

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

National Institute of Corrections

Solicitation for a Cooperative Agreement - Technical Assistance Site Management in NIC's Evidence-Based Decision Making in Local Criminal Justice Systems Initiative

AGENCY: National Institute of Corrections, U.S. Department Of Justice

ACTION: Solicitation for a Cooperative Agreement

SUMMARY: The National Institute of Corrections (NIC) Community Services Division is soliciting proposals from organizations, groups, or individuals to enter into a cooperative agreement with NIC for up to 16 months beginning in August 2012. Work under this cooperative agreement is part of a larger NIC initiative, Evidence-Based Decision Making (EBDM) in Local Criminal Justice Systems. Work under this cooperative agreement will be coordinated with awardees of other cooperative agreements who will be providing services under Phase III of this initiative.

Specifically, under this cooperative agreement, the awardee will provide technical assistance to seven Phase III sites that have already been identified. During Phase II of the EBDM initiative, the seven sites identified change strategies based on their individual system planning activities. These change strategies are critical to meeting their system's harm reduction goals. The technical assistance from this award will be targeted to the identified change strategies.

DATE: Applications must be received by 4:00 p.m. (EDT) on Friday, July 30, 2012.

ADDRESSES: Mailed applications must be sent to: Director, National Institute of Corrections, 320 First Street, NW, Room 5002, Washington, D.C. 20534. Applicants are encouraged to use Federal Express, UPS, or similar service to ensure delivery by the due date.

Hand delivered applications should be brought to 500 First Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20534. At the front desk, dial 7-3106, extension 0 for pickup.

Faxed applications will not be accepted. Electronic applications can be submitted via <http://www.grants.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: A copy of this announcement can be downloaded from the NIC website at www.nicic.gov/cooperativeagreements.

All technical or programmatic questions concerning this announcement should be directed to Lori Eville, Correctional Program Specialist, National Institute of Corrections, at leville@bop.gov. In addition to direct reply, all questions and answers will be posted on the NIC website at www.nicic.gov for public review (the names of those submitting questions will not be posted). The website will be updated regularly and postings will remain on the website until the closing date of this cooperative agreement solicitation. Only questions received by 12:00 P.M. (EDT) on July 20, 2012 will be posted on the NIC website.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Overview: The overall goal of the EBDM Initiative is to establish and test articulated linkages (information tools and protocols) between the decisions of local criminal justice stakeholders and the application of human and organizational change principles (evidence-based practices) in achieving measurable reductions in pretrial misconduct and post-conviction risk of reoffending. The unique focus of the initiative is the review of locally developed criminal justice strategies that guide practice within existing sentencing statutes and rules. The initiative intends to:

(1) improve the quality of information that jurisdictions use to make individual case decisions in local systems; and

(2) engage these systems as policymaking bodies to collectively improve the effectiveness and capacity of their decision making related to pretrial release/sentencing options. Local officials involved in the initiative include: judges, prosecutors, public defenders, police, human service providers, county executives, and administrators of jail, probation, and pretrial services agencies.

Local criminal justice decisions are defined broadly to

include dispositions regarding arrest, cite and release or to custody, pretrial release or detention and setting of bail and pretrial release conditions, pretrial diversion, charging and plea bargaining, sentencing of adjudicated offenders regarding use of community and custody options, and responses to violations of conditions of pretrial release and community sentences.

Background: In June 2008, the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) launched a multi-phased initiative and awarded a cooperative agreement to address evidence-based decision making in local criminal justice systems. The goal of Phase I of the initiative was to build a systemwide framework (from arrest through final disposition and discharge) that would result in more collaborative evidence-based decision making and practices in local criminal justice systems. This effort was grounded in two decades of research on the factors that contribute to criminal reoffending and the methods a justice system can employ to interrupt the cycle of reoffense. Today, the initiative seeks to equip criminal justice policymakers in local communities with information, processes, and tools that will result in measurable reductions of pretrial misconduct and post-conviction reoffending.

The principle product of Phase I of this initiative was the Evidence-Based Decision Making Framework in Local Criminal Justice Systems. The Framework identifies the key structural elements of a system informed by evidence-based practice. It defines a vision of safer communities. It puts forward the belief that risk and harm reduction are fundamental goals of the justice system and that these can be achieved without sacrificing offender accountability or other important justice system outcomes.

The Framework both acknowledges the importance of the key premises and values underlying our criminal justice system and provides a set of principles to guide evidence-based decision making within that context. The principles themselves are evidence-based. The Framework also highlights groundbreaking research that demonstrates that pretrial misconduct and offender recidivism can be reduced. It identifies the key stakeholders who must be actively engaged in a collaborative partnership if an evidence-based system of justice is to be achieved. It outlines the difficult challenges agencies face as they seek to deliberately and systematically implement such

an approach in their local communities. A copy of the Evidence-Based Decision Making Framework document can be downloaded online at <http://nicic.gov/Library/024372>.

In August 2010, NIC launched Phase II (Planning and Engagement) of the Evidence-Based Decision Making in Local Criminal Justice Systems Initiative by selecting seven jurisdictions to serve as EBDM "seed sites." Those sites are **Mesa County, Colorado; Grant County, Indiana; Ramsey County, Minnesota; Yamhill County, Oregon; City of Charlottesville/County of Albemarle, Virginia; Eau Claire County, Wisconsin; Milwaukee County, Wisconsin.**

The cooperative agreement awardees of Phase II provided extensive technical assistance to each of the seven seed sites for a period of 10 months. The overarching purpose of the technical assistance was to (1) Develop a shared philosophy and vision for the local criminal justice system; (2) Determine the capacity to collect and analyze data, including the quality of the data, to support ongoing analysis of the effectiveness of current and future policies, practices, and services designed to achieve specific risk and harm reduction outcomes; and (3) Change knowledge, skills, and abilities regarding research-based risk reduction strategies.

Each site received technical assistance that was specific to the initiative and individualized to its system's needs. Monthly site visits from an assigned technical assistance site coordinator led the jurisdictions through the attainment of specific activities and goals. The Roadmap to Phase II outlines the major objectives that the technical assistance providers guided the seeds sites through. A copy of the roadmap is available online at http://static.nicic.gov/Public/roadmap_phase_ii_final_2.docx.

The technical assistance was intended to lead to the following outcomes: Build a genuine, collaborative policy team; Build individual agencies that are collaborative and in a state of readiness for change; Understand current practice within each agency/across the system; Understand and have the capacity to implement evidence-based practices; Establish performance measurements/outcomes/system scorecard; Develop a system logic model; Engage/gain support of the community; and Develop a strategic action plan.

All seven sites completed Phase II in October 2011. Each jurisdiction submitted an application for acceptance into Phase III of the initiative. Within their applications are a detailed strategic action plan and their system's logic model. The action plan and logic model are the foundation of implementation activities of the Phase III technical assistance.

Scope of Work: The intent of this request for proposal is to expand the availability of technical assistance to the jurisdictions involved in NIC's Evidence-Based Decision Making in Local Criminal Justice Systems Initiative. Technical assistance will be coordinated and/or provided to seven EBDM sites: **Grant County, IN; Yamhill County, OR; Charlottesville, VA; and Ramsey County, MN; Mesa County, CO; Milwaukee County, WI; Eau Claire County, WI.** The technical assistance will be guided by each site's established strategic action plan, logic model, and other agreed upon specialized assistance required to reach the jurisdiction's identified outcomes.

In addition, targeted technical assistance will be provided to each of the seven sites to develop a site-specific communication strategy. The communication strategy will guide elected and non-elected officials in effectively communicating the set of core principles upon which their criminal justice system will base its decisions. The communication strategy will be targeted to both criminal justice staff and the general public.

Project Deliverables: The awardee will:

- Work with the site coordinator from each of the seven sites to develop a report that prioritizes current unfunded, targeted activities that require technical assistance. These activities include technical assistance events across the criminal justice system in areas such as data collection, risk assessment, application of evidence-based practices, logic model development, guarding against implementation failure, and sustaining change. The report will include how the technical assistance will be provided, the recommended technical assistance provider, the estimated cost of delivering the technical assistance, and the anticipated effect that delivering the technical assistance will have on the sites' performance measures. This report will be due within 60 days of the award.

- Develop a report from each technical assistance event completed by the technical assistance provider and submitted to the site and NIC. At minimum, the report will include the activities that the technical assistance is addressing, who attended the technical assistance event, the outcome of the technical assistance, and other findings and/or recommendations.
- Work with each of the seven jurisdictions to develop a strategic communications plan that outlines their criminal justice systems' mission, vision, and risk and harm reduction measures and strategies. This will include a written communications plan that will identify key audiences of both internal and external stakeholders to which the message shall be communicated.

Meetings: The cooperative agreement awardee will participate in an initial meeting with the NIC staff for a project overview and preliminary planning meeting within 2 weeks of the award. The awardee will meet with NIC staff routinely to discuss the activities noted in the timeline during the course of the cooperative agreement. Meetings will be held no less than quarterly and may be conducted via webinar or in person as agreed upon by NIC and the awardee.

Application Requirements: Applications should be concisely written, typed double-spaced and reference the project by the "NIC Opportunity Number" and Title in this announcement. The package must include: a cover letter that identifies the audit agency responsible for the applicant's financial accounts as well as the audit period or fiscal year that the applicant operates under (e.g., July 1 through June 30); a program narrative in response to the statement of work, and a budget narrative explaining projected costs. The following forms must also be included: OMB Standard Form 424, Application for Federal Assistance; OMB Standard Form 424A, Budget information - Non-Construction Programs; OMB Standard Form 424B, Assurances - Non-Construction Programs (these forms are available at <http://www.grants.gov>) and DOJ/NIC Certification Regarding Lobbying; Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters; and the Drug-Free Workplace Requirements (available at <http://www.nicic.gov/downloads/general/certif-frm.pdf>).

Applications may be submitted in hard copy, or electronically via <http://www.grants.gov>. If submitted in hard copy, there needs to be an original and three copies of the full proposal (program and budget narratives, application forms, and assurances). The original should have the applicant's signature in blue ink.

Authority: Public Law 93-415

Funds Available: Up to \$300,000 is available for this project, subject to available funding, but preference will be given to applicants who provide the most cost efficient solutions in accomplishing the scope of work. Determination will be made based on best value to the government, not necessarily the lowest bid. Funds may be used only for the activities that are directly related to the project.

This project will be a collaborative venture with the NIC Community Services Division.

Eligibility of Applicants: An eligible applicant is any public or private agency, educational institution, organization, individual, or team with expertise in the described areas.

Required Expertise: Successful applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have the organizational capacity to carry out the deliverables of this project. Appropriate expertise may include extensive experience in correctional and criminal justice policy and practice and a strong background in criminal justice systemwide change with experience in the implementation of evidence-based practices in the criminal justice system to reduce pretrial misconduct and offender risk of reoffending. Applicants should also have demonstrated the ability to package a criminal justice strategy and advance it to a national audience.

Review Considerations: Applications received under this announcement will be subject to the NIC review process. The criteria for the evaluation of each application will be as follows:

Program Narrative: (50%)

Are all of the project tasks adequately discussed, and is there a clear statement of how each will be accomplished,

including the staffing, resources, and strategies to be employed? Are there any innovative approaches, techniques, or design aspects proposed that will enhance the project?

Organizational Capabilities: (25%)

Do the skills, knowledge, and expertise of the applicant(s) and the proposed project staff demonstrate a high level of competency to complete the tasks? Does the applicant have the necessary experience and organizational capacity to complete the goals of the project?

Program Management/Administration (25%)

Does the applicant identify reasonable objectives, milestones, and measures to track progress? If there are consultants and/or partnerships proposed, is there a clear structure to ensure effective utilization and coordination? Is the proposed budget realistic, does it provide sufficient cost detail/narrative, and does it represent good value relative to the anticipated results?

Note: NIC will NOT award a cooperative agreement to an applicant who does not have a Dun and Bradstreet Database Universal Number (DUNS) and is not registered in the Central Contractor Registry (CCR).

A DUNS number can be received at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-800-333-0505 (if you are a sole proprietor, dial 1-866-705-5711 and select option 1).

Registration in the CCR can be done online at the CCR website <http://www.ccr.gov>. A CCR Handbook and worksheet can also be reviewed at the website.

Number of Awards: One

NIC Opportunity Number: 12CS04. This number should appear as a reference line in the cover letter, where indicated on Standard Form 424, and outside of the envelope in which the application is sent.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 16.603

Executive Order 12372: This program is subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372.

E.O. 12372 allows states the option of setting up a system for reviewing applications from within their states for assistance under certain federal programs. Applicants (other than federally recognized Indian tribal governments) should contact their state Single Point of Contact (SPOC), a list of which is available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc.

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CHRISTOPHER INNES

Acting Director, National Institute of Corrections