclosure of High Risk Status

Applicants are to disclose whether they are currently designated high risk by another federal grant making agency. This includes any status requiring additional oversight by the federal agency due to past programmatic or financial concerns. If an applicant is designated high risk by another federal grant making agency, you must email the following information to

OJPComplianceReporting@usdoj.gov at the time of application submission:

- The federal agency that currently designated the applicant as high risk
- Date the applicant was designated high risk
- The high risk point of contact name, phone number, and email address, from that federal agency
- Reasons for the high risk status

OJP seeks this information to ensure appropriate federal oversight of any grant award. Unlike the Excluded Parties List, this high risk information does not disqualify any organization from receiving an OJP award. However, additional grant oversight may be included, if necessary, in award documentation.

8. Additional Attachments

a. Applicant Disclosure of Pending Applications.

Applicants are to disclose whether they have pending applications for federally funded grants or subgrants (including cooperative agreements) that include requests for funding to support the same project being proposed under this solicitation and will cover the identical cost items outlined in the budget narrative and worksheet in the application under this solicitation. The disclosure should include both direct applications for federal funding (e.g., applications to federal agencies) and indirect applications for such funding (e.g., applications to state agencies that will subaward federal funds).

OJP seeks this information to help avoid any inappropriate duplication of funding. Leveraging multiple funding sources in a complementary manner to implement comprehensive programs or projects is encouraged and is not seen as inappropriate duplication.

Applicants that have pending applications as described above are to provide the following information about pending applications submitted within the last 12 months:

- The Federal or State funding agency;
- The solicitation name/project name; and
- The point of contact information at the applicable funding agency.

Federal or State Funding Agency	Solicitation Name/Project Name	Name/Phone/E-mail for Point of Contact at Funding Agency
DOJ/COPS	COPS Hiring Program	Jane Doe, 202/000-0000; jane.doe@usdoj.gov
HHS/ Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration	Drug Free Communities Mentoring Program/ North County Youth Mentoring Program	John Doe, 202/000-0000; john.doe@hhs.gov

Applicants should include the table as a separate attachment, with the file name “Disclosure of Pending Applications,” to their application. Applicants that do not have pending applications as described above are to include a statement to this effect in the separate attachment page (e.g., “[Applicant Name on SF-424] does not have pending applications submitted within the last 12 months for federally funded grants or subgrants (including cooperative agreements) that include requests for funding to support the same project being proposed under this solicitation and will cover the identical cost items outlined in the budget narrative and worksheet in the application under this solicitation.”).

b. Research and Evaluation Independence and Integrity

If a proposal involves research and/or evaluation, regardless of the proposal’s other merits, in order to receive funds, the applicant must demonstrate research/evaluation independence, including appropriate safeguards to ensure research/evaluation objectivity and integrity, both in this proposal and as it may relate to the applicant’s other current or prior related projects. This documentation may be included as an attachment to the application which addresses BOTH i. and ii. below.

- i. For purposes of this solicitation, applicants must document research and evaluation independence and integrity by including, at a minimum, one of the following two items:
 - a. A specific assurance that the applicant has reviewed its proposal to identify any research integrity issues (including all principal investigators and sub-recipients) and it has concluded that the design, conduct, or reporting of research and evaluation funded by BJS grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts will not be biased by any personal or financial conflict of interest on the part of part of its staff, consultants, and/or sub-recipients responsible for the research and evaluation or on the part of the applicant organization;

OR

- b. A specific listing of actual or perceived conflicts of interest that the applicant has identified in relation to this proposal. These conflicts could be either personal (related to specific staff, consultants, and/or sub-recipients) or

organizational (related to the applicant or any subgrantee organization). Examples of potential investigator (or other personal) conflict situations may include, but are not limited to, those in which an investigator would be in a position to evaluate a spouse's work product (actual conflict), or an investigator would be in a position to evaluate the work of a former or current colleague (potential apparent conflict). With regard to potential organizational conflicts of interest, as one example, generally an organization could not be given a grant to evaluate a project if that organization had itself provided substantial prior technical assistance to that specific project or a location implementing the project (whether funded by OJP or other sources), as the organization in such an instance would appear to be evaluating the effectiveness of its own prior work. The key is whether a reasonable person understanding all of the facts would be able to have confidence that the results of any research or evaluation project are objective and reliable. Any outside personal or financial interest that casts doubt on that objectivity and reliability of an evaluation or research product is a problem and must be disclosed.

- ii. In addition, for purposes of this solicitation applicants must address the issue of possible mitigation of research integrity concerns by including, at a minimum, one of the following two items:
 - a. If an applicant reasonably believes that no potential personal or organizational conflicts of interest exist, then the applicant should provide a brief narrative explanation of how and why it reached that conclusion. Applicants **MUST** also include an explanation of the specific processes and procedures that the applicant will put in place to identify and eliminate (or, at the very least, mitigate) potential personal or financial conflicts of interest on the part of its staff, consultants, and/or sub-recipients for this particular project, should that be necessary during the grant period. Documentation that may be helpful in this regard could include organizational codes of ethics/conduct or policies regarding organizational, personal, and financial conflicts of interest.

OR

- b. If the applicant has identified specific personal or organizational conflicts of interest in its proposal during this review, the applicant must propose a specific and robust mitigation plan to address conflicts noted above. At a minimum, the plan must include specific processes and procedures that the applicant will put in place to eliminate (or, at the very least, mitigate) potential personal or financial conflicts of interest on the part of its staff, consultants, and/or sub-recipients for this particular project, should that be necessary during the grant period. Documentation that may be helpful in this regard could include organizational codes of ethics/conduct or policies regarding organizational, personal, and financial conflicts of interest. There is no guarantee that the plan, if any, will be accepted as proposed.

Considerations in assessing research and evaluation independence and integrity will include, but are not be limited to, the adequacy of the applicant's efforts to identify factors

that could affect the objectivity or 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.

c. Key staff information

This should include a staff loading chart, by task, showing the role and number of hours 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 cooperative agreement; and an identification by name of all key personnel with decision-making authority. Resumes of all staff to be involved in the program should be provided.

9. Financial Management and System of Internal Controls Questionnaire

In accordance with [2 CFR 200.205](#), Federal agencies must have in place a framework for evaluating the risks posed by applicants before they receive a Federal award. To facilitate part of this risk evaluation, **all** applicants (other than an individual) are to download, complete, and submit this [form](#).

10. Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

All applicants must complete this information. Applicants that expend any funds for lobbying activities are to provide the detailed information requested on the form Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL). Applicants that do not expend any funds for lobbying activities are to enter "N/A" in the text boxes for item 10 ("a. Name and Address of Lobbying Registrant" and "b. Individuals Performing Services").

How to Apply

Applicants must register in, and submit applications through Grants.gov, a "one-stop storefront" to find federal funding opportunities and apply for funding. Find complete instructions on how to register and submit an application at www.Grants.gov. Applicants that experience technical difficulties during this process should call the Grants.gov Customer Support Hotline at **800-518-4726** or **606-545-5035**, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, except federal holidays. Registering with Grants.gov is a one-time process; however, **processing delays may occur, and it can take several weeks** for first-time registrants to receive confirmation and a user password. OJP encourages applicants to **register several weeks before** the application submission deadline. In addition, OJP urges applicants to submit applications 72 hours prior to the application due date to allow time to receive validation messages or rejection notifications from Grants.gov, and to correct in a timely fashion any problems that may have caused a rejection notification.

BJS strongly encourages all prospective applicants to sign up for Grants.gov email [notifications](#) regarding this solicitation. If this solicitation is cancelled or modified, individuals who sign up with Grants.gov for updates will be automatically notified.

Note on File Names and File Types: Grants.gov only permits the use of certain specific characters in names of attachment files. Valid file names may include only the characters shown in the table below. Grants.gov is designed to reject any application that includes an attachment(s) with a file name that contains any characters not shown in the table below.

Characters	Special Characters		
Upper case (A – Z)	Parenthesis ()	Curly braces { }	Square brackets []
Lower case (a – z)	Ampersand (&)	Tilde (~)	Exclamation point (!)
Underscore (_)	Comma (,)	Semicolon (;)	Apostrophe (')
Hyphen (-)	At sign (@)	Number sign (#)	Dollar sign (\$)
Space	Percent sign (%)	Plus sign (+)	Equal sign (=)
Period (.)	When using the ampersand (&) in XML, applicants must use the “&” format.		

Grants.gov is designed to forward successfully submitted applications to OJP’s Grants Management System (GMS).

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.” GMS may reject applications with files that use these extensions. It is important to allow time to change the type of file(s) if the application is rejected.

All applicants are required to complete the following steps:

OJP may not make a federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the federal awarding agency is ready to make a federal award, the federal awarding agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a federal award to another applicant.

- 1. Acquire a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number.** In general, the Office of Management and Budget requires that all applicants (other than individuals) for federal funds include a DUNS number in their applications for a new award or a supplement to an existing award. A DUNS number is a unique nine-digit sequence recognized as the universal standard for identifying and differentiating 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. Call Dun and Bradstreet at 866-705-5711 to obtain a DUNS number or apply online at www.dnb.com. A DUNS number is usually received within 1 to 2 business days.
- 2. Acquire registration with the System for Award Management (SAM).** SAM is the repository for standard information about federal financial assistance applicants, recipients, and subrecipients. OJP requires all applicants (other than individuals) for federal financial assistance to maintain current registrations in the SAM database. Applicants must be registered in SAM to successfully register in Grants.gov. Applicants must **update or renew their SAM registration annually** to maintain an active status.

Applications cannot be successfully submitted in Grants.gov until Grants.gov receives the SAM registration information. **The information transfer from SAM to Grants.gov can take up to 48 hours.** OJP recommends that the applicant register or renew registration with SAM as early as possible.

Information about SAM registration procedures can be accessed at www.sam.gov.

3. **Acquire an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and a Grants.gov username and password.** Complete the AOR profile on Grants.gov and create a username and password. The applicant organization's DUNS number must be used to complete this step. For more information about the registration process, go to www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html
4. **Acquire confirmation for the AOR from the E-Business Point of Contact (E-Biz POC).** The E-Biz POC at the applicant organization must log into Grants.gov to confirm the applicant organization's AOR. Note that an organization can have more than one AOR.
5. **Search for the funding opportunity on Grants.gov.** Use the following identifying information when searching for the funding opportunity on Grants.gov. The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance number for this solicitation is 16.554, titled "National Criminal History Improvement Program," and the funding opportunity number is BJS-2015-4188.
6. **Submit a valid application consistent with this solicitation by following the directions in Grants.gov.** Within 24–48 hours after submitting the electronic application, the applicant should receive two notification from Grants.gov. The first will confirm the receipt of the application and the second first will confirm the receipt of the application and the second will state whether the application has been successfully validated, or rejected due to errors, with an explanation. It is possible to first receive a message indicating that the application is received and then receive a rejection notice a few minutes or hours later. Submitting well ahead of the deadline provides time to correct the problem(s) that caused the rejection. **Important:** OJP urges applicants to submit applications **at least 72 hours prior** to the application due date to allow time to receive validation messages or rejection notifications from Grants.gov, and to correct in a timely fashion any problems that may have caused a rejection notification.

Click [here](#) for further details on DUNS, SAM, and Grants.gov registration steps and timeframes.

Note: Duplicate Applications

If an applicant submits multiple versions of the same the same application, BJS will review only the most recent system-validatedsystem-validated version submitted. See Note on File Names and File Types under [How to Apply](#).

Experiencing Unforeseen Grants.gov Technical Issues

Applicants that experience unforeseen Grants.gov technical issues beyond their control that prevent them from submitting their application by the deadline must contact the Grants.gov [Customer Support Hotline](#) or the [SAM Help Desk](#) to report the technical issue and receive a tracking number. Then applicant must contact the Grants.gov [Customer Support Hotline](#) or the [SAM Help Desk](#) to report the technical issue and receive a tracking number. Then applicant must e-mail the BJS contact identified in the Contact Information section on page 2 **within 24 hours after the application deadline** and request approval to submit their application. The e-mail must describe the technical difficulties, and include a timeline of the applicant's submission efforts, the complete grant application, the applicant's DUNS number, and any Grants.gov Help Desk or SAM tracking number(s). **Note: BJS does not automatically approve requests.** After the program office reviews the submission, and contacts the Grants.gov or SAM Help Desks to

validate the reported technical issues, OJP will inform the applicant whether the request to submit a late application has been approved or denied. If OJP determines that the applicant failed to follow all required procedures, which resulted in an untimely application submission, OJP will deny the applicant's request to submit their application.

The following conditions are generally insufficient to justify late submissions:

- failure to register in SAM or Grants.gov in sufficient time;
- failure to follow Grants.gov instructions on how to register and apply as posted on its Web site
- failure to follow each instruction in the OJP solicitation; and
- technical issues with the applicant's computer or information technology environment, including firewalls.

Notifications regarding known technical problems with Grants.gov, if any, are posted at the top of the OJP funding Web page at www.ojp.gov/funding/Explore/CurrentFundingOpportunities.htm.

E. Application Review Information

Selection Criteria

All applications must be responsive to this solicitation. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review the evaluation criteria BJS will use to make funding decisions before deciding whether to submit an application for this solicitation. Applicants should understand that applications should respond to priorities identified and that full funding may not be possible for all proposed activities. Applications that meet basic minimum requirements will be evaluated by peer reviewers using the following review criteria.

1. Statement of the Problem, as Described in the Program Narrative (25%)

- Content of the proposal and how it addresses the tasks in the scope of work, deliverables required, (pgs. 5-8) and scheduled timeline. Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of state and federal efforts toward improvement of criminal history and related records.

2. Project/Program Design and Implementation (25%)

- Technical feasibility of the proposed project design and reasonableness of the proposal given the scope of work and tasks to be completed, and the required deliverables, and other products proposed.

3. Capabilities and Competencies (35%)

- Demonstrated ability and breadth of experience of the organization and its staff in providing technical assistance to improve the quality, completeness, timeliness, accuracy, and accessibility of criminal history and related records to state, territorial, and tribal criminal justice agencies.
- Demonstrated past successful collaboration with key federal, state, and local agencies, such as the FBI Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS), the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF), the Bureau of Justice Assistance, and state record repositories and related agencies.

- Demonstrated knowledge of and experience in survey research, including survey development, data collection, entry and verification, analysis and publication of results.

4. Plan for Collecting the Data Required for this Solicitation’s Performance Measures (5%)

- Identify how the approach and methods in this project will achieve the performance goals described in the solicitation.

5. Budget: complete, cost effective, and allowable (e.g., reasonable, allocable, and necessary for project activities). Budget narratives should generally demonstrate how applicants will maximize cost effectiveness of grant expenditures. Budget narratives should demonstrate cost effectiveness in relation to potential alternatives and the goals of the project.³ **(10%)**

- 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.

Review Process

OJP is committed to ensuring a fair and open process for awarding grants. BJS 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 review the applications submitted under this solicitation that meet basic minimum requirements. For purposes of assessing whether applicants have met basic minimum requirements, OJP screens applications for compliance with specified program requirements to help determine which applications should proceed to further consideration for award. Although program requirements may vary, the following are common requirements applicable to all solicitations for funding under OJP grant programs:

- Applications must be submitted by an eligible type of applicant
- Applications must request funding within programmatic funding constraints (if applicable)
- Applications must be responsive to the scope of the solicitation
- Applications must include all items designated as “critical elements”
- Applicants will be checked against the General Services Administration’s Excluded Parties List

For a list of critical elements, see “What an Application Should Include” under [Section D. Application and Submission Information](#).

BJS may use internal peer reviewers, external peer reviewers, or a combination, to assess applications meeting basic minimum requirements on technical merit using the solicitation’s selection criteria. An external peer reviewer is an expert in the subject matter of a given

³ Generally speaking, a reasonable cost is a cost that, in its nature or amount, does not exceed that which would be incurred by a prudent person under the circumstances prevailing at the time the decision was made to incur the costs.

solicitation who is not a current DOJ employee. An internal reviewer is a current DOJ employee who is well-versed or has expertise in the subject matter of this solicitation. A peer review panel will evaluate, score, and rate applications that meet basic minimum requirements. Peer reviewers' ratings and any resulting recommendations are advisory only, although their views are considered carefully. 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 under prior BJS and OJP awards, and available funding.

OJP reviews applications for potential discretionary awards to evaluate the risks posed by applicants before they receive an award. This review may include but is not limited to the following:

1. Financial stability and fiscal integrity
2. Quality of management systems and ability to meet the management standards prescribed in the Financial Guide
3. History of performance
4. Reports and findings from audits
5. The applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-Federal entities
6. Proposed costs to determine if the Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative accurately explain project costs, and whether those 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 award decisions will be made by the Assistant Attorney General, who may consider factors including, but not limited to, peer review ratings, underserved populations, geographic diversity, strategic priorities, past performance under prior BJS and OJP awards, and available funding when making awards.

F. Federal Award Administration Information

Federal Award Notices

OJP award notification will be sent from GMS. Recipients will be required to login; accept any outstanding assurances and certifications on the award; designate a financial point of contact; and review, sign, and accept the award. The award acceptance process involves physical signature of the award document by the authorized representative and the scanning of the fully-executed award document to OJP.

Administrative, National Policy, and other Legal Requirements

If selected for funding, in addition to implementing the funded project consistent with the agency-approved project proposal and budget, the recipient must comply with award terms and conditions, and other legal requirements, including but not limited to OMB, DOJ or other federal regulations which will be included in the award, incorporated into the award by reference, or are otherwise applicable to the award. OJP strongly encourages prospective applicants to review the information pertaining to these requirements **prior** to submitting an application. To assist applicants and recipients in accessing and reviewing this information, OJP has placed pertinent information on its [Solicitation Requirements](#) page of the [OJP Funding Resource Center](#).

Please note in particular the following two forms, which applicants must accept in GMS prior to the receipt of any award funds, as each details legal requirements with which applicants must provide specific assurances and certifications of compliance. Applicants may view these forms in the [OJP Funding Resource Center](#) and are strongly encouraged to review and consider them carefully prior to making an application for OJP grant funds.

- [Certifications Regarding Lobbying; Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements](#)
- [Standard Assurances](#)

Upon grant approval, OJP electronically transmits (via GMS) the award document to the prospective award recipient. In addition to other award information, the award document contains award terms and conditions that specify national policy requirements⁴ with which recipients of federal funding must comply; uniform administrative requirements, cost principles, and audit requirements; and program-specific terms and conditions required based on applicable program (statutory) authority or requirements set forth in OJP solicitations and program announcements, and other requirements which may be attached to appropriated funding. For example, certain efforts may call for special requirements, terms, or conditions relating to intellectual property, data/information-sharing or -access, or information security; or audit requirements, expenditures and milestones, or publications and/or press releases. OJP also may place additional terms and conditions on an award based on its risk assessment of the applicant, or for other reasons it determines necessary to fulfill the goals and objectives of the program.

Prospective applicants may access and review the text of mandatory conditions OJP includes in all OJP awards, as well as the text of certain other conditions, such as administrative conditions, via [Mandatory Award Terms and Conditions](#) page of the [Funding Resource Center](#).

As stated above, BJS anticipates that it will make any award from this solicitation in the form of a cooperative agreement. Cooperative agreement awards include standard “federal involvement” conditions that describe the general allocation of responsibility for execution of the funded program. Generally-stated, under cooperative agreement awards, responsibility for the day-to-day conduct of the funded project rests with the recipient in implementing the funded and approved proposal and budget, and the award terms and conditions. Responsibility for oversight and redirection of the project, if necessary, rests with BJS.

In addition to any “federal involvement” condition(s), OJP cooperative agreement awards include a special condition specifying certain reporting requirements required in connection with conferences, meetings, retreats, seminars, symposium, training activities, or similar events funded under the award, consistent with OJP policy and guidance on conference approval, planning, and reporting.

⁴ See generally 2 C.F.R. 200.300 (provides a general description of national policy requirements typically applicable to recipients of Federal awards, including the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (FFATA)).

General Information about Post-Federal Award Reporting Requirements

Recipients must submit quarterly financial reports, semi-annual progress reports, final financial and progress reports, and, if applicable, an annual audit report in accordance with 2 CFR Part 200. Future awards and fund drawdowns may be withheld if reports are delinquent.

Special Reporting requirements may be required by OJP, depending on the statutory, legislative, or administrative obligations of the recipient or the program.

G. Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s)

For additional Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s), see the Title page.

For additional contact information for Grants.gov, see the Title page.

H. Other Information

Provide Feedback to OJP

To assist OJP in improving its application and award processes, we encourage applicants to provide feedback on this solicitation, the application submission process, and/or the application review/peer review process. Provide feedback to OJPSolicitationFeedback@usdoj.gov.

IMPORTANT: This e-mail is for feedback and suggestions only. Replies are **not** sent from this mailbox. If you have specific questions on any program or technical aspect of the solicitation, **you must** directly contact the appropriate number or e-mail listed on the front of this solicitation document. These contacts are provided to help ensure that you can directly reach an individual who can address your specific questions in a timely manner.

If you are interested in being a reviewer for other OJP grant applications, please e-mail your resume to ojppeerreview@lmbps.com. The OJP Solicitation Feedback e-mail account will not forward your resume. **Note:** Neither you nor anyone else from your organization can be a peer reviewer in a competition in which you or your organization have submitted an application.

Application Checklist

FY 2015 National Criminal History Improvement Technical Assistance Program (NCHIP TA)

This application checklist has been created to assist in developing an application.

What an Applicant Should Do:

Prior to Registering in Grants.gov:

- _____ Acquire a DUNS Number (see page 22)
- _____ Acquire or renew registration with SAM (see page 22)

To Register with Grants.gov:

- _____ Acquire AOR and Grants.gov username/password (see page 23)
- _____ Acquire AOR confirmation from the E-Biz POC (see page 23)

To Find Funding Opportunity:

- _____ Search for the Funding Opportunity on Grants.gov (see page 23)
- _____ Download Funding Opportunity and Application Package (see page 23)
- _____ Sign up for Grants.gov email [notifications](#) (optional) (see page 23)
- _____ Read [Important Notice: Applying for Grants in Grants.gov](#)

After application submission, receive Grants.gov email notifications that:

- _____ (1) application has been received,
- _____ (2) application has either been successfully validated or rejected with errors (see page 24)

If no Grants.gov receipt, and validation or error notifications are received:

- _____ contact BJS regarding experiencing technical difficulties (see page 23)

General Requirements:

- _____ Review the [Solicitation Requirements](#) in the OJP Funding Resource Center.

Eligibility Requirement: See cover page.

What an Application Should Include:

- _____ Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) (see page 12)
- _____ Project Abstract (see page 13)
- _____ Program Narrative (see page 13)
- _____ Budget Detail Worksheet (see page 16)
- _____ Budget Narrative (see page 16)
- _____ Employee Compensation Waiver request and justification (if applicable) (see page 11)
- _____ Read OJP policy and guidance on conference approval, planning, and reporting available at www.ojp.gov/funding/confcost.htm (see page 11)
- _____ Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL) (see page 21)
- _____ Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable) (see page 17)
- _____ Tribal Authorizing Resolution (if applicable) (see page 17)
- _____ Applicant Disclosure of High Risk Status (see page 17)
- _____ Additional Attachments (see page 18)

- _____ Applicant Disclosure of Pending Applications (see page 18)
- _____ Research and Evaluation Independence and Integrity (see page 19)
- _____ Key staff (see page 21)
- _____ Financial Management and System of Internal Controls Questionnaire (if applicable)
(see page 21)