



National Institute of Justice

S O L I C I T A T I O N

Jeremy Travis, Director

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Research and Evaluation on Violence Against Women:

Practitioner-Researcher Collaborations

*Evaluation of Policies and Programs including
Experimental Research Designs*

*Longitudinal Studies of Women's
Experience with Violence*

Basic Research

APPLICATION DEADLINE:

July 7, 1998

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs
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Washington, DC 20531

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National Institute of Justice
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<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij>

Research and Evaluation on Violence Against Women

I. Introduction

Proposals are solicited for research and evaluation on violence against women. Four major program areas are identified in the request for proposals. They are Practitioner-Researcher Collaborations, Evaluation of Policies and Programs including Experimental Research Designs, Longitudinal Studies of Women's Experience with Violence, and Basic Research. For this solicitation, violence against women includes domestic or intimate partner violence, sexual assault, other assaultive behaviors against women and stalking. ***NIJ anticipates awarding a total of 15 to 20 grants in the four program areas with a funding total of \$4,000,000.***

NIJ is streamlining its process to accommodate the volume of proposals anticipated under this and other solicitations. Researchers can help in a significant way by sending NIJ a nonbinding letter of intent by June 15, 1998. The Institute will use these letters to forecast the numbers of peer panels it will need and to identify conflicts of interest among potential reviewers. There are two ways to send these letters. You can reach NIJ by Internet by sending e-mail to tellnij@ncjrs.org and identifying the solicitation and part(s) you expect to apply for or you can write a letter with the same information to Research and Evaluation on VAW, 810 Seventh Street N.W., Washington, DC 20531.

II. Background

Prior to the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) of 1994, NIJ supported a number of research projects on spouse assault, child abuse, and sexual assault. Since the Act, family and intimate violence research and evaluation, particularly as it concerns the justice system, has become a major program at NIJ.

The VAWA brought responsibility to NIJ for a number of Congressionally mandated studies and national evaluations. Included among the mandated studies was one calling for a National Academy of Sciences panel on the development of a research agenda on violence against women. The panel, funded jointly by NIJ and the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC) of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), has been published by the National Academy Press as *Understanding Violence Against Women*.¹ The report recommends a research agenda on the nature and scope of violence against women, causes and consequences of violence against women, prevention and intervention, and the research infrastructure. *Understanding Violence Against Women* has provided NIJ with an agenda for a new FY98 program to address violence against women research and evaluation issues, and this solicitation is a major component of the new program. The recent National Academy of Sciences report, *Violence in Families: Assessing Prevention and Treatment*

¹National Research Council, 1996, *Understanding Violence Against Women*, N.A. Crowell and A.W. Burgess, eds. Panel on Research on Violence Against Women, Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press. Can be purchased from the National Academy Press at 800 624-6242 or 202 334-3313.

Programs,² will also guide this research program and the field.

The NIJ and CDC Joint Program

In the current Fiscal Year, NIJ has joined with CDC in initiating a collaborative, five-year research program to better understand the extent of violence against women, why violence against women occurs, how to prevent it, and how to increase the effectiveness of legal and health care interventions. The long-range goal of this NIJ/CDC initiative is to achieve highly effective, interdisciplinary, widely useful, efficient approaches to the prevention, intervention, and control of violence against women.

NIJ and NCIPC are generating a series of solicitations on violence against women research and evaluation. Announcements can be found under 'Funding Opportunities' at the NIJ web site: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij> or interested researchers are encouraged to contact the National Criminal Justice Reference Service at 1-800-851-3420 to be placed on NIJ's mailing list for Research on Family Violence and Violence Against Women. Researchers may also contact the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control at 770-488-4410 to be placed on CDC's mailing list.

NIJ's Program with the Violence Against Women Grants Office

The NIJ/CDC Joint Program is a major new effort and represents a substantial commitment of funding. A variety of additional programs are also a part of NIJ's overall Violence Against Women and Family Violence Program. These

programs include a host of research and evaluation projects undertaken in collaboration with the Violence Against Women Grants Office (VAWGO) and projects supported directly by NIJ through its Investigator Initiated and other announced programs.

Over the past four years of the STOP Violence Against Women grants program, NIJ has managed a research and evaluation program that provides for a national evaluation, several state and local evaluations, and a variety of research and evaluations projects pertinent to the VAWA. Two additional VAWGO programs for which NIJ has announced national evaluations this year are the Grants to Encourage Arrest Policies Program and the Rural Domestic Violence and Child Victimization Enforcement Grant Program.

The Interagency Consortium for Research on Violence Against Women and Violence Within the Family

In January, 1996, NIJ and eight other federal offices developed an interagency consortium and announced a special Request for Applications focusing on "Research on Violence Against Women and Violence within the Family." The announcement encouraged research on the abuse of children and the elderly, partner violence, sexual violence, and perpetrators and victims of multiple episodes of family violence (e.g., abused children who witness parental domestic violence).

The announcement was coordinated by the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research in the National Institutes of Health (NIH). NIJ conducts annual consortium grantee meetings and anticipates publishing results from the research. This program represents the first interdepartmental and trans-NIH research funding program on violence. It has brought together perspectives of the participating agencies, encompassing criminal justice, mental

²National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 1998, *Violence in Families: Assessing Prevention and Treatment Programs*, R. Chalk and P. King, eds. Committee on the Assessment of Family Violence Interventions, Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press. Can be purchased from the National Academy Press at 800 624-6242 or 202 334-3313.

health, public health and prevention, alcohol and drug abuse, and child development, to advance our knowledge of family violence and violence against women.

The sponsoring organizations supported ten grants under this announcement, and two additional grants resulting from the announcement were supported directly by two of the agencies. The goal of this program is to conduct research on the causes, course, treatment, management, and prevention of family violence and other violence against women, as well as on the health and legal consequences of this violence for victims. This interagency effort produced a synergy, attracting new and important applications and researchers in a way never seen in a single-organization solicitation.

Availability of NIJ's Portfolio

NIJ's research portfolio on violence against women and family violence may be accessed at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/vawprog/contents.htm or a copy may be obtained from the Department of Justice Response Center at 800-421-6770 (in the Washington, D.C., area, at 202-307-1480).

III. Areas of Research and Evaluation: Four Part Solicitation

Applicants should be familiar with the background that guides this current solicitation: the Violence Against Women Act, the current NIJ program on Violence Against Women, the previously cited NAS Reports and related research and evaluation. Through this solicitation, projects can be jointly supported with other interested agencies if applicants have obtained or applied to other interested governmental or non-governmental funders. However, NIJ will not seek funding partners on behalf of applicants.

The four parts below, under which proposals are solicited, are not mutually exclusive categories

but are intended to suggest areas or approaches of priority interest. If an applicant's proposal is equally responsive to more than one of the four parts, each part should be listed on the face sheet of the application and in the address to NIJ. Applicants are reminded that NIJ grants are funded for the full length of the project (unless otherwise noted) and the full cost should be in the total budget requested.

While research and evaluation regarding violence against all populations of women is encouraged, those of particular interest include minority populations, rural populations, disabled women, and the elderly.

The goal of this solicitation, in its four parts, is to advance our understanding of violence against women and accompanying theory; support theory testing and development; and improve policy and practice.

Part A: Practitioner-Researcher Collaborations

Over the years NIJ has supported research that has been useful in modifying practice and formulating policy. Much of this research was done in cooperation with criminal justice agencies. This solicitation goes beyond many of the past cooperative arrangements and encourages the formation of close working partnerships among researchers and key practitioners groups relevant to the reduction of violence against women.

NIJ Research in Progress. Several partnerships were initiated in FY 1997 with the VAW Grants Office support. Among these projects are evaluations of advocacy efforts, an evaluation of police domestic violence training, and an evaluation of medical records as legal evidence.

A number of policing related partnerships that focus on domestic violence are also in progress.

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These collaborations in both small and large cities are addressing needs identified and responses developed in the particular locales.

What the evaluators of the NIJ-supported collaborations in the policing area have learned is that a number of factors are critical to the development of successful partnerships. These include a shared vision, a problem-solving orientation, a clear definition of roles and responsibilities, effective communication, continuity of personnel, and benefits accrue to all partners. Applicants should consider these factors in developing a collaborative proposal.

Research Requested. Partnerships encouraged may be newly formed in response to this solicitation or they may build on existing relationships between researchers and practitioners. The applicant may be either a practitioner agency or a research agency or academic institution. All partners should share in the research and evaluation resources of the project. Applications from jurisdictions of all sizes are encouraged.

The ultimate goal of these collaborations is to benefit all parties to the partnerships during and beyond the Federal funding period. The partnerships should provide justice system practitioners and victim service providers with a resource for policy-relevant research and evaluation of programs, policies and protocols. The partnerships should also afford research scholars the means and opportunity to contribute to the growing body of knowledge that can be used to effectively address violence against women.

A wide range of partnership structures may be supported under this solicitation. Examples of partnerships include:

! a local prosecutor, victim service provider, and researcher;

! a researcher working directly with a local or state domestic violence or sexual assault coalition;

! local victim service, shelter providers, or rape crisis centers partnering with police and researchers.

Research partnerships may also include other relevant local or state government agencies or private service providers. A critical element of the application is that it reflects a genuine collaboration regardless of who may have initiated the effort. The application must clearly demonstrate a commitment to the partnership on the part of all parties involved.

Examples of the kinds of activities a partnership should include are:

! problem definition through the collection and analysis of baseline data,

! performance measures development for programmatic assessment,

! process and/or formative evaluation to assist in the implementation of new programs or activities,

! impact or outcome evaluation.

As the partners initiate a collaboration in the development of a proposal, they should consider the spirit and intent of the VAWA in deciding which specific issues to address. A particular population may be addressed -- adult victims of sexual assault, victims of domestic violence, rural women, Native American women, minority women, elderly or homeless women -- or a particular policy, practice, program or issue relating to violence against women may provide the focus for the collaboration.

Funding under this section is intended to support the establishment of the partnerships, the

collaborative development of a policy relevant research agenda, and the completion of at least one research project. The application must include a task outline that includes a schedule for the completion of the key tasks over the course of the project.

While the partnership may address one or more initial short-term questions or issues, the completion of a specific research or evaluation study is required. Documentation of the development of the partnership is critical, therefore the application must include a plan to create a system to record the establishment, development, and achievements of the research collaboration.

Partnerships of up to 18 months in duration are encouraged. Five grant awards of approximately \$100,000 each are anticipated under this Part. Contingent upon continued appropriations in the future, these partnerships may receive continued funding in subsequent years to further the collaboration.

Part B: Evaluation of Policies and Programs Including Experimental Research Designs

While evaluation projects may be conducted in the context of a researcher-practitioner collaboration (Part A), this Part offers support for researcher-initiated evaluation studies, including multi-jurisdictional evaluations of policies, protocols and programs that are directed toward insuring the safety of women and improving the criminal justice response to violence against women.

Designs involving the random assignment of cases to an experimental or control condition can be difficult to conduct in criminal justice settings. However, jurisdictions searching for reliable answers to policy questions have used experimental designs that are fair and equitable to determine the most effective policy or

programmatic response. Although a practice or policy may appear to be reasonably effective, unconvincing or conflicting evidence regarding the best of several alternatives has led some jurisdictions to consider random assignment of cases for gaining the most reliable results. Thus, experimental designs are encouraged. However, other evaluation designs may be appropriate given the needs and constraints in a particular setting.

NIJ Research in Progress. NIJ is currently supporting a substantial body of criminal justice evaluation work. Projects in progress are evaluating court, prosecution, police and advocacy efforts largely as they relate to domestic violence matters. Evaluations are also addressing the major programs of the Violence Against Women Grants Office, Coordinated Community Responses to VAW, and anti-stalking efforts.

Among the most notable NIJ supported projects using an experimental design were the Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment and the follow-up Spouse Assault Replications that studied alternative police responses to misdemeanor domestic violence calls. The only experimental prosecution study was the Indianapolis Domestic Violence Prosecution Experiment which involved random assignment to one of three conditions, and found that victims who were permitted to drop charges but did not do so were significantly less likely to experience revictimization. Two recent studies involving experimental designs addressed batterer intervention programs. These studies in Brooklyn and Broward County, Florida will provide results in the near future.

Chapter Three of the previously cited National Academy of Sciences report on *Violence in Families* provides an informative discussion on improving evaluation. Evaluation applicants may want to consider this chapter as well as the

guiding principles presented in the report to assist in the evaluation selection process.

Research Requested. Evaluation studies aimed at addressing gaps in the current understanding of policies, programs and practices are encouraged. The following are among the areas of interest, but applicants are not restricted to these:

- ! An assessment of current mechanisms developed to determine risk of injury to women who present to official responders as domestic violence victims;
- ! Development and evaluation of early warning systems for abusers to detect failure to comply with or complete court mandated treatment, and to detect new abuse of victims;
- ! The impact of domestic violence or sexual assault training, including various forms, amount and duration of training, on the performance of criminal justice professionals.
- ! Evaluations of a “readiness to change” or “stages of change” model for both offenders and victims in the criminal justice response to domestic violence;
- ! Evaluations of the effectiveness of treatment for different types of sex offenders;
- ! The impacts of mandatory reporting by physicians and other health care providers of victims of domestic violence to law enforcement agencies;
- ! Determining prosecution strategies that are most effective in reducing recidivism of misdemeanor spouse assaulters; and

- ! Determining what prosecution response affords the most protection for the victim of sexual assault or domestic violence.

Under this part, four to six awards are anticipated for projects generally up to 24 months. The duration and the budget for proposed evaluations should be justified by factors such as the complexity of the design, the number of sites, and the size of the sample. Prospective applicants considering an experimental design may apply for a grant to conduct a feasibility and planning project for an initial year. Such projects should be limited to \$100,000. A grant for the conduct of the experimental design study would be considered after completion of the feasibility study and would be dependent on future appropriations for this program area.

Written agreement from key practitioners to use an experimental design and a thorough plan for insuring the safety of victims is required of applicants.

**Part C:
Longitudinal Studies of Women's
Experiences With Violence**

Violence against women, because of its intimate and personal nature, is difficult to study. Consequently, much remains unknown about what causes violence against women, the factors that endanger women or protect them from violence, and the physical and emotional consequences of such violence for women and their children.

Research Requested. The National Academy of Sciences report "Understanding Violence Against Women" recommended that “longitudinal research be undertaken to study the developmental trajectory of violence against women and whether it differs from the development of other violent behaviors.” In response to this recommendation, NIJ is

soliciting proposals for longitudinal research on women's experiences with violence. For the purposes of this solicitation longitudinal research involves the repeated observation or examination of a set of subjects over time with respect to one or more study variables. These longitudinal studies should emphasize factors associated with the development of violent behavior against women; its maintenance, escalation, or diminution over time; and the influence of racial, ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic factors. They should also explore the interaction of violence against women with other social problems. In addition, these studies should examine how individual, neighborhood, community, and broader social factors protect women or increase their risk for victimization. Analyzing the ecological context in which women experience violence is critical to understanding the nature of this problem, its impact on women, and the effectiveness of interventions.

Various methodological strategies for longitudinal studies are encouraged. For example, applicants may wish to survey women about their experiences with violence. In addition, surveys of community residents may yield valuable information about the impacts of violence against women on the community. Census tract or block level data also may be utilized to capture neighborhood or community characteristics that influence violence against women. The use of data from a variety of systems (e.g. criminal justice, social service, public health) is recommended. Projects may involve ethnography, focus groups, and other qualitative methods, along with surveys and other quantitative approaches. At least two waves of data collection are required. Existing longitudinal data sets may be augmented with additional waves of data collection.

Up to \$1,000,000 will be available to support up to three longitudinal studies. Projects initially will be funded for up to 24 months.

Based upon the successful progress of funded studies and the availability of funds, project periods may be extended and additional financial support provided for the continuation of these projects. Applicants should include with their proposal a statement on the additional work that would be completed, the time period for completion of this work, and the funds requested, if the project were to be extended beyond 24 months and additional financial support provided. Decisions regarding project extension and supplemental funding will be made prior to the close of the 24 month project period. Continuation funding beyond an initial grant is contingent upon NIJ's receipt of funding.

Part D: Basic Research on Violence Against Women

For many years NIJ has supported research on spouse assault, other family violence and sexual assault. NIJ has partnered with other Office of Justice Programs (OJP) bureaus, program offices, and other federal agencies including the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to fund research in this area. Additionally, the Interagency Consortium cited earlier provides a major multi-agency research focus on violence against women and family violence.

NIJ Research in Progress. The current violence against women portfolio includes research projects addressing domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Projects have focused on operations of law enforcement, prosecution, victim services, the courts, probation, and parole. Others have included:

- ! A study of the influence of alcohol and drugs on women's utilization of the police for domestic violence;
- ! An analysis of the use of medical records as legal evidence in domestic violence cases;

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- ! A national survey on violence and threats of violence against women and men in America;
- ! An examination of domestic violence in multi-ethnic rural communities;
- ! A national survey on the extent and nature of sexual victimization of college women; and
- ! An investigation of the role of stalking in serious cases of domestic violence.

NIJ's research portfolio on violence against women and family violence can be accessed at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/vawprog/contents.htm or a copy can be obtained from the Department of Justice Response Center at 800-421-6770 (in the Washington, D.C. area at 202-307-1480)

Research Requested. Proposals are encouraged for basic research studies aimed at improving our understanding of violence against women. Studies in areas that have not been widely researched may suggest a descriptive study approach. Several topics for consideration include but are not limited to:

- ! The safety planning processes that individual women employ;
- ! Implications of "readiness to change", or "stages of change" models for offenders and victims of domestic violence and sexual assault; and the accompanying criminal justice response;
- ! Links between partner abuse and child abuse, including child witnessing of domestic violence;
- ! The international trafficking of women and children to the United States for use

in the illegal sex trade and unlawful labor;

- ! The role of media as a key participant in communicating a community's shared vision in addressing violence against women;
- ! Impact of welfare reform for women and their children who are victims of domestic violence; and
- ! The significance of strategically placed advocates in police or prosecution offices in terms of victim safety, victim quality of life, and the criminal justice case process.

The above list is not exhaustive or intended to limit the applicant. Any research that has the potential to reduce the level of violence against women, increase the safety of women, and provide useful findings for improving programs will be considered. *Up to \$900,000 will be available to support projects under this Part. The average grant is anticipated to be \$150,000 to \$200,000, however smaller and larger grants may be appropriate.*

Methodological Considerations. In all of the above Parts of the solicitation the need for innovation, particularly on qualitative measures, culturally sensitive measures, and the need for many different levels of data are acknowledged. Victims, advocates, and knowledgeable criminal justice practitioners should be brought into the various stages of the research process wherever appropriate. In evaluations, outcome measures that go beyond reoffending need to be considered and utilized. New outcome measures could address stress, economic independence, quality of life, offending with a new partner, and victim and community safety. The use of data from a variety of systems (e.g. criminal justice, social service, public health) is encouraged. Also, applicants must include a statement that

demonstrates an understanding of the care needed in protecting human subjects.

Dissemination of Results

NIJ is interested in expeditious and innovative methods to disseminate the results from all projects supported under this solicitation. Methods that would supplement the more traditional dissemination approaches are encouraged. Results of projects are expected to be reported to NIJ as they become available, and at a minimum through semi-annual progress reports. Applicants should provide a discussion of the types of reports or products that would become available over the course of the project.

An annual grantee meeting should be anticipated and applicants should budget \$1,000 for each year of the grant to participate in these grantee meetings.

IV. How to Apply

Those interested in submitting proposals in response to this solicitation must complete the required application forms and submit related required documents. (See below for how to obtain application forms and guides for completing proposals.) Applicants must include the following information/forms to qualify for consideration:

- Standard Form (SF) 424—application for Federal assistance
- Assurances
- Certifications Regarding Lobbying, Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements (one form)
- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities
- Budget Detail Worksheet
- Budget Narrative
- Negotiated indirect rate agreement (if appropriate)
- Names and affiliations of all key persons from applicant and subcontractor(s),

advisors, consultants, and advisory board members. Include name of principal investigator, title, organizational affiliation (if any), department (if institution of higher education), address, phone, and fax

- Proposal abstract
- Table of contents
- Program narrative or technical proposal
- Privacy certificate
- References
- Letters of cooperation from organizations collaborating in the research project
- Résumés
- Appendixes, if any (e.g., list of previous NIJ awards, their status, and products [in NIJ or other publications])

Proposal abstract. The proposal abstract, when read separately from the rest of the application, is meant to serve as a succinct and accurate description of the proposed work. Applicants must concisely describe the research goals and objectives, research design, and methods for achieving the goals and objectives. Summaries of past accomplishments are to be avoided, and proprietary/confidential information is not to be included. Length is not to exceed 400 words. Use the following two headers:

Project Goals and Objectives:

Proposed Research Design and Methodology:

Page limit. The number of pages in the “Program Narrative” part of the proposal must not exceed 30 (double-spaced pages) for awards greater than \$50,000; for smaller awards (under \$50,000), the maximum page length is 15 (double-spaced pages).

Due date. Completed proposals **must be received** at the National Institute of Justice by the close of business on July 7, 1998. Extensions of this deadline will not be permitted.

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Award period. In general, NIJ limits its grants and cooperative agreements to a maximum period of 12 or 24 months. However, longer budget periods may be considered and are suggested in some parts of this solicitation.

Number of awards. NIJ anticipates supporting 15 to 20 grants under this solicitation.

Award amount. Awards totaling \$50,000 to \$500,000 will be made available for this NIJ solicitation. The higher amounts are expected to be few in number and justified by the complexity and cost of the design.

Applying. Two packets need to be obtained: (1) application forms (including a sample budget worksheet) and (2) guidelines for submitting proposals (including requirements for proposal writers and requirements for grant recipients). To receive them, applicants can:

- Access the Justice Information Center on the web:

<http://www.ncjrs.org/fedgrant.htm#NIJ>

or the NIJ web site:

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/NIJ/funding.htm>

These web sites offer the NIJ application forms and guidelines as electronic files that may be downloaded to a personal computer.

- Request hard copies of the forms and guidelines by mail from the National Criminal Justice Reference Service at 800-851-3420 or from the Department of Justice Response Center at 800-421-6770 (in the Washington, D.C., area, at 202-307-1480).
- Request copies by fax. Call 800-851-3420 and select option 1, then option 1 again for NIJ. Code is 1023.

Guidance and information. Applicants who wish to receive additional guidance and information may contact the U.S. Department of Justice Response Center at 800-421-6770.

Center staff can provide assistance or refer applicants to an appropriate NIJ professional. Applicants may, for example, wish to discuss their prospective research topics with the NIJ professional staff.

Send 12 copies (one with original signatures) of completed forms to:

National Institute of Justice
R&E on VAW:
(Specify Part and Title)
810 Seventh Street N.W.
Washington, DC 20531
[overnight courier ZIP code 20001]

An acknowledgment letter will be sent to applicants within three weeks of the due date. Include a stamped, self-addressed post card acknowledging receipt with your application if you want a response sooner than the NIJ acknowledgment letter.

For more information on the National Institute of Justice, please contact:

National Criminal Justice Reference Service

Box 6000

Rockville, MD 20849-6000

800-851-3420

e-mail: askncjrs@ncjrs.org

You can view or obtain an electronic version of this document from the NCJRS Justice Information Center web site (<http://www.ncjrs.org>) or the NIJ web site (<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij>).

If you have any questions, call or e-mail NCJRS.