



The [U.S. Department of Justice](#) (DOJ), [Office of Justice Programs](#) (OJP), [Bureau of Justice Statistics](#) (BJS) is seeking applications for funding under the 2015 National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) Act Record Improvement Program (NARIP). The NARIP implements the grant provisions of the NICS Improvement Amendments Act of 2007 (Pub. L. 110-180 (18 U.S.C. § 922 note)) enacted on January 8, 2008. This program furthers the Department's mission by improving the records available to NICS, which is accomplished by helping eligible states and tribes improve completeness, automation, and transmittal of records to state and federal systems. For the purpose of this solicitation, the term "state" includes the District of Columbia and U.S. territories.

FY 2015 NICS Act Record Improvement Program (NARIP)

Eligibility

Eligible applicants are limited to (a) the agency designated by the Governor to administer the NARIP, (b) the state or territory central administrative office or similar entity designated by statute or regulation to administer federal grant funds on behalf of the jurisdiction's court system, or (c) federally recognized Indian tribal governments as determined by the Secretary of the Interior. Additionally, there are two specific conditions associated with eligibility for grants under this program (see "Eligibility" on page 4).

BJS welcomes applications that involve two or more entities; however, one eligible entity must be the applicant and the others must be proposed as subrecipients. The applicant must be the entity with primary responsibility for administering the funding and managing the entire program.

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 p.m. eastern time on May 7, 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 email 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 email at askbjs@usdoj.gov. Include "2015 NARIP" in the subject line.

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FY 2015 NICS Act Record Improvement Program (NARIP) (CFDA #16.813)

A. Program Description

Overview

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) is publishing this notice to announce the continuation of the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) Act Record Improvement Program (NARIP) in Fiscal Year (FY) 2015, identify the program priorities, and provide information on application requirements.

The NICS Improvement Amendments Act of 2007, Pub. L. 110-180 (NIAA or the Act), was signed into law on January 8, 2008, in the wake of the April 2007 shooting tragedy at Virginia Tech. The Virginia Tech shooter was able to purchase firearms from a Federal Firearms Licensee (FFL) because information about his prohibiting mental health history was not available to the NICS, and the system was therefore unable to deny the transfer of the firearms used in the shootings. The NIAA seeks to address the gap in information available to NICS about such prohibiting mental health adjudications and commitments, and other prohibiting factors. Filling these information gaps will better enable the system to operate as intended to keep guns out of the hands of persons prohibited by federal or state law from receiving or possessing firearms. The automation of records will also reduce delays for law-abiding persons to purchase firearms.

The NIAA authorized a grant program to assist states in providing certain information to the NICS and prescribes grant penalties for noncompliance with the NIAA's record completeness goals. Additionally, pursuant to the Act, there are certain conditions, described under "Eligibility," that a state must satisfy in advance of receiving grants under the Act.

Eligibility

The NIAA provides that the grants authorized are to be made in a manner consistent with the National Criminal History Improvement Program (NCHIP).

Applications must be submitted by: (a) the agency designated by the Governor to administer the NCHIP program; (b) the state or territory central administrative office or similar entity designated by statute or regulation to administer federal grant funds on behalf of the jurisdiction's court system, or (c) federally recognized Indian tribal governments.

Note - In accordance with the NIAA (see 18 U.S.C. § 922 note), there are two specific conditions that each state must satisfy before being eligible to receive grants:

1. First, "each State shall provide the Attorney General with a reasonable estimate, as calculated by a method determined by the Attorney General... of the number of the records" subject to the NIAA completeness requirements. The last round of estimates

was collected in 2011. Applicants under this solicitation should confirm with BJS whether this eligibility criteria has been met.

2. Second, “to be eligible for a grant under this [program], a State shall certify, to the satisfaction of the Attorney General, that the State has implemented a relief from disabilities program.” (*Id.*) For the purpose of this solicitation, a “relief from disabilities program” is a program that permits persons who have been adjudicated a mental defective or committed to a mental institution to obtain relief from the firearms disabilities imposed by law as a result of such adjudication or commitment. This relief must be based on a finding, in accordance with principles of due process, by a state court, board, commission, or other lawful authority, that the circumstances of the disability and the person’s record and reputation are such that the person will not be likely to act in a manner dangerous to the public safety and that the granting of relief would not be contrary to the public interest. The certification form is available on the ATF website at www.atf.gov/files/forms/download/atf-f-3210-12.pdf. For further information, please visit NICS Improvement Act Questions and Answers on the BJS website at <http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=tp&tid=49>.

Further, applications submitted on behalf of state court systems must specifically assure that (1) the court system has the capability to contribute and will transmit pertinent information to the NICS established under section 103(b) of the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act (18 U.S.C. § 922 note), and (2) it will coordinate the programs proposed for NARIP funding with other federally funded information technology programs, including directly funded local programs.

(See “Additional Attachments” on page 18.)

Program-Specific Information

Authorizing Legislation

Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 3732(c), BJS is authorized to “provide for improvements in the accuracy, quality, timeliness, immediate accessibility, and integration of state criminal history and related records, support the development and enhancement of national systems of criminal history and related records including the NICS, the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), and the records of the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), facilitate state participation in national records and information systems, and support statistical research for critical analysis of the improvement and utilization of criminal history records.” The NCHIP and the NARIP are two means by which BJS provides for such improvements.

The NARIP is authorized by the NIAA, enacted on January 8, 2008. Among other things, the NIAA provides that grants are to be made in a manner consistent with NCHIP. Therefore, NARIP application procedures parallel the provisions of the Crime Identification Technology Act of 1998, which guide NCHIP and implement the requirements of the following –

- the Crime Identification Technology Act of 1998 (CITA), Pub. L. No. 105-251, 112 Stat. 1871 (1998), codified at 42 U.S.C. § 14601 et seq.
- the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act (Brady Act), Pub. L. No. 103-159, 107 Stat. 1536 (1993), codified as amended at 18 U.S.C. § 921 et seq.

- the National Child Protection Act of 1993 (NCPA), Pub. L. No. 103-209, 107 Stat. 2490 (1993), codified as amended at 42 U.S.C. §§ 3759, 5101 note, 5119, 5119a, 5119b, and 5119c
- Those provisions of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (Omnibus Act), Pub. L. No. 90-351, 82 Stat. 197 (1968), codified as amended at 42 U.S.C. § 3711 et seq., as amended; and the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (Violent Crime Control Act), Pub. L. No. 103-322, 108 Stat. 1796 (1994), which pertain to the establishment, maintenance, analysis, or use of criminal history records and criminal record systems
- relevant requirements of the Jacob Wetterling Crimes Against Children and Sexually Violent Offender Registration Act, Pub. L. No. 103-322, 108 Stat. 2038; Megan's Law, Pub. L. No. 104-145, 110 Stat. 1345; and the Pam Lychner Sexual Offender Tracking and Identification Act of 1996, Pub. L. No. 104-236, 110 Stat. 3093; and Title 1 of the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006, Pub. L. No. 109-248; and
- the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000, Pub. L. No. 106-386, 114 Stat. 1464 (2000) and related laws pertaining to the identification, collection, analysis, and interstate exchange records relating to domestic violence and stalking (including protection orders).

Goals, Objectives, and Deliverables

Record Completeness Goals and Incentives

The NIAA has provisions that require states to meet specific goals for completeness of the records submitted to the Attorney General identifying individuals prohibited by federal law from possessing firearms. The records covered include automated information needed by the NICS to identify felony convictions, felony indictments, fugitives from justice, drug arrests and convictions, prohibiting mental health adjudications and commitments, domestic violence protection orders, and misdemeanor crimes of domestic violence. The Act provides incentives for states to meet the goals it sets for greater record completeness:

- First, the Act allows states to obtain a waiver, beginning in 2011, of the state matching requirement under NCHIP if a state provides at least 90% of its records identifying persons in specified prohibited categories;
- Second, the Act authorizes grant programs described herein, which, pursuant to the Act, are being administered consistent with NCHIP, for state executive and judicial agencies to establish and upgrade information automation and identification technologies for timely submission of final criminal record dispositions and other information relevant to NICS checks; and
- Finally, the Act provides for discretionary and mandatory Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) program funding penalties, unless the penalties are waived by the Attorney General for good cause. The penalties are specific in relation to meeting record completeness requirements and the time lapsed from January 8, 2008, when NIAA was enacted. As of January 2011, 3% could be withheld if records are less than 70% complete. In 2013, 4 percent may be withheld if records are less than 70 percent

complete. In 2018, 5% shall be withheld if the records are less than 90% complete, unless the Attorney General waives the penalty upon finding that a State is making a reasonable effort to comply with the NIAA. [Note: No penalties or waivers have been imposed to date.]

Program Goals

The NARIP was enacted to improve the completeness, automation, and transmittal of records to state and federal systems used by the NICS. Such records include criminal history records, records of felony convictions, warrants, records of protective orders, convictions for misdemeanors involving domestic violence and stalking, drug arrests and convictions, records of mental health adjudications, and others which may disqualify an individual from possessing or receiving a firearm under federal law. Helping states, state court systems, and tribes to automate these records will also reduce delays for law-abiding gun purchasers.

FY 2015 Priority Area – Improve Reporting of Mental Health Information to NICS

BJS continues to emphasize the need for applicants to focus efforts on making information on persons prohibited from possessing firearms for mental health reasons accessible to NICS. Therefore, recipients of funds must agree to use a portion of awarded funds to make such records accessible to NICS unless the state certifies in the application that it—

- 1) Already submits to NICS information on all persons prohibited from possessing firearms for mental health reasons; or
- 2) Will focus funds on another category of qualifying NICS records that the state reasonably argues represents a greater information gap; or
- 3) Is prohibited by law from sharing information with NICS on persons prohibited for mental health reasons (with citations to the relevant state law). Note: HIPPA is not considered to be a prohibiting factor.

State Grants

Section 103 of the NIAA provides that the grants “shall be used by the States and Indian tribal governments, in conjunction with units of local government and State and local courts, to establish or upgrade information and identification technologies for firearms eligibility determinations.” In accordance with the NIAA, a grant to a state, territory, or Indian tribe may only be used to—

- supply accurate and timely information to the Attorney General concerning the identity of persons who have a federally prohibiting mental health adjudication or commitment
- create electronic systems that provide accurate and up-to-date information directly related to checks under the NICS, including court disposition and corrections records
- assist states in establishing or enhancing their own capacities to perform NICS background checks
- supply accurate and timely information to the Attorney General concerning final dispositions of criminal records to databases accessed by NICS

- supply accurate and timely court orders and records of misdemeanor crimes of domestic violence for inclusion in federal and state law enforcement databases used to conduct NICS background checks
- collect and analyze data needed to demonstrate levels of state compliance with the NIAA
- maintain the required relief from disabilities program in accordance with the NIAA (however, by statute, not less than 3% and no more than 10% of each grant shall be used for this purpose).

State Court Grants

Section 301 of the NIAA provides that grants shall be made to each state or tribal government, consistent with plans for the integration, automation, and accessibility of criminal history records, for use by the court systems to improve automation and transmittal to federal and state repositories of (1) criminal history dispositions, (2) records relevant to determining whether a person has been convicted of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence or whether a person is a subject of a prohibiting domestic violence protection order, and (3) prohibiting mental health adjudications and commitments.

Further, the law provides that the amounts granted shall be used by the court system only to implement—

- assessments, as necessary, of the capabilities state courts to automate and transmit arrest and conviction records, court orders, and mental health adjudications or commitments to federal and state record repositories; and
- policies, systems, and procedures to automate and transmit arrest and conviction records, court orders, and mental health adjudications or commitments to federal and state record repositories.

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
- 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) Web site 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

FY 2015 NARIP awards will be made for up to 24 months. Funded activities may begin on or after October 1, 2015. All activities must be scheduled to be completed by September 30, 2017.

BJS is unable to estimate the number of awards to be made or the maximum amount awarded per state. The number and amount of awards will be totally dependent on the extent to which the projects proposed address the program priority areas and the demonstrated level of need.

All awards are subject to the availability of appropriated funds and to any modifications or additional requirements that may be imposed by law. The FY 2015 NARIP appropriation is \$25 million.

Type of Award¹

BJS expects that it will make any award from this solicitation in the form of a cooperative agreement, which is a particular type of grant used if 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 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.

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)).

(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.

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](#). Note: 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 the 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.

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.

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/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.

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 system-validated 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 that are 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, Budget Narrative. Applicants may combine the Budget Narrative and the Budget Detail Worksheet in one document. However, if an applicant submits only one budget document, it must contain **both** narrative and detail information. Please 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,” “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 pre-applications, 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 (program) **is not** subject to [Executive Order 12372](#). (In completing the SF-424, applicants are to make the appropriate selection in response to question 19 to indicate that the “Program is not covered by E.O. 12372.”)

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
- single-spaced, using a standard 12-point font (Times New Roman) with 1-inch margins.

3. Program Narrative

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

- a. Statement of the Problem
- b. Project Design and Implementation
- c. Capabilities and Competencies
- d. Plan for Collecting the Data Required for this Solicitation’s Performance Measures

The Program Narrative should also include the following sections:

Activities to be funded. The program narrative should describe each task to be funded with FY 2015 NARIP funds over the project period outlined under Program Goals. All proposed tasks should demonstrate the program’s intent to improve the completeness, automation,

and transmittal of records used by the NICS to state and federal systems. Dollar amounts must be included for each funded task. **Applications must specifically address the priority area regarding submission of mental health information to NICS (as outlined on page 7).**

Compatibility with other systems. The application should describe the extent to which proposed activities are compatible with current NCIC, NICS, Next Generation Identification (NGI; formerly IAFIS), and other applicable statewide or regional criminal justice information sharing standards or plans, including state anti-terrorism plans.

Coordination. The administering 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. NARIP activities will be coordinated with other OJP efforts authorized and funded under CITA. To encourage coordination and information sharing among criminal justice systems, all OJP awards supporting information technology development require that a description of the project be submitted to the state Information Point of Contact (POC), if one has been designated. A copy of the correspondence can be submitted as a separate attachment or sent directly to BJS prior to accessing funds. There is no requirement that the POC concur with the information technology project. The intent of this condition is to facilitate communication within the state. **Tribal applicants should provide documentation that activities proposed for funding will be coordinated with a tribal consortia, a state, or directly with the FBI.**

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

Plan for Collecting the Data Required for the Solicitation's Performance Measures.

Submission of performance measures data are not required for the application. Performance measures are included as a notification that successful applicants will be required to submit specific data to BJS as part of their reporting requirements. For the application, the applicant should indicate an understanding of these requirements and discuss how the applicant will gather the required data, should the applicant receive funding.

NICS Record Improvement Plan

As in previous years, in order to make the most effective use of the funds for improvement to the quality and availability of records used by the NICS, FY 2015 NARIP grant applications must provide for the development and implementation of comprehensive strategic planning. Such planning must include activities designed to examine the current condition of the involved state, local, and tribal records, problems associated with incomplete reporting and/or records availability, and demonstrate a commitment to a long-range planning process to address such issues to achieve the goals of the NIAA.

Therefore, FY 2015 NARIP applications should include funding, as needed, for the development and/or modification of a NICS Record Improvement Plan through a four-step process:

Step 1. Establishment of a NICS Record Improvement Task Force. Complete reporting and transmission of state or tribal records to national files can only be achieved through the cooperative efforts of all record originating entities. Therefore, BJS recommends that the applicant propose to use some FY 2015 NARIP funding to establish and/or support a NICS

Record Improvement Task Force to guide the development and implementation of an ongoing long-range records improvement plan. The task force might include representatives from the central record repository and source agencies, including state, local, and tribal law enforcement; prosecuting attorneys; the courts; local jails; state correctional facilities; probation and parole agencies; and state mental health program agencies.

A task force with wide representation from throughout the system could provide a forum for exploring the range of options for improving the quality, completeness and availability of NICS records in the state. The task force could review the results of the assessment and the problem identification phases (Steps 2 and 3) and develop recommendations to improve the quality, completeness, and availability of NICS records. Current legislation and administrative procedures related to reporting, maintaining, sharing, and use of relevant records might be reviewed to determine if they are adequate. A list of the proposed task force members and the agencies they represent should be included in the preliminary plan. If components of the system listed above are not included in the task force, the plan should describe how input and participation will be achieved. If a task force is not to be established, the applicant should propose instituting other mechanisms to provide for the input and participation of all affected components of the criminal justice system.

Step 2. Assessment of the completeness and availability of NICS records. The record estimates and other information provided by the state in response to the information collection developed by BJS pursuant to the NIAA, provide an initial or baseline assessment on which FY 2015 activities can be based. However, for the purposes of long-term strategic planning, an applicant may wish to use the task force to examine (and address) issues surrounding the accuracy, completeness, and availability of such records as part of its assessment. In any event, the ongoing assessment must result in a comprehensive understanding of the following:

- availability of the records in terms of entities that originate, maintain, and/or receive such records;
- how relevant records are currently transmitted to the state's central repository and/or how they are otherwise made available to the NICS; and
- completeness of the records in the various categories described of (what portion of the records is actually made available to the NICS).

Such an assessment may involve an examination of records in the state central record repository, surveys of local reporting/originating agencies, analysis of court statistics, data collection from sample(s) of local agency records, estimates derived from audits of local reporting agencies, or other analytical work which may or may not have been performed to support the development of record estimates.

Step 3. Identification of reasons for incomplete and/or unavailable NICS records. The task force may also seek to identify challenges or obstacles encountered in efforts to ensure that all qualifying records are made available to the NICS. Understanding such challenges may help focus improvement strategies, and may include factors such as: the type and number of state/local/tribal agencies that originally create such records; the typical "life cycle" of such original records, including when and where the records are created, whether such records are maintained in paper or electronic form, if and how such records are transmitted to state and national files, and when and how such records are ultimately disposed of, deleted, or otherwise made unavailable. The task force might identify factors

that affect the availability of records for state and national files, including whether categories of records may be protected from disclosure under a provision of state, tribal or federal law.

Step 4. Development of a NICS Record Improvement Plan. The final step develops strategies for addressing each of the challenges identified in Step 3, including the use of federal grant funds appropriated under the NIAA. The plan should clearly identify goals, objectives, and a general timetable for achievements. Subsequent iterations of the plan should include a progress report on the strategies previously employed.

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
<p>Ensure that the infrastructure is developed to connect each state’s and tribe’s records systems to the national records systems operated by the FBI, including the NCIC, NGI, III and NICS Index.</p>	<p>Number of states and tribes participating or making records available to the NICS (within the 7 categories).</p>	<p>Total number of states and tribes participating and total number of state and tribal records in the 7 categories.</p> <p>Number of state and tribal records made available for the use by NICS in 7 categories, including –</p> <p>Category 1: Records that identify a person who has been convicted in any court of a crime punishable by imprisonment for a term exceeding 1 year (e.g. federal or state felonies), and any state misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for more than 2 years.</p> <p>Category 2: Records that identify a person who is under an indictment or information returned or filed with a court, or for whom a criminal complaint has been issued or verified by a prosecutor for the crimes described in Category 1.</p> <p>Category 3: Records that identify a person who is a fugitive from justice, as demonstrated by an active felony or misdemeanor want or warrant.</p> <p>Category 4: Records that identify a person who is an unlawful user of, or addicted to, any controlled substance, as demonstrated by specified arrests, convictions, and adjudications not protected from disclosure to the Attorney General by federal or state law.</p> <p>Category 5: Records that identify a person who has been adjudicated as a mental defective or who has been formally and involuntarily committed to any mental institution when the information is not protected from disclosure to the Attorney General by federal or state law.</p>

	<p>Percentage of records made available to NICS that are complete.</p> <p>Number of records available in NICS.</p> <p>Percentage of applications for firearm transfers rejected due to data made available to the NICS.</p>	<p>Category 6: Records that electronically made available and identify a person subject to an active court order (e.g. issued by a criminal court or any civil court, such as divorce court, family court, magistrate, or general jurisdiction court) that restrains the person from committing acts of violence against another person.</p> <p>Category 7: Records that are electronically available and identify a person convicted in any court of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence.</p> <p>Number of records made available to NICS that are complete.</p> <p>Number of applications for firearm transfers.</p> <p>Number of applications for firearm transfers rejected for the presence of a domestic violence misdemeanor conviction.</p> <p>Number of applications for firearm transfers rejected due to the presence of a mental health prohibitor.</p>
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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.

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 [OJP 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.

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

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

- a. A copy of the approved application for certification of the state's relief from disabilities program or indication that certification is being sought by ATF (the certification form must be approved by ATF to be eligible for funding).
- b. If the application does **not** include a portion of funds to improve submission of information to NICS on persons prohibited from possessing firearms for mental health reasons, the applicant must certify one of the following in the submission: (1) it already submits information to NICS on all persons prohibited from possessing firearms for mental health reasons, (2) it will focus on another category of qualifying NICS records that the state reasonably argues represents a greater information gap, or (3) it is

prohibited by law from sharing information with NICS on persons prohibited for mental health reasons (with citations to the relevant state law).

c. 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:

1. the Federal or State funding agency
2. the solicitation name/project name
3. 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.”).

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) must 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 “&amp;” 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 1-2 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/applicants/get_registered.jsp.
- 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 16.813, titled "NICS Act Record Improvement Program (NARIP)", and the funding opportunity number is BJS-2015-4103.

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 notifications from Grants.gov. The 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 application, BJS will review only the most recent system-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 the 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 Desk 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
- 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 in making 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. **For FY 2015 NARIP awards, completeness of the application in terms of all required information will be a key consideration for BJS.** Awards will also be based on the following review criteria:

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

- the program narrative must describe each proposed task in accordance with the priority program goals. Applications should address how proposed activities directly relate to the improvement of the NICS.
- Applications should specifically address the FY 2015 Priority Area – Improve Reporting of Mental Health Information to NICS.

2. Program Design and Implementation (20%)

- the extent to which the application recognizes the role of the courts in ensuring complete records.
- The extent to which the proposal appears reasonable in light of the applicant's current level of system development and statutory framework.
- The extent to which the application demonstrates the technical feasibility of the proposed task(s) and details the specific implementation plan to achieve the intended deliverables.

3. Capabilities and Competencies (25%)

- evidence of the applicant's progress in record quality improvement efforts.
- the extent to which the applicant has fulfilled goals of previous NARIP and NCHIP 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 the FBI's III and participation in the NFF, and the current status of development of its criminal records and related records.

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

- the extent to which the data collection plan addresses required performance measures.

5. Budget: Complete; Reasonable and Allowable; Cost Effective; and Necessary for Program Activities (10%)

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

- the reasonableness of the budget, including the basis of the estimates, nature of the proposed expenditures, and their relationship to the priorities identified herein.

6. Impact/Outcomes and Evaluation (15%)

- the extent to which the application identifies the anticipated outcomes of the proposed program(s) in **quantifiable** terms to demonstrate the anticipated level of impact at the national level.

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 the 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 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

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.

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.

F. Federal Award Administration Information

Federal Award Notices

OJP award notification will be sent from GMS. Recipients will be required to log in; 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 Apply section of 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 the [Mandatory Award Terms and Conditions](#) page of the [OJP 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.

Cooperative Agreement Under NCHIP and NARIP

This NCHIP/NARIP related project is to be funded as a cooperative agreement. The basis for using a cooperative agreement is the substantial involvement of the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) in providing information, guidance, and direction relative to criminal history records improvements within the states. BJS will exercise general approval over the entire project. In addition, the substantial involvement of BJS will include, but not be limited to:

- a. Determining the types of criminal history record information that will be useful to Federal, state, and local agencies.
- b. Identifying Federal information reporting standards and guidelines and making them available to the recipient or providing access to them.
- c. Providing technical assistance to the recipient to enhance state criminal history records, identify convicted felons, and improve the quality and timeliness of criminal history information.

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)).

- d. Informing the recipient of the status of Federal program requirements, specifications, and funding levels.
- e. Requesting and obtaining statistical data as needed to monitor and assess performance with respect to criminal records improvement goals.

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.

Comprehensive Strategy for Information Sharing

Recipient 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 State and local officials with emphasis on the recommendation of officials whose duty it is to oversee, plan, and implement integrated information technology systems, and contain-- (a) a definition and analysis of integration in the State and localities developing integrated information sharing systems; (b) an assessment of the criminal justice resources being devoted to information technology; (c) State and local resource needs; (d) Federal, State, regional, and local information technology coordination requirements; and (e) statewide priorities for planning and implementation of information technology systems.

FBI Systems Compatibility

Recipient agrees that criminal justice information systems designed, implemented, or upgraded with NCHIP or NARIP funds will be compatible, where applicable, with the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), the National Crime Information Center system (NCIC 2000), the National Criminal Instant Background Check System (NICS), the Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS), and applicable national, statewide or regional criminal justice information sharing standards and plans.

AFIS Compatibility

Recipient agrees that AFIS (Automated Fingerprint Identification System) equipment purchased under this award will conform to the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Standard, "Data Format for the Interchange of Fingerprint, Facial & Other Biometric Information" (ANSI/NIST-ITL 1-2007 PART 1) and other reporting standards of the FBI.

State and Local Coordination

Recipient agrees that activities funded under this award will be closely coordinated with related activities supported with OJP, State, local, or tribal funds.

Coordination Involving Federal Employment Check and Firearm-related Background Checks

Recipient agrees that activities supported under this award will be coordinated with Federal, State, and local activities relating to sharing criminal history record information to investigative services providers pursuant to Title 5 U.S.C. Sec. 9101 and related to presale firearm checks, as appropriate.

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 email 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 NICS Act Record Improvement Program (NARIP)

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 21)

_____ Acquire or renew registration with SAM (see page 21)

To Register with Grants.gov:

_____ Acquire AOR and Grants.gov username/password (see page 21)

_____ Acquire AOR confirmation from the E-Biz POC (see page 21)

To Find Funding Opportunity:

_____ Search for the Funding Opportunity on Grants.gov (see page 21)

_____ Download Funding Opportunity and Application Package (see page 21)

_____ Sign up for Grants.gov email notifications (optional) (see page 22)

_____ 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 22)

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

_____ contact BJS regarding experiencing technical difficulties
(see page 22)

General Requirements:

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

Eligibility Requirement:

_____ Agency Designated by the Governor to Administer NCHIP/State Court Agency/Federally recognized Indian tribal government

What an Application Should Include:

_____ Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) (see page 12)

_____ Project Abstract (see page 12)

_____ Program Narrative (see page 12)

_____ Budget Detail Worksheet (see page 17)

_____ Budget Narrative (see page 17)

_____ Employee Compensation Waiver request and justification (if applicable)
(see page 10)

_____ Read OJP policy and guidance on conference approval, planning, and reporting available at ojp.gov/financialguide/PostawardRequirements/chapter15page1.htm
(see page 11)

_____ Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL) (see page 20)

_____ Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable) (see page 17)

_____ Tribal Authorizing Resolution (if applicable) (see page 18)

- _____ Applicant Disclosure of High Risk Status (see page 18)
- _____ Additional Attachments (see page 18)
- _____ Copy of approved ATF certification form for relief from disabilities provision (or statement indicating the applicant is working with ATF toward certification in FY 2014, subject to ATF concurrence)
 - _____ If application does **not** request a portion of funds to improve submission of mental health information to NICS, certification for one of the following:
 - _____ already submits all qualifying mental health information to NICS;
 - _____ will focus funds on another category of qualifying NICS records that the state reasonably argues represents a greater information gap: or
 - _____ is prohibited by law from sharing information with NICS on persons prohibited for mental health reasons, and provides citations to the relevant law
- _____ Applicant Disclosure of Pending Applications (see page 19)
- _____ Financial Management and System of Internal Controls Questionnaire (if applicable) (see page 20)