

National Institute of Corrections

Solicitation for a Cooperative Agreement - Vicarious Trauma  
Affecting Staff in Correctional Settings

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

ACTION: Solicitation for a Cooperative Agreement

SUMMARY: The National Institute of Corrections (NIC) is soliciting proposals from organizations, groups, or individuals to enter into a cooperative agreement for an 18-month period to begin no later than September 15, 2013. Work under this cooperative agreement will extend the research and promising practices regarding the identification of and strategies for addressing vicarious trauma with staff who work with justice-involved populations. Please note vicarious trauma may also be referred to as secondary trauma, compassion fatigue, or secondary traumatic stress. When this topic is considered, it is often thought of as being confined to staff who work within institutional settings (jails, prisons and community residential settings); however, staff who work in community settings, particularly probation and parole, also experience vicarious trauma, albeit, with some variations on the type of exposure. This project will be a collaborative venture with the NIC Community Services Division.

NIC OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: 13CS23. This number should appear in the reference line in your cover letter, on Standard Form 424 in section 11 with the title of your proposal, and in the right justified header of your proposal.

NUMBER OF AWARDS AND FUNDS AVAILABLE: Under this solicitation, one award will be made. The total amount of funds available under this solicitation is \$160,000.00. Funds awarded under this solicitation may be used only for activities directly related to the project as described herein unless otherwise amended in writing by NIC.

APPLICATIONS: All applicants must be submitted electronically via <http://www.grants.gov>. Hand delivered, mailed, faxed, or emailed applications will not be accepted.

DATE: Application must be submitted before midnight on Wednesday, August 7, 2013.

AUTHORITY: Public Law 93-415

ELIGIBILITY OF APPLICANTS: An eligible applicant is any public or private agency, educational institution, organization, individual or team with expertise in the described areas.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background: Correctional systems are responsible for managing populations often originating from extremely chaotic and dysfunctional settings, a factor frequently related to offenders' criminal justice involvement, which may in turn

intensify negative behaviors or contribute to personal self-injurious actions.

Correctional professionals are well-versed in managing threatening situations in facilities and in community-based settings, are trained in policy and procedure to ensure the safety and security of staff and offenders, and are responsible for maintaining the safety of the physical environment. Rarely addressed is the effect of persistent exposure to the day-to-day challenges of correctional work, including its effect on individual health and wellness, increased labor costs, and the potential for compromised correctional practice.

If this topic is addressed within an organization, it is often referred to as "burnout," an occupational hazard that is simply part of the culture or a weakness on the part of the affected individual. It's a taboo subject that, if acknowledged, is perceived to weaken the structure of an agency or to raise complex issues that an organization is not comfortable with or prepared to deal with. A correctional environment is only as safe and secure as the individuals who operate it, and to manage a healthy environment in which the potential for behavioral improvement and risk reduction is present, attention must be given to promote the health and wellness of the staff and the working environment.

Scope of Work: At a minimum, an applicant's proposal should (1) reflect a solid understanding of the topic both within correctional institutional settings and community-based correctional environments; (2) state why this topic is not well understood, generally addressed within organizations, or dealt with as solely an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) issue; (3) demonstrate experience in working within correctional settings and familiarity with the challenges faced by staff within institutional and community-based correctional settings; (4) have experience in providing technical assistance and discuss how the scope of work will be determined; (5) demonstrate experience in conducting training with particular attention to train-the-trainer events; (6) discuss and reference examples of materials that were developed for training purposes; and (7) demonstrate how research and promising practice with regard to vicarious trauma will be incorporated into the deliverables through development of a final summary report and presentation on the overall project to NIC executive staff. The awardee must participate in an initial meeting with designated NIC staff for a project overview and preliminary planning session. The awardee must have meeting facilitation skills and develop and disseminate a record of followup meetings with participants, including NIC staff.

Deliverables: Under this cooperative agreement the awardee will engage in the following:

(1) Through coordination with NIC, determine subject matter experts, develop a plan to facilitate a project planning session, and produce a meeting record; (2) Enhance the annotated bibliography and NIC website, which is currently under development, with relevant research and promising practices, with particular focus on the effect of vicarious trauma within community corrections; (3) Provide 6 to 10 technical assistance (TA) events. Note all tasks related to coordinating and delivering TA, including followup coaching, if appropriate, and preparation of a final report summarizing the assistance and recommendations to the requesting site; and (4) Prepare a final report that reflects the overall work that was carried out as required in this solicitation as well as quarterly reports through the duration of this cooperative agreement.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: All technical or programmatic questions concerning this announcement should be directed to Maureen Buell, Correctional Program Specialist, National Institute of Corrections who may be reached by email at [mbuell@bop.gov](mailto:mbuell@bop.gov). In addition to the direct reply, all questions and responses will be posted on NIC's website at [www.nicic.gov](http://www.nicic.gov) for public review (the names or affiliations 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.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS: Application Requirements:

Applications should be typed, double spaced, in 12-point font, and reference the project by the "NIC Opportunity Number" 13CS23 and title in this announcement, "Vicarious Trauma Affecting Staff in Correctional Settings." 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 concisely written program narrative, not to exceed 30 numbered pages, in response to the statement of work, and a detailed budget with a budget narrative explaining projected costs. Applicants may submit a description of the project teams' qualifications and expertise relevant to the project, but should not attach lengthy resumes. Attachments to the proposal describing your organization or examples of other past work beyond those specifically requested above are discouraged. These attachments should not exceed 5MB.

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://nicic.gov/Downloads/General/certif-frm.pdf>)

Failure to supply all required forms with the application package may result in disqualification of the application from consideration.

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 System for Award Management (SAM).

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, you would dial 1-866-705-5711 and select option 1).

Registration in the SAM can be done online at the SAM website: <https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/> .

REVIEW CONSIDERATIONS: Applications received under this announcement will be subject to the NIC Review Process. Proposals which fail to provide sufficient information to

allow evaluation under the criteria below may be judged non-responsive and disqualified.

The criteria for the evaluation of each application will be as follows:

Programmatic (40%)

Are all of the project tasks adequately discussed? Is there a clear statement of how each task will be accomplished, to include the overall project goal(s), major tasks to achieve the goal(s), the strategies to be employed in completing the tasks, required staffing, and other required resources? Are there any approaches, techniques, or design aspects proposed that are new to NIC and will enhance the project?

Organizational (35%)

Do the proposed project staff members possess the skills, knowledge, and expertise necessary to complete the tasks listed under the scope of work? Does the applicant organization, group, or individual have the organizational capacity to complete all project tasks? Does the proposal contain project management and staffing plans that are realistic and sufficient to complete the project within the project time frame?

Project Management/Administration (25%)

Does the applicant identify reasonable objectives and/or milestones that reflect the key tasks, and measures to track

progress? If consultants and/or partnerships are proposed, is there a reasonable justification for their inclusion in the project, and a clear structure to ensure effective coordination? Is the proposed budget realistic, does it provide a sufficient cost detail/narrative, and does it represent good value relative to the anticipated results?

**SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS:** Documents or other media that are produced under this award must follow these guidelines: Prior to the preparation of the final draft of any document or other media, the awardee must consult with NIC's Writer/Editor concerning the acceptable formats for manuscript submissions and the technical specifications for electronic media. For all awards in which a document will be a deliverable, the awardee must follow the guidelines listed herein, as well as follow the Guidelines for Preparing and Submitting Manuscripts for Publication as found in the "General Guidelines for Cooperative Agreements," which can be found on our website at [www.nicic.gov/cooperativeagreements](http://www.nicic.gov/cooperativeagreements).

All final documents and other materials submitted under this project must meet the federal government's requirement for Section 508 accessibility, including those provisions outlined in 1194 Subpart B, Technical Provisions, Subpart C, Functional Performance Criteria; and Subpart D, Documentation and Support, NIC's government product accessibility template (see

[www.nicic.gov/section508](http://www.nicic.gov/section508)) outlines the agency's minimum criteria for meeting this requirement; a completed form attesting to the accessibility of project deliverables should accompany all submissions.

Note Concerning Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:

The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) should be entered into box 10 of the SF 424. The CFDA number for this solicitation is 16.601 - Training and Staff Development. You are subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372 and should check box b under section 16.

Robert M. Brown, Jr.

Acting Director, National Institute of Corrections