



NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE

ANNUAL REPORT

2020

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs
810 Seventh St. N.W.
Washington, DC 20531

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The National Institute of Justice is the research, development, and evaluation agency of the U.S. Department of Justice. NIJ's mission is to advance scientific research, development, and evaluation to enhance the administration of justice and public safety.

The National Institute of Justice is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the Office for Victims of Crime; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking.

To the President, the Attorney General, and the Congress:

It is my honor to transmit the National Institute of Justice's annual report on research, development, and evaluation for fiscal year 2020, pursuant to Title 1 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 and Title II of the Homeland Security Act of 2002.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in grey ink, consisting of a large, stylized loop followed by a horizontal stroke.

Jennifer Scherer, Ph.D.
Principal Deputy Director, National Institute of Justice

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About the National Institute of Justice

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) is the research, development, and evaluation agency of the U.S. Department of Justice. We are dedicated to improving knowledge and understanding of crime and justice issues through science. NIJ provides objective and independent knowledge and tools to inform the decision-making of the criminal justice community to reduce crime and advance justice, particularly at the state and local levels. NIJ is committed to supporting the development of rigorous and independent research that crosses scientific disciplines and leverages the expertise of both researchers and those working within the criminal justice system. Investments in science allow us to better understand the challenges facing the U.S. criminal justice system and to develop and test effective solutions.

NIJ's core mission is to provide objective, independent, evidence-based knowledge and tools to advance criminal justice policy and practice in the United States.

NIJ's work is conducted primarily through competitive extramural grants, agreements, and contracts. NIJ uses both cooperative agreements, which are a type of grant, and agreements with other federal agencies. By providing these funds, NIJ continues to support high-quality scientific research on crime, crime control, and the fair administration of justice by engaging and supporting researchers, particularly scholars, in scientific endeavors related to criminal justice challenges, and by disseminating evidence and practical solutions in response to the challenges of crime and justice.

NIJ also engages with other federal and private-sector science agencies to develop technology solutions to leverage investments and infrastructure, thereby increasing the impact of NIJ's finite resources and the introduction of novel technology solutions to the field.

Understanding, Preventing, and Reducing Crime

NIJ supports research in and evaluations of many specific types of crime and crime prevention strategies.

Research on Domestic Terrorism

Countering and preventing terrorism are primary concerns for state and local law enforcement agencies as well as the federal government.

Terrorists are those who support or commit ideologically motivated violence to further political, social, or religious goals. The Domestic Radicalization and Terrorism research portfolio at NIJ strives to better understand the primary drivers of radicalization and what can be done to prevent or intervene during the radicalization process.

This program includes research on what drives the process of individuals becoming committed to terrorist ideologies, but it is increasingly moving toward the evaluation of promising practices to address these drivers, including the prevention of recidivism by individuals released back into the community.

In fiscal year (FY) 2020, NIJ continued to lead the federal government's efforts to understand domestic terrorism with three awards for research in this area.

These projects include a study that aims to better understand which risk and protective factors increase or mitigate an individual's pathway to politically motivated violence, how individuals move from nonviolent to violent participation, and the degree to which an individual's connection to a group impacts terrorist outcomes.

The awards also include a project to identify a model for how a community-based Multidisciplinary Threat Assessment and Management Team can operate by identifying and engaging individuals at risk for radicalization to violence, and then providing them with supportive services that contribute to a reduction in risk for violence. Finally, NIJ will fund a project that aims to provide analysis on the differences between five far-right groups (Skinheads, Neo-Nazis, Sovereign Citizens, Militias, Christian Identity groups) and construct an analytical framework that law enforcement can use to shape policies that address far-right violent extremism.

This work was funded under the [Research and Evaluation of Domestic Terrorism Prevention](#) solicitation. Three awards and \$2.26 million were distributed.

Investigator-Initiated Research and Evaluation of Firearms Violence

NIJ funded research and program evaluation projects that inform efforts to prevent and reduce intentional, interpersonal firearms violence and mass shootings in the United States. NIJ supports scientifically rigorous research and evaluation projects designed to strengthen the scientific knowledge base and produce findings with high practical utility for improving public safety. This research supports the U.S. Department of Justice's priority to prevent and reduce gun crimes, gun violence-related victimization, and the wide range of criminal activities related to firearms violence.

In FY 2020, NIJ funded two research projects. The first project will assess the impact of plea bargaining on firearms cases. Researchers seek to understand the extent and patterns of plea bargaining for firearms-related charges, the typical "distance traveled" in plea bargains for firearms offenses, and the extent to which plea bargaining shapes subsequent patterns of recidivism. The second project will map the networks of gang violence in New Jersey and investigate the role of firearms violence within the broader context of gang conflict.

This work was funded under the [Investigator-Initiated Research and Evaluation of Firearms Violence](#) solicitation. Two awards and \$804,432 were distributed.

Research and Evaluation on Human Trafficking

NIJ continues to build on its research and evaluation efforts to better understand, prevent, and respond to trafficking in persons in the United States. In FY 2020, NIJ sought to fund research projects that address both sex and labor trafficking and that — first and foremost — have clear implications for criminal justice policy and practice in the United States.

Projects include an effort to assess national demand-reduction efforts; the identification of effective strategies to disrupt the recruitment of victims; understanding the physical and mental health needs of victims of sex trafficking; and what works in the successful identification, investigation, and prosecution of labor trafficking cases.

This work was funded under the [Research and Evaluation on Trafficking in Persons](#) solicitation. Four awards and \$2.57 million were distributed.

Research on School Safety

NIJ remains committed to supporting research that enhances school safety. In FY 2020, NIJ developed a comprehensive model for school safety. This report, *A Comprehensive School Safety Framework*, reviews existing research on the causes of school violence and identifies multiple factors that may contribute to violent incidents in schools. Based on these factors, the report outlines a framework emphasizing three major components — physical safety, school climate, and student behavior — to guide the development of comprehensive programs to prevent, prepare for, and address school violence.

In FY 2020, NIJ also funded research projects to examine the causes of school violence, including bias-based harassment; evaluate the effectiveness of the approaches to stopping school violence found in the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) and the Office of

Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) FY 2018 or FY 2019 STOP School Violence Act solicitations; and a follow-up study to continue the examination of the predictors, consequences, and school responses to violence against teachers.

This work was funded under the [Research and Evaluation on School Safety](#) solicitation. Seven awards and \$5.59 million were distributed.

Research on the Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation of Elderly Individuals

As the population of elderly people grows, crimes against this population are expected to increase. NIJ supports research and evaluation related to the abuse, neglect, and exploitation of elderly individuals. NIJ has identified the following three priority areas for this research: (1) research on people who perpetrate elder abuse that directly involves those who have committed the abuse; (2) elder abuse reporting pathways, facilitators, barriers, and outcomes; and (3) forensic research involving the development of elder abuse radiographic evidence and bioinformatic approaches for use by physicians.

In FY 2020, NIJ funded two projects in this area. The first seeks to establish markers of physical elder abuse and develop a digital diagnostic tool for practitioners. The second examines federal- and state-level barriers and facilitators to elder abuse reporting and response.

This work was funded under the [Research on the Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation of Elderly Individuals](#) solicitation. Two awards and \$1.47 million were distributed.

Research and Evaluation on Violence Against Women

NIJ strives to support objective and independent knowledge and validated tools to reduce violence against women, promote justice for victims of crime, and enhance criminal justice responses.

In FY 2020, NIJ funded research and evaluation projects that examine a broad range of topics, including the prevalence, characteristics, and consequences of statutory rape; the effectiveness and accessibility of civil protection orders; an evaluation of intimate partner violence and sexual violence cross-sectoral approaches and an examination of their similarities and differences; and an in-depth investigation of the prevalence and predictors of sexual assault victimization and perpetration on college campuses.

This work was funded under the [Research and Evaluation on Violence Against Women](#) solicitation. Four awards and \$2.02 million were distributed.

Research and Evaluation on Drugs and Crime

NIJ supports rigorous applied research on evidence-based tools, protocols, and policies for state, tribal, and local law enforcement and other criminal justice agencies that address drug trafficking, drug markets, and drug-related violence.

In FY 2020, NIJ funded two awards in this area. The first award funds the Oklahoma Methamphetamine Data Initiative, in which researchers will analyze national and local drugs and crime data to examine methamphetamine-related violent and other crime trends and inform narcotics law enforcement intervention strategies. The second award will implement a wastewater-based epidemiology approach for comprehensive, noninvasive, near real-time drug flow monitoring, effectively developing a novel drug surveillance strategy to identify specific stimulant drugs and their concentrations in samples taken from wastewater systems, and extrapolating the data to population-level use estimates.

This work was funded under the [Research and Evaluation on Drugs and Crime](#) solicitation. Two awards and \$1.45 million were distributed.

Research and Evaluation of Technology-Facilitated Abuse for Criminal Justice Purposes

In FY 2020, NIJ funded research and evaluation to examine cyberstalking, explore the costs and consequences of technology-facilitated intimate partner violence, and conduct a national survey of victims to help law enforcement and policymakers better understand and respond to technology-facilitated abuse.

This work was funded under the [Research and Evaluation of Technology-Facilitated Abuse for Criminal Justice Purposes](#) solicitation. Three awards and \$1.81 million were distributed.

Research Into Immigration and Crime

The relationship between immigration and crime has been the subject of much debate and great concern for public officials. Although there are arguments that stringent immigration enforcement policies are needed to combat increased risk of crime by undocumented noncitizens, recent research suggests that those who immigrate (legally or illegally) are not more likely, and may even be less likely, to commit crime in the United States. NIJ funds projects designed to advance understanding of this complex association.

In FY 2020, NIJ funded projects to assess the relationship between immigration status, crime, gang affiliation, and victimization as well as to advance the understanding of immigration, crime, and crime reporting at the local level.

This work was funded under the [Research into Immigration and Crime](#) solicitation. Two awards and \$1.36 million were distributed.

Law Enforcement

NIJ is dedicated to the development of knowledge and tools that will advance policing operations and practices to deliver policing services to communities more effectively and efficiently. NIJ has been a leader in developing and advancing the research agenda for policing.

Equipment Standards and Conformity Assessment

NIJ seeks to engage with other federal and private-sector standards development organizations to develop standards that will leverage investments, reduce the need for federal investment, and speed the introduction of established standards.

Since 1975, police officer line-of-duty fatalities have been reduced by 40% due, in large part, to NIJ's body armor compliance testing program.

Approximately 100 models of body armor are tested annually through the NIJ Compliance Testing Program, with follow-on inspection of approximately 150 models. More than 6,000 models of body armor have been tested since 1987.

In FY 2020, 51 new models of body armor were tested through this program; 26 models passed and 25 models failed. The number of inspections conducted in 2020 was less than average due to travel and worksite restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Learn more about NIJ's body armor compliance testing program.](#)

Research and Evaluation on Policing

In FY 2020, NIJ funded investigator-initiated, randomized controlled trial studies of approaches to the challenges of policing in the United States that address the strategic priorities and objectives identified in NIJ's *[Policing Strategic Research Plan, 2017-2022](#)*.

In FY 2020, NIJ funded projects to build the evidence base for de-escalation training, using body-worn camera recordings to measure police implementation of procedural justice, improving police response to individuals in moments of crisis by providing service alternatives, and understanding and enhancing police investigations of gun offenses.

This work was funded under the [Research and Evaluation on Policing](#) solicitation. Four awards and \$2.44 million were distributed.

Research and Evaluation in Safety, Health, and Wellness in the Criminal Justice System

NIJ continues to fund projects to promote the safety, health, and wellness of individuals affected by, or employed within, the criminal justice system. In FY 2020, NIJ funded multiple projects to better understand the stress that police and corrections officers experience. These projects include an examination of the causes, correlates, and mitigation of adverse impacts of organizational stress on officer health and wellness; an intervention assessment to determine the adverse effects of corrections work on corrections workers; the identification and mitigation of organizational stressors and mediators on correctional officer health and wellness; a longitudinal study of occupational stress, trauma exposure, psychological distress, and suicide risk among corrections officers; and an examination of the impacts of police organizational stress on long-term health and wellness and opportunities for mitigation.

This work was funded under the [Research and Evaluation in Safety, Health, and Wellness in the Criminal Justice System](#) solicitation. Five awards and \$4.02 million were distributed. It supports the objectives of NIJ's *Safety, Health, and Wellness Strategic Research Plan, 2016-2021*.

Corrections

The number of men and women under correctional supervision remains a key area of concern and research for NIJ. As the research and evaluation arm of the U.S. Department of Justice, NIJ is committed to empirically exploring issues of interest for the field of corrections.

Recidivism Forecasting Challenge

In FY 2020, NIJ funded the “Recidivism Forecasting Challenge,” which aims to increase public safety and improve the fair administration of justice across the United States. The Challenge is designed to improve the ability to forecast recidivism using person- and place-based variables, with the goal of improving outcomes for those serving a community supervision sentence. Results from the Challenge will provide critical information to community corrections departments that may help facilitate more successful reintegration into society for previously incarcerated persons and persons on parole.

As a result of the Challenge, NIJ awarded 27 prizes totaling \$723,000. (Note that these awards were made in FY 2021.)

To help put the results of the Challenge into context, read the article, [Results From the National Institute of Justice Recidivism Forecasting Challenge](#).

Research and Evaluation on Promising Reentry Initiatives

Reentry initiatives provide many types of services, skills training, and therapeutic interventions. These initiatives are designed to promote prosocial behavior, reduce recidivism, and improve the likelihood of successful reintegration into the community from jail or prison. Given the potential public safety and financial implications of successful reentry into society, it is critical for corrections stakeholders to know which reentry initiatives are the most effective.

In FY 2020, NIJ funded a multisite, randomized controlled trial to improve reentry outcomes for incarcerated persons with traumatic brain injuries, an evaluation of recidivism program components in an underserved county jail, and a randomized controlled trial to study the impact of being housed in a young adult treatment pod in a jail setting on institutional misconduct and recidivism.

This work was funded under the [Research and Evaluation on Promising Reentry Initiatives](#) solicitation. Three awards and \$5.29 million were distributed.

Assessing the Effectiveness of the Second Chance Act Grant Program

In FY 2020, NIJ funded research to evaluate the effectiveness of the Second Chance Act (SCA) grant program in improving reentry and reducing recidivism. To support this effort, NIJ funded a phased research evaluation strategy that details and measures the implementation, processes, outcomes, costs, and impacts of the grants awarded under the SCA grant program.

This work was funded under the [Assessing the Effectiveness of the Second Chance Act Grant Program: A Phased Evaluation Approach](#) solicitation. One award and \$1.14 million were distributed.

Review and Revalidation of the First Step Act Risk Assessment Tool

The [First Step Act of 2018](#) aims to reform the federal prison system and reduce recidivism. NIJ plays a key role in major components of the act and assists the attorney general in:

- Assessing the Federal Bureau of Prisons' risk and needs assessment system.
- Developing and evaluating a new risk and needs assessment system.
- Developing recommendations regarding effective, evidence-based recidivism-reduction programs and activities, and conducting research and data analysis on evidence-based programs and assessment tools.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of grants used by the U.S. Department of Justice to support reentry and recidivism reduction programs at the federal, state, local, and tribal levels.

In FY 2020, the following reports related to the First Step Act were published:

- [First Step Act Implementation Fiscal Year 2020 90-Day Report](#), published June 2, 2020.
- [The First Step Act of 2018 Risk and Needs Assessment System - Update](#), published January 16, 2020.

NIJ also funded an annual review of the risk assessment tool developed in response to the First Step Act. The risk assessment tool, the Prisoner Assessment Tool Targeting Estimated Risk and Needs (PATTERN), will be implemented and used by the Federal Bureau of Prisons to predict the likelihood of general and violent recidivism for all individuals in federal custody.

This work was funded under the [Review and Revalidation of the First Step Act Risk Assessment Tool](#) statement of work. Two awards and \$96,200 were distributed.

Tribal Crime and Justice Research

NIJ actively supports research that involves federally recognized tribes (or tribally based organizations) on issues of crime and justice in the United States. In doing so, NIJ is committed to ethical and engaged efforts in line with responsible research conduct and federal trust responsibilities.

In FY 2020, NIJ funded a planning grant to create a new tribal-researcher partnership that will develop a new and innovative criminal justice research project to study the restorative justice approach of circle peacemaking for addressing intimate partner violence issues.

This work was funded under the [Tribal-Researcher Capacity Building Grants](#) solicitation. One award and \$99,637 were distributed.

Forensic Science

Forensic science is the application of sciences such as physics, chemistry, biology, computer science, and engineering to matters of law. NIJ's forensic science research and development program focuses on basic and applied scientific research and seeks to enhance and expand forensic methods and increase the body of knowledge to guide and inform forensic science policy and practice.

Research and Development in Forensic Science for Criminal Justice Purposes

In FY 2020, NIJ sought proposals for basic or applied research and development projects. The intent of this program is to direct the findings of basic scientific research; foster research and development in broader scientific fields applicable to forensic science; and support ongoing forensic science research toward the development of highly discriminating, accurate, reliable, cost-effective, and rapid methods for the identification, analysis, and interpretation of forensic evidence for criminal justice purposes.

Among the 36 projects selected for funding in FY 2020, NIJ is supporting:

- A first-ever, large-scale independent study to evaluate the extent of the variation in DNA mixture (biological samples with more than one donor) analysis. This project will evaluate current methods for interpreting DNA mixtures and will expand on the results and lessons learned from studies previously conducted by the grantee Noblis.
- A project to estimate body mass using bone micro- and macro-structure. When developing a biological profile during a medicolegal death investigation, forensic anthropologists estimate sex, age, ancestry, and stature. However, body mass is usually not included in the profile because there are no methods for accurately estimating body mass from skeletal remains. As the prevalence of obesity increases, so will the chances of encountering obese individuals in death investigations, making body mass an important detail for matching unknown and missing persons profiles.
- A project to accurately make THC determinations in seized cannabis. With the passage of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, forensic laboratories have been forced to differentiate seized cannabis samples as either legal hemp or illegal marijuana; however, most forensic laboratories lack protocols for this purpose. This project aims to provide forensic laboratories with the tools to confidently make these measurements through simple, robust, and cost-effective analytical methods.
- A comprehensive assessment of novel reference materials and analytical methods for the analysis and interpretation of organic and inorganic gunshot residues. Forensic practitioners require standardized protocols to confidently report on inorganic gunshot residue examinations. However, technological advances and the evolution of ammunition to greener alternatives are changing gunshot residue identification and interpretation paradigms. The researchers aim to design reference standards for examinations and to compare the performance of portable and benchtop residue identification devices through collaboration with industry and practitioners.

- Development of an elastic network forensic toolkit for law enforcement — FileTSAR+. Nearly every type of criminal investigation involves some form of digital evidence. However, there are too few tools to capture and analyze digital forensics from large-scale computer networks. The research team will develop an elastic version of the Toolkit for Selective Analysis & Reconstruction of Files (FileTSAR+) for the analysis and reconstruction of files from large-scale computer networks.

This work was funded under the [Research and Development in Forensic Science for Criminal Justice Purposes](#) solicitation. Thirty-six awards and \$16.9 million were distributed.

Research and Evaluation for the Testing and Interpretation of Physical Evidence in Publicly Funded Forensic Laboratories

Under the Research and Evaluation for the Testing and Interpretation of Physical Evidence in Publicly Funded Forensic Laboratories program, NIJ funds research and evaluation projects to:

- Identify and inform the forensic community of best practices through the evaluation of existing laboratory protocols.
- Have a direct and immediate impact on laboratory efficiency and assist in making laboratory policy decisions.

The intent of this program is to direct the findings of research and evaluation toward the identification of the most efficient, accurate, reliable, and cost-effective methods for the identification, analysis, and interpretation of physical evidence for criminal justice purposes.

In FY 2020, NIJ funded projects to evaluate digital evidence processing efficiencies; expand quantitative cannabinoid testing in biological specimens; validate and implement methods and guidelines for Y-STR applications, particularly for complex missing persons cases; develop and optimize a method to identify and profile male-specific cells recovered from a mixture of male- and female-like cells; and create DART-MS spectral interpretation, library building, and report-generation software that is vendor agnostic and freely available.

This work was funded under the [Research and Evaluation for the Testing and Interpretation of Physical Evidence in Publicly Funded Forensic Laboratories](#) solicitation. Five awards and \$1.19 million were distributed.

The National Center on Forensics

In FY 2020, NIJ funded the establishment and operation of the National Center on Forensics. The Center will facilitate a partnership among a full-service state department of forensic science with a medical examiner function, an accredited university of higher education with affiliate medical and law schools, and a statewide district attorneys association. This partnership aims to develop and instruct future medical examiners and to inform and train public officials.

This work was funded under the [NIJ National Center on Forensics](#) solicitation. One award and \$2 million were distributed.

Forensic Technology Center of Excellence

In FY 2020, NIJ continued to fund the Forensic Technology Center of Excellence (FTCoE). The FTCoE has established itself as a leader for the advancement of forensic science within the criminal justice community. The Center's blend of expertise, experience, and knowledge in forensic science, combined with its objectivity and national reach to include all justice program stakeholders, allows the FTCoE to deliver practical and valuable solutions to the forensic science community, thereby bridging the gap between the scientific and justice communities. In FY 2020, NIJ provided an additional \$1.65 million to continue this work.

Supporting Victims of Crime

Millions of Americans become crime victims every year. The rights of victims are every bit as important as those of alleged criminals, and in recent decades government agencies have strengthened services to crime victims. NIJ's research has supported efforts to guarantee the rights of victims in a variety of ways.

Research and Evaluation of Victims of Crime

In FY 2020, NIJ funded research that includes an evaluability assessment of the Weinberg Center for Elder Justice's elder abuse shelter services, a phased evaluation of the LOVE146 victim services program to improve outcomes for domestic minor sex-trafficking victims, and a study on the cumulative financial costs of victimization among college students at minority-serving institutions.

Other funded projects will evaluate victim assistance programs, including the Office for Victims of Crime's law enforcement-based victim services program and the use of telemedicine to deliver mental health services for victims of crime in rural areas.

This work was funded under the [Research and Evaluation of Victims of Crime](#) solicitation. Six awards and \$4.23 million were distributed.

Research on Law Enforcement Responses to Sex Trafficking of Minors

In FY 2020, NIJ funded a study that will examine trends and new directions in the law enforcement response to the sex trafficking of minors, particularly how law enforcement prevention of and response to the sex trafficking of minors has evolved since passage of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000. This study aims to understand how widely law enforcement agencies have adopted practices that are based on the perspective that the minor is a victim as opposed to a delinquent and the challenges that agencies have faced in adopting such practices.

This work was funded under the [Research on Law Enforcement Responses to Sex Trafficking of Minors](#) solicitation. One award and \$991,015 were distributed.

Juvenile Justice

NIJ works closely with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to prevent and respond to juvenile delinquency and victimization by supporting high-quality, rigorous research, evaluations, and statistical analyses related to juvenile justice. This research provides information about the risk and protective factors that contribute to or deter a youth's involvement in the juvenile justice system. It also helps the field understand adolescent behaviors, system responses, and the interventions that are most likely to promote positive youth outcomes.

Research on Juvenile Reoffending

In FY 2020, NIJ funded research to improve the measurement of juvenile reoffending in collaboration with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The research includes a two-state examination of varied measurement strategies for juvenile reoffending; a study seeking to optimize supervision and service strategies to reduce reoffending by accounting for risks, strengths, and developmental differences of youth who have committed crimes; and an examination of factors that predict juvenile offending and how the likelihood of reoffending varies by changes in risk and protective factors as well as geographic location.

This work was funded under the [Research on Juvenile Reoffending](#) solicitation. Three awards and \$1.23 million were distributed.

National Youth Gang Survey

In FY 2020, in collaboration with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, NIJ funded a study of youth gangs that will develop, test, and administer a national data collection from law enforcement agencies to produce accurate and reliable national estimates of, and information about, youth gangs and gang-related criminal activities and law enforcement approaches to dealing with those activities.

This work was funded under the [National Youth Gang Survey](#) solicitation. One award and \$996,640 were distributed.

Longitudinal Research on Delinquency and Crime

NIJ supports longitudinal research that focuses on delinquency and crime throughout the life course of the individual. The research findings are intended to inform efforts to prevent the onset of delinquency and to intervene in the lives of justice-involved youth and young adults.

In FY 2020, NIJ funded a project to augment, analyze, and archive criminal trajectories in four birth cohorts from the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods; an exploration of pathways to desistance and adjustment in adulthood among juvenile justice-involved females; and a study of the life course and intergenerational effects of criminal justice involvement, particularly risks, resilience, and the impact of the rise in opioid misuse and the COVID-19 pandemic.

This work was funded under the [Longitudinal Research on Delinquency and Crime](#) solicitation. Three awards and \$3.37 million were distributed.

Improving the Criminal Justice System

National Missing and Unidentified Persons System

The National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) is a national information clearinghouse and resource center for missing, unidentified, and unclaimed persons cases across the United States.

It is estimated that 4,400 unidentified bodies are recovered each year, with approximately 1,000 of those bodies remaining unidentified after one year.

NamUs responds to the need to assist state and local law enforcement, medical examiners and coroners, allied professionals, and the general public with resolving missing and unidentified persons cases.

NIJ continues to support NamUs, which was developed to provide national assistance in the search for those living and deceased in hopes of resolving these cases.

A web-based system, NamUs resources are provided at no cost to law enforcement, medical examiners, coroners, allied forensic professionals, and family members of missing persons. NamUs has criminal justice users in all 50 states and is a collaborative system that bridges the communication gap among stakeholder communities to foster enhanced information sharing and case support. As of July 2020, more than 64,500 missing and unidentified persons cases have been reported to NamUs, and over 26,800 cases have been resolved. Additionally, NamUs has resolved 300 of the 9,700 unclaimed persons cases in the database. Unclaimed persons are decedents who have been identified but whose remains are unclaimed by the legal next of kin. Through a partnership with the FBI, NamUs helped identify 263 previously unidentified persons from medical examiner-coroner officers nationwide.

In FY 2020, over 43,300 cases were entered into the database: over 19,800 published missing persons cases, 13,500 published unidentified persons cases, and 10,000 published unclaimed persons cases. Of those new entries, over 650 American Indian/Alaska Native cases were entered into the system. The NamUs-FBI fingerprint partnership project reached 281 fingerprint hits.

There were a number of success stories during FY 2020 in which NamUs helped identify an unknown decedent. One such case happened on August 31, 2020, when an unknown male walking along the I-5 freeway in Arleta, California, was struck and killed by multiple vehicles. The remains were unidentifiable due to the traumatic injuries, but it was estimated that he was between 18 and 55 years old. The decedent had numerous unique tattoos on his neck and body; however, he remained unidentified. The medical examiner's office entered the decedent into NamUs, listing the distinctive tattoos as well as clothing and accessories worn by the decedent at the time of his death. The decedent's fingerprints were also available for comparison purposes.

Shortly after the details were entered into NamUs, the medical examiner's office received multiple tips from citizens who recognized the tattoos as being similar to those of a 20-year-old musician who posted frequently on social media. The medical examiner-coroner investigators determined that there was a missing person report for the man and that his tattoos matched those of the decedent. Dental records were obtained and compared by the county coroner's odontologist, who made a positive dental identification. The man's family was then notified of his death.

[Explore the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System website.](#)

CrimeSolutions

CrimeSolutions is a central resource to help practitioners and policymakers understand what works in justice-related programs and practices. Its purpose is to assist in practical decision-making and program implementation by gathering information on justice-related programs and practices and reviewing evaluation and meta analysis research against standard criteria. In FY 2020, 46 programs and 18 practices received ratings based on CrimeSolutions review.

Building the Nation's Criminal Justice Research Infrastructure

Two pillars of the nation's criminal justice research infrastructure are information and people. NIJ is committed to supporting both.

Information Infrastructure

Information — data, articles, and reports — generated by past research lays the foundation for future work, shows where there are gaps in our knowledge, and provides the foundation for the evidence-based decisions that are so critical to effective policy and practice. Through the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS) and the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data (NACJD), NIJ (and other components of the Office of Justice Programs) are committed to increasing the availability of research findings and data.

National Criminal Justice Reference Service. Established in 1972, NCJRS is a federally funded resource offering justice- and drug-related information to support research, policy, and program development worldwide. In FY 2020, 1,094 NIJ-funded resources were added to NCJRS, an increase over prior years fueled largely by the introduction of new tools used in the search for NIJ-funded resources published in the scientific literature.

National Archive of Criminal Justice Data. The central mission of NACJD is to facilitate and encourage research in the field of criminal justice through the sharing of data resources. NACJD provides computer-readable data for the quantitative study of crime and the criminal justice system, technical assistance in selecting data collections and the computer hardware and software for analyzing data efficiently and effectively, and training in quantitative methods of social science research to facilitate secondary analysis of criminal justice data.

NACJD routinely receives statistical data from NIJ and other U.S. Department of Justice program offices and agencies, including the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

In FY 2020, 76 NIJ-supported entries were added to the database.

Human Infrastructure

NIJ is committed to supporting new scholars, encouraging researchers from a broad array of disciplines to apply their work to issues of justice and victim services, and supporting practitioners eager to engage with research as both researchers and savvy consumers.

Research Fellowships

One of NIJ's goals is to increase the number of scientists who are aware of the challenges of crime and justice and are engaged in research to address those challenges. To meet that goal, NIJ funds the following fellowship programs.

The Graduate Research Fellowship program provides grants to accredited academic institutions to support outstanding doctoral students whose dissertation research is relevant to criminal justice. In FY 2020, NIJ combined the formerly separate STEM and social and behavioral science solicitations. The Graduate Research Fellowship supports students currently enrolled in a doctoral program in the sciences or engineering and students whose proposed dissertation research has demonstrable relevance to preventing and controlling crime or ensuring the fair and impartial administration of criminal justice in the United States. In FY 2020, NIJ awarded 26 [Graduate Research Fellowships](#) totaling \$2.85 million.

NIJ also provides funding to the American Academy for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Science & Technology Policy Fellowship program. AAAS created this program to provide opportunities to outstanding scientists and engineers to learn firsthand about policymaking while contributing their knowledge and analytical skills to the federal policymaking process. Fellows serve yearlong assignments in the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the federal government in Washington, DC. In FY 2020, NIJ provided \$487,893 to support the program.

Law Enforcement Advancing Data and Science (LEADS) Program

NIJ continues to support and expand the Law Enforcement Advancing Data and Science (LEADS) program, which is designed to increase the research capabilities of law enforcement officers and agencies. LEADS scholars are selected in three categories: law enforcement officers, academics, and civilians. In FY 2020, NIJ supported a total of 20 LEADS scholars.

The LEADS program is supported as part of the NIJ Criminal Justice Requirements and Resources Consortium, which is funded through cooperative agreements awarded by NIJ to the RAND Corporation and the International Association of Chiefs of Police. [Read about the LEADS scholars.](#)

Highlights of Dissemination

NIJ accomplishes its mission through the “Listen, Learn, Inform” model — we “listen” to the needs of the field; “learn” ways to meet those needs by funding research, development, and evaluation projects; and then “inform” the field of what we learned. NIJ informs the field through the development of publications and other products to give policymakers and practitioners the best available evidence to make decisions and build knowledge that advances both science and practice.

Articles and Publications

The *NIJ Journal* features articles to help criminal justice policymakers and practitioners stay informed about new developments. The *NIJ Journal* presents research-based information that can help inform policy decisions and improve understanding of the criminal justice system. In FY 2020, NIJ published seven *NIJ Journal* articles in an issue focused on violent crime.

NIJ regularly publishes articles on NIJ.ojp.gov that summarize the results of completed research projects spanning the social, physical, and forensic sciences. Each article aims to communicate findings to practitioners and policymakers in the field. In FY 2020, NIJ released 36 articles.

In addition to publishing articles in the *NIJ Journal* and on its website, NIJ also places articles in prominent trade magazines that serve critical audiences. In FY 2020, NIJ placed six articles in trade association publications.

NIJ’s *Notes From the Field* presents lessons learned by law enforcement executives and other on-the-ground leaders who have years of experience and think deeply about law enforcement issues. In FY 2020, NIJ released 21 installments in this series.

NIJ also produced a variety of publications and other reports along with videos ranging from short interviews to recorded webinars.

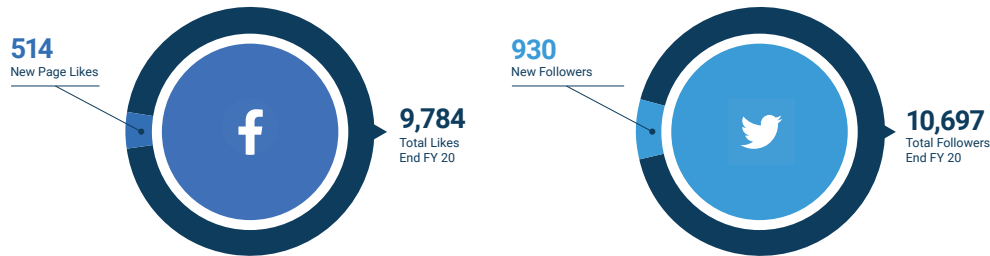
Events and Training

NIJ and our grantees host and sponsor training and events focused on relevant and timely issues in criminal justice and technology research.

The NIJ Forensic Technology Center of Excellence, funded under a cooperative agreement with RTI International, hosted 32 events in FY 2020. These events focused on topics of interest spanning the forensic sciences. Events are held live in a virtual environment and then made available on demand. See the full list of available events on the [Forensic Technology Center of Excellence](#) website.

Social Media

How Many People Connected With NIJ on Social Media?



How Many People Saw NIJ's Social Media Posts?

Facebook

255

Total Posts

95,916

Total People Reached

376

Average People Reached Per Post FY 20

612

Average People Reached Per Post FY 19

-38.6%

Reach Change
Compared With FY 19

Twitter

716

Total Posts

1,217,447

Total People Reached

1,700

Average People Reached Per Post FY 20

1,612

Average People Reached Per Post FY 19

+5.5%

Reach Change
Compared With FY 19

How Did People Engage With NIJ on Social Media?

Facebook

4,720

Total Interactions FY 20

8,476

Total Interactions FY 19

-44.3%

Change Compared with FY 19

Twitter

8,717

Total Interactions FY 20

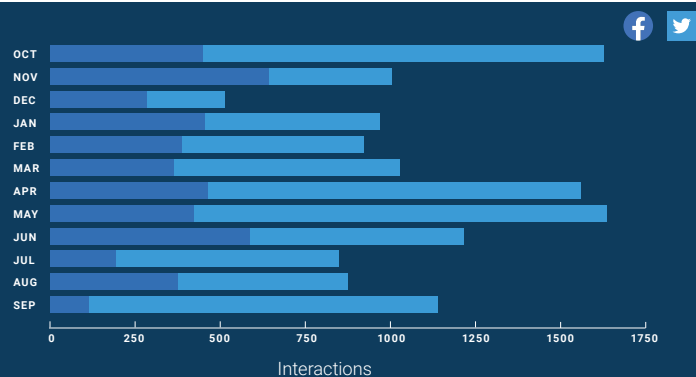
7,698

Total Interactions FY 19

+13.2%

Change Compared with FY 19

Interactions by Month



Appendix: Financial Data

Exhibit 1: Funds Made Available Pursuant to P.L. 116-93

Type of Funds	Enacted Amount
Research, Evaluation, and Statistics (RES)	
Research, Development, and Evaluation Programs (NIJ “Base” Appropriation)	\$27,000,000
Research on School Violence	\$1,000,000
Research on Protecting Children Against Online Predatory Behavior (National Juvenile Online Victimization Studies)	\$ -
National Center for Restorative Justice	\$ -
National Study of Law Enforcement Responses to Sex Trafficking of Minors	\$1,000,000
National Center on Forensics	\$2,000,000
Domestic Radicalization Research	\$5,000,000
Total Research, Evaluation, and Statistics (RES) Programs	\$36,000,000
Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) Programs Transferred to OJP	
Research and Evaluation on Violence Against Women	\$2,500,000
Total OVW Programs Transferred to OJP	\$2,500,000
State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance	
National Missing and Unidentified Persons System	\$2,400,000
DNA-Related and Other Forensic Programs and Activities	\$33,335
Total State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance	\$2,433,335
Total Enacted	\$40,933,335
Transfers	
RES Set-Aside 2% for Research and Statistics – Transfer into Research, Evaluation, and Statistics (RES) Programs	\$21,455,000
Total Transfers	\$21,455,000
Carry-Forward, Reimbursable Agreements, and Intra-Agency Agreements	
Carry-Forward Funds	\$23,082,110
Reimbursable Agreements	\$2,016,459
Intra-Agency Agreements	\$25,937,914
Total Carry-Forward, Reimbursable Agreements, and Intra-Agency Agreements	\$51,036,483
Total Funding Available for Programs and Activities	\$113,424,818
Assessments	
Management and Administration Assessment – 6.8%	\$(2,855,123)

Type of Funds	Enacted Amount
Section 215 Set-Aside for Research, Evaluation, and Statistics Assessment – 2%	\$(48,000)
Total Assessments	\$(2,903,123)
Total Available After Assessments	\$110,521,695

Exhibit 2: Allocation of Funds

Type of Activity	Subcategory	Percentage	FY 2020 Amount
Social Science	Research and Evaluation	47.5%	\$53,844,388
	Technical Assistance	0.0%	\$0
Science and Technology	Research and Development	5.5%	\$6,235,291
	Technology Assistance/Test and Evaluation	1.3%	\$2,097,000
Investigative and Forensic Science	Analysis and Capacity Enhancement	0.0%	\$0
	Research and Development	18.4%	\$20,840,232
	Training and Technical Assistance	3.2%	\$3,649,993
Dissemination/Outreach/Program Support		15.9%	\$18,006,164
Total		92.3%	\$104,673,068
Section 215 Set-Aside for Research, Evaluation, and Statistics Assessment		0.0%	\$48,000
OJP Management and Administration		2.5%	\$2,855,123
Carryover (including reimbursements)		5.2%	\$5,848,627
Total		7.7%	\$8,751,750
		100.0%	\$113,424,818

Exhibit 3: Solicitations

FY 2020 Solicitation	Awards Made	Value of Awards
Assessing the Effectiveness of the Second Chance Act Grant Program: A Phased Evaluation Approach, Fiscal Year 2020	1	\$1,142,634
*Establishment of a National Center on Restorative Justice, Fiscal Year 2019	0	\$0
**DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction (CEBR) Program (Formula)	0	\$0
Graduate Research Fellowship, Fiscal Year 2020	26	\$2,850,786
Investigator-Initiated Research and Evaluation of Firearms Violence, Fiscal Year 2020	2	\$804,432
Longitudinal Research on Delinquency and Crime, Fiscal Year 2020	3	\$3,373,433
National Youth Gang Survey, Fiscal Year 2020	1	\$996,640
NIJ Fiscal Year 2020 Continuations	3	\$4,776,354
NIJ National Center on Forensics, Fiscal Year 2020	1	\$2,000,000
NIJ Nonsolicited Applications, FY 2020	12	\$5,026,748
**Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program - COMPETITIVE	0	\$0
**Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program - FORMULA	0	\$0
**Postconviction Testing of DNA Evidence	0	\$0
**Prosecuting Cold Cases using DNA and Other Forensic Technologies	0	\$0
Research and Development in Forensic Science for Criminal Justice Purposes, Fiscal Year 2020	36	\$16,896,429
Research and Evaluation for the Testing and Interpretation of Physical Evidence in Publicly Funded Forensic Laboratories, Fiscal Year 2020	5	\$1,188,390
Research and Evaluation in Safety, Health, and Wellness in Criminal Justice System, Fiscal Year 2020	5	\$4,023,939
Research and Evaluation of Domestic Terrorism Prevention, Fiscal Year 2020	3	\$2,258,599
Research and Evaluation of Technology-Facilitated Abuse for Criminal Justice Purposes, Fiscal Year 2020	3	\$1,806,025
Research and Evaluation of Victims of Crime, Fiscal Year 2020	6	\$4,229,841
Research and Evaluation on Drugs and Crime, Fiscal Year 2020	2	\$1,449,786
Research and Evaluation on Policing, Fiscal Year 2020	4	\$2,440,337
Research and Evaluation on Promising Reentry Initiatives, Fiscal Year 2020	3	\$5,288,134
Research and Evaluation on School Safety, Fiscal Year 2020	7	\$5,593,109
Research and Evaluation on Trafficking in Persons, Fiscal Year 2020	4	\$2,568,008

Exhibit 3: Solicitations (continued)

FY 2020 Solicitation	Awards Made	Value of Awards
Research and Evaluation on Violence Against Women, Fiscal Year 2020	4	\$2,019,582
Research into Immigration and Crime, Fiscal Year 2020	2	\$1,362,119
Research on Juvenile Reoffending, Fiscal Year 2020	3	\$1,229,165
Research on Law Enforcement Responses to Sex Trafficking of Minors, Fiscal Year 2020	1	\$991,015
Research on the Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation of Elderly Individuals, Fiscal Year 2020	2	\$1,468,696
Review and Revalidation of the First Step Act Risk Assessment Tool, Fiscal Year 2020	2	\$96,200
**Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence – Inventory, Tracking, and Reporting	0	\$0
**Strengthening the Medical Examiner-Coroner System Program	0	\$0
Tribal-Researcher Capacity Building Grants Solicitation, Fiscal Year 2020	1	\$99,637
TOTAL	143	\$78,122,658

*This program was transferred to the Bureau of Justice Assistance in FY 2020.

**The awards made under this solicitation are now being managed by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. To see the complete list of awards, visit [BJA.ojp.gov](https://www.bja.ojp.gov).

