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## FY 2021 National Criminal History Improvement Program (NCHIP)

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### Overview

The [U.S. Department of Justice](#) (DOJ), [Office of Justice Programs](#) (OJP), [Bureau of Justice Statistics](#) (BJS) is seeking applications for funding for the fiscal year (FY) 2021 National Criminal History Improvement Program (NCHIP). This program furthers the Department's mission to reduce violent crime and address gun violence by enhancing the criminal justice capabilities of U.S. state and tribal governments by improving the accuracy, utility, and interstate accessibility of criminal-history and related records in support of national record systems and their use for name- and fingerprint-based criminal history background checks. For the purpose of this solicitation, "state" includes the District of Columbia and U.S. territories.

This solicitation incorporates the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) by reference. The OJP Grant Application Resource Guide provides guidance to applicants on how to prepare and submit applications for funding to OJP. **If this solicitation expressly modifies any provision in the OJP Grant Application Resource Guide, the applicant is to follow the guidelines in this solicitation as to that provision.**

### Solicitation Categories

This solicitation does not include Solicitation Categories.

### Eligible Applicants:

Other

### Other

The following entities are eligible to apply:

- Agencies designated by the governor of their respective state to administer NCHIP (34 U.S.C. § 40301).
- Federally recognized tribal governments.

To advance Executive Order 13929 Safe Policing for Safe Communities, the Attorney General determined that all state, local, and university or college law enforcement agencies must be certified by an approved independent credentialing body or have started the certification process no later than January 31, 2021, to be eligible for FY 2021 DOJ discretionary grant funding. To become certified, the law enforcement agency must meet two mandatory conditions: (1) the agency's use of force policies adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local laws; and (2) the agency's use of force policies prohibit chokeholds except in situations where use of deadly force is allowed by law. The certification requirement also applies to law enforcement agencies receiving DOJ discretionary grant funding through a subaward. For detailed information on this new certification requirement, please visit <https://cops.usdoj.gov/SafePolicingEO> to access the Standards for Certification on Safe Policing for Safe Communities, Implementation Fact Sheet, and List of Designated Independent Credentialing Bodies.

For additional information on eligibility, see **Eligibility Information**.

All recipients and subrecipients (including any for-profit organization) must forgo any profit or management fee.

## Contact Information

For technical assistance with submitting the **SF-424 and SF- LLL** in Grants.gov, contact the Grants.gov Customer Support Hotline at 800-518-4726, 606-545-5035, at [Grants.gov customer support webpage](https://www.grants.gov/customer-support), or email at [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov). The Grants.gov Support Hotline operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, except on federal holidays.

For technical assistance with submitting the **full application** in DOJ's Justice Grants System (JustGrants), contact the JustGrants Service Desk at [JustGrants.Support@usdoj.gov](mailto:JustGrants.Support@usdoj.gov) or at 833-872-5175. The JustGrants Service Desk operates 5 a.m. to 9 p.m. EST Monday - Friday and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Sunday, and federal holidays.

An applicant that experiences unforeseen Grants.gov or JustGrants technical issues beyond its control that prevent it from submitting its application by the deadline must email the BJS contact identified below **within 24 hours after the application deadline** to request approval to submit its application after the deadline.

For assistance with any other requirements of this solicitation, contact Devon Adams, Chief, Criminal Justice Data Improvement Program, by telephone at 202-307-0765, or by email at [AskBJS@usdoj.gov](mailto:AskBJS@usdoj.gov). Include "NCHIP21" in the subject line.

## Submission Information

In FY 2021, applications will be submitted to DOJ in a **NEW** two-step process.

**Step 1:** Applicants will submit an **SF-424 and an SF-LLL** in Grants.gov at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html>. To register in Grants.gov, applicants will need to obtain a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) and System for Award Management (SAM) registration or renewal.

**Step 2:** Applicants will submit the **full application** including attachments in JustGrants at [JustGrants.usdoj.gov](https://www.justgrants.usdoj.gov).

To be considered timely, the full application must be submitted in JustGrants by the JustGrants application deadline.

OJP encourages applicants to review, the "How to Apply" section in the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#).

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# Program Description

## Overview

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) is publishing this notice to announce the continuation of the National Criminal History Improvement Program (NCHIP) in fiscal year (FY) 2021, to identify the program priorities, and to provide information on application requirements. This year, BJS is prioritizing the use of funds for two purposes: (1) to improve reporting of dispositions and (2) to improve reporting to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) of persons who are prohibited from possessing firearms for reasons related to mental health.

## Statutory Authority

34 U.S.C. §10132(c)(19)

## Specific Information

BJS is authorized, under 34 U.S.C. § 10132(c)(19), to “provide for improvements in the accuracy, quality, timeliness, immediate accessibility, and integration of State and tribal criminal history and related records, support the development and enhancement of national systems of criminal history and related records, support the development and enhancement of national systems of criminal history and related records, including the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, National Incident-Based Reporting System [(NIBRS)], and records of the National Crime Information Center [ (NCIC)], facilitate state and tribal participation in national record and information systems, and support statistical research for critical analysis of the improvement and utilization of criminal history records.” NCHIP and the NICS Act Record Improvement Program (NARIP) are means by which BJS provides for such improvements.

## Goals, Objectives, Deliverables, and Timeline

As a basic principle of NCHIP, BJS strongly encourages states and tribes to ensure the integrated functioning of record improvement initiatives, regardless of the funding source. Also, BJS urges applicants to match or leverage the federal funds provided with other resources to the maximum extent possible.

### Goals

This funding will assist states and tribes with finding ways to make more records available to NICS, including records in NCIC, criminal history record information available through the III, and records in the NICS Indices. Therefore, through the funded activities, BJS expects that more records (including improved quality, completeness, and timeliness) will become available in these systems.

### Objectives

- Provide direct financial and technical assistance to states, state courts, and tribes to improve their criminal-history record systems and related systems to support background checks, including NICS checks.
- Ensure the infrastructure connects criminal-history record systems to the state record repository or appropriate federal agency record system, and ensure records are accessible through the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) record systems.
- Provide the training and technical assistance needed to ensure that record systems are developed and managed to conform to FBI standards and appropriate technologies, while ensuring that contributing agencies adhere to the highest standards of practice with respect to privacy and confidentiality.
- Use systematic evaluation and standardized performance measurements and statistics to assess progress on improving national record holdings and background check systems.

Further information about the history and accomplishments of NCHIP are available at <https://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=tp&tid=47>.

Additionally, applicants shall develop or update long-range record improvement plans to assess data quality and completeness and identify gaps in record reporting and availability. These efforts help develop strategies to significantly reduce or eliminate such gaps. The improvement plans should include ongoing research, analysis, data quality auditing, or similar work that may result in quantifiable improvements and facilitate performance monitoring. Applicants may wish to contact the current NCHIP technical assistance provider, SEARCH Group, Inc., to take advantage of a criminal history analytics tool to assist in evaluating the accuracy and completeness of data within their state repositories.

### Deliverables

#### FY 2021 Priority Areas—Improving Dispositions and Mental Health Submissions Accessible to NICS

BJS invites applications from states, territories, and tribes that (1) propose projects that specifically and directly address one or more of the priority areas identified below and (2) to the maximum extent possible, propose to match or leverage the NCHIP award with other resources.

In FY 2021, applicants are strongly encouraged to focus on improving the (1) availability of dispositions (specifically for felony crimes and for misdemeanor crimes of domestic violence) through the national system and (2) reporting records of persons prohibited from possessing firearms for mental health reasons to NICS. Therefore, recipients of funds must agree to use a portion of awarded funds to make such dispositions and records accessible to NICS unless the state or tribe certifies in the application that it—

- Already makes available all dispositions to the national systems and records demonstrating a person is prohibited from possessing firearms for mental health reasons to NICS; or
- Will focus funds on another area that the state or tribe demonstrates is a greater information-sharing gap.

## 1. Priority Areas for Grant Funding

### a. Updating and automating case outcomes from courts and prosecutors in state or tribal records and the FBI's Criminal History File.

Allowable costs may include activities such as—

- Implementing or upgrading state, local, or tribal court record systems that facilitate immediate identification of disposition records, provided that the records are accessible for criminal history record inquiries at the state and national levels.
  - Implementing improved procedures for capturing criminal history information, including complete arrest reporting and researching missing dispositions, provided that the captured data are subsequently included in relevant state and federal files.
  - Capturing complete data from prosecutors and courts on misdemeanor convictions of domestic violence.
  - Ensuring that criminal history record information is shared with investigative service providers for national security and other purposes pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 9101.
  - Ensuring, through data analysis on the completeness of criminal history records, that records of all criminal events (starting with an arrest or indictment) are included in background check files.
  - Establishing automated interfaces between the record repository and prosecutors, courts, and corrections agencies (i.e., detention, prison, jail, and community supervision), including the development of relevant information exchange package documentation based on the National Information Exchange Model (NIEM).
  - Capturing data on persons convicted of abusing children, elderly persons, or disabled persons; or stalking and domestic violence offenses (including protection orders and related violations).
  - Submitting disposition information to the FBI via the III Message Key, Machine Readable Data process, or other methods of transmission accepted by the FBI.
  - Reducing any backlog of missing court dispositions, provided that the dispositions are made available for criminal history inquiries at the state and national levels.
  - Implementing the standardized RAP sheet format, which relies on NIEM, and assisting states in converting criminal history records to the standard interstate RAP sheet format or developing related electronic interchange capabilities.
  - Converting manual or other non-automated criminal history records to electronic records.
  - Establishing more effective controls over the accuracy and quality of information, including data analysis capabilities.
  - Converting juvenile records to the adult system. (Federal regulations allow the FBI to accept juvenile records if submitted by the state or local arresting agency.)
  - Upgrading equipment to directly improve the availability of data where appropriate, given the level of data completeness and participation in national record systems. **(The ongoing or maintenance costs associated with any such equipment are allowable only during the initial 12-month period.)**
  - Purchasing Livescan equipment for local agencies (1) where the funds can be justified on the basis of geographic, population, traffic, or related factors, and (2) when the jurisdiction has established an Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) and either has implemented or is implementing procedures to ensure that the AFIS is compatible with FBI Next Generation Identification (NGI) standards. **(The ongoing or maintenance costs associated with any such equipment are allowable only during the initial 12-month period.)**
- Ensuring compatibility with federal record systems, such as III, and implementing integrated system strategies that interface all components of the criminal justice system, including law enforcement, prosecutors, courts, and corrections, to the extent that such expenditures improve the availability of criminal record data, at the national level. Any systems funded must be compatible with FBI standards for national data systems, such as NIBRS, NCIC, NICS, and NGI. However, NCHIP funds may not be used to support studies, analysis, design, or development of

integrated system strategies. Funds should not be used to primarily improve law enforcement investigative capabilities associated with NGI participation (e.g., latent workstations, palm-print capture, facial recognition, and DNA capture).

**a. Improving access to information concerning persons prohibited from possessing or receiving a firearm for mental health reasons and transmitting relevant records to NICS.**

Allowable costs may include activities such as—

- Identifying and developing access to data on persons prohibited from firearm purchases under the Gun Control Act (18 U.S.C. § 922), as amended by the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act (P.L. 103-159).
- Participating in the FBI's Identification for Firearms Sales program, which is a system for flagging III records for the immediate and accurate identification of convicted felons.
- Enabling the state to serve as a point of contact (POC) under the NICS system (including related costs of equipment, software, personnel training, and development and implementation of related operating and administrative procedures). However, funds may not be used to cover ongoing costs of presale firearm background checks, but may be used for costs associated with capturing dispositions in response to a specific NICS inquiry, provided that the captured data are entered into the automated state and FBI systems, thus serving to upgrade the permanent quality of the record systems.
- Instituting programming or operational changes in records management necessary to comply with the requirements for NICS record keeping and for reporting the status of transactions.
- Establishing electronic interfaces or information exchanges between criminal history records, sex offender registries, and civil protection order files to ensure that, consistent with state law, a complete data review is possible in connection with background checks for childcare or other authorized purposes. Funds may be used to develop software to establish protocols to permit interfaces between the criminal history record system, the state sex offender registry, and related POFs, including files of civil protection orders.

**1. Additional Area for Grant Funding**

**Full participation in the III and NFF, including adoption and implementation of the National Crime Prevention and Privacy Compact**

Allowable costs may include activities such as—

- Paying reasonable costs associated with the adoption and implementation of the National Crime Prevention and Privacy Compact (Compact), including costs associated with state review and enactment of the Compact, and the development and implementation of procedures (including purchase of equipment and development of software) necessary to facilitate operations pursuant to Compact protocols, including those relating to participation in the FBI's NFF.
- Automating criminal record databases.
- Synchronizing records between the state and the FBI.
- Developing software and hardware necessary to enable electronic access to state records on an intrastate or interstate basis.

The Goals, Objectives, and Deliverables are directly related to the performance measures that demonstrate the results of the work completed, as discussed under Application and Submission Information.

**Information Regarding Potential Evaluation of Programs and Activities**

OJP may conduct or support an evaluation of the programs and activities funded under this solicitation. For additional information, see the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) section entitled "Information Regarding Potential Evaluation of Programs and Activities."

**Federal Award Information**

**Awards, Amounts and Durations**

**Anticipated Number of Awards**

40

**Period of Performance Start Date**

10/1/21 12:00 AM

**Period of Performance Duration (Months)**

24

**Anticipated Total Amount to be Awarded Under Solicitation**

\$53,000,000.00

**Continuation Funding Intent**

BJS may, in certain cases, provide additional funding in future years to awards made under this solicitation, through continuation awards. OJP will consider, among other factors, OJP's strategic priorities, a recipient's overall management of the award, and progress of award funded work, when making continuation award decisions.

**Availability of Funds**

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

**Types of Awards**

BJS expects to make awards under this solicitation as cooperative agreements, which provide for OJP to have substantial involvement in carrying out award activities. See the "Administrative, National Policy, and Other Legal Requirements" section of the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#).

**Financial Management and System of Internal Controls**

Award recipients and subrecipients (including recipients or subrecipients that are pass-through entities) must, as described in the Part 200 Uniform Requirements as set out at 2 C.F.R. 200.303, comply with standards for financial and program management. The "Part 200 Uniform Requirements" means the DOJ regulation at 2 C.F.R. Part 2800, which adopts (with certain modifications) the provisions of 2 C.F.R. Part 200. See [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information.

**Budget Information****Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement**

This solicitation requires a 10% **cash or in-kind match**. See [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information on this match requirement.

**Pre-agreement Costs (also known as Pre-award Costs)**

See the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) information on Pre-agreement Costs (also known as Pre-award Costs).

**Limitation on Use of Award Funds for Employee Compensation: Waiver**

See the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) information on Limitation on Use of Award Funds for Employee Compensation: Waiver.

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

See the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for information on Prior Approval, Planning, and Reporting of Conference/Meeting/Training Costs.

**Costs Associated with Language Assistance (if applicable)**

See the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for information on Costs Associated with Language Assistance.

**Eligibility Information**

The NCHIP application must be submitted by the agency designated by the governor to administer NCHIP or a federally recognized tribe. States and tribes may choose to submit applications as part of a multi-state consortium, a multi-tribe consortium, or another entity. In such cases, contact the BJS program manager for further information. Also, as required by the Crime Identification Technology Act of 1998 under 34 U.S.C. § 40301(c), to be eligible to receive an NCHIP grant, the application must specifically attest that the state, territory, or tribe—

1. Has the capability to contribute pertinent information to NICS established under Section 103(b) of the Brady Act.
2. Is or will be following a comprehensive strategy for information sharing systems to improve the functioning of the criminal justice system, with an emphasis on integration of all criminal justice components, law enforcement, courts, prosecution, corrections, and probation and parole. Further, the strategy must be developed in consultation with appropriate federal, state, or local officials, with emphasis on the recommendation of officials who oversee, plan, and implement integrated information technology systems, and contain the following:
  - a. A definition and an analysis of “integration” in the jurisdictions developing integrated information sharing systems.
  - b. An assessment of the criminal justice resources being devoted to information technology.
  - c. A description of the resource needs.
  - d. Federal, state, regional, local, and tribal information technology coordination requirements.
  - e. Priorities for planning and implementation of information technology systems.
1. Coordinates the programs funded by NCHIP with other federally funded information technology programs, including directly funded local programs.
2. Assures that the individuals who developed the grant application considered the needs of all government branches and **specifically sought the advice of the top official of the highest court of the jurisdiction, with respect to the application.**

## Application and Submission Information

The following application elements **MUST** be included in the application submission for an application to meet the basic minimum requirements (BMR) to advance to peer review and receive consideration for funding:

- Proposal Abstract
- Program Narrative
- Budget Worksheet and Budget Narrative

See the “Application Elements and Formatting Instructions” section of the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for information on what happens to an application that does not contain all the specified elements or that is nonresponsive to the scope of the solicitation.

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

The SF-424 will be submitted in Grants.gov. The SF-424 is a required standard form used as a cover sheet for submission of pre-applications, applications, and related information. See the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information on completing the SF-424.

**Intergovernmental Review:** This solicitation (“funding opportunity”) is subject to [Executive Order 12372](#). An applicant may find the names and addresses of State Single Points of Contact (SPOCs) at the following website: [https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/spoc\\_1\\_16\\_2020.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/spoc_1_16_2020.pdf). If the applicant’s State appears on the SPOC list, the applicant must contact the State SPOC to find out about, and comply with, the State’s process under E.O. 12372. In completing the SF-424, an applicant whose State appears on the SPOC list is to make the appropriate selection in response to question 19, once the applicant has complied with its State E.O. 12372 process. (An applicant whose State does not appear on the SPOC list should answer question 19 by selecting the response that the: “Program is subject to E.O. 12372 but has not been selected by the State for review.”).

### Standard Applicant Information (JustGrants 424 and General Agency Information)

The Standard Applicant Information section of the JustGrants application is pre-populated with the SF-424 data submitted in Grants.gov. Applicants will need to review the Standard Applicant Information in JustGrants and make edits as needed. Within this section, applicants will need to: add zip codes for areas affected by the project; confirm their Authorized Representative; and verify the organization’s legal name and address.

### Proposal Abstract

A proposal abstract (no more than 400 words) summarizing the proposed project including primary activities, products and deliverables, the service area, and who will benefit from the proposed project, will be completed in the JustGrants Web-based form.

### Proposal Narrative

The program narrative should be submitted as an attachment in JustGrants. The attached document should be double-spaced; use a standard 12-point Times New Roman font; have no less than 1-inch margins; and **should not exceed 30 pages**. Pages should be numbered and submitted as an attachment. If the program narrative fails to comply with these length restrictions, BJS may negatively consider such non-compliance in peer review and in final award decisions.

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

**a. Description of the Issue – Background and Identification of Needs**

Accomplishments and progress on record improvement goals. Applicants must summarize the major accomplishments achieved with funding under NCHIP. This section should describe, in quantifiable terms if possible, results achieved and advances made in the last decade of NCHIP funding (2009-19). **Specifically address accomplishments relating to participation in each of the national databases and initiatives (i.e., III, NICS, NCIC Protection Order File, mental health records, and Livescan/AFIS capability).** Where relevant, reference surveys and data quality audits. This section should also include any evaluative efforts undertaken to identify the key areas of weakness in the state's criminal record system since submission of previous NCHIP applications. Tribal applicants should discuss progress related to record automation and improvement funded by other federal sources that are applicable to the above areas.

Current status in specific subject areas. Describe the status of the applicant's participation in each of the following subject areas in your application and include the current number of records in each system where applicable:

- **Dispositions available to III (including felonies and misdemeanor convictions of domestic violence).** All applicants should discuss the percentage of state records with final dispositions or case outcomes linked to arrests and available at the time of a firearm background check. Applicants should provide information on efforts to improve reporting and availability at the national level. The application should also discuss the extent to which dispositions requested in connection with a NICS inquiry have not been provided within the required time frame and must identify any problems that are delaying instant responses to NICS inquiries and identify proposed solutions to these problems.
  - **Applicants should provide the number and percentage of arrests (felonies and misdemeanors) available in the state criminal history repository that are missing final dispositions.**
  - **Applicants should report the percentage of arrests (felonies and misdemeanors) missing final dispositions accessible to III.**
- **NICS Indices and mental health record availability.** All applications should discuss the extent to which the applicant provides information to the FBI's NICS Indices. Applicants that do not submit information to this file should describe the prohibiting factors and any plans to overcome them. (Note: Health Insurance Portability and Accountability (HIPAA) is not considered to be a prohibiting factor.) Additionally, all applicants should indicate whether mental health records are checked, either by the state POC or the FBI, during a NICS check. Where mental health records are accessible, include the number of records currently available and any plans to improve availability. If mental health records are not currently accessible at the time of a background check, describe factors that limit or prohibit exchange of mental health records. States that are not currently eligible for funding under NARIP should discuss plans, if any, to establish a relief from disabilities program and progress toward NARIP eligibility. If a state has no immediate plans to pursue development of a relief program, include a statement outlining the reasons for not pursuing one.
  - **Applicants should provide the current number of submissions, by prohibitor, in the NICS Indices**. Counts for the following prohibitors should be addressed in the application:
    - Felony conviction.
    - Active felony indictment/information.
    - Fugitive from justice.
    - Controlled substance.
    - Protection/restraining order.
    - MCDV.
    - State prohibitor.
- **Protection order file.** All applicants should indicate whether they submit information for inclusion in the FBI's NCIC POF. Applicants that submit protection orders should indicate the number of active protection orders provided to the FBI. Applicants that do not submit all active protection orders to NCIC should describe the prohibiting factors and any plans to overcome them.
  - **Applicants should provide the current number of records in the NCIC protection order file and a description of any known gaps in reporting.**

**Warrants/wanted person records.** All applicants should indicate whether they submit records for inclusion in the FBI's NCIC Wanted Persons file. Applicants that submit such records should indicate the number provided to the FBI for the last full calendar year. Applicants that do not submit such records (or do not submit all

qualifying records that are maintained at the state or local level) should describe the prohibiting factors and any plans to overcome them.

- **Applicants should provide the current number of active warrants in the NCIC Wanted Persons File and a description of any known gaps in reporting.**

**b. Project Design and Implementation – Description of Tasks to Be Funded**

- Describe the activities to be conducted with NCHIP funds over the project period and specifically address how activities relate to each of the NCHIP priority areas identified under “Priority Areas for Grant Funding” on pages 5-6. Note that—
  - Dollar amounts should be included for each funded task.
  - Applicants should provide quantitative measures to assess or describe the impact each project will have on the quality, completeness, and availability of records at the national level.
  - Applicants should submit a detailed project period timeline covering all proposed activities.
- **Letter from the courts.** In recognition of the importance of court reporting to the development of complete and accurate criminal records, all applications should describe tasks and indicate the level of funds that will be made directly available to the courts. Where no funds are provided for court-directed disposition reporting activities, a certification by the appropriate state or tribal court official declining participation must be included with this section.
  - **If no funding is proposed for a court-directed disposition project, applicants should provide a letter of support from the courts as part of the application package.**

**c. Capabilities and Competencies – Coordination**

The administering NCHIP agency should coordinate efforts with relevant emergency management task forces and agencies to ensure that records development activities are compatible with security measures for preventing acts of terrorism.

To encourage coordination and information sharing among criminal justice systems, all OJP awards that support information technology development are subject to a special condition requiring that a description of the project be submitted to the state information technology POC, if one has been designated. A copy of the correspondence can be submitted as part of Additional Attachments or sent directly to BJS prior to fund drawdown.

There is no requirement that the POC agree with the information technology project. The intent of this condition is to facilitate communication within the state.

Recipients of funds under this solicitation should seek to ensure that any funded activities will be coordinated with related activities supported with OJP funding, including awards under OJP's Residential Substance Abuse Treatment Program, Drug Court Program, or the Mentally Ill Offender Act Program. Of particular interest are awards under these programs that may involve reportable records that can be shared with state and national record systems. To the extent feasible under state law and regulations, such records should be made available to the state criminal history record repository and federal files managed by the FBI, including III, NCIC, and the NICS Indices.

Tribal applicants should provide documentation that activities proposed for funding will be coordinated with a tribal consortia, with the state, or directly with the FBI.

Unexpended funds. The application should describe the specific reasons that previously awarded NCHIP funds remain unexpended (if applicable) and include the current unexpended balance.

- **The applicant should include the current status of open NCHIP awards, including the current unexpended balance, the projected end date, and a description of any challenges or delays encountered, if applicable.**

Compatibility with other systems. The application should describe the extent to which proposed activities are compatible with NIBRS, NCIC, NICS, NGI, and other applicable statewide or regional criminal justice information sharing standards or plans, including state anti-terrorism.

#### **d. Plan for Collecting the Data Required for This Solicitation's Performance Measures**

The application should demonstrate the applicant's understanding of the performance data reporting requirements for this grant program and detail how the applicant will gather the required data should it receive funding.

Note: applicants are **not** required to submit performance data with the application. Rather, performance measures information is included as an alert that successful applicants will be required to submit performance data as part of the reporting requirements under an award.

OJP will require each successful applicant to submit regular performance data that demonstrate the results of the work carried out under the award. The performance data directly relate to the goals, objectives, and deliverables identified under "Goals, Objectives, and Deliverables."

Performance measures for this solicitation are listed in Appendix A: Performance Measures Table. Applicants can also visit OJP's performance measurement page at [www.ojp.gov/performance](http://www.ojp.gov/performance) for an overview of performance measurement activities at OJP.

Award recipients will be required to provide relevant data addressing performance measures information as part of their semi-annual performance reports in JustGrants. All performance measures should be fully addressed in these semi-annual reports.

#### **Note on Project Evaluations**

An applicant that proposes to use award funds through this solicitation to conduct project evaluations must follow the guidance under "Note on Project Evaluations" in the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#).

#### **Goals, Objectives, Deliverables, and Timeline**

Applicants will submit the NCHIP goals, objectives, deliverables, and timelines in the JustGrants Web-based form. See the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information.

#### **Budget and Associated Documentation**

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

Applicants will submit their indirect cost rate agreement by uploading the agreement as an attachment in JustGrants. See the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information.

#### **Financial Management Questionnaire (including applicant disclosure of high-risk status)**

Applicants will download the questionnaire in JustGrants and submit by uploading the completed questionnaire as an attachment in JustGrants. See the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information.

#### **Additional Application Components**

The following documents should be submitted either as a single file attachment or as separate attachments:

- a. Letter of support or commitment from the courts (required if no funds are going to the courts for disposition-related or mental health record capture projects).
- b. Letter to the state information technology POC describing the current application request, as referenced above.
- c. Complete project timeline outlining each activity, completion time, and responsible party.

#### **Tribal Authorizing Resolution**

If applicable, applicants will submit the Tribal Authorizing Resolution by uploading the resolution as an attachment in JustGrants. An application in response to this solicitation may require inclusion of information related to a tribal authorizing resolution as an attachment. See the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for information on tribal authorizing resolutions.

#### **Disclosures and Assurances**

Applicants will complete the following disclosures and assurances.

### **Disclosure of Lobbying Activities**

Applicants will complete and submit the SF-LLL in Grants.gov. See the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information.

### **DOJ Certified Standard Assurances**

See the DOJ Certified Standard Assurances in the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#).

### **Applicant Disclosure of Duplication in Cost Items**

Applicants will complete the JustGrants web-based Applicant Disclosure of Duplication in Cost Items form. See the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information.

### **DOJ Certifications Regarding Lobbying; Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements**

Applicants will review and accept the DOJ Certified Certifications Regarding Lobbying; Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements. See [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#).

### **How to Apply**

Applicants will submit an **SF-424** and an **SF-LLL** in Grants.gov at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html>.

Applicants will submit the **full application** including attachments in JustGrants at [JustGrants.usdoj.gov](https://www.justgrants.usdoj.gov).

For additional information, see the "How to Apply" section in the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#).

### **Submission Dates and Time**

The **SF-424** and the **SF-LLL** will be submitted in Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. eastern time on April 8, 2021. OJP urges applicants to submit applications at least 72 hours prior to the application due date to allow time for the applicant 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.

The **full application** will be submitted in JustGrants by 11:59 p.m. eastern time on April 15, 2021.

To be considered timely, the full application must be submitted in JustGrants by the JustGrants application deadline.

## **Application Review Information**

### **Review Criteria**

#### **Scored Review Criteria**

Applications that meet basic minimum requirements will be evaluated by peer reviewers using the following review criteria:

- **Description of the Issue (30%)**

The extent to which the application—

- Includes a concise and well-organized description of progress and accomplishments of criminal history systems improvement.
- Proposes to directly address one or more of the priorities as identified in the solicitation. The application should specifically address the FY 2021 Priority Areas – Improving Dispositions and Mental Health Submissions Accessible to NICS.
- Addresses needs and identifies quantifiable measures to demonstrate how the funds will improve the quality, completeness, and accessibility of records at the national level, particularly with regard to NICS.

- **Project Design and Implementation (30%)**

- The proposed activities will result in the increased availability of records to systems queried by NICS, including through federal and state criminal history records, NCIC, and NICS Indices.
  - The application includes dollar amounts for each proposed project.
  - The application includes a detailed project period timeline covering all the proposed projects to demonstrate the technical feasibility of the proposed task(s) and details the specific implementation plan to achieve the intended deliverables.
- The application clearly demonstrates court commitment to record improvement either through direct funding

or a letter of support.

- **Capabilities and Competencies (25%)**

- Evidence of applicant's progress in record quality improvement efforts as demonstrated by making relevant records available for national background checks and the reported number of records currently available in the national files.
- The extent to which the applicant has fulfilled goals of previous NCHIP awards (or related criminal record improvement awards), including consideration of the total funds already awarded and expended funds from previous awards.
- The applicant's commitment to the national record system as evidenced by membership in III and participation in the FBI's NFF, and the current status of development in the applicant's criminal records.

- **Plan for Collecting the Data Required for this Solicitation's Performance Measures (5%)**

- An expressed commitment to supply key performance measures for the award period.
- The sufficiency of the plan for collecting and reporting these performance measures.

- **Budget (10%): Complete, cost effective, and allowable** (e.g., reasonable, allocable, and necessary for project activities). Budget narratives should demonstrate generally 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, including—

- The reasonableness of the budget, including the basis of the estimates, nature of the proposed expenditures, and their relation to the priorities identified herein.
- The extent to which the applicant proposes to match or leverage the NCHIP award with other resources.
- The extent to which the applicant proposes to leverage funds to directly support activities associated with the proposed tasks.

## Review Process

Applications submitted under this solicitation that meet basic minimum requirements, will be evaluated for technical merit by a peer review panel(s) in accordance with OJP peer review policy and procedures using the stated review criteria above.

OJP screens applications to ensure they meet the basic minimum requirements prior to conducting peer review. Although specific requirements may vary, the following are common requirements applicable to all solicitations for funding under OJP programs:

- The application must be submitted by an eligible type of applicant.
- The application must request funding within programmatic funding constraints (if applicable).
- The application must be responsive to the scope of the solicitation.
- The application must include all items necessary to meet the basic minimum requirements.

Pursuant to the Part 200 Uniform Requirements, before award decisions are made, OJP also reviews information related to the degree of risk posed by the applicant. Among other things to help assess whether an applicant that has one or more prior federal awards has a satisfactory record with respect to performance, integrity, and business ethics, OJP checks whether the applicant is listed in SAM as excluded from receiving a federal award.

In addition, if OJP anticipates that an award will exceed \$250,000 in federal funds, OJP also must review and consider any information about the applicant that appears in the non-public segment of the integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently, the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System, FAPIIS).

**Important note on FAPIIS:** An applicant, may review and comment on any information about itself that currently appears in FAPIIS and was entered by a federal awarding agency. OJP will consider any such comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in FAPIIS, in its assessment of the risk posed by the applicant.

Absent explicit statutory authorization or written delegation of authority to the contrary, all final award decisions will be made by the Director of BJS, who may take into account not only peer review ratings and BJS recommendations, but also other factors as indicated in this section.

## Federal Award Administration Information

### Federal Award Notices

See the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for information on award notifications and instructions.

## **Administrative, National Policy, and Other Legal Requirements**

If selected for funding, in addition to implementing the funded project consistent with the OJP-approved application, the recipient must comply with all award conditions, and all applicable requirements of federal statutes and regulations (including applicable requirements referred to in the assurances and certifications executed in connection with award acceptance).

For additional information on these legal requirements, see the “Administrative, National Policy, and Other Legal Requirements” section in the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#).

## **Information Technology (IT) Security Clauses**

An application in response to this solicitation may require inclusion of information related to information technology security. See the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for information on information technology security.

## **General Information about Post-Federal Award Reporting Requirements**

In addition to the deliverables described in the Program Description section, any recipient of an award under this solicitation will be required to submit certain reports and data.

Awards under this solicitation will include a condition (the specific terms of which will govern the award) related to supplying records to the National Instant Background Check System (NICS). The condition will, generally speaking, require recipients that use the award for a project or program that results in court dispositions, information or other “eligible records” relevant to the NICS, or that has a purpose of establishing or improving any of the foregoing, to promptly make available (and, as appropriate, update, correct, modify, remove) to the NICS or the state repository accessed by the NICS all such dispositions, information, and other “eligible records.”

Required reports. Recipients typically must submit quarterly financial reports, semi-annual progress reports, final financial and progress reports, and, if applicable, an annual audit report in accordance with the Part 200 Uniform Requirements or specific award conditions. Future awards and fund drawdowns may be withheld if reports are delinquent. (In appropriate cases, OJP may require additional reports.)

See the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information on specific post-award reporting requirements, including performance measures data.

## **Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s)**

For OJP contact(s), see page 2.

For contact information for Grants.gov, see page 2.

## **Other Information**

### **Freedom of Information and Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552 and 5 U.S.C. 552a)**

See the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for information on Freedom of Information and Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552 and 5 U.S.C. 552a).

### **Provide Feedback to OJP**

See the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for information on how to provide feedback to OJP.

## **Performance Measures**



## **FY 2021 National Criminal History Improvement Program (NCHIP)**

This application checklist has been created as an aid in developing an application.

### **What an Applicant Must Do:**

#### *Prior to Registering in Grants.gov:*

- Acquire a DUNS Number  
(see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- Acquire or renew registration with SAM  
(see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))

#### *To Register with Grants.gov:*

- Acquire AOR and Grants.gov username/password  
(see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- Acquire AOR confirmation from the E-Biz POC  
(see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))

#### *To Find Funding Opportunity:*

- Search for the Funding Opportunity on Grants.gov  
(see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- Access Funding Opportunity and Application Package  
(see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- Sign up for Grants.gov email [notifications](#) (optional)  
(see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- Read [Important Notice: Applying for Grants in Grants.gov](#)
- Read OJP policy and guidance on conference approval, planning, and reporting available at [ojp.gov/financialguide/DOJ/PostawardRequirements/chapter3.10a.htm](http://ojp.gov/financialguide/DOJ/PostawardRequirements/chapter3.10a.htm)  
(see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))

#### *After Grants.gov Application Submission, Receive Grants.gov Email Notifications That:*

- Application has been received in Grants.gov,
- Application has either been successfully validated or rejected with errors  
(see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))

#### *If Grants.gov Receipt, and Validation or Error Notifications are Received:*

- Contact BJS regarding technical difficulties  
(see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))

#### *Complete Application Sections Listed Below in JustGrants:*

- Receive email notification to complete application in JustGrants

### **Overview of Post-Award Legal Requirements:**

- Review the [“Overview of Legal Requirements Generally Applicable to OJP Grants and Cooperative Agreements - FY 2021 Awards”](#) in the [OJP Funding Resource Center](#).

### **Scope Requirement:**

- The federal amount requested is within the allowable limit(s).  
(see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))

### **Eligibility Requirement:**

- Agency designated by the governor to administer NCHIP or federally recognized tribal government

### **Content of Application Submission:**

The following items are critical application elements required to pass Basic Minimum Requirements review. An application that OJP determines does not include the application elements that must be included in the application submission in order for the application to meet the basic minimum requirements, will neither proceed to peer review nor receive further consideration.

- Project Abstract
- Program Narrative
- Budget Worksheet and Budget Narrative  
(see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- Information to Complete the Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)  
(see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- Intergovernmental Review
- Standard Applicant Information (SF-424 information from Grants.gov)
- Budget and Associated Documentation
- Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)  
(see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- Financial Management and System of Internal Controls Questionnaire  
(see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))

**Additional Attachments:**

- Tribal Authorizing Resolution (if applicable)  
(see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- Request and Justification for Employee Compensation; Waiver (if applicable)  
(see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- Letter from the Courts
- Letter to the State Information Technology POC
- Project Period Timeline

**Disclosures and Assurances**

- [Disclosure of Lobbying Activities \(SF-LLL\)](#)  
(see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- Applicant Disclosure of Duplication in Cost Items  
(see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- DOJ Certified Standard Assurances  
(see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- DOJ Certifications Regarding Lobbying; Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements  
(see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- Applicant Disclosure and Justification – DOJ High Risk Grantees (if applicable)  
(see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))

*Submit Application in JustGrants:*

- Application has been successfully submitted in JustGrants

*If JustGrants Application Submission, Validation, or Error Notifications are Received:*

Contact JustGrants Service Desk at 833-872-5175, [JustGrants.Support@usdoj.gov](mailto:JustGrants.Support@usdoj.gov) regarding technical difficulties.

