

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs
Bureau of Justice Statistics



FY 2020 National Criminal History Improvement Program (NCHIP) FY 2020 Competitive Grant Solicitation

CFDA # 16.554

Grants.gov Solicitation Number: BJS-2020-17632

Solicitation Release Date: February 7, 2020

Application Deadline: 11:59 p.m. eastern time on April 16, 2020

The [U.S. Department of Justice](#) (DOJ), [Office of Justice Programs](#) (OJP), [Bureau of Justice Statistics](#) (BJS) is seeking applications for funding for the fiscal year (FY) 2020 National Criminal History Improvement Program (NCHIP). This program furthers the Department's mission to reduce violent crime and address gun violence by enhancing the criminal justice capabilities of U.S. state and tribal governments by improving the accuracy, utility, and interstate accessibility of criminal history and related records in support of national records systems and their use for name- and fingerprint-based criminal history background checks. For the purpose of this solicitation, "state" includes the District of Columbia and U.S. territories.

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

Eligibility (Who may apply):

The following entities are eligible to apply:

- Agency designated by the governor in each state to administer the NCHIP (34 U.S.C. § 40301)
- Federally recognized Indian tribal governments

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

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

Contact information

For technical assistance with submitting an application, contact the Grants.gov Customer Support Hotline at 800-518-4726, 606-545-5035, at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support.html>, or at support@grants.gov. The Grants.gov Support Hotline operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, except on federal holidays.

An applicant that experiences unforeseen Grants.gov technical issues beyond its control that prevent it from submitting its application by the deadline must email BJS **within 24 hours after the application deadline** to request approval to submit its application after the deadline. Additional information on reporting technical issues appears under “Experiencing Unforeseen Grants.gov Technical Issues” in the How To Apply (Grants.gov) section in the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#).

For assistance with any other requirements of this solicitation, contact BJS at 202-307-0765, or by email at AskBJS@usdoj.gov. Include “NCHIP20” in the subject line.

Deadline details

Applicants must register with Grants.gov at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html> prior to submitting an application. All applications are due by 11:59 p.m. eastern time on April 16, 2020.

To be considered timely, an application must be submitted by the application deadline using Grants.gov, and the applicant must have received a validation message from Grants.gov that indicates successful and timely submission. OJP urges applicants to submit applications at least 72 hours prior to the application due date to allow time for the applicant to receive validation messages or rejection notifications from Grants.gov and to correct in a timely fashion any problems that may have caused a rejection notification.

An applicant must use the **Add Attachment** button to attach a file to its application. Do not click the paperclip icon to attach files. This action will not attach the files to the application. After adding an attachment, select the **View Attachment** button to confirm you attached the correct file. To remove the file, select the **Delete Attachment** button.

OJP encourages all applicants to read this [Important Notice: Applying for Grants in Grants.gov](#).

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

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FY 2020 National Criminal History Improvement Program (NCHIP)

CFDA # 16.554

A. Program Description

Overview

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) is publishing this notice to announce the continuation of the National Criminal History Improvement Program (NCHIP) in fiscal year (FY) 2020, identify the program priorities, and provide information on application requirements. This year, BJS is prioritizing the use of funds for two purposes: 1) to improve the reporting of dispositions and 2) to improve the reporting of persons prohibited from possessing firearms for reasons related to mental health to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS).

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

In the past, appropriations for the NCHIP have been made pursuant to the Crime Identification Technology Act of 1998 (34 U.S.C. § 40301), and the procedures for applying for NCHIP grants generally reflect these provisions. NCHIP was reauthorized in 2018 under Title VI of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018, P.L. 115-141.

Program-Specific Information

Goals, Objectives, and Deliverables

The objectives of this program are to:

- Provide direct financial and technical assistance to states, state courts, and tribes to improve their criminal record systems and related systems to support background checks, including NICS checks.
- Ensure the infrastructure connects criminal history records systems to the state record repository or appropriate federal agency record system, and ensure records are accessible through the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) records systems.
- Provide the training and technical assistance needed to ensure that records systems are developed and managed to conform to FBI standards and appropriate technologies,

while ensuring that contributing agencies adhere to the highest standards of practice with respect to privacy and confidentiality.

- Use systematic evaluation and standardized performance measurements and statistics to assess progress on improving national records holdings and background check systems.

The NCHIP serves as an umbrella for different record improvement activities and funding streams, each of which has unique goals and objectives. As a basic principle of this program, BJS strongly encourages states and tribes to ensure the integrated functioning of record improvement initiatives, regardless of the funding source. Also, BJS urges applicants to match or leverage the federal funds provided with other resources to the maximum extent possible.

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

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

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

FY 2020 Priority Areas—Improving Dispositions and Mental Health Submissions Accessible to NICS

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

In FY 2020, applicants must focus on improving the (1) availability of dispositions (specifically for felony crimes and for misdemeanor crimes of domestic violence) through the national system and (2) reporting records of persons prohibited from possessing firearms for mental health reasons to the NICS. Therefore, recipients of funds must agree to use a portion of awarded funds to make such dispositions and records accessible to NICS unless the state or tribe certifies in the application that it—

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

1. Priority Areas for Grant Funding

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

Allowable costs may include activities such as the following:

- Implementing or upgrading state, local, or tribal court record systems that facilitate immediate identification of disposition records, provided that the records are accessible for criminal history record inquiries at the state and national levels.
- Implementing improved criminal history information capture procedures, including complete arrest reporting and researching missing dispositions, provided that the captured data are subsequently included in relevant state and federal files.
- Capturing complete data from prosecutors and courts on domestic violence misdemeanor convictions.
- Ensuring that criminal history record information is shared with investigative service providers for national security and other purposes pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 9101.
- Ensuring that records of all criminal events, starting with an arrest or indictment, are included in background check files, through data analysis focused on the completeness of criminal history records.
- Establishing automated interfaces between the record repository and prosecutors, courts, and corrections agencies (i.e., detention, prison, jail, and community supervision), including the development of relevant information exchange package documentation based on the National Information Exchange Model (NIEM).
- Capturing data on persons convicted of abuse of children, elderly persons, and disabled persons; or stalking and domestic violence offenses (including protection orders and related violations).
- Submitting disposition information to the FBI via the III Message Key, Machine Readable Data process, or other methods of transmission accepted by the FBI.
- Reducing any backlog of missing court dispositions, provided that the dispositions are made available for criminal history inquiries at the state and national levels.
- Implementing the standardized RAP sheet format, which relies on NIEM, and assisting states in converting criminal history records to the standard interstate RAP sheet format or developing related electronic interchange capabilities.
- Converting manual or other non-automated criminal history records to electronic records.
- Establishing more effective accuracy and information quality controls, including data analysis capabilities.
- Converting juvenile records to the adult system. (Federal regulations allow the FBI to accept juvenile records if submitted by the state or local arresting agency.)
- Upgrading equipment to directly improve availability of data where appropriate, given the level of data completeness and participation in national records systems. **(The ongoing and/or maintenance costs associated**

with any such equipment are allowable only during the initial 12-month period.)

- Purchasing Livescan equipment for local agencies: (1) where the funds can be justified on the basis of geographic, population, traffic, or related factors, and (2) when the jurisdiction has established an Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) and either has implemented or is implementing procedures to ensure that the AFIS is compatible with FBI Next Generation Identification (NGI) standards. **(The ongoing and/or maintenance costs associated with any such equipment are allowable only during the initial 12-month period.)**
- Ensuring compatibility with federal record systems, such as III, and implementing integrated system strategies that interface all components of the criminal justice system, including law enforcement, prosecutors, courts, and corrections, to the extent that such expenditures improve the availability of criminal record data, at the national level. Any systems funded must be compatible with FBI standards for national data systems, such as NIBRS, NCIC, NICS, and NGI. However, NCHIP funds may not be used to support studies, analysis, design, or development of integrated systems strategies. Funds should not be used to primarily improve law enforcement investigative capabilities associated with NGI participation (e.g., latent workstations, palm print capture, facial recognition, and DNA capture).

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

Allowable costs may include activities such as the following:

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

Type of Award

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

Financial Management and System of Internal Controls

Award recipients and subrecipients (including recipients or subrecipients that are pass-through entities) must, as described in the Part 200 Uniform Requirements¹ as set out at 2 C.F.R. 200.303, comply with standards for financial and program management. See [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information.

Budget Information

Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

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

Please see the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for information on the following:

[Pre-agreement Costs \(also known as Pre-award Costs\)](#)

[Limitation on Use of Award Funds for Employee Compensation; Waiver](#)

[Prior Approval, Planning, and Reporting of Conference/Meeting/Training Costs](#)

[Costs Associated with Language Assistance \(if applicable\)](#)

C. Eligibility Information

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

1. Has the capability to contribute pertinent information to the NICS established under Section 103(b) of the Brady Act.
2. Is or will be following a comprehensive strategy for information sharing systems to improve the functioning of the criminal justice system, with an emphasis on integration of all criminal justice components, law enforcement, courts, prosecution, corrections, and probation and parole. Further, the strategy must be developed in consultation with appropriate federal, state, or local officials, with emphasis on the recommendation of officials who oversee, plan, and implement integrated information technology systems, and contain the following:

¹ The “Part 200 Uniform Requirements” means the DOJ regulation at 2 C.F.R. Part 2800, which adopts (with certain modifications) the provisions of 2 C.F.R. Part 200.

- a. Definition and an analysis of “integration” in the jurisdictions developing integrated information sharing systems.
 - b. Assessment of the criminal justice resources being devoted to information technology.
 - c. Resource needs.
 - d. Federal, state, regional, local, and tribal information technology coordination requirements.
 - e. Priorities for planning and implementation of information technology systems.
3. Coordinates the programs funded by NCHIP with other federally funded information technology programs, including directly funded local programs.
 4. Assures that the individuals who developed the grant application considered the needs of all government branches and **specifically sought the advice of the top official of the highest court of the jurisdiction, with respect to the application.**

For information on cost sharing or matching requirements, see [Section B. Federal Award Information](#).

D. Application and Submission Information

This solicitation expressly modifies the OJP Grant Application Resource Guide by not incorporating the “Disclosure of Process Related to Executive Compensation” provisions in the “Application Attachments” section of the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#).

What an Application Should Include

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

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

1. Application for Federal Assistance (Standard Form (SF)-424)

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

Intergovernmental Review: This solicitation (“funding opportunity”) is subject to [Executive Order 12372](#). An applicant may find the names and addresses of State Single Points of Contact (SPOCs) at the following website: https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Intergovernmental_-_Review_-_SPOC_01_2018_OFFM.pdf. If the applicant’s State appears on the SPOC list, the applicant must contact the State SPOC to find out about, and comply with, the State’s process under E.O. 12372. In completing the SF-424, an applicant whose State appears on the SPOC list is to make the appropriate selection in response to question 19, once the applicant has complied with its State E.O. 12372 process. (An applicant whose State does not appear on the SPOC list should answer question 19 by selecting the response that the: “Program is subject to E.O. 12372, but has not been selected by the State for review.”)

2. Project Abstract

Applications should include a 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 Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins.

3. Program Narrative

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

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

Accomplishments and progress on record improvement goals. Applicants must summarize the major accomplishments achieved with funding under NCHIP. This section should describe, in quantifiable terms if possible, results achieved and advances made in the last decade of NCHIP funding (2008-18). **Specifically address accomplishments relating to participation in each of the national databases and initiatives (i.e., III, NICS, NCIC Protection Order File, mental health records, and Livescan/AFIS capability).** Where relevant, reference surveys and data quality audits. This section should also include any evaluative efforts undertaken to identify the key areas of weakness in the state’s criminal record system since submission of previous NCHIP applications. Tribal applicants should discuss progress related to record automation and improvement funded by other federal sources that are applicable to the above areas.

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

- **Dispositions available to III (including felonies and domestic violence misdemeanor convictions).** All applicants should discuss the percentage of state records with final dispositions or case outcomes linked to arrests and available at the time of a firearm background check. Applicants should provide information on efforts to improve reporting and availability at the national level. The application should also discuss the extent to which dispositions requested in connection with a NICS inquiry have not been provided within the required time frame and must identify any problems that are delaying instant responses to NICS inquiries and identify proposed solutions to these problems.
 - ***Applicants should provide the number and percentage of arrests (felonies and misdemeanors) available in the state criminal history repository that are missing final dispositions.***
 - ***Applicants should report the percentage of arrests (felonies and misdemeanors) missing final dispositions accessible to III.***
- **NICS Indices and mental health record availability.** All applications should discuss the extent to which the applicant provides information to the FBI’s NICS Indices. Applicants that do not submit information to this file should

describe the prohibiting factors and any plans to overcome them. (Note: HIPAA is not considered to be a prohibiting factor.) Additionally, all applicants should indicate whether mental health records are checked, either by the state POC or the FBI, during a NICS check. Where mental health records are accessible, include the number of records currently available and any plans to improve availability. If mental health records are not currently accessible at the time of a background check, describe factors that limit or prohibit exchange of mental health records. States that are not currently eligible for funding under the NARIP should discuss plans, if any, to establish a relief from disabilities program and progress toward NARIP eligibility. If a state has no immediate plans to pursue development of a relief program, include a statement outlining the reasons for not pursuing one.

- **Applicants should provide the current number of submissions, by prohibitor, in the NICS Indices.** Counts for the following prohibitors should be addressed in the application: (1) felony conviction, (2) active felony indictment/information, (3) fugitive from justice, (4) controlled substance, (5) protection/restraining order, (6) MCDV, and (7) state prohibitor.
- **Protection order file.** All applicants should indicate whether they submit information for inclusion in the FBI's NCIC POF. Applicants that submit protection orders should indicate the number of active protection orders provided to the FBI. Applicants that do not submit all active protection orders to NCIC should describe the prohibiting factors and any plans to overcome them.
 - **Applicants should provide the current number of records in the NCIC protection order file and a description of any known gaps in reporting.**
- **Warrants/wanted person records.** All applicants should indicate whether they submit records for inclusion in the FBI's NCIC Wanted Persons file. Applicants that submit such records should indicate the number provided to the FBI for the last full calendar year. Applicants that do not submit such records (or do not submit all qualifying records that are maintained at the state or local level) should describe the prohibiting factors and any plans to overcome them.
 - **Applicants should provide the current number of active warrants in the NCIC Wanted Persons File and a description of any known gaps in reporting.**

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

- Describe the activities to be conducted with NCHIP funds over the project period and specifically address how activities relate to each of the NCHIP priority areas identified under “Priority areas for grant funding” on page 7.
 - **Dollar amounts should be included for each funded task.**
 - **Applicants should provide quantitative measures to assess or describe the impact each project will have on the quality, completeness, and availability of records at the national level.**
 - **Applicants should submit a detailed project period timeline covering all proposed activities.**

- **Letter from the courts.** In recognition of the importance of court reporting to the development of complete and accurate criminal records, all applications should describe tasks and indicate the level of funds that will be made directly available to the courts. Where no funds are provided for court-directed disposition reporting activities, a certification by the appropriate state or tribal court official declining participation must be included with this section.
 - ***If no funding is proposed for a court-directed disposition project, applicants should provide a letter of support from the courts as part of the application package.***

c. Capabilities and Competencies – Coordination

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

To encourage coordination and information sharing among criminal justice systems, all OJP awards that support information technology development are subject to a special condition requiring that a description of the project be submitted to the state information technology POC, if one has been designated. A copy of the correspondence can be submitted as part of Additional Attachments (see page 17) or sent directly to BJS prior to fund drawdown.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

OJP will require each successful applicant to submit regular performance data that demonstrate the results of the work carried out under the award. The performance data directly relate to the goals, objectives, and deliverables identified under “Goals, Objectives, and Deliverables” in [Section A. Program Description](#).

Applicants should visit OJP’s performance measurement page at www.ojp.gov/performance for an overview of performance measurement activities at OJP.

Performance measures for this solicitation are listed in [Appendix A: Performance Measures Table](#).

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

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

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

Note on Project Evaluations

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

Please see the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for information on the following:

4. [Budget Information and Associated Documentation](#) in the Budget Preparation and Submission Information section.
5. [Indirect Cost Rate Agreement](#)
6. [Tribal Authorizing Resolution](#) (if applicable)
7. [Financial Management and System of Internal Controls Questionnaire \(including applicant disclosure of high-risk status\)](#)
8. [Disclosure of Lobbying Activities](#)
9. [Applicant Disclosure of Pending Applications](#)

10. [Applicant Disclosure and Justification – DOJ High Risk Grantees](#)² (if applicable)

11. [Research and Evaluation Independence and Integrity](#)

12. Additional Attachments

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

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

How To Apply (Grants.gov)

Applicants must register in and submit applications through [Grants.gov](#), a primary source to find federal funding opportunities and apply for funding. Find information on how to apply in response to this solicitation in the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#).

Registration and Submission Steps

Applicants will need the following identifying information when searching for the funding opportunity on Grants.gov:

- CFDA #16.554, FY 2020 National Criminal History Improvement Program (NCHIP).
- BJS-2020-15724.

For information on each registration and submission step, see the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#).

E. Application Review Information

Review Criteria

Applicants are strongly encouraged to review the evaluation criteria BJS will use to make funding decisions, before deciding whether to submit an application for this solicitation. Applicants should understand that applications should respond to the identified priorities and that full funding may not be possible for all proposed activities. **For FY 2020 NCHIP grants, completeness of the application in terms of all required information will be a key consideration for BJS.**

² A “DOJ High Risk Grantee” is a recipient that has received a DOJ High-Risk designation based on a documented history of unsatisfactory performance, financial instability, management system or other internal control deficiencies, or noncompliance with award terms and conditions on prior awards, or that is otherwise not responsible.

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

- **Description of the Issue (30%)**
The extent to which the application—
 - includes a concise and well-organized description of progress and accomplishments of criminal history systems improvement
 - proposes to directly address one or more of the priorities as identified in the solicitation. The application should specifically address the FY 2020 Priority Areas – Improving Dispositions and Mental Health Submissions Accessible to NICS
 - addresses needs and identifies quantifiable measures to demonstrate how the funds will improve the quality, completeness, and accessibility of records at the national level, particularly with regard to the NICS.

- **Project Design and Implementation (30%)**
 - Proposed activities will result in the increased availability of records to systems queried by the NICS, including through federal and state criminal history records, the NCIC, and NICS Indices.
 - Application includes dollar amounts for each proposed project.
 - Application includes a detailed project period timeline covering all the proposed projects to demonstrate the technical feasibility of the proposed task(s) and details the specific implementation plan to achieve the intended deliverables.
 - Application clearly demonstrates court commitment to record improvement either through direct funding or a letter of support.

- **Capabilities and Competencies (25%)**
 - Evidence of applicant's progress in record quality improvement efforts as demonstrated by making relevant records available for national background checks and the reported number of records currently available in the national files.
 - The extent to which the applicant has fulfilled goals of previous NCHIP awards (or related criminal record improvement awards), including consideration of the total funds already awarded and expended funds from previous awards.
 - The applicant's commitment to the national record system as evidenced by membership in III and participation in the FBI's NFF, and the current status of development in the applicant's criminal records.

- **Plan for Collecting the Data Required for this Solicitation's Performance Measures (5%)**
 - Expressed commitment to supply key performance measures for the award period.
 - The sufficiency of the plan for collecting and reporting these performance measures.

- **Budget (10%): complete, cost effective, and allowable** (e.g., reasonable, allocable, and necessary for project activities). Budget narratives should demonstrate generally how applicants will maximize cost effectiveness of grant expenditures. Budget narratives

should demonstrate cost effectiveness in relation to potential alternatives and the goals of the project.³

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

Review Process

OJP is committed to ensuring a fair and open process for making awards. BJS reviews the application to make sure that the information presented is reasonable, understandable, measurable, achievable, and consistent with the solicitation. See the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#).

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

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

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

F. Federal Award Administration Information

Please see the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for information on the following:

[Federal Award Notices](#)

[Administrative, National Policy, and Other Legal Requirements](#)

OJP strongly encourages prospective applicants to review information on post-award legal requirements and common OJP award conditions **prior** to submitting an application.

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

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

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.

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

[Information Technology \(IT\) Security Clauses](#)

General Information about [Post-Federal Award Reporting Requirements](#)

In addition to the deliverables described in [Section A. Program Description](#), any recipient of an award under this solicitation will be required to submit certain reports and data.

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

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

G. Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s)

For OJP contact(s), see page 2.

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

H. Other Information

Please see the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for information on the following:

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

[Provide Feedback to OJP](#)

Appendix A: Performance Measures Table

Objective	Performance Measure(s)	Data Recipient Provides
<p>Improve criminal history record systems in the U.S. states and territories to support background checks for the purposes of identifying ineligible firearm purchases and persons ineligible to hold positions involving children, the elderly, or the disabled.</p>	<p>Percentage of recent state or tribal records that are automated.</p> <p>Percentage of records accessible through the III.</p> <p>Number of states and tribes submitting records to the FBI NICS Indices</p>	<p>Number of criminal history records, manual and automated, in the state's or tribe's criminal history file.</p> <p>Number of fully automated records (records for which the master name index and entire criminal history are automated) in the state's or tribe's criminal history database.</p> <p>Number of records available through the III system (including arrests linked to case outcomes).</p> <p>Number of arrests reported to the repository by mail, fax, electronic, and other means of submission; the number of these communicated by automated interface.</p> <p>Number of court dispositions reported to the repository by mail, fax, electronic, and other means of submission.</p> <p>Number of records submitted by states and tribes in the FBI NICS Indices</p>
<p>Ensure the development of the infrastructure connects each state's and tribe's records systems to national records and to connect each state's background check databases to other states.</p>	<p>Number of states and tribes participating in the FBI's NGI fingerprint capture.</p> <p>Number of states and tribes</p>	<p>Number of 10-print records submitted to the FBI's NGI.</p>

Objective	Performance Measure(s)	Data Recipient Provides
	participating in the FBI's POF. Number of states and tribes participating in the FBI's Wanted Persons File	Number of active records submitted by states and tribes to the FBI's POF. Number of active records submitted by states and tribes to the FBI's Wanted Persons File.

Appendix B: Application Checklist

FY 2020 National Criminal History Improvement Program (NCHIP)

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

What an Applicant Should Do:

Prior to Registering in Grants.gov:

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

To Register with Grants.gov:

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

To Find Funding Opportunity:

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

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 [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))

If No Grants.gov Receipt, and Validation or Error Notifications are Received:

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

Overview of Post-Award Legal Requirements:

- Review the [Overview of Legal Requirements Generally Applicable to OJP Grants and Cooperative Agreements - FY 2020 Awards](#) in the [OJP Funding Resource Center](#).

Scope Requirement:

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

Eligibility Requirement:

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

What an Application Should Include:

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

- Program Narrative (see page 11)
 - Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
 - Intergovernmental Review (see page 10)
 - Project Abstract (see page 11)
 - Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable) (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
 - Tribal Authorizing Resolution (if applicable) (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
 - Financial Management and System of Internal Controls Questionnaire (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
 - [Disclosure of Lobbying Activities \(SF-LLL\)](#) (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
 - Applicant Disclosure of Pending Applications (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
 - Applicant Disclosure and Justification – DOJ High Risk Grantees (if applicable) (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
 - Research and Evaluation Independence and Integrity (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))

Additional Attachments

- Request and Justification for Employee Compensation; Waiver (if applicable)
(see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- Letter from the Courts (see page 13)
- Letter to the State Information Technology POC (see page 15)
- Project Period Timeline (see page 12)