THE FEDERAL FUNDING PROCESS:
THE FIRST STEPS TO APPLYING, HOW TO PREPARE NOW, & OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

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Agenda

I. Overview of Funding Opportunities
   I. OJP and BJA
   II. Grant Life Cycle Overview

II. JustGrants
   I. Transition to JustGrants System
   II. Entity Onboarding, Application Submission, and Award Acceptance

III. Key Steps to Completing Your Application
   I. How to Read a BJA Solicitation
   II. Key Steps to Completing your Application
   III. Understanding the Peer Review Process

IV. Question and Answer Session
Learning Objectives

• Help prospective BJA applicants prepare for the FY 2023 funding season.
• Review how to prepare and successfully submit an application in Grants.gov and JustGrants.
• Review how to find the critical elements of a solicitation.
• Share tips for developing a budget.
• Review how the peer review process works.
• Review how attendees can stay connected.
What is the Office of Justice Programs?

- The Office of Justice Programs (OJP) provides grant funding, training, research, and statistics to the criminal justice community.

- OJP is one of three grant-making components of the Department of Justice along with the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS).
U.S. Department of Justice
Bureau of Justice Assistance

Mission: BJA’s mission is to provide leadership and services in grant administration and criminal justice policy development to support state, local, and Tribal justice strategies to achieve safer communities. BJA works with communities, governments, and nonprofit organizations to reduce crime, recidivism, and unnecessary confinement, and promote a safe and fair criminal justice system.

https://bja.ojp.gov
Appointed by President Biden in February 2022, Director Moore leads BJA’s programmatic and policy efforts on providing a wide range of resources, including training and technical assistance, to law enforcement, courts, corrections, treatment, reentry, justice information sharing, and community-based partners to address chronic and emerging criminal justice challenges nationwide.

**Policy Office**

provides national leadership to criminal justice organizations that partner with BJA to identify effective program models for replication and infuse data-driven, evidence-based strategies into operational models, practices, and programs.

**Programs Office**

administrates state, local, tribal, and territorial grant programs. It acts as BJA’s direct line of communication to states, local jurisdictions, territories, and tribal governments by providing customer-focused grants management support and careful stewardship over federal funds.

**Operations Office**

coordinates all communication, formulates and executes the budget, manages contracts, measures grantees’ performance, and provides administrative support to BJA.

**Public Safety Officer Benefits Office**

provides death and education benefits to survivors of fallen law enforcement officers, firefighters, and other public safety officers, and disability benefits to officers catastrophically injured in the line of duty.
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<th>Five Major Strategic Focus Areas</th>
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<td>Improve public safety through measures which build trust with the community and ensure an effective criminal justice system</td>
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<td>Reduction in recidivism and prevention of unnecessary confinement and interactions with the criminal justice system</td>
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<td>Integration of evidence-based, research-driven strategies into the day-to-day operations of BJA and the programs BJA administers and supports</td>
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<td>Increasing program effectiveness with a renewed emphasis on data analysis, information sharing, and performance management</td>
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<td>Ensuring organizational excellence through outstanding administration and oversight of all of BJA’s strategic investments</td>
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Grant Life Cycle

Administrative Preparation
- DOJ Program Plan
- Registration with Grants.gov and JustGrants
- Grants Learning Center

Solicitation Posted; Application Period Begins
- OJP.gov
- BJA.gov
- Grants.gov
- JustGrants.gov

Application Review
- Basic minimum requirements
- Peer review
- Programmatic review
- Financial review

Award Notification
- Awarded by September 30
- Non-awards by December 30
- Email sent to AOR and E-Biz

Post award
- Accept award
- Designate financial POC
- Review special conditions and deliverables
- Grantee training
- Ongoing monitoring and site visits

Award Closeout
- Submit closeout documents
- Complete closeout requirements
- Submit required reports
Transition to JustGrants

DOJ’s Grants Management and Payment Systems

On October 15, 2020, DOJ’s grantmaking components — OJP, OVW, and COPS — launched new grantmaking and payment systems, JustGrants and ASAP.

These systems are intended to offer the user an improved, seamless experience.
JustGrants

The Goal: Improved User Experience

• Offers a streamlined end-to-end process, allowing applicants and grantees to move seamlessly through the full grants management lifecycle.

• Gives applicants and award recipients new ways to manage their own entity information and users in the system.

• Leverages a shared service payment system to simplify the federal grantee payment user experience and expedite payments.
JUSTGRANTS
BJA Federal Funding Program
First Steps to Applying, How to Prepare Now, and Other Considerations
February 9, 2023
Agenda

• Entity Onboarding
• Application Submission
• Award Acceptance
• Resources
JustGrants Onboarding

Entity Administrator invites users in DIAMD

Assigns JustGrants roles to each user in DIAMD

- Register in DIAMD
- Login to JustGrants

Users receive email from DIAMD

Entity Administrator assigns users to awards in JustGrants

- Assigns Grant Award Administrator to individual awards
- Assigns Financial Manager to individual awards
- Assigns Authorized Representative to Grant Award Package

Note: Users will not be visible in JustGrants until they have successfully logged into JustGrants after creating their account.

E-Biz POC = Entity Administrator (for onboarding)

Users can now access and edit awards

Note: Only one user can be assigned to a role on a specific award at a time.
Entity Roles
There are six roles for applicants and awardees:

- **ENTITY ADMINISTRATOR**
  Confirms Entity profile information is current. Manages users and user assignments. Confirms Authorized Representative has proper legal authority to accept or decline an award.

- **APPLICATION SUBMITTER**
  Completes and submits applications on behalf of an Entity, including Entity Assurances and Certifications.

- **AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE**
  Accepts or declines awards on behalf of an Entity. Must have legal authority to enter into contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements with the federal government on behalf of the Entity.

- **GRANT AWARD ADMINISTRATOR**
  Edits/submits programmatic-related award requirements, including Performance Reports, certain Grant Award Modifications (GAMs), and portions of the Closeout.

- **FINANCIAL MANAGER**
  Certifies and submits financial information and all Federal Financial Reports on behalf of an Entity.

- **ALTERNATE GRANT AWARD ADMINISTRATOR**
  Supports the Grant Award Administrator (GAA). Can initiate and submit programmatic-related award requirements, including Performance Reports and GAMs.

Multiple roles can be assigned to a single user.
Application Submission
Application Submission Overview

Applicants have two application submission deadlines. **First:** Grants.gov (submitting the SF-424 and SF-LLL). **Second:** JustGrants.

It’s OK to enter preliminary budget or programmatic data in Grants.gov and update later in JustGrants.

A JustGrants submission should include all items as defined in the solicitation.

The application in JustGrants is customized per the requirements of the solicitation. Your application will have specific requests.
Application Submitter (AS)

AS Abilities and Responsibilities

In addition to the Entity Administrator, a new Application Submitter (AS) role in JustGrants has some specific abilities and responsibilities.

• Complete a web-based budget form,
• Complete an application on behalf of an entity, including certifying the information, and
• Submit the application in JustGrants.
Application Submission

Demo
Award Acceptance
Award Acceptance: Authorized Representative

• Has the authority to accept or decline awards on behalf of an Entity.

• Must have legal authority to enter into contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements with the federal government on behalf of the Entity.

• Must be assigned to the award by the Entity Administrator in order to accept or decline the award.
Award Acceptance: Key Takeaways

- Prior to accepting an award, the entity administrator must assign a financial manager and a grant administrator.

- Each Authorized Representative will receive an electronic notification to sign and accept their award.

- The system-generated award notification email is saved in JustGrants for audit purposes and becomes part of the history of the award.

- The process of accepting/declining an award no longer requires printing and signing a PDF to accept the award. It is now done electronically by the Authorized Representative(s).
Resources
Resources

• **Justice Grants Website**: Find more information about JustGrants, including training, resources, and news and updates.

• **Entity User Experience Training and Reference Materials**

• **Application Submissions Training and Reference Materials**

• **Application Submission JARG**

• **Award Acceptance JARG**

• **JustGrants User Roles Guide**
JustGrants Technical Support

JustGrants technical issues should be sent to JustGrants Technical Support. For grant application status check the website from the DOJ Managing Offices, COPS, OJP, and OVW.

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Monday – Friday between the hours of 7:00 AM and 9:00 PM Eastern
Saturday, Sunday, and Federal holidays from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM Eastern
JustGrants Training

justicegrants.usdoj.gov
• Job Aid Reference Guides
• Microlearning videos
• Recordings of past sessions
• Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
• Glossary terms
JustGrants Training Resources

Organized by Topics

Micro-learning videos

Job Aid Reference Guides
Upcoming Sessions

JUSTICEGRANTS.USDOJ.GOV/Training/training-virtual-sessions

Post-Award Management: MONDAYS from 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM
GEARED TOWARDS: Grant Award Administrators, Entity Administrators, Financial Managers

Entity Management: TUESDAYS from 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM
GEARED TOWARDS: Entity Administrators

Application Mechanics: WEDNESDAYS from 2:30 PM to 4:00 PM
GEARED TOWARDS: Entity Administrators, Application Submitters, Authorized Representatives

Award Acceptance: THURSDAYS from 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM
GEARED TOWARDS: Entity Administrators, Authorized Representatives
Understanding the Solicitation

**Step 1:** Ensure that your agency is eligible to apply or that you have a partner agency you can apply with that is eligible. Eligibility is listed on the first page of a solicitation.

**Step 2:** Ensure that you have enough time to develop your application. The due date is also listed on the first page. Take into account the time required to register to apply, prepare the application, gather the required attachments, and complete any local, state, or tribal review processes.

**Important:** Applications have two deadlines. The first is in Grants.gov, and the second is in JustGrants.
Understanding the Solicitation (cont.)

**Step 3:** Read the program-specific section to understand how funds can be used and the intent of the funding agency.

**Step 4:** Read the rest of the application in its entirety at the beginning so you know what is needed as you prepare your application.
Step 5: Determine if your agency has the capacity to do the work or if you need additional resources built into the project to successfully manage the project.

Helpful Hint: Identify if you need project partners and, if so, reach out to them as soon as possible.
Planning and Organizing Your Writing

Step 1: Read the application a second time and develop a timeline and a checklist for yourself. The application checklist is a good resource for getting organized.

Think about the steps you need to do first or steps that will take the most time and do those first.

• Registrations complete and current
• Letters of support/MOU's
• Inviting partners to a planning meeting
Planning and Organizing Your Writing (cont.)

Step 2: Read the review criteria section carefully. Develop an outline for the program narrative based on the questions you have to answer.

The biggest mistake applicants make is not answering every question.

DO NOT change the order in which you answer the questions! Follow the order of the review criteria.
State the Problem

Clearly identify the community, state, or region that is included in the proposed program.
[Insert text to answer this question]

Describe the nature and scope of the problem, providing local, state, or regional data to support the discussion.
[Insert text to answer this question]

Identify each partner agency that has demonstrated commitment to this effort via an interagency agreement or letter of support.
[Insert text to answer this question]

Identify existing strategic plans relevant to the program and describe how the proposed initiative aligns with the existing plan.
[Insert text to answer this question]

Helpful Tip: Leave the questions in red until you have others review your draft. Once you are confident that every question has been answered, remove the questions in red.
Step 3: Make sure you understand and follow the instructions about page limits for the proposal narrative.

Helpful Tip: A table can be single spaced and can be put in an attachment if it is not a required component of the proposal narrative.

Proposal Narrative
The proposal narrative should be submitted as an attachment in JustGrants. The attached document should be double spaced, using a standard 12-point Times New Roman font; have no less than 1-inch margins; and should not exceed 20 pages. Pages should be numbered and submitted as an attachment.

NOTE: If the proposal narrative fails to comply with these length restrictions, BJA may negatively consider such noncompliance in peer review and in final award decisions.

The following sections must be included as part of the proposal narrative:

a. Description of the Issue
b. Project Design and Implementation
c. Capabilities and Competencies
d. Plan for Collecting the Data Required for this Solicitation’s Performance Measures
Step 4: Draft your budget very early in the process, before you make commitments. Make sure you carefully read and understand any required budget expenses detailed in the application — especially required grantee meetings. Also make sure you read carefully to understand any caps on expenses or expenses that are not allowed.

New This Year: Applicants will complete the JustGrants web-based budget form. See the OJP Grant Application Resource Guide for additional information.

Budgets and the Budget Narrative

• The budget proposed and related narrative should relate directly to the project design.
  o There should be no expenses in the budget that are not referenced in the project/proposal narrative (e.g.,
    do not ask for drug-testing supplies if you have not included drug testing as a component in your project
    description).

• Personnel costs should relate to the key personnel for the project.

• Subrecipients should be categorized as either subawards or procurement contracts and also be clearly stated
  in the project/proposal narrative. Please refer to OJP guidance on this topic:

• The budget should include adequate funding to fully implement the project, but not more than the amount listed
  in the solicitation as the available funding amount.

• The budget narrative should leave no questions for a reviewer about the purpose of the requested funds.

• The total federal request entered in the SF-424 should match the total federal request in the application budget
  for the entire project period.
Planning and Organizing Your Writing (cont.)

Step 5: Do not forget about the required attachments when you are preparing your application!

Tip: Make sure you triple check your checklist and make sure you have everything.

Additional Application Components

The Applicant will attach the additional requested documentation in JustGrants.

Tribal Authorizing Resolution

An application in response to this solicitation may require inclusion of tribal authorizing documentation as an attachment. If applicable, the applicant will submit the tribal authorizing documentation by uploading it as an attachment in JustGrants. See the OJP Grant Application Resource Guide for information on tribal authorizing resolutions.

Timeline Form

Applicants should submit as an attachment a realistic timeline or milestone chart that indicates major tasks associated with the goals and objectives of the program, assigns responsibility for each, and plots completion of each task by month or quarter for the duration of the award, using “Year 1,” “Month 1,” “Quarter 1,” etc., not calendar dates (see Sample Timelines). Applicants should submit the timeline as a separate attachment. Upon receipt of an award, the recipient may revise the timeline, based on the training and technical assistance that OJP will provide.

Research and Evaluation Independence and Integrity Statement

If an application proposes research (including research and development) and/or evaluation, the applicant must demonstrate research evaluation independence and integrity, including appropriate safeguards, before it may receive award funds. The applicant will submit documentation of its research and evaluation independence and integrity by uploading it as an attachment in JustGrants. For additional information, see the OJP Grant Application Resource Guide.

Documentation of Proposed Subrecipients
Basic Minimum Requirements

• Each solicitation identifies basic minimum requirements that an application must meet to move forward to peer review.

• The requirements will vary by solicitation, but often examples of these critical elements may include the Proposal Narrative, Timeline/Task Plan, Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative, and Applicant Disclosure of Proposed Subrecipients.

Important Note:
Applications that do not contain ALL elements designated by BJA as critical in the solicitation will not be submitted to peer review.
Before You Submit Your Application…

- Check the application checklist one last time, and make sure you did not miss anything! Please pay special attention to the critical elements.
- The checklist is typically found in the appendix of the solicitation.

Application Checklist

FY22 Office of Justice Programs Community Based Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative

This application checklist has been created as an aid in developing an application. The DOJ Application Submission Checklist is another resource.

What an Applicant Must Do:

Prior to registering in Grants.gov:

- Confirm your Entity’s System Award Management (SAM) Registration Information (see OJP Grant Application Resource Guide)

To register in Grants.gov:

- Acquire an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and a Grants.gov username and password (see OJP Grant Application Resource Guide)
- Acquire AOR confirmation from the E-Business Point of Contact (E-Biz POC) (see OJP Grant Application Resource Guide)

To find the funding opportunity:

- Search for the funding opportunity in Grants.gov using the opportunity number, Assistance Listing or keyword(s)
- Select the correct Competition ID
- Access the funding opportunity and application package (see Step 7 in the 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
Unforeseen Technical Issues

• An applicant that experiences unforeseen Grants.gov technical issues beyond its control that prevent it from submitting its application by the deadline must email the OJP Response Center at grants@ncjrs.gov before the Solicitation Closes and within 24 hours after the application deadline to request approval to submit its application after the deadline.

• For more information on reporting technical issues, refer to "How To Reply" in the OJP Grant Application Resource Guide at: https://ojp.gov/funding/Apply/Resources/Grant-App-Resource-Guide.htm
What If You Have Questions?

If you have questions about the solicitation or submitting your application:

- Attend or listen to the applicant webinar (recordings and transcripts may also be available).
- Review any solicitation FAQs or program web pages.
- Contact Grants.gov and JustGrants for technical assistance.
- Contact NCJRS with questions about other requirements using the information found in the first three pages of the solicitation.
Understanding the Peer Review Process

- Applications are typically reviewed by three expert peer reviewers who score your application against the review criteria.
- The review criteria tell you how the applications will be scored and the weight of each section.

**Helpful Tip:** Think about the scoring when you are deciding how many pages to devote to each section. A section worth 10 percent of the points should not be 10 pages of your 20-page application.

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**a. Merit Review Criteria**

Applications under Categories 1-4 that meet the basic minimum requirements will be evaluated by peer reviewers on how the proposed project/program addresses the following criteria:

1. **Statement of the Problem/Description of the Issue (20%)** - evaluate the applicant's understanding of the program/issue to be addressed.
2. **Project Design and Implementation (40%)** - evaluate the adequacy of the proposal, including the goals, objectives, timelines, milestones, and deliverables.
3. **Capabilities and Competencies (25%)** - evaluate the administrative and technical capacity of the applicant to successfully accomplish the goals and objectives.
4. **Plan for Collecting the Data Required for this Solicitation's Performance Measures (5%)** - evaluate the applicant's understanding of the performance data reporting requirements and the plan for collecting the required data.
5. **Budget (10%)** - evaluate for completeness, cost effectiveness, and allowability (e.g., reasonable, allocable, and necessary for project activities).
FY 2023 Resources for Funding Opportunities

For information on funding opportunities, publications, and initiatives, visit BJA’s website at https://www.bja.ojp.gov.

OJP Grant Applicant Resource Guide
https://ojp.gov/funding/Apply/Resources/Grant-App-Resource-Guide.htm

Office of Justice Programs – Award Data
https://ojp.gov/funding/Explore/OJPAwardData.htm

NIJ’s CrimeSolutions.gov

• Web-based clearinghouse of programs and practices that have been rated for their effectiveness in addressing different criminal justice issues.

FY 2023 Resources for Funding Opportunities

The Department of Justice Program Plan (https://www.justice.gov/dojgrantsprogramplan) is a tool to help applicants and grantees find funding opportunities (solicitations) that address their criminal, juvenile, and civil justice needs. The plan provides summary details on the funding opportunities that DOJ agencies are expecting to release in the current fiscal year.
Looking Ahead

- OJP Grants Financial Management and Grant Administration Training: [https://ojp.gov/training/fmts.htm](https://ojp.gov/training/fmts.htm)

- OJP Funding Resource Center: [https://ojp.gov/funding/index.htm](https://ojp.gov/funding/index.htm)
Stay Connected

Email Updates
• Text OJP [your email address] to 468-311 to subscribe.
  *Message and data rates may apply.

Social Media
• Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/DOJBJA
• Twitter: https://twitter.com/DOJBJA
• YouTube: www.youtube.com/dojbja

For information on funding opportunities, publications, and initiatives, visit BJA’s website – https://bja.ojp.gov
Application Assistance and Support

OJP Response Center

- Provides solicitation support and general assistance
- **email** - grants@ncjrs.gov
- **web chat** - [https://webcontact.ncjrs.gov/ncjchat/chat.jsp](https://webcontact.ncjrs.gov/ncjchat/chat.jsp)
- **toll free** at 800–851–3420
- **TTY** at 301–240–6310 (hearing impaired only)

The Response Center hours of operation are 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. eastern time, Monday through Friday

Subscribe

- Subscribe to receive email notifications of new funding opportunities and other resources
  - Sign-up to receive the twice monthly **JUSTINFO** newsletter as well as the weekly **Funding News** email
  - Subscribe at [https://www.ojp.gov/subscribe](https://www.ojp.gov/subscribe) and be sure to select “Grants/funding” as an area of interest
Questions?

Enter in the Q&A box and send to All Panelists