

awards. The review normally takes 60 to 90 days, depending on the number of applications received. Each applicant receives written comments from the peer review panel concerning the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal. These comments may include suggestions for how a revised or subsequent application to NIJ might be improved.

19. What are the criteria for an award? The essential question asked of each applicant is, "If this study were successful, how would criminal justice policies or operations be improved?" Four criteria are applied in the evaluation process:

Impact of the proposed project.

Feasibility of the approach to the issue, including technical merit and practical considerations.

Originality of the approach, including creativity of the proposal and capability of the research staff.

Economy of the approach. Applicants bear the responsibility of demonstrating to the panel that the proposed study addresses the critical issues of the topic area and that the study findings could ultimately contribute to a practical application in law enforcement or criminal justice. Reviewers will assess applicants' awareness of related research or studies and their ability to direct the research or study toward answering questions of policy or improving the state of criminal justice operations.

Technical merit is judged by the likelihood that the study design will produce convincing findings. Reviewers take into account the logic and timing of the research or study plan, the validity and reliability of measures proposed, the appropriateness of statistical methods to be used, and each applicant's awareness of factors that might dilute the credibility of the findings. Impact is judged by the scope of the proposed approach and by the utility of the proposed products. Reviewers consider each applicant's understanding of the process of innovation in the targeted criminal justice agency or setting and knowledge of prior uses of criminal justice research by the proposed criminal justice constituency. Appropriateness of products in terms of proposed content and format is also considered.

Applicants' qualifications are evaluated both in terms of the depth of experience and the relevance of that experience to the proposed research or study. Costs are evaluated in terms of the reasonableness of each item and the utility of the project to the Institute's program.

20. Are there any other considerations in selecting applications for an award? Projects should have a national impact or have potential relevance to a number of jurisdictions. Because of the broad national mandate of the National Institute of Justice, projects that address the unique concerns of a single jurisdiction should be fully justified. Projects that intend to provide services in addition to performing research are eligible for support, but only for the resources necessary to conduct the research tasks outlined in the proposal. The applicant's performance on previous or current NIJ grants will also be taken into consideration in making funding decisions.

21. Who is eligible to apply? NIJ awards grants to, or enters into cooperative agreements with, educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, public agencies, individuals, and profitmaking organizations that are willing to waive their fees. Where appropriate, special eligibility criteria are indicated in the separate solicitations.

22. Does NIJ accept resubmission of proposals? The Institute will accept resubmission of a previously submitted proposal. The applicant should indicate for Question 8, Form 424, that the application is a revision. The applicant should include this information in the abstract. Finally, the applicant should prepare a one-page response to the earlier panel review (to follow the abstract) including (1) the title, submission date, and NIJ-assigned application number of the previous proposal and (2) a brief summary of responses to the review and/or revisions to the proposal.

#### **NIJ Policy Regarding Unsolicited Proposals**

It is NIJ's policy to submit all unsolicited proposals to peer review. NIJ's peer review process takes place in periodic cycles; unsolicited proposals received will be included in the next available review cycle. NIJ will offer the applicant the option of revising the proposal in accordance with the program goals established in the Plan or, alternatively, submitting the original proposal to the peer panel it deems most appropriate.

#### **Requirements for Award Recipients**

##### *Required Products*

Each project is expected to generate tangible products of maximum benefit to criminal justice professionals, researchers, and policymakers. In particular, NIJ strongly encourages documents that provide information of

practical utility to law enforcement officials; prosecutors; judges; corrections officers; victims services providers; and Federal, State, county, and local elected officials. Products should include:

A summary of approximately 2,500 words highlighting the findings of the research and the policy issues those findings will inform. The material should be written in a style that will be accessible to policy officials and practitioners and suitable for possible publication as an NIJ Research in Brief. An NIJ editorial style guide is sent to each project director at the time of the award.

A full technical report, including a discussion of the research question, review of the literature, description of project methodology, detailed review of project findings, and conclusions and policy recommendations.

Clean copies of all automated data sets developed during the research and full documentation prepared in accordance with the instructions in the NIJ Data Resources Manual.

Brief project summaries for NIJ use in preparing annual reports to the President and the Congress. As appropriate, additional products such as case studies and interim and final reports (e.g., articles, manuals, or training materials) may be specified in the proposal or negotiated at the time of the award.

#### **Public Release of Automated Data Sets**

NIJ is committed to ensuring the public availability of research data and to this end established its Data Resources Program in 1984. All NIJ award recipients who collect data are required to submit a machine-readable copy of the data and appropriate documentation to NIJ prior to the conclusion of the project. The data and materials are reviewed for completeness. NIJ staff then create machine-readable data sets, prepare users' guides, and distribute data and documentation to other researchers in the field. A variety of formats are acceptable; however, the data and materials must conform with requirements detailed in Depositing Data With the Data Resources Program of the National Institute of Justice: A Handbook. A copy of this handbook is sent to each project director at the time of the award. For further information about NIJ's Data Resources Program, contact Dr. Pamela Lattimore, (202) 307-2961.