

DARYL FOX: Good afternoon everyone, and welcome to today's webinar, "FY 2024 Field Initiated: Encouraging Innovation Solicitation Webinar," hosted by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. At this time, it's my pleasure to introduce Tenzing Lahdon, senior policy advisor with BJA, to begin the presentation. Tenzing?

TENZING LAHDON: Thanks, Daryl. And welcome everyone and thank you for joining us today. As Daryl mentioned, my name is Tenzing Lahdon, I am senior policy advisor with Bureau of Justice Assistance in the Office of Justice Programs, part of U.S. Department of Justice. This is very interesting and exciting solicitation, and we are really looking forward to new and innovative ideas from the field. So today, I'm going to go through a lot of information during this presentation and I'll be highlighting some of the most important aspects of the solicitation. And as Daryl mentioned, this presentation will be made available to everyone after the webinar for reference and will also include the PowerPoint slide deck.

In terms of our agenda for today, we will do a brief overview of OJP and BJA, followed by an overview of the solicitation. We will talk about the eligibility and application requirements as well as the resources and support that are available to you, and then we will save 10 to 15 minutes at the end for any questions that you may have for us today. And if you have any questions, please feel free to use the Q&A function at any time during this presentation. Next slide.

So just a quick information about our office. So what is Office of Justice Programs? Office of Justice Programs provides grant funding, training, research, and statistics for our criminal justice community. OJP is one of the three grant-making offices within Department of Justice, along with the COPS Office and the Office on Violence Against Women. Within the Office of Justice Programs, there are six bureaus or program offices that administer various OJP grant programs.

So we have the National Institute of Justice, which is our research and development and evaluation agency within DOJ. Office for Victims of Crime, which supports a broad array of programs and services that are really focused on helping victims. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, which supports state, local, and communities in their effort to implement effective programs for children. Bureau of Justice Statistics, which is our primary statistical agency for Department of Justice. And SMART Office, which provides jurisdictions with guidance regarding implementation of the Adam Walsh Act. And lastly the Bureau of Justice Assistance, and I'll go over this in the next slide.

The Bureau of Justice Assistance was created in 1984 to reduce violent crimes, create safer communities, and reform our nation's criminal justice system. BJA strengthens the nation's criminal justice system and helps America's state, local, and tribal jurisdictions reduce and prevent crime, reduce recidivism, and promote fair and safe criminal justice system. Our director, Karhlton Moore, leads the programmatic and the 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.

So how does BJA support the field? We do it in three ways. First, being our investments. We put solicitations to support the field as well as the goals and mission of BJA. Sharing knowledge: BJA supports a number of research projects that support the field in terms of identifying what are the best practices. We equip the field with tools and resources needed, based on changing times and trends, to build capacity and improve outcome. And lastly, partnering, consulting, connecting, and convening with our partners in the field. And collectively, through our investments, research, engagement, we are working to create a stronger program that will impact communities and help you do the work that you do. Next slide.

So, we have our first and only poll question here today. So feel free to respond to this poll. And the question is, "Has your organization been awarded federal grants in the past?" And the options are, "Yes, my organization has extensive experience with federal grants;" "Yes, though my organization does not currently have federal grants;" or "My organization has limited experience with federal grants;" and lastly, "My organization is new to federal grants and is looking to learn more." So I'll just give you all a few more seconds to respond to this poll. And Daryl, maybe in next five, six seconds, you can close the poll.

All right. It looks like pretty evenly spread. It seems like a lot more people have had federal grants in the past, so that's a good thing. So we have some experienced folks here on the webinar today. And thank you everyone for participating in the poll. It will help me gauge the level of experience and comfort you all have with the federal grant process. And at the tail end of this webinar, I will provide you with links and resources that provides a step-by-step guidance on how to apply for OJP or BJA grants. Next.

For the Field Initiated Encouraging Innovation solicitation, we are looking to support new and innovative strategies for preventing and reducing crime, improving community safety, and strengthening criminal justice system outcomes by collaborating with the field to identify, define, and respond to either emerging or chronic problems and

systemic issues. We are looking for strategies to address those issues, including trying new approaches, addressing gaps, and building and translating research knowledge, or building capacity. The applications under this program should not duplicate other BJA-funded solicitations. So we are really looking for things that cannot be funded through other existing funding sources or are not likely to be funded under BJA, other solicitations, and, more importantly, the proposal should have potential to broadly benefit the field of criminal justice nationally. Next slide.

There are a few areas of interest or focus areas that I want to highlight, but you are not limited to these topic areas. These are just few that are of interest to us. So first is develop innovative, fair, and equitable responses to combat and respond to precipitous increases in crime or types of crime—such as homicides, assaults, hate crime—at state, local, tribal, regional, or national level by enhancing the capacity to track, identify, and respond quickly to these crime issues.

Next is address and support law enforcement and criminal justice agencies in building trust and legitimacy with communities, ensure the capable criminal justice workforce to address crime and public health challenges, study and develop approaches to enhance recruitment, retention, and wellness of personnel in criminal justice system, as well as first responders and community-based agencies.

And lastly on this slide is to develop new strategies—like restorative justice programs, diversion programs, and other community-driven efforts—to prevent unnecessary involvement in the criminal justice system and improve outcomes for those who are already involved. And this may include efforts to expand access to services for individuals in crisis.

There are three more areas. The first one here is accelerate justice through creation of approaches and tools that build the capacity to gather and analyze data and information to understand key decision points and leverage for change to strengthen safety while reducing unnecessary incarceration, community correctional control, and racial disparities, such as through effective pre-trial processes and sentencing practices that prevent over-incarceration and collateral consequences.

Next is explore innovative approaches that use technology and artificial intelligence to both enhance practices and investigations and prosecutions while safeguarding privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties as well as manage the increasing complexity of crimes related to these tools.

Lastly, through the Category 3, we are seeking innovative ideas to address recent increase in carjacking incidents or implement strategies to advance or enhance public knowledge. This may include providing necessary services and interventions to help disrupt the cycle of youth and young adults' involvement in criminal activities like carjacking. And lastly, I will say that there might be other topics that are not listed here. So we want to hear ideas from the field that reflect the most recent emerging issues and creative solutions to new and long-term challenges. Next.

So, the goal of the solicitation is to identify, define, and respond to emerging or chronic crime problems or criminal justice system challenges by supporting new and innovative strategies that address these issues through new, innovative approaches. And I know I'm saying "innovative" a lot, but in a couple of slides, we will be defining what we mean by innovative. So, next slide.

Objectives are listed on page 10 of the solicitation, so I'm not going to read this slide. However, the takeaway from this slide is that the proposal should propose new and innovative strategies that can be replicated by the field, enhance capacity of criminal justice professionals and communities by developing and providing tools and resources to the field. Next slide.

So what is innovative? How do we define it? So BJA is looking at the field to be innovative and forward-thinking, and applicants should propose a strategy or a response that has not been implemented previously yet is supported by research, data, theory, and evidence. Or should propose a new modification to existing strategy or response that has not been implemented previously yet but is supported by research, data, theory, and evidence. Or, if you are proposing a new approach to delivering existing evidence-based strategies or responses that have not been implemented previously and have potential to reduce cost, increase efficiencies while maintaining effectiveness, including organizational developments and changes that may enhance effectiveness or long-term sustainability of existing strategies or responses. And finally, an approach that seeks to update current knowledge and practices in a particular area of need. And more information on this and more detailed information is available on page nine of the solicitation. Next.

So, there are three categories, and we will go over these categories in a little more detail in the next couple of slides. And for an overview, under Category 1, we are expecting to make three awards for up \$1 million each. For Category 2, we are expecting to make three awards for \$1 million each. And under Category 3, we are expecting to make up to five awards for \$1 million each. The start date for all of these

three categories will be October 1st, 2024, and the performance period will be 36 months for this award. Next.

In terms of eligibility under Category 1, you can see the following applicants are eligible to apply: city, township governments; county government; state government; Native American tribal government that are federally recognized; and other units of local government; nonprofits that have 501(c)(3) status with IRS and those who do not have 501(c)(3) status, other than institution of higher education; public- and state-controlled institution of higher education; private institution of higher education; for-profit organizations; small businesses; and lastly, public housing authorities and Indian housing authorities. Next slide.

Category 1 focuses on testing strategies or a theory of change at state, local, and tribal level. Formal partnership with a research organization is required for the project. Research partner will assist in development, assessment, and/or evaluation activities as well as development of tools to support the replication. And an important note here as well, while you're required to have a research partner, no more than 20 percent of the total budget may be used to support research and/or evaluation services. Next.

For Category 2, eligible applicants are public- and state-controlled institutions of higher education, public housing authorities, and American Indian housing authorities, nonprofit having 501(c)(3) status, nonprofits that don't have 501(c)(3) status, private institutions of higher education, for-profit organizations other than small businesses, and small businesses. And the eligibility criteria for all three categories are listed on page four and five of the solicitation. Next slide.

Category 2 focuses on national and regional strategies, so applicants here would need to develop targeted national or regional strategies to advance or translate knowledge that will make an impact in addressing the critical need and gap in the field. Regional projects must propose a model that is specific to regional need or could be effectively implemented regionally and replicated elsewhere. Applicants are required to work with a research partner to document implementation and develop tools to support further replication or implementation in the field. Lastly, no more than 50 percent of the total budget may be used to support research and/or evaluation services. Next.

For Category 3, eligible applicants are city or township governments, county government, state government, Native American tribal government that are federally recognized, and other units of local government; nonprofits that have 501(c)(3) status with the IRS and those who do not have 501(c)(3) status, other than institutions of higher education; public- and state-controlled institutions of higher education; private

institutions of higher education; for-profit organizations; small businesses; and public housing authorities and Indian housing authorities.

Category 3 focuses on addressing the recent increase in carjacking incidents. Under this category, you can propose to use methods outlined in Category 1, which is testing an innovative strategy or theory of change at state, local, and tribal level, or Category 2, which is developing targeted national or regional strategies to advance or translate knowledge that will make an impact in addressing critical needs or gaps in the field. So the scope can be state, local, tribal, regional, or national. BJA will prioritize applications that propose to test innovative intervention strategies designed to reduce overall number of carjacking incidents and disrupt the cycle of youth and young adult violence while supporting youth and young adults charged with carjacking offenses. Formal partnership with a research organization is required for this project. A research partner will assist in development, assessment, and/or evaluation activities as well as development of tools to support the replication. No more than 20 percent of the total budget may be used to support research or evaluation services. And you can find detailed list of deliverables for each of these categories on page 22 and 23 of the solicitation.

So, what an application should include. There are many pieces, such as SF-424 form and Proposal Abstract, Narrative, Budget Worksheet, Indirect Cost Rate, et cetera. I will highly encourage you to use the application checklist that's on page 31 of the solicitation to help guide you through the application submission process and to make sure that you are not missing any of those required pieces in your application, as well as, there is a section, "How To Apply," on page 13 of the solicitation, so you might want to have a look there as well. But the most important thing, applications are screened to ensure they meet the Basic Minimum Requirements prior to application going for the external peer review. These are making sure you are meeting eligibility requirements for each of the categories, clearly specifying which category you are applying for, and it should not exceed the allowable dollar amount for funding. And you must include a Proposal Abstract, Program Narrative, Budget Detail Worksheet, and your Time Task Plan.

The Abstract should not be more than 400 words summarizing the proposed project. It needs to include applicant's name, category for which the applicant is applying, total funding requested, goals and objectives, your project partners, et cetera. And there's more detail on it on page 16 and 17 of the solicitation.

The Program Narrative must include four sections, and these sections will be rated in the scoring of your application. So the first is the Statement of Problem, or Description

of the Issue, which evaluates applicant's understanding of the focus area, gaps in the field, and issues to be addressed.

Next is the Project Design and Implementation, which evaluates the efficacy of proposal, including goals, objectives, timeline, milestone, deliverables. Capabilities and Competencies evaluates the administrative and technical capacity of the applicant to successfully accomplish goals and objectives. Plan for Collecting Data Required according to the solicitation will evaluate the applicant's understanding of performance data, reporting requirements, and plan for collecting the required data.

The Proposal Narrative should not exceed 15 pages and should be submitted as an attachment. An important thing to note here is the weight of each of these sections. So here, the big chunk of points are allocated to Program Design and Implementation and Capabilities and Competencies—I think they are 35 percent and 30 percent. So weighted scores for each of these sections are noted on page 27 of the solicitation, so you might want to look at that. Lastly, the budget and the budget worksheet, where the peer reviewers will be evaluating for completeness, cost-effectiveness, and allowability. For example, whether the expenditures that is listed in the budget line item is reasonable, whether there is something that is allocable to the award. Lastly, whether that expenditure is necessary for the project activity. Next slide.

Other additional items: We have Timeline, which should be for full 36 months; it should outline goals and objectives and summarize major activities; resumes for all grant-funded positions for your project partners; Letter of Support or MOU; Disclosure of Pending Applications; Research and Evaluation disclosure; Indirect Cost Rate; and other things. They are all listed on the checklist as well. Next slide.

We urge all the applicants to submit their application in Grants.gov and JustGrants submission prior to the due date to allow for sufficient time to correct any errors, and then resubmit by the submission deadline. It's really important to do it ahead because you never know when the system stops or you have internet issues and things like that. So please remember, there are dual deadlines. Step one is to submit SF-424 and SF-LLL forms in Grants.gov by the deadline of August 9th, 8:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. Step two is to submit the full application in JustGrants by the deadline of August 16th, 8:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. Next slide.

So, OJP Grant Application Resource Guide, that's here, provides you guidance in preparing and submitting the application for OJP funding and goes through step-by-step process on how to submit an application. So if you are new to federal grant application process, this would be the place you want to go and look at. Next slide.

And then, we have the JustGrants learning system. So you are moving forward with submitting your application through JustGrants, here again our biggest resources that can support you in submitting your application through JustGrants.

So, when you are looking to submit your application, again, we are at step one to the left where it says Grants.gov. This is pretty much to provide you with technical support in submitting both SF-424 and SF-LLL. You have the Customer Support Hotline here as well. So again, if you're having any technical issue with submission in Grants.gov, this is where you would go to be able to get assistance. And also to your right, you have JustGrants technical support, same information, Customer Support Hotline with that email information as well as variety of resources. And this information is also included on page 5 of your solicitation. And one thing I will say that is if you are having any issue, please email or call the—if SF-424 form or SF-LLL form is not pulling up, please call the Customer Hotline and/or email support@grants.gov, because we had a few solicitations then were closing and then folks were having technical issue. But making sure it's recorded so we know, if there is any glitch or things like that, that your application can go to the next step and we can resolve that issue. But please make sure you're notifying us before the deadline, because if it gets to 9:00 Eastern Standard Time on August 6th, there's not much we can do because you have already passed the deadline. Trying to do things ahead, in at least for Grants.gov, at least try to go a day ahead of the deadline and submit the two forms. And if you're having any issue, reach out to customer helpdesk. Next slide.

And here, what you see on the screen are some different ways to connect with us. Subscribing will ensure that you're getting information latest, open solicitations, programs, and other support as soon as they are available. And you can text OJP in your email address to subscribe for email updates. Next.

Here are other ways to stay connected with us. We have Facebook, Twitter, YouTube. So definitely feel free to stay connected to what we are doing at BJA. We are doing some great things and many different programming. So feel free to visit those sites.

And if you have any questions about solicitation or solicitation requirements or programming or, you know, reporting requirements or any deliverables or any pieces, please contact the OJP Response Center at this email address or you can call us at the number that's listed here. So if we don't get through all the questions today, then that would be the email address and the phone number to call and we will be able to respond to you all your questions. And I would say like, just going back to the Grants.gov and JustGrants, like, helpdesk, if you email me, I might miss it. So, please

reach out to the helpdesk or like OJP response desk. That's the process we need to follow to make sure you are getting help within the timeframe to avoid any delays. And that's the process that if you are having issues with Grants.gov, you call their helpdesk. If you're having issues with JustGrants, you reach out right away. And for any questions about solicitation or programming or application in general, you can email OJP Response Center.

Again, important contact information for Grants.gov and JustGrants as well as OJP Response Center. This is just reminding you all again about two-step process. First step is submission of SF-424 and SF-LLL in Grants.gov by August 9, 8:59 p.m. Eastern. The second step is full submission of your application in JustGrants by the deadline of August 16, 8:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. And here's the contact information again for Grants.gov, JustGrants, as well as OJP Response Center. So I think now we are at the place where we can look at some of the questions that came in.

So, the question here is, "How do you define national project scope? Could that be scattered sites of implementation in different parts of the country?" Yeah, I think under Category 2, it talks about regional and national in scope, so I think it would fall under. So if you have a program model you are trying to implement that new idea or project in different states or East Coast in different states or in different... that would be considered, that will fall under Category 2. The other question is around research.

The question is, "In Category 2, applicants are required to work with research partners to document the implementation and develop tools to support further implementation in the field. Our organization has an internal research department. Can they act as a research partner or does it have to be a partner that operates separately or externally from organization that is applying?" I think that's a good question. So the response is yes and no. I can explain that. So, I would say if you have a research unit or department that is separate within the same, say, university—this is just an example—but they're independent and maintain... and can demonstrate independence and integrity between the two different units or department, then it's okay. But you would need to... there is also a research integrity questionnaire, so it depends on how you respond to that. But it can be okay as long as there is independence and separation that's there.

"So with October 1st performance period start date, when do you anticipate making the award announcements?" Our hope and goal is to make all the awards announcements by 1st or 2nd week of October. So, the project period start date is, you know, October 1st, but it takes time because usually in grant processes, once you are awarded, your budget goes to review process and it takes like some time. So, it's usually okay with October 1st as the project period start date given there are few things that need to be

cleared. So, all that to say, we anticipate that we will be making award announcements in early October, 1st or 2nd week of October.

And yes, this presentation, as Daryl said, we have been recording and there will be PowerPoints and recording of this webinar will be made available to all the folks who are just in for this webinar.

"Can you provide specific details on expected extent and nature of collaboration with research partners for Category 2 applicants? What roles and responsibilities should research partner assume and how should their involvement be structured throughout the duration of the project?" For Category 2—and also, I think, Category 1—research in general for this field-initiated solicitation, they play a very critical role because our intent with this solicitation is we test out new strategies, new models, new ideas. And pilot them and see how they work, and researchers play a critical role in documenting what the process was so down the road, the same model, if it's successful, can be replicated in other places—so ensuring the fidelity to the model. So there's a process that's written out that someone is doing assessment, collecting data, what that process looks like. So, I think our main intent with field-initiated solicitation is replication and for field to learn and replicate successful program models, and one way to do it, and the way to do it, would be have a strong research partner that are able to document the process and procedures that other can follow if and when the field is interested in implementing the proposed ideas.

"Can the period of performance be less than 36 months?" I might need more information on why, like, on that question. So, Sonya, we are expecting... usually once you get the award, there are processes and steps, and budget clearance takes time, getting partners onboarded it takes time. So, testing of a new idea or program model takes time. So we give 36 months to make sure, like, there is a time for planning, strategic planning, there's a timeframe for implementation, and then there's a time for assessment and review and evaluation piece. So, I am not sure, but we can entertain less than 36 months timeframe depending on what the project is, what the merit of the proposed strategies are.

"Regarding definition of innovative, does that mean the approach we are studying must be brand new?" The approach does not necessarily need to be brand new. It can be a modification, expansion of existing ideas or strategy. Yeah.

The question is, "What constitutes a research organization?" I think in the solicitation, there is... We have not defined that, but I know in the solicitation, for assistance on research partnership, there is a link there for Center for Research Partnerships and

Program Evaluation. But we have not defined who, what, that aspects of research—what would constitute as a research organization.

I'm not sure. There's a question around incentives for veterans and minority-owned small businesses. There is a priority consideration, I believe... There is a priority consideration in the application, and I'm trying to... So there is a priority consideration that's given to—and it's listed on... sorry. I'm trying to find where it's listed. It's listed on page 11 of the solicitation. There are two priority areas, one of them is related to minority and underserved communities and organizations, so you might want to look at that piece.

So, the question is around how many total recipients. So, just reiterating, under Category 3, we are planning to make up to three awards. Under Category 2, we are planning to make three awards. And then under Category 3, we are planning to make five awards.

The question is, "If you are a small organization, is there any special requirements needed to be eligible if this is your first time?" There is no special requirements. I would say, if you are applying for first time or if you are a small organization, I would say submit your SF-424 and SF-LLL as soon as possible, because sometimes there are some requirements to enter, they ask for some [UEI] code. Sometimes you need to create those ones. And you want to give yourself enough time to make sure you have all the things that are needed to submit those two forms. And sometimes smaller organizations or newer entities do not have those codes. I think they're called [UEI] or sometimes, I think, in the past, DUNS number was used too. So, I would encourage you to submit as soon as possible. Yeah, no special requirement if you are a smaller organization.

I think as I've mentioned, we have not outlined any special requirements for the research partner.

"I'm not sure if our needs fit this grant, but does the development and implementation of new application and adoption of new hardware to discover opioid and other substances making their way into [INDISTINCT] interfering?" I would encourage folks to apply if... I was reading this question around opioid. And so, I think I would say there are areas of focus that we have outlined. So, if you look at those ones and if your project fits within those, that would be great. If you have unique idea or something that's not listed there, so I would encourage you to apply as well.

The question about innovation: "If we have an assessment protocol that we would like to seek funding to do an app for to increase law enforcement efficient use of tool, would that be considered new modification of the tool?" I think I would need for that question around law enforcement, a tool and the app question, I would just need a little more information. It's hard for me to say what aspect of it is already there and with new modification, how much of that. And then also around, would this app be available to public or law enforcement? So, there are a lot of questions, but I would encourage folks to send your questions, so I'll have more time to look at these questions in detail and get back to you at OJP Response Center email address.

So, the question is, "Is solicitation prioritizing community-based agencies as opposed to institutional corrections and prison?" This solicitation is focused on coming up with new, innovative ideas to address systemic issues, reducing crime, and I would say around preventing and reducing crimes, around community safety. I think we really want community to be part of solution. So I would say, yeah. We want communities to be part of like problem-solving process. And so, I would not say we are prioritizing... It depends. This solicitation is unlike any other solicitation. We are looking for new, innovative ideas.

I think, Daryl, I think I have addressed most of the questions here. So I'll pass it to you, Daryl. I think I responded to almost all the questions. For folks who I might have missed the questions, please, please do send those questions to OJP Response Center. And we will try to respond to those questions as soon as you send those in to us, we will respond to those questions.

I do want to thank every one of you today for joining us, and Daryl for helping us with this webinar. Once again, if you have any questions, if we didn't get to any of those questions that you asked, if I missed anything, please do email us at OJP Response Center at grants@ncjrs.gov. Go ahead.

DARYL FOX: No, that's it. Thanks so much, Tenzing. And just a reminder that the PowerPoint, recording, and transcript for today will be sent out to the registration list, so you'll be able to reference this as you begin to look and prepare applications for submission. So with that, on behalf of the Bureau of Justice Assistance and our panelists, we want to thank you for joining today's webinar. This will end today's presentation.