



The [U.S. Department of Justice](#) (DOJ), [Office of Justice Programs](#) (OJP), [Bureau of Justice Statistics](#) (BJS) is seeking applications for funding under the 2013 National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) Act Record Improvement Program (NARIP). NARIP implements the grant provisions of the NICS Improvement Amendments Act of 2007 (Pub. L. No. 110-180 (codified at 18 U.S.C. § 922 note)) enacted on January 8, 2008. The program furthers the Department's mission by improving the records available to NICS. This is accomplished by helping eligible states and tribes to improve the completeness, automation and transmittal of records to state and federal systems. For the purpose of this solicitation, the term "state" includes the District of Columbia and U.S. territories.

FY 2013 NICS Act Record Improvement Program (NARIP)

Eligibility

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

BJS may elect to make awards for applications submitted under this solicitation in future fiscal years, dependent on the merit of the applications and on the availability of appropriations.

Deadline

Applicants must register with [Grants.gov](#) prior to submitting an application. (See "How to Apply," page 22.) All applications are due by 11:59 p.m. eastern time on Monday, May 13, 2013. (See "Deadlines: Registration and Application," page 4.)

Contact Information

For technical assistance with submitting an application, contact the Grants.gov Customer Support Hotline at 800-518-4726, 606-545-5035, or via e-mail to support@grants.gov.

Note: The [Grants.gov](#) Support Hotline hours of operation are 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, except federal holidays.

For assistance with any other requirements of this solicitation, contact Devon B. Adams, Chief, Criminal Justice Data Improvement Program, by telephone at 202-307-0765 or by e-mail at askbjs@usdoj.gov. Include "2013NARIP" in the subject line.

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FY 2013 NICS Act Record Improvement Program (NARIP) (CFDA # 16.813)

Overview

BJS is publishing this notice to announce the continuation of the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) Act Record Improvement Program (NARIP) in Fiscal Year (FY) 2013, identify the program priorities, and provide information on application requirements.

Program goals

The NICS Improvement Amendments Act of 2007, Pub. L. No. 110-180 (“the NIAA”) was signed into law on January 8, 2008. The NIAA amends the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act of 1993 (“the Brady Act”) (Pub. L. No. 103-159), under which the Attorney General established NICS. Among other things, the Brady Act requires Federal Firearms Licensees (FFLs) to contact the NICS before transferring a firearm to an unlicensed person to obtain information on whether the proposed transferee is prohibited from receiving or possessing a firearm under state or federal law.

The NIAA was enacted in the wake of the April 2007 shooting tragedy at Virginia Tech. The Virginia Tech shooter was able to purchase firearms from an FFL because information about his prohibiting mental health history was not available to the NICS, and the system was therefore unable to deny the transfer of the firearms used in the shootings. The NIAA seeks to address the gap in information available to NICS about such prohibiting mental health adjudications and commitments and other prohibiting factors. Filling these information gaps will better enable the system to operate as intended to keep guns out of the hands of persons prohibited by federal or state law from receiving or possessing firearms. The automation of records will also reduce delays for law-abiding gun purchasers.

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

Deadlines: Registration and Application

Applicants must register with Grants.gov in order to submit an application. OJP encourages applicants to **register several weeks before** the application submission deadline. In addition, OJP urges applicants to submit applications 72 hours prior to the application due date. The deadline to apply for funding under this announcement is 11:59 p.m. eastern time on Monday, May 13, 2013. See “How to Apply” on page 22 for details.

Eligibility

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

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

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

1. First, "each State shall provide the Attorney General with a reasonable estimate, as calculated by a method determined by the Attorney General... of the number of the records" subject to the NIAA completeness requirements. (*Id.*) The last round of estimates were collected in 2011. Applicants under this solicitation should confirm with BJS whether this eligibility criteria has been met.
2. Second, "to be eligible for a grant under this [program], a State shall certify, to the satisfaction of the Attorney General, that the State has implemented a relief from disabilities program." (*Id.*) For the purpose of this solicitation, a "relief from disabilities program" is a program that permits persons who have been adjudicated a mental defective or committed to a mental institution to obtain relief from the firearms disabilities imposed by law as a result of such adjudication or commitment. This relief must be based on a finding, in accordance with principles of due process, by a state court, board, commission, or other lawful authority, that the circumstances of the disability and the person's record and reputation are such that the person will not be likely to act in a manner dangerous to the public safety and that the granting of relief would not be contrary to the public interest. The certification form is available on the ATF website at www.atf.gov/forms/download/atf-f-3210-12.pdf. For further information, please visit NICS Improvement Act Questions and Answers on the BJS website at www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=tp&tid=49#g_and_a.

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

(See "Additional Attachments" on page 17)

Program-Specific Information

Authorizing legislation

Pursuant to 42 USC § 3732(c), BJS is authorized to, "provide for improvements in the accuracy, quality, timeliness, immediate accessibility, and integration of State criminal history and related records, support the development and enhancement of national systems of criminal history and related records including the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, the National Incident-Based Reporting System, and the records of the National Crime Information Center, facilitate State participation in national records and information systems, and support statistical research for critical analysis of the improvement and utilization of criminal history records."

NCHIP and the NICS Act Record Improvement Program (NARIP) are one means by which BJS provides for such improvements.

The NARIP is authorized by the NICS Improvement Amendments Act of 2007 (Pub. L. No. 110-180), enacted on January 8, 2008. Among other things, the Act provides that the grants are to be made in a manner consistent with BJS's NCHIP Program. Therefore, NARIP application procedures parallel the provisions of the Crime Identification Technology Act of 1998 that guide NCHIP and implement the requirements of—

- The Crime Identification Technology Act of 1998 (CITA), Pub. L. No. 105-251, 112 Stat.1871 (1998), codified at 42 USC Section 14601 et seq.;
- The Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act (Brady Act), Pub. L. No. 103-159, 107 Stat.1536 (1993), codified as amended at 18 U.S.C. Section 921 et seq.;
- The National Child Protection Act of 1993 (NCPA), Pub. L. No. 103-209, 107 Stat. 2490 (1993), codified as amended at 42 U.S.C. Sections 3759, 5101 note, 5119, 5119a, 5119b, 5119c;
- Those provisions of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (Omnibus Act), Pub. L. No. 90-351, 82 Stat. 197 (1968), codified as amended at 42 U.S.C. Section 3711 et seq., as amended; and the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (Violent Crime Control Act), Pub. L. No.103-322, 108 Stat. 1796 (1994), which pertain to the establishment, maintenance, analysis, or use of criminal history records and criminal record systems;
- Relevant requirements of the Jacob Wetterling Crimes Against Children and Sexually Violent Offender Registration Act, Pub. L. No. 103-322, 108 Stat. 2038, Megan's Law, Pub. L. No. 104-145, 110 Stat. 1345, and the Pam Lychner Sexual Offender Tracking and Identification Act of 1996, Pub. L. No. 104-236, 110 Stat. 3093; and Title 1 of the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006, Pub. L. No.109-248; and
- The Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000, Pub. L. No. 106-386, 114 Stat. 1464 (2000) and related laws pertaining to the identification, collection, analysis and interstate exchange of records relating to domestic violence and stalking (including protection orders).

Record Completeness Goals and Incentives

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

- First, the Act allows states to obtain a waiver, beginning in 2011, of the state matching

requirement under the NCHIP grant program, if a state provides at least 90 percent of its records identifying persons in specified prohibited categories;

- Second, the Act authorizes grant programs described herein, which, pursuant to the Act, are being administered consistent with NCHIP, for state executive and judicial agencies to establish and upgrade information automation and identification technologies for timely submission of final criminal record dispositions and other information relevant to NICS checks; and
- Finally, the Act provides for discretionary and mandatory Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) program funding penalties, unless the penalties are waived by the Attorney General for good cause. The penalties are specified in relation to meeting record completeness requirements and the time lapsed from January 8, 2008, when NIAA was enacted. As of January 2011, 3 percent could be withheld if records were less than 50 percent complete. In 2013, 4 percent may be withheld if records are less than 70 percent complete. In 2018, 5 percent shall be withheld if the records are less than 90 percent complete, unless the Attorney General waives the penalty upon a finding that a State is making a reasonable effort to comply with the NIAA.

Program goals

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

FY 2013 Priority Area – Improve Reporting of Mental Health Information to NICS

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

- (1) already submits to NICS information on all persons prohibited from possessing firearms for mental health reasons; or
- (2) will focus funds on another category of qualifying NICS records that the state reasonably argues represents a greater information gap; or
- (3) is prohibited by law from sharing information with NICS on persons prohibited for mental health reasons (with citations to the relevant law).

State Grants

Section 103 of the NIAA provides that the grants "shall be used by the States and Indian tribal governments, in conjunction with units of local government and State and local courts, to

establish or upgrade information and identification technologies for firearms eligibility determinations."

In accordance with the Act, a grant to a state, territory or Indian tribe may only be used to—

- supply accurate and timely information to the Attorney General concerning the identity of persons who have a federally prohibiting mental health adjudication or commitment;
- create electronic systems that provide accurate and up-to-date information directly related to checks under the NICS, including court disposition and corrections records;
- assist states in establishing or enhancing their own capacities to perform NICS background checks;
- supply accurate and timely information to the Attorney General concerning final dispositions of criminal records to databases accessed by NICS;
- supply accurate and timely court orders and records of misdemeanor crimes of domestic violence for inclusion in federal and state law enforcement databases used to conduct NICS background checks;
- collect and analyze data needed to demonstrate levels of state compliance with the NIAA; and
- maintain the required relief from disabilities program in accordance with the NIAA (however, by statute not less than 3 percent and no more than 10 percent of each grant shall be used for this purpose).

State Court Grants

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

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

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

Amount and Length of Awards

All awards are subject to the availability of appropriated funds and to any modifications or additional requirements that may be imposed by law.

FY 2013 NARIP awards will be made for up to 12 months. Funded activities may begin on or after October 1, 2013. All activities must be scheduled to be completed by September 30, 2014.

Budget Information

Limitation on Use of Award Funds for Employee Compensation; Waiver

With respect to any award of more than \$250,000 made under this solicitation, recipients may not use federal funds to pay total cash compensation (salary plus cash bonuses) to any employee of the award recipient at a rate that exceeds 110% of the maximum annual salary payable to a member of the Federal Government's Senior Executive Service (SES) at an agency with a Certified SES Performance Appraisal System for that year. The 2012 salary table for SES employees is available at www.opm.gov/oca/12tables/indexSES.asp. Note: A recipient may compensate an employee at a greater rate, provided the amount in excess of this compensation limitation is paid with non-federal funds. (Any such additional compensation will not be considered matching funds where match requirements apply.)

The Director of the Bureau of Justice Statistics may exercise discretion to waive, on an individual basis, the limitation on compensation rates allowable under an award. An applicant requesting a waiver should include a detailed justification in the budget narrative of the application. Unless the applicant submits a waiver request and justification with the application, the applicant should anticipate that OJP will request the applicant to adjust and resubmit the budget.

The justification should include the particular qualifications and expertise of the individual, the uniqueness of the service the individual will provide, the individual's specific knowledge of the program or project being undertaken with award funds, and a statement explaining that the individual's salary is commensurate with the regular and customary rate for an individual with his/her qualifications and expertise, and for the work to be done.

Minimization of Conference Costs

OJP encourages applicants to review the OJP guidance on conference approval, planning, and reporting that is available on the OJP Web site at www.ojp.gov/funding/confcost.htm. This guidance sets out the current OJP policy, which requires all funding recipients that propose to hold or sponsor conferences (including meetings, trainings, and other similar events) to minimize costs, requires OJP review and prior written approval of most conference costs for cooperative agreement recipients (and certain costs for grant recipients), and generally prohibits the use of OJP funding to provide food and beverages at conferences. The guidance also sets upper limits on many conference costs, including facility space, audio/visual services, logistical planning services, programmatic planning services, and food and beverages (in the rare cases where food and beverage costs are permitted at all).

Prior review and approval of conference costs can take time (see the guidance for specific deadlines), and applicants should take this into account when submitting proposals. Applicants also should understand that conference cost limits may change and that they should check the guidance for updates before incurring such costs.

Note on food and beverages: OJP may make exceptions to the general prohibition on using OJP funding for food and beverages, but will do so only in rare cases where food and beverages are not otherwise available (e.g., in extremely remote areas); the size of the event and capacity of nearby food and beverage vendors would make it impractical to not provide food and beverages; or a special presentation at a conference requires a plenary address where conference participants have no other time to obtain food and beverages. Any such exception requires OJP's prior written approval. The restriction on food and beverages does not apply to water provided at no cost, but does apply to any and all other refreshments, regardless of the size or nature of the meeting. Additionally, this restriction does not affect direct payment of per diem amounts to individuals in a travel status under your organization's travel policy.

Match Requirement

This solicitation does not require a match. However, if a successful application proposes a voluntary match amount, and OJP approves the budget, the total match amount incorporated into the approved budget becomes mandatory and subject to audit.

Performance Measures

To assist the Department with fulfilling its responsibilities under the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA), Public Law 103-62, and the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010, Public Law 111-352, applicants that receive funding under this solicitation must provide data that measure the results of their work done under this solicitation. OJP will require any award recipient, post award, to provide the data requested in the "Data Grantee Provides" column so that OJP can calculate values for the "Performance Measures" column. Performance measures for this solicitation are as follows:

Objective	Performance Measure(s)	Data Grantee Provides
Ensure that the infrastructure is developed to connect each state's and tribe's records systems to the national records systems operated by the FBI, including the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), the Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS), the Integrated Identification Index	Number of states and tribes participating and/or making records available to the NICS (within the 7 categories).	Total number of state and tribes participating and total number of state and tribal records in the 7 categories. Number of state/tribal records made available for use by NICS in 7 categories, including: Category 1: Records that identify a person who has been convicted in any court of a crime punishable by imprisonment for a term exceeding 1 year (e.g., federal or state felonies), and any state misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for more than 2 years. Category 2: Records that identify a person who is under an indictment or information returned or filed with a court, or for whom a criminal complaint has been issued or verified by a prosecutor for the crimes described in Category 1.

(III), and the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) Index.	Percentage of records made available to NICS that are complete. Number of records available in NICS. Percentage of applications for firearm transfers rejected due to data made available to the NICS.	Category 3: Records that identify a person who is a fugitive from justice, as demonstrated by an active felony or misdemeanor want or warrant. Category 4: Records that identify a person who is an unlawful user of, or addicted to, any controlled substance, as demonstrated by specified arrests, convictions, and adjudications not protected from disclosure to the Attorney General by federal or state law. Category 5: Records that identify a person who has been adjudicated as a mental defective or who has been formally and involuntarily committed to any mental institution when that information is not protected from disclosure to the Attorney General by federal or state law. Category 6: Records that electronically available and identify a person subject to an active court order (e.g., issued by a criminal court or any civil court, such as divorce court, family court, magistrate, or general jurisdiction court) that restrains the person from committing acts of violence against another person. Category 7: Records that electronically available and identify a person convicted in any court of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence. Number of records made available to NICS that are complete. Number of applications for firearm transfers. Number of applications for firearm transfers rejected for the presence of a domestic violence misdemeanor conviction. Number of applications for firearm transfers rejected due to the presence of a mental health prohibitor.
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OJP does not require applicants to submit performance measures data with their applications. Instead, applicants should discuss in their application their proposed methods for collecting data for performance measures. Refer to the section “What an Application Should Include” on page 12 for additional information.

Note on Project Evaluations

Applicants that propose to use funds awarded through this solicitation to conduct project evaluations should be aware that certain project evaluations (such as systematic investigations designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge) may constitute “research” for purposes of applicable DOJ human subjects protection regulations. However, project evaluations that are intended only to generate internal improvements to a program or service, or

are conducted only to meet OJP's performance measure data reporting requirements likely do not constitute "research." Applicants should provide sufficient information for OJP to determine whether the particular project they propose would either intentionally or unintentionally collect and/or use information in such a way that it meets the DOJ regulatory definition of research.

Research, for the purposes of human subjects protections for OJP-funded programs, is defined as, "a systematic investigation, including research development, testing, and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge" 28 C.F.R. § 46.102(d). For additional information on determining whether a proposed activity would constitute research, see the decision tree to assist applicants on the "Research and the Protection of Human Subjects" section of the OJP "Other Requirements for OJP Applications" Web page (www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/other_requirements.htm). Applicants whose proposals may involve a research or statistical component also should review the "Confidentiality" section on that Web page.

Notice of Post-Award FFATA Reporting Requirement

Applicants should anticipate that OJP will require all recipients (other than individuals) of awards of \$25,000 or more under this solicitation, consistent with the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (FFATA), to report award information on any first-tier subawards totaling \$25,000 or more, and, in certain cases, to report information on the names and total compensation of the five most highly compensated executives of the recipient and first-tier subrecipients. Each applicant entity must ensure that it has the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with the reporting requirements should it receive funding. Reports regarding subawards will be made through the FFATA Subaward Reporting System (FSRS), found at www.fsrs.gov.

Please note also that applicants should anticipate that no subaward of an award made under this solicitation may be made to a subrecipient (other than an individual) unless the potential subrecipient acquires and provides a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number.

What an Application Should Include

Applicants should anticipate that if they fail to submit an application that contains all of the specified elements, it may negatively affect the review of their application; and, should a decision be made to make an award, it may result in the inclusion of special conditions that preclude the recipient from accessing or using award funds pending satisfaction of the conditions.

Moreover, applicants should anticipate that applications that are determined to be nonresponsive to the scope of the solicitation, or that do not include the application elements that BJS has designated to be critical, will neither proceed to peer review nor receive further consideration. Under this solicitation, BJS has designated the following application elements as critical: Program Narrative, Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative. Applicants may combine the Budget Narrative and the Budget Detail Worksheet in one document. However, if an applicant submits only one document, it must contain **both** narrative and detail information.

OJP strongly recommends that applicants use appropriately descriptive file names (e.g., "Program Narrative," "Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative," "Timelines," "Memoranda of Understanding," "Resumes") for all attachments. Also, OJP recommends that applicants include resumes in a single file.

1. Information to Complete the Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)

The SF-424 is a required standard form used as a cover sheet for submission of pre-applications, applications, and related information. Grants.gov and GMS take information from the applicant's profile to populate the fields on this form. When selecting "type of applicant," if the applicant is a for-profit entity, select "For-Profit Organization" or "Small Business" (as applicable).

2. Program Narrative

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

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

The Program Narrative attachment should include the following sections:

Activities to be funded. The program narrative should describe each and all of the tasks to be funded with FY 2013 NARIP funds over the project period outlined under Program Goals. All proposed tasks should demonstrate the intent of this program to improve the completeness, automation, and transmittal of records used by the NICS to state and federal systems. Dollar amounts must be included for each funded task.

Applications must specifically address the priority area regarding submission of mental health information to NICS (as outlined on page 7).

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

Coordination. The administering agency should coordinate efforts with relevant emergency management task forces and agencies to ensure that records development activities are compatible with security measures for preventing acts of terrorism. NARIP activities will be coordinated with other OJP efforts authorized and funded under CITA. To encourage coordination and information sharing among criminal justice systems, all OJP awards supporting information technology development require that a description of the project be submitted to the state Information Technology Point of Contact (POC), if one has been designated. A copy of the correspondence can be submitted as part of

Other Attachments (see below) or sent directly to BJS prior to accessing funds. There is no requirement that the point of contact concur with the information technology project. The intent of this condition is to facilitate communication within the state. **Tribal applicants should provide documentation that activities proposed for funding will be coordinated with a tribal consortia, state, or directly with the FBI.**

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

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

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

NICS Record Improvement Plan

In order to make the most effective use of the grant program funds for improvement to the quality and availability of records used by the NICS, FY 2013 NARIP grant applications must provide for the development and implementation of comprehensive strategic planning. Such planning must include activities designed to examine the current condition of the involved state, local, and tribal records, problems associated with incomplete reporting and/or records availability, and demonstrate a commitment to a long-range planning process to address such issues to achieve the goals of the NICS Improvement Amendments Act of 2007.

Therefore, FY 2013 NARIP applications should include funding, as needed, for the development or continuation of a NICS Record Improvement Plan through a four-step process:

Step 1. Establishment of a NICS Record Improvement Task Force. Complete reporting and transmission of state or tribal records to national files can only be achieved through the cooperative efforts of all record originating entities. Therefore, BJS recommends that the applicant propose to use some FY 2013 NARIP funding to establish and/or support a NICS Record Improvement Task Force to guide the development and implementation of an ongoing long-range records improvement plan. The task force might include representatives from the central record repository and source agencies, including state, local, and tribal law enforcement; prosecuting attorneys; the courts; local jails; state correctional facilities; probation and parole agencies; and state mental health program agencies.

A task force with wide representation from throughout the system could provide a forum for exploring the range of options for improving the quality, completeness and availability of NICS records in the state. The task force could review the results of the assessment and the problem identification phases (Steps 2 and 3) and develop recommendations to

improve the quality, completeness, and availability of NICS records. Current legislation and administrative procedures related to reporting, maintaining, sharing, and use of relevant records might be reviewed to determine if they are adequate. A list of the proposed task force members and the agencies they represent should be included in the preliminary plan. If components of the system listed above are not included in the task force, the plan should describe how input and participation will be achieved. If a task force is not to be established, the applicant should propose instituting other mechanisms to provide for the input and participation of all affected components of the criminal justice system.

Step 2. Assessment of the completeness and availability of NICS records. The record estimates and other information provided by the state in response to the information collection developed by BJS pursuant to the Act, provide an initial or baseline assessment on which FY 2013 activities can be based. However, for the purposes of long-term strategic planning, an applicant may wish to use the task force to examine (and address) issues surrounding the accuracy, completeness and availability of such records as part of its assessment. In any event, the ongoing assessment must result in a comprehensive understanding of the following:

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

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

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

Step 4. Development of a NICS Record Improvement Plan. The final step develops strategies for addressing each of the challenges identified in Step 3, including the use of federal grant funds appropriated under the NIAA. The plan should clearly identify goals,

objectives, and a general timetable for achievements. Subsequent iterations of the plan should include a progress report on the strategies previously employed.

3. Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative

a. Budget Detail Worksheet

A sample Budget Detail Worksheet can be found at www.ojp.gov/funding/forms/budget_detail.pdf. Applicants that submit their budget in a different format should include the budget categories listed in the sample budget worksheet.

For questions pertaining to budget and examples of allowable and unallowable costs, see the OJP Financial Guide at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/financialguide/index.htm.

b. Budget Narrative

The Budget Narrative should thoroughly and clearly describe every category of expense listed in the Budget Detail Worksheet. OJP expects proposed budgets to be complete, cost effective, and allowable (e.g., reasonable, allocable, and necessary for project activities).

Applicants should demonstrate in their budget narratives how they will maximize cost effectiveness of grant expenditures. Budget narratives should generally describe cost effectiveness in relation to potential alternatives and the goals of the project. For example, a budget narrative should detail why planned in-person meetings are necessary, or how technology and collaboration with outside organizations could be used to reduce costs, without compromising quality.

The narrative should be mathematically sound and correspond with the information and figures provided in the Budget Detail Worksheet. The narrative should explain how the applicant estimated and calculated all costs and how they are relevant to the completion of the proposed project. The narrative may include tables for clarification purposes but need not be in a spreadsheet format. As with the Budget Detail Worksheet, the Budget Narrative should be broken down by year.

c. Match

There is no required cash or in-kind match required under this program. However, if the applicant chooses to offer such a commitment, the narrative should include a description of cash contributions, in-kind services, or activities, with accompanying fiscal implications, which are offered as matching support for the activities to be funded under NARIP. BJS will consider all matching support which contributes to or meets NARIP program goals as additional demonstrated commitment to the application.

This solicitation does not require a match. However, if a successful application proposes a voluntary match amount, and OJP approves the budget, the total match amount incorporated into the approved budget becomes mandatory and subject to audit.

4. Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)

Indirect costs are allowed only if the applicant has a federally approved indirect cost rate. (This requirement does not apply to units of local government.) Attach a copy of the federally approved indirect cost rate agreement to the application. Applicants that do not have an approved rate may request one through their cognizant federal agency, which will review all documentation and approve a rate for the applicant organization, or, if the applicant's accounting system permits, costs may be allocated in the direct cost categories. If DOJ is the cognizant federal agency, obtain information needed to submit an indirect cost rate proposal at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/pdfs/indirect_costs.pdf.

5. Tribal Authorizing Resolution (if applicable)

Tribes, tribal organizations, or third parties proposing to provide direct services or assistance to residents on tribal lands should include in their applications a resolution, a letter, affidavit, or other documentation, as appropriate, that certifies that the applicant has the legal authority from the tribe(s) to implement the proposed project on tribal lands. In those instances when an organization or consortium of tribes applies for a grant on behalf of a tribe or multiple specific tribes, then the application should include appropriate legal documentation, as described above, from all tribes that would receive services/assistance under the grant. A consortium of tribes for which existing consortium bylaws allow action without support from all tribes in the consortium (i.e., without an authorizing resolution or comparable legal documentation from each tribal governing body) may submit, instead, a copy of its consortium bylaws with the application.

Applicants that are unable to submit with the application a fully-executed (i.e., signed) copy of appropriate legal documentation, as described above, consistent with the applicable tribe's governance structure, should, at minimum, submit an unsigned, draft version of such legal documentation as part of its application (except in cases where, with respect to a tribal consortium applicant, consortium bylaws allow action without the support of all consortium member tribes). If selected for funding, BJS will make use of and access to funds contingent on receipt of the fully-executed legal documentation.

6. Additional Attachments

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

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

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

c. applicant disclosure of pending applications.

Applicants are to disclose whether they have pending applications for federally funded assistance that include requests for funding to support the same project being proposed under this solicitation and will cover the identical cost items outlined in the budget narrative and worksheet in the application under this solicitation. The disclosure should include both direct applications for federal funding (e.g., applications to federal agencies) and indirect applications for such funding (e.g., applications to state agencies that will be subawarding federal funds).

OJP seeks this information to help avoid any inappropriate duplication of funding. Leveraging multiple funding sources in a complementary manner to implement comprehensive programs or projects is encouraged and is not seen as inappropriate duplication.

Applicants that have pending applications as described above are to provide the following information about pending applications submitted within the last 12 months:

- the federal or state funding agency
- the solicitation name/project name
- the point of contact information at the applicable funding agency

Federal or State Funding Agency	Solicitation Name/Project Name	Name/Phone/E-mail for Point of Contact at Funding Agency
DOJ/COPS	COPS Hiring Program	Jane Doe, 202/000-0000; jane.doe@usdoj.gov
HHS/ Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration	Drug Free Communities Mentoring Program/ North County Youth Mentoring Program	John Doe, 202/000-0000; john.doe@hhs.gov

Applicants should include the table as a separate attachment, with the file name "Disclosure of Pending Applications," to their application. Applicants that do not have pending applications as described above are to include a statement to this effect in the separate attachment page. (e.g., "[Applicant Name] does not have pending applications submitted within the last 12 months for federally funded assistance that include requests for funding to support the same project being proposed under this solicitation and will cover the identical cost items outlined in the budget narrative and worksheet in the application under this solicitation.")

7. Other Standard Forms

Additional forms that OJP may require in connection with an award are available on OJP's funding page at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/forms.htm. For successful applicants, receipt of funds may be contingent upon submission of all necessary forms. Note in particular the following forms:

a. [Standard Assurances](#)*

Applicants must read, certify, and submit this form in GMS prior to the receipt of any award funds.

b. [Certifications Regarding Lobbying; Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements](#)*

Applicants must read, certify, and submit in GMS prior to the receipt of any award funds.

c. [Accounting System and Financial Capability Questionnaire](#) Any applicant (other than an individual) that is a non-governmental entity and that has not received any award from OJP within the past 3 years, must download, complete, and submit this form.

*These OJP Standard Assurances and Certifications are forms which applicants accept in GMS. They are not additional forms to be uploaded at the time of application submission.

Selection Criteria

All applications must be responsive to this solicitation. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review the evaluation criteria BJS will use in making funding decisions before deciding whether to submit an application for this solicitation. Applicants should understand that applications should respond to priorities identified and that full funding may not be possible for all proposed activities. **For FY 2013 NARIP grants, completeness of the application in terms of all required information will be a key consideration for BJS.** Awards will also be based on the following review criteria:

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

- the program narrative must describe each proposed task in accordance with the priority program goals, as outlined on pages 6 and 7. Applications should address how proposed activities directly relate to the improvement of the NICS.
- applications should specifically address the FY 2013 Priority Area – Improve Reporting of Mental Health Information to NICS.

(2) Project/Program Design and Implementation (20%)

- the extent to which the application recognizes the role of the courts in ensuring complete records.
- the extent to which the proposal appears reasonable in light of the applicant's current level of system development and statutory framework.
- the extent to which the application demonstrates the technical feasibility of the proposed

task(s) and details the specific implementation plan to achieve the intended deliverables.

(3) Capabilities/Competencies (25%)

- evidence of the applicant's progress in record quality improvement efforts.
- the extent to which the applicant has fulfilled goals of previous NARIP and/or NCHIP awards, including consideration of the total funds already awarded and expended funds from previous awards
- the applicant's commitment to the national record system as evidenced by membership in the FBI's Interstate Identification Index and participation in the National Fingerprint File, and the current status of development of its criminal records and related records.

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

(5) Budget complete; reasonable and allowable; cost effective; and necessary for project activities (10%)

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

(6) Impact/Outcomes and Evaluation (15%)

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

Review Process

OJP is committed to ensuring a fair and open process for awarding grants. BJS reviews the application to make sure that the information presented is reasonable, understandable, measurable, and achievable, as well as consistent with the solicitation.

Peer reviewers will review the applications submitted under this solicitation that meet basic minimum requirements. BJS may use either internal peer reviewers, external peer reviewers, or a combination, to review the applications. An external peer reviewer is an expert in the subject matter of a given solicitation who is NOT a current DOJ employee. An internal reviewer is a current DOJ employee who is well-versed or has expertise in the subject matter of this solicitation. A peer review panel will evaluate, score, and rate applications that meet basic minimum requirements. Peer reviewers' ratings and any resulting recommendations are advisory only. In addition to peer review ratings, considerations for award recommendations and decisions may include, but are not limited to, underserved populations, geographic diversity, strategic priorities, past performance, and available funding.

The Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO), in consultation with BJS, reviews applications for potential discretionary awards to evaluate the fiscal integrity and financial capability of applicants, examines proposed costs to determine if the Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative accurately explain project costs, and determines whether costs are reasonable,

necessary, and allowable under applicable federal cost principles and agency regulations.

All final award decisions will be made by the Director of the Bureau of Justice Statistics, who may consider factors including, but not limited to, underserved populations, geographic diversity, strategic priorities, past performance, and available funding when making awards.

Additional Requirements

Applicants selected for awards must agree to comply with additional legal requirements upon acceptance of an award. OJP encourages applicants to review the information pertaining to these additional requirements prior to submitting an application. Additional information for each requirement can be found at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/other_requirements.htm.

- Civil Rights Compliance
- Civil Rights Compliance Specific to State Administering Agencies
- Faith-Based and Other Community Organizations
- Confidentiality
- Research and the Protection of Human Subjects
- Anti-Lobbying Act
- Financial and Government Audit Requirements
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- DOJ Information Technology Standards (if applicable)
- Single Point of Contact Review
- Non-Supplanting of State or Local Funds
- Criminal Penalty for False Statements
- Compliance with [Office of Justice Programs Financial Guide](#)
- Suspension or Termination of Funding
- Nonprofit Organizations
- For-profit Organizations
- Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA)

- Rights in Intellectual Property
- Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (FFATA)
- Awards in Excess of \$5,000,000 – Federal Taxes Certification Requirement
- Policy and Guidance for Conference Approval, Planning, and Reporting
- OJP Training Guiding Principles for Grantees and Subgrantees

How to Apply

Applicants must submit applications through Grants.gov. Applicants must first register with Grants.gov in order to submit an application through Grants.gov, a “one-stop storefront” to find federal funding opportunities and apply for funding. Find complete instructions on how to register and submit an application at www.Grants.gov. Applicants that experience technical difficulties during this process should call the Grants.gov Customer Support Hotline at **800-518-4726** or **606-545-5035**, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, except federal holidays. Registering with Grants.gov is a one-time process; however, **processing delays may occur, and it can take several weeks** for first-time registrants to receive confirmation and a user password. OJP encourages applicants to **register several weeks before** the application submission deadline. In addition, OJP urges applicants to submit applications 72 hours prior to the application due date to allow time to receive validation messages or rejection notifications from Grants.gov, and to correct in a timely fashion any problems that may have caused a rejection notification.

Note: BJS encourages all prospective applicants to sign up for Grants.gov email notifications regarding this solicitation. If this solicitation is cancelled or modified, individuals who sign up with Grants.gov for email updates will be notified.

All applicants are required to complete the following steps:

1. **Acquire a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number.** In general, the Office of Management and Budget requires that all applicants (other than individuals) for federal funds include a DUNS number in their applications for a new award or a supplement to an existing award. A DUNS number is a unique nine-digit sequence recognized as the universal standard for identifying and differentiating entities receiving federal funds. The identifier is used for tracking purposes and to validate address and point of contact information for federal assistance applicants, recipients, and subrecipients. The DUNS number will be used throughout the grant life cycle. Obtaining a DUNS number is a free, one-time activity. Call Dun and Bradstreet at 866-705-5711 to obtain a DUNS number or apply online at www.dnb.com. A DUNS number is usually received within 1-2 business days.
2. **Acquire registration with the System for Award Management (SAM).** SAM replaces the **Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database** as the repository for standard information about federal financial assistance applicants, recipients, and subrecipients. OJP requires all applicants (other than individuals) for federal financial assistance to maintain current registrations in the SAM database. Applicants must be registered in

SAM to successfully register in Grants.gov. (Previously, organizations that had submitted applications via Grants.gov were registered with CCR, as it was a requirement for Grants.gov registration. SAM registration replaces CCR as a pre-requisite for Grants.gov registration.) Applicants must **update or renew their SAM registration annually** to maintain an active status.

Applicants that were previously registered in the CCR database must, at a minimum:

- Create a SAM account;
- Log in to SAM and migrate permissions to the SAM account (all the entity registrations and records should already have been migrated).

Applicants that were not previously registered in the CCR database must register in SAM prior to registering in Grants.gov. Information about SAM registration procedures can be accessed at www.sam.gov.

3. **Acquire an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and a Grants.gov username and password.** Complete the AOR profile on Grants.gov and create a username and password. The applicant organization's DUNS number must be used to complete this step. For more information about the registration process, go to www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp.
4. **Acquire confirmation for the AOR from the E-Business Point of Contact (E-Biz POC).** The E-Biz POC at the applicant organization must log into Grants.gov to confirm the applicant organization's AOR. Note that an organization can have more than one AOR.
5. **Search for the funding opportunity on Grants.gov.** Use the following identifying information when searching for the funding opportunity on Grants.gov. The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number for this solicitation is 16.813, titled "NICS Act Record Improvement Program (NARIP)" and the funding opportunity number is BJS-2013-3537.
6. **Complete the Disclosure of Lobbying Activities.** All applicants must complete this information. Applicants that expend any funds for lobbying activities must provide the detailed information requested on the form, *Disclosure of Lobbying Activities* (SF-LLL). Applicants that do not expend any funds for lobbying activities should enter "N/A" in the required highlighted fields.
7. **Submit an application consistent with this solicitation by following the directions in Grants.gov.** Within 24–48 hours after submitting the electronic application, the applicant should receive an e-mail validation message from Grants.gov. The message will state whether the application has been received and validated, or rejected due to errors, with an explanation. **Important:** OJP urges applicants to submit applications **at least 72 hours prior** of the application due date to allow time to receive validation messages or rejection notifications from Grants.gov, and to correct in a timely fashion any problems that may have caused a rejection notification.

Note: Grants.gov only permits the use of specific characters in names of attachment files. Valid file names may only include the following characters: A-Z, a-z, 0-9, underscore (_), hyphen (-), space, and period. Grants.gov will forward the application to OJP's Grants Management System (GMS). GMS does not accept executable file types as application attachments. These disallowed file types include, but are not limited to, the following extensions: ".com," ".bat," ".exe," ".vbs," ".cfg," ".dat," ".db," ".dbf," ".dll," ".ini," ".log," ".ora," ".sys," and ".zip."

Note: Duplicate Applications

If an applicant submits multiple versions of an application, BJS will review the most recent version submitted.

Experiencing Unforeseen Grants.gov Technical Issues

Applicants that experience unforeseen Grants.gov technical issues beyond their control that prevent them from submitting their application by the deadline must e-mail the BJS contact identified in the Contact Information section on page 1 **within 24 hours after the application deadline** and request approval to submit their application. The e-mail must describe the technical difficulties, and include a timeline of the applicant's submission efforts, the complete grant application, the applicant's DUNS number, and any Grants.gov Help Desk or SAM tracking number(s). **Note: BJS does not automatically approve requests.** After the program office reviews the submission, and contacts the Grants.gov or SAM Help Desks to validate the reported technical issues, OJP will inform the applicant whether the request to submit a late application has been approved or denied. If the technical issues reported cannot be validated, OJP will reject the application as untimely.

The following conditions are not valid reasons to permit late submissions: (1) failure to register in sufficient time, (2) failure to follow Grants.gov instructions on how to register and apply as posted on its Web site, (3) failure to follow each instruction in the OJP solicitation, and (4) technical issues with the applicant's computer or information technology environment, including firewalls.

Notifications regarding known technical problems with Grants.gov, if any, are posted at the top of the OJP funding Web page at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/solicitations.htm.

Provide Feedback to OJP on This Solicitation

To assist OJP in improving its application and award processes, we encourage applicants to provide feedback on this solicitation, the application submission process, and/or the application review/peer review process. Feedback may be provided to OJPSolicitationFeedback@usdoj.gov.

IMPORTANT: This email is for feedback and suggestions only. Replies are **not** sent from this mailbox. If you have specific questions on any program or technical aspect of the solicitation, **you must** directly contact the appropriate number or email listed on the front of this solicitation document. These contacts are provided to help ensure that you can directly reach an individual who can address your specific questions in a timely manner.

If you are interested in being a reviewer for other OJP grant applications, please email your resume to ojppeerreview@lmbps.com. The OJP Solicitation Feedback email account will not forward your resume. **Note:** Neither you nor anyone else from your organization can be a peer reviewer in a competition in which you or your organization have submitted an application.

Application Checklist

FY 2013 NICS Act Record Improvement Program (NARIP)

The application check list has been created to aid you in developing your application. Please refer to corresponding sections in the solicitation to determine specific content of each of these sections.

Eligibility Requirements:

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

What an Application Should Include:

- _____ Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) (see page 13)
- _____ Program Narrative (see page 13)
- _____ Address Mental Health Priority (see page 13)
- _____ Budget Detail Worksheet (see page 16)
- _____ Budget Narrative (see page 16)
- _____ Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable) (see page 17)
- _____ Tribal Authorizing Resolution (if applicable) (see page 17)
- _____ Additional Attachments (see page 17)
 - _____ Copy of approved ATF certification form for relief from disabilities provision (or statement indicating the applicant is working with ATF toward certification in FY 2013, subject to ATF concurrence)
 - _____ If application does **not** request a portion of funds to improve submission of mental health information to NICS, certification for one of the following:
 - _____ already submits all qualifying mental health information to NICS;
 - _____ will focus funds on another category of qualifying NICS records that the state reasonably argues represents a greater information gap: or
 - _____ is prohibited by law from sharing information with NICS on person prohibited for mental health reasons, and provides citations to the relevant law.
 - _____ Disclosure of Pending Applications (see page 18)
 - _____ Other Standard Forms as applicable (see pages 19) including:
 - _____ Accounting System and Financial Capability Questionnaire (if applicable)