

The [National Institute of Corrections](#) (NIC) is seeking applications for funding under the Fiscal Year (FY) 2016. Revalidation of an agency's objective classification system. Work in this cooperative agreement will result in the revision, conversion and or development of instructional materials for the existing document entitled "Revalidating External Prison Classification Systems". This document will be used to build competency and capacity within an agency and the overall field of corrections.

## NIC FY 2016 Classification Instrument Revalidation for NIC Prisons Division

### Eligibility

NIC invites applications from nonprofit organizations (including faith-based, community, and tribal organizations), for-profit organizations (including tribal for-profit organizations), and institutions of higher education (including tribal institutions of higher education). Recipients, including for-profit organizations, must agree to waive any profit or fee for services.

NIC welcomes applications that involve two or more entities; however, one eligible entity must be the applicant and the others must be proposed as sub-recipients. The applicant must be the entity with primary responsibility for administering the funding and managing the entire program.

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

For additional eligibility information, see Section [C. Eligibility Information](#).

### Deadline

Applicants must register with [Grants.gov](#) prior to submitting an application. NIC encourages applicants to **register several weeks before** the application submission deadline. In addition, NIC urges applicants to **submit applications 72 hours** prior to the application due date. All applications are due to be submitted and in receipt of a successful validation message in Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. eastern time on **September 12, 2016**.

For additional information, see [How To Apply](#) in [Section D Application and Submission Information](#).

## Contact Information

For programmatic questions concerning this solicitation contact **Wayne Hill** Correctional Program Specialist, National Institute of Corrections [W Hill@bop.gov](mailto:W Hill@bop.gov) Responses to programmatic questions will be posted on [NIC's](#) website for public review. The website will be updated regularly and postings will remain on the website until the closing date of this solicitation.

For technical assistance with submitting an application, contact the Grants.gov Customer Support Hotline at 800-518-4726 or 606-545-5035, or via e-mail to [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov). Hotline hours of operation are 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, except federal holidays.

Applicants who experience unforeseen Grants.gov technical issues beyond their control that prevent them from submitting their application by the deadline must e-mail the NIC at [BOP-NIC/General@bop.gov](mailto:BOP-NIC/General@bop.gov) **within 24 hours after the application deadline** and request approval to submit their application. Additional information on reporting technical issues is found under "Experiencing Unforeseen Grants.gov Technical Issues" in the [How To Apply](#) section.

Grants.gov number assigned to this announcement: **16PR02**

Release date: July 15, 2016

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# NIC FY 2016 Classification Instrument Revalidation for NIC Prisons Division (CFDA # 16.601)

## A. Program Description

### Overview

For the past several years, there has been increasing requests from correctional agencies for the National Institute of Corrections to render technical assistance in the area of revalidation of classification instruments. Many correctional systems have found themselves in situations of overcrowding and managing diverse populations. To add to their distress, in light of dwindling budgets, cuts have been made in areas that historically have aided agencies in the reduction of sentences such as institutional jobs, treatment programs and education beyond their high school equivalency. All of these factors combined have, in some cases, diminished the power of the classification instrument to predict an inmate's threat to the safety and security of an institution. In an attempt not to "override" and move an offender, agencies now find themselves looking inward to the process of classification.

Recognizing these needs, the National Institute of Corrections is seeking practitioners who have the ability to design a document to include a workbook which would allow an agency to enhance their ability to make those critical decisions about an offender's ability to transition through the correctional system.

### Program-Specific Information

Between January 2002 and July 2004, four (4) documents were developed in the area of classification for correctional agencies. They were: Revalidating External Prison Classification Systems, Internal Prison Classification Systems, Objective Prison Classification and Enhancing Prison Classification Systems. While these documents provided a wealth of knowledge in the area of classification, agencies still were not comfortable with the idea of revalidating their own classification instruments. While revalidation is both an art and a science, agencies will need a handbook/workbook to walk them through each step of the revalidation process to ensure they gain the desired outcome.

### Goals, Objectives, and Deliverables

The goal of this project is to update the manual entitled "Revalidating External Prison Classification Systems" using evidence based research to improve the implementation of the manual. As a result of the updated manual, a workbook will also be completed to accompany the manual. This workbook will provide instructions, applications and examples to enhance an agency's ability to revalidate their classification system/instrument.

A proposal responsive to this solicitation should, at a minimum, identify a plan to address the scope and timeframe of the project, determine the methodology and resources necessary to deliver the work products, and identify a team that includes members with experience and subject matter expertise in designing and developing instructional

materials for adult learners. The qualified applicant team will be able to:

Consult with the Prisons Division team leader on the recommended revisions and draft a revision plan for the work to be completed;

Edit/update the current document “Revalidating External Prison Classification Systems”

Develop an accompanying workbook which will provide users a step-by-step process of how to revalidate a classification instrument

The awardee will provide technical assistance to 3 states within a region to revalidate their external classification systems to enhance and facilitate the management, safety and security of their prison systems. This technical assistance will provide the criteria for the revalidation process from which the manual and workbook will be derived.

The awardee will work in conjunction with NIC Project Manager to identify and select the agencies for the revalidation of their classification system/instrument.

The awardee will assist the states with implementing the revisions to the classification process

The awardee will plan, conduct, and evaluate the outcomes and impact of a pilot training in Aurora, Colorado for 15 (fifteen) classification directors

The awardee will revise and update written documentation of classification policies, procedures, and instructions;

**Deliverables.** In addition to the strategy and content of the program design, the successful applicant must complete the following deliverables during the project period. The program narrative should reflect how the applicant will accomplish these activities.

- Develop an assessment plan
- Create a pre-survey to be distributed to state correctional agencies in reference to their current classification instrument to include the dates of their last revalidation process
- Revalidate the classification system
- Plan for implementation
- Train staff, develop materials and test reliability
- Provide detailed report to document the revalidation along with modifications
- Pilot the preliminary classification instrument at the 3 designated sites
- Create a comprehensive evaluation to be distributed to the participating agencies
- Provide classroom training for the classification directors.
- Provide the manual, workbook and any other publications in Word, Adobe and on a flash drive

**Evidence-based programs or practices.** NIC strongly emphasizes the use of data and evidence in policy making and program development.

- improving the quality of learning and performance materials NIC generates

- integrating evidence into instructional practice within NIC and the corrections field
- improving the translation of evidence into practice.

NIC considers programs and practices to be evidence-based when their effectiveness has been demonstrated by causal evidence, generally obtained through one or more outcome evaluations. Causal evidence documents a relationship between an activity or intervention (including technology) and its intended outcome, including measuring the direction and size of a change, and the extent to which a change may be attributed to the activity or intervention. Causal evidence depends on the use of scientific methods to rule out, to the extent possible, alternative explanations for the documented change. The strength of causal evidence, based on the factors described above, will influence the degree to which NIC considers a program or practice to be evidence-based.

### **Additional resources.**

**NIC training and technical assistance awardee standards.** NIC has developed the [ TA Handbook] to promote among providers the consistency and quality of NIC-sponsored training and technical assistance and to advance common expectations of performance excellence. The standards present minimum expectations that providers must meet for effective practice in the planning, coordination, delivery, and evaluation of training.

## **B. Federal Award Information**

NIC expects to make one award for as much as **\$202,000** for a 12-month project period, beginning on September 12, 2016.

If the awardee demonstrates significant progress toward implementing project activities and achieving project goals, NIC may, in certain cases, provide supplemental funding for FY 2017 and FY 2018 to the awardee. With the supplemental funding, the project period will be extended for two additional 12-month increments for an overall project period of 36 months. Important considerations in decisions regarding supplemental funding include, among other factors, the availability of funding, strategic priorities, assessment of the quality of the management of the award (for example, timeliness and quality of progress reports), and assessment of the progress of the work funded under the award.

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

**Type of award.** NIC expects to make an award from this solicitation in the form of a cooperative agreement which is a particular type of grant used when NIC expects to have ongoing substantial involvement in award activities. Substantial involvement includes direct oversight and involvement with the grantee organization in implementation of the grant but does not involve day-to-day project management. See [Administrative, National Policy, and Other Legal Requirements](#), under Section [F. Federal Award Administration](#), for details regarding the federal involvement anticipated under an award from this solicitation.

**Financial management and system of internal controls.** If selected for funding, the award recipient must:

- (a) Establish and maintain effective internal control over the federal award that provides reasonable assurance that the nonfederal entity is managing the federal award in compliance with federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the federal award. These internal controls should be in compliance with guidance in “Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government” issued by the Comptroller General of the United States and the “Internal Control Integrated Framework”, issued by the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission (COSO).
- (b) Comply with federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the federal awards.
- (c) Evaluate and monitor the nonfederal entity's compliance with statute, regulations, and the terms and conditions of federal awards.
- (d) Take prompt action when instances of noncompliance are identified, including noncompliance identified in audit findings.
- (e) Take reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other information the federal awarding agency or pass-through entity designates as sensitive or the nonfederal entity considers sensitive consistent with applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding privacy and obligations of confidentiality.

## Budget Information

**Pre-Agreement Cost Approvals.** NIC does not typically approve pre-agreement costs; an applicant must request and obtain the prior written approval of NIC for all such costs. If approved, pre-agreement costs could be paid from grant funds consistent with a grantee's approved budget, and under applicable cost standards. However, all such costs prior to award and prior to approval of the costs are incurred at the sole risk of an applicant.

Generally, no applicant should incur project costs *before* submitting an application requesting federal funding for those costs. Should there be extenuating circumstances that appear to be appropriate for NIC's consideration as pre-agreement costs, the applicant should contact the point of contact listed on the title page of this announcement for details on the requirements for submitting a written request for approval.

**Limitation on use of award funds for employee compensation; waiver.** With respect to any award of more than \$250,000 made under this solicitation, recipients may not use federal funds to pay total cash compensation (salary plus cash bonuses) to any employee of the award recipient at a rate that exceeds 110 percent of the maximum annual salary payable to a member of the Federal Government's Senior Executive Service (SES) at an agency with a Certified SES Performance Appraisal System for that year. The 2015 salary table for SES employees is available at the Office of Personnel Management [website](#). Note: A recipient may compensate an employee at a greater rate, provided the amount in excess of this compensation limitation is paid with non-federal funds. (Any such additional compensation will not be considered matching funds where match requirements apply.)

## C. Eligibility Information

For additional eligibility information, see the title page.

Cost sharing or match requirement. For additional information on cost sharing or match requirement, see Section [B. Federal Award Information](#).

**Limit on number of application submissions.** If an applicant submits multiple versions of the same application, NIC will review only the most recent system-validated version submitted. For more information on system-validated versions, see [How To Apply](#).

## D. Application and Submission Information

### What an Application Should Include

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

Moreover, applicants should anticipate that applications that are determined to be nonresponsive to the scope of the solicitation, do not request funding within the funding limit, or that do not include the application elements that NIC has designated to be critical, will neither proceed to peer review nor receive further consideration. Under this solicitation, NIC has designated the following application elements as critical: Program Narrative, Budget Detail Worksheet or Budget Narrative.

Applicants should review the “Note on File Names and File Types” under [How To Apply](#) to be sure that they submit their applications in the permitted formats.

*NIC strongly recommends that applicants use appropriately descriptive file names (e.g., “Program Narrative,” “Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative,” “Timelines,” “Memoranda of Understanding,” “Résumés”) for all attachments. Also, NIC recommends that applicants include résumés in a single file.*

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

The SF-424 is a required standard form used as a cover sheet for submission of pre-applications, applications, and related information. This form can be found on Grants.gov and NIC’s website [www.nicic.gov](http://www.nicic.gov).

**Intergovernmental review.** This funding opportunity (program) **is not** subject to [Executive Order 12372](#). (In completing the SF-424, applicants are to make the appropriate selection in response to question 19 to indicate that the “Program is not covered by E.O. 12372.”)

### 2. Project Abstract

Applications should include a high-quality project abstract that summarizes the proposed

project in 400 words or less. Project abstracts should be—

- written for a general public audience;
- submitted as a separate attachment with “Project Abstract” as part of its file name; and
- single-spaced, using a standard 12-point font (Times New Roman) with 1-inch margins.

As a separate attachment, the project abstract will **not** count against the page limit for the program narrative.

The abstract should briefly describe the project’s purpose, the population to be served, and the activities that the applicant will implement to achieve the project’s goals and objectives. The abstract should describe how the applicant will measure progress toward these goals.

### **3. Program Narrative**

Applicants must submit a program narrative that presents a detailed description of the purpose, goals, objectives, strategies, design, and management of the proposed program. The program narrative should be double-spaced with 1-inch margins, not exceeding 30 pages of 8½ by 11 inches, and use a standard 12-point font, preferably Times New Roman. Pages should be numbered “1 of 30,” etc. The tables, charts, pictures, etc., including all captions, legends, keys, subtext, etc., may be single-spaced and will count in the 30-page limit. Material required under the Budget and Budget Narrative and Additional Attachments sections will not count toward the program narrative page count. Applicants may provide bibliographical references as a separate attachment that will not count toward the 30-page program narrative limit. If the program narrative fails to comply with these length-related restrictions, NIC may consider such noncompliance in peer review and in final award decisions.

The program narrative should address the following selection criteria: (1) statement of the problem; (2) goals, objectives, and performance measures; (3) program design and implementation; and (4) capabilities/competencies. The applicant should clearly delineate the connections between and among each of these sections. For example, the applicant should derive the goals and objectives directly from the problems to be addressed. Similarly, the project design section should clearly explain how the program’s structure and activities will accomplish the goals and objectives identified in the previous section.

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

#### **a. Statement of the problem.**

Applicants should describe any research or evaluation studies that relate to the problem and contribute to the applicant’s understanding of its causes and potential solutions. While NIC expects applicants to review the research literature for relevant studies, they should also explore whether unpublished local sources of research or evaluation data are available.

#### **b. Goals, objectives, and performance measures.** Applicants should describe the goals of the proposed training and technical assistance program and identify its

objectives. When formulating the program's goals and objectives, applicants should be cognizant of the performance measures that NIC will require successful applicants to provide.

**Goals.** Applicants should describe the program's intent to deliver training and technical assistance, as described in the previous section and outline the project's goals.

**Program objectives.** Applicants should explain how the program will accomplish its goals. Objectives are specific, quantifiable statements of the project's desired results. They should be clearly linked to the training and technical assistance strategy identified in the preceding section and measurable.

**Performance measures.** NIC requires all applicants to submit quarterly progress reports demonstrating progress towards completion of the work proposed under this solicitation. The performance measures for this solicitation are:

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Performance Measure(s)</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Data Grantee Provides</b>
Update the manual entitled "Revalidating External Classification Systems"	Select 3 states to use as test subjects. Conduct onsite assessments.	Analyze current practices/trends, develop practical resolutions, develop an implementation and evaluation plan. This will include interviews, observation and dialogue with the task force	Planning notes denoting the status of the process. Prove the evaluation plan once complete.
	Develop preliminary classification system.	Using the current data obtained from the agency, create an instrument using the information provided.	Data received, meeting notes, outline of instrument
	Design a prototype of the instrument and manual	Develop preliminary report, design prototype of instrument, manual and workbook, pilot the preliminary training module and present findings to task force and NIC representative	Planning notes, draft of prototype, manual and workbook.
Create a workbook to accompany the revalidating external classification system/manual	Ensure the content of the manual corresponds to the application of the workbook	Workbook should provide an evidence based approach to it's content. Workbook will compliment the manual to provide instructions on the application of revalidating the classification system/instrument	Planning notes providing best practices, provide supporting documentation to ensure accountability of workbook and manual
	Pilot the test instrument/ Prototype and workbook to ensure compatibility	Collaborate with staff in the locations to ensure teams are prepared for the pilot of the prototype instrument and workbook.	Identify the timeframe of the pilot, Data received as a result of the pilot, also a revalidated instrument.

	. Develop strategies to identify problems and discrepancies	Work with the agencies to identify strengths/weaknesses and other issues regarding the pilot test. Provide recommendations to correct any deficiencies discovered during the pilot of the instrument	Notes of findings and recommendation. Report should document each stage of the process s
	Provide revised manual and new workbook in final form	Present an updated and tested manual as well as new workbook in final form. Manual and workbook will have been piloted, staff trained and issues resolved	Final revalidated updated manual and workbook
Create a workbook to accompany the Revalidating External Classification System manual	Ensure the content of the manual corresponds to the application of the workbook.	Workbook should provide an evidence based approach to it's content. Workbook will complement the manual to provide instructions on the application of revalidating a classification system/instrument	Planning notes providing best practices, provide supporting documentation to ensure compatibility of workbook and manual
Provide classroom based training for up to 20 classification directors as a pilot on the application of the manual and workbook. This training will be 4-5 days in duration.	Classification directors will be able to revalidate their respective classification systems/instruments with the information from the manual and the directions of the workbook	Program intended to be a train-the-trainers style of learning environment to build capacity within the agency. There must be a component to ensure the transfer of knowledge among agency staff.	Provide a program overview, program review, training outline, lesson plan, participant manual, presentation slides for each module and supplemental materials.
Evaluate the effectiveness of the manual, workbook and practical application of the process.	Create the evaluation standards.	Evaluation should encompass the information gathering component. The evaluation should also determine if the modifications made to the pre-existing instrument accomplished the goals desired	Preview of the evaluation for comments

	Distribute approved evaluation standards to participating agencies	To determine if goals and objectives were met through this training	Copies of evaluation
	Collect and review comments from the evaluation.	To determine if training was successful for the participating agencies	Final evaluation and closeout comment.

NIC does not require applicants to submit performance measures data with their application. Performance measures are included as an alert that NIC will require successful applicants to submit specific data as part of their reporting requirements. For the application, applicants should indicate an understanding of these requirements and discuss how they will gather the required data, should they receive funding.

**c. Project design and implementation.** Applicants should detail how the project will operate throughout the funding period and describe the strategies that they will use to achieve the goals and objectives identified in the previous section. Applicants should describe how they will complete the deliverables stated in the Goals, Objectives, and Deliverables section on page 5. NIC encourages applicants to select evidence-based practices for their programs.

**Logic model.** Applicants should include a logic model that graphically illustrates how the performance measures are related to the project's problems, goals, objectives, and design. Applicants should submit the logic model (sample here) as a separate attachment, as stipulated in Additional Attachments.

**Timeline.** Applicants should submit a milestone chart that indicates major tasks associated with the goals and objectives of the project, assigns responsibility for each, and plots completion of each task by month or quarter for the duration of the award, using "Year 1," "Month 1," "Quarter 1," etc., not calendar dates.

Applicants should submit the timeline as a separate attachment, as stipulated in Additional Attachments, page 19. On receipt of an award, the recipient may revise the timeline, based on training and technical assistance that NIC will provide.

**d. Capabilities and competencies.** This section should describe the experience and capability of the applicant organization and any contractors or subgrantees that the applicant will use to implement and manage this effort and its associated federal funding, highlighting any previous experience implementing projects of similar design or magnitude. Applicants should highlight their experience/capability/capacity to manage subawards, including details on their system for fiscal accountability. Management and staffing patterns should be clearly connected to the project design described in the previous section. Applicants should describe the roles and responsibilities of project staff and explain the program's organizational structure and operations. Applicants should include a copy of an organizational chart showing how the organization operates, including who manages the finances; how the organization manages subawards, if there are any; and the management of the project proposed for funding.

**Letters of Support/Memoranda of Understanding.** If submitting a joint application, as described under Section C: Eligibility Information, page 1, applicants should provide signed and dated letters of support or memoranda of understanding for all key partners that include the following:

- expression of support for the program and a statement of willingness to participate and collaborate with it;

- description of the partner's current role and responsibilities in the planning process and expected responsibilities when the program is operational; and
- estimate of the percentage of time that the partner will devote to the planning and operation of the project.

#### 4. Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative

Applicants should provide a budget that (1) is complete, allowable, and cost-effective in relation to the proposed activities; (2) shows the cost calculations demonstrating how they arrived at the total amount requested; and (3) provides a brief supporting narrative to link costs with project activities. The budget should cover the entire award period.

- Budget Detail Worksheet.** Applicants that submit their budget in a different format should include the budget categories listed in the sample budget worksheet. The Budget Detail Worksheet should be broken down by year.
- Budget Narrative.** The budget narrative should thoroughly and clearly describe every category of expense listed in the Budget Detail Worksheet. NIC expects proposed budgets to be complete, cost effective, and allowable (e.g., reasonable, allocable, and necessary for project activities).

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

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

- Noncompetitive procurement contracts in excess of simplified acquisition threshold.** If an applicant proposes to make one or more non-competitive procurements of products or services, where the noncompetitive procurement will exceed the simplified acquisition threshold (also known as the small purchase threshold), which is currently set at \$150,000, the application should address the considerations outlined in the Financial Guide.
- Preagreement cost approvals.** For information on pre-agreement costs, see Section [B. Federal Award Information](#).

#### 5. Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)

Indirect costs are allowed only if the applicant has a current federally approved indirect

cost rate. (This requirement does not apply to units of local government.) Attach a copy of the federally approved indirect cost rate agreement to the application. Applicants that do not have an approved rate may request one through their cognizant federal agency, which will review all documentation and approve a rate for the applicant organization, or, if the applicant's accounting system permits, costs may be allocated in the direct cost categories.

## **6. Tribal Authorizing Resolution**

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

## **7. Applicant Disclosure of High Risk Status**

Applicants are to disclose whether they are currently designated high risk by another federal grant making agency. This includes any status requiring additional oversight by the federal agency due to past programmatic or financial concerns. If an applicant is designated high risk by another federal grant making agency, you must submit the following information to at the time of application submission:

- the federal agency that currently designated the applicant as high risk;
- date the applicant was designated high risk;
- the high risk point of contact name, phone number, and email address, from that federal agency; and
- reasons for the high risk status.

NIC seeks this information to ensure appropriate federal oversight of any grant award. Unlike the Excluded Parties List, this high risk information does not disqualify any organization from receiving an NIC award. However, additional oversight may be included, if necessary, in award documentation.

## **8. Additional Attachments**

Applicants should submit the following information, as stipulated in the cited pages, as attachments to their applications. While the materials listed below are not assigned specific point values, peer reviewers will, as appropriate, consider these items when rating applications. For example, reviewers will consider résumés and/or letters of support/ memoranda of understanding when assessing “capabilities/competencies.” Peer reviewers will not consider any additional information that the applicant submits other than that specified below.

- a. Applicant disclosure of pending applications.** Applicants are to disclose whether they have pending applications for federally funded grants or subgrants (including

cooperative agreements) that include requests for funding to support the same project being proposed under this solicitation and will cover the identical cost items outlined in the budget narrative and worksheet in the application under this solicitation. The disclosure should include both direct applications for federal funding (e.g., applications to federal agencies) and indirect applications for such funding (e.g., applications to state agencies that will subaward federal funds).

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

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

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

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

Applicants should include the table as a separate attachment, with the file name “Disclosure of Pending Applications,” to their application. Applicants that do not have pending applications as described above are to include a statement to this effect in the separate attachment page (e.g., “[Applicant Name on SF-424] does not have pending applications submitted within the last 12 months for federally funded grants or subgrants (including cooperative agreements) that include requests for funding to support the same project being proposed under this solicitation and will cover the identical cost items outlined in the budget narrative and worksheet in the application under this solicitation.”).

- b.** Logic model (see examples [here](#)).
- c.** Timeline or milestone chart.
- d.** Résumés of all key personnel.
- e.** Job descriptions outlining roles and responsibilities for all key positions.
- f.** Letters of support/memoranda of understanding from partner organizations.
- g.** Evidence of nonprofit status, e.g., a copy of the tax exemption letter from the Internal revenue Service, if applicable.

- h. Evidence of for-profit status, e.g., a copy of the articles of incorporation, if applicable.

**9. Financial Management and System of Internal Controls Questionnaire**

In accordance with 2 CFR 200.205, federal agencies must have in place a framework for evaluating the risks posed by applicants before they receive a federal award. To facilitate part of this risk evaluation, **all** applicants (other than an individual) are to download, complete, and submit this form.

**10. Disclosure of Lobbying Activities**

All applicants must complete this information. Applicants that expend any funds for lobbying activities are to provide the detailed information requested on the form Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL). Applicants that do not expend any funds for lobbying activities are to enter “N/A” in the text boxes for item 10 (“a. Name and Address of Lobbying Registrant” and “b. Individuals Performing Services”).

**How To Apply**

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

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

**Note on file names and file types.** Grants.gov only permits the use of certain specific characters in names of attachment files. Valid file names may include only the characters shown in the table below. Grants.gov is designed to reject any application that includes an attachment(s) with a file name that contains any characters not shown in the table below.

Characters	Special Characters		
Upper case (A – Z)	Parenthesis ( )	Curly braces { }	Square brackets [ ]
Lower case (a – z)	Ampersand (&)	Tilde (~)	Exclamation point (!)
Underscore ( _ )	Comma ( , )	Semicolon ( ; )	Apostrophe ( ' )
Hyphen ( - )	At sign (@)	Number sign (#)	Dollar sign (\$)
Space	Percent sign (%)	Plus sign (+)	Equal sign (=)

Period (.)	<b>When using the ampersand (&amp;) in XML, applicants must use the “&amp;#amp;#226;” format.</b>
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All applicants are required to complete the following steps:

NIC may not make a federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the federal awarding agency is ready to make a federal award, the federal awarding agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a federal award to another applicant.

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

Applicants cannot successfully submit their applications until Grants.gov receives the SAM registration information. **The information transfer from SAM to Grants.gov can take as long as 48 hours.** NIC recommends that the applicant register or renew registration with SAM as early as possible.

Access information about SAM registration procedures [here](#).

- 3. Acquire an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and a Grants.gov username and password.** Complete the AOR profile on Grants.gov and create a username and password. Applicant organizations must use their DUNS number to complete this step. For more information about the registration process, go [here](#).
- 4. Acquire confirmation for the AOR from the E-Business Point of Contact (E-Biz POC).** The E-Biz POC at the applicant organization must log into Grants.gov to confirm the applicant organization's AOR.

5. **Search for the funding opportunity on Grants.gov.** Use the following identifying information when searching for the funding opportunity on Grants.gov. The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance number for this solicitation is 16.601 and the funding opportunity number is NIC- **16PR02**.
6. **Submit a valid application consistent with this solicitation by following the directions in Grants.gov.** Within 24–48 hours after submitting the electronic application, the applicant should receive two notifications from Grants.gov. The first will confirm the receipt of the application and the second will state whether the application has been successfully validated, or rejected due to errors, with an explanation. It is possible to first receive a message indicating that the application is received and then receive a rejection notice a few minutes or hours later. Submitting well ahead of the deadline provides time to correct the problem(s) that caused the rejection. **Important:** NIC urges applicants to submit applications **at least 72 hours prior** to the application due date to allow time to receive validation messages or rejection notifications from Grants.gov, and to correct in a timely fashion any problems that may have caused a rejection notification.

Click [here](#) for further details on DUNS, SAM, and Grants.gov registration steps and timeframes.

**Note: Duplicate applications.** If an applicant submits multiple versions of the same application, NIC will review only the most recent system-validated version submitted. See Note on File Names and File Types under [How To Apply](#).

### **Experiencing Unforeseen Grants.gov Technical Issues**

Applicants that experience unforeseen Grants.gov technical issues beyond their control that prevent them from submitting their application by the deadline must contact the Grants.gov [Customer Support Hotline](#) or the [SAM Help Desk](#) to report the technical issue and receive a tracking number. The applicant must e-mail the Response Center at [BOP-NIC/General@bop.gov](mailto:BOP-NIC/General@bop.gov) **within 24 hours after the application deadline** and request approval to submit their application. The e-mail must describe the technical difficulties, and include a timeline of the applicant's submission efforts, the complete grant application, the applicant's DUNS number, and any Grants.gov Help Desk or SAM tracking number(s). **Note: NIC does not automatically approve requests.** After the program office reviews the submission and contacts the Grants.gov or SAM Help Desks to validate the reported technical issues, NIC will inform the applicant whether the request to submit a late application has been approved or denied. If NIC determines that the applicant failed to follow all required procedures, which resulted in an untimely application submission, NIC will deny the applicant's request to submit their application.

The following conditions are generally insufficient to justify late submissions:

- failure to register in SAM or Grants.gov in sufficient time;
- failure to follow Grants.gov instructions on how to register and apply as posted on its website;
- failure to follow each instruction in the NIC solicitation; and
- technical issues with the applicant's computer or information technology environment, including firewalls.

**Notifications regarding known technical problems with Grants.gov, if any, are posted**  
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on [NIC's web page](#).

## E. Application Review Information

### Selection Criteria

The following three (3) selection review criteria will be used to evaluate each application, with the different weight given to each based on the percentage value listed after each individual criteria. For example, the first criteria, Programmatic Review, is worth 40 percent of the entire score in the application review process.

1. Programmatic Review (40)
  - a. Project tasks adequately discussed?
  - b. Clear statement of how each task will be accomplished?
  - c. New approaches, techniques, or design aspects to enhance the project?
2. Organizational Review (35)
  - a. Skills of the proposed project members.
  - b. Organizational capacity to complete all project tasks.
  - c. Realistic and sufficient project and management plans to complete within the time frame.
3. Management/Administrative Review (25)
  - a. Identification of reasonable objectives.
  - b. Reasonable justification for inclusion of consultants or partnerships if used.
  - c. Realistic budget proposed.

See section What an Application Should Include for the criteria that the peer reviewers will use to evaluate applications.

### Review Process

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

Peer reviewers will review the applications submitted under this solicitation that meet basic minimum requirements. For purposes of assessing whether applicants have met basic minimum requirements, NIC screens applications for compliance with specified program requirements to help determine which applications should proceed to further consideration for award. Although program requirements may vary, the following are common requirements applicable to all solicitations for funding under NIC grant programs:

- Applications must be submitted by an eligible type of applicant.
- Applications must request funding within programmatic funding constraints (if applicable).
- Applications must be responsive to the scope of the solicitation.
- Applications must include all items designated as “critical elements”.
- Applicants will be checked against the General Services Administration's Excluded Parties List.

For a list of critical elements, see “What an Application Should Include” under [Section D. Application and Submission Information](#).

NIC may use internal peer reviewers, external peer reviewers, or a combination, to assess applications meeting basic minimum requirements on technical merit using the solicitation's selection criteria. An external peer reviewer is an expert in the subject matter of a given solicitation who is not a current DOJ employee. An internal reviewer is a current NIC employee who is well-versed or has expertise in the subject matter of this solicitation. A peer review panel will evaluate, score, and rate applications that meet basic minimum requirements. Peer reviewers' ratings and any resulting recommendations are advisory only, although their views are considered carefully. In addition to peer review ratings, considerations for award recommendations and decisions may include, but are not limited to, underserved populations, geographic diversity, strategic priorities, past performance under prior NIC and NIC awards, and available funding.

NIC reviews applications for potential discretionary awards to evaluate the risks posed by applicants before they receive an award. This review may include but is not limited to the following:

1. Financial stability and fiscal integrity.
2. Quality of management systems and ability to meet the management standards prescribed in the Financial Guide.
3. History of performance.
4. Reports and findings from audits.
5. The applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-Federal entities.
6. Proposed costs to determine if the Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative accurately explain project costs, and whether those costs are reasonable, necessary, and allowable under applicable federal cost principles and agency regulations.

Absent explicit statutory authorization or written delegation of authority to the contrary, all final award decisions will be made by the NIC Director, who may consider factors including, but not limited to, peer review ratings, underserved populations, geographic diversity, strategic priorities, past performance under prior NIC awards, and available funding when making awards.

## **F. Federal Award Administration Information**

### **Federal Award Notices**

NIC award notification will be sent from NIC's Office via FedEx or USPS within 45 days of the announcements close.

### **Administrative, National Policy, and Other Legal Requirements**

If selected for funding, in addition to implementing the funded project consistent with the agency-approved project proposal and budget, the recipient must comply with award terms and conditions, and other legal requirements, including but not limited to OMB or other federal regulations that will be included in the award, incorporated into the award by reference, or are otherwise applicable to the award. NIC strongly encourages prospective applicants to review the information pertaining to these requirements **prior** to submitting an application.

As stated above, NIC anticipates that it will make any award from this solicitation in the

form of a cooperative agreement. Cooperative agreement awards include standard “federal involvement” conditions that describe the general allocation of responsibility for execution of the funded program. Generally-stated, under cooperative agreement awards, responsibility for the day-to-day conduct of the funded project rests with the recipient in implementing the funded and approved proposal and budget, and the award terms and conditions.

Responsibility for oversight and redirection of the project, if necessary, rests with NIC. NIC's role will include the following tasks:

- reviewing and approving major work plans, including changes to such plans, and key decisions pertaining to project operations;
- reviewing and approving major project-generated documents and materials used in the provision of project services; and
- providing guidance in significant project planning meetings and participating in project sponsored training events or conferences.

In addition to any “federal involvement” condition(s), NIC cooperative agreement awards include a special condition specifying certain reporting requirements required in connection with conferences, meetings, retreats, seminars, symposium, training activities, or similar events funded under the award, consistent with NIC policy and guidance on conference approval, planning, and reporting.

### **General Information about Post-Federal Award Reporting Requirements**

Recipients must submit quarterly financial reports, semi-annual progress reports, final financial and progress reports, and, if applicable, an annual audit report in accordance with 2 CFR 200. Future awards and fund drawdowns may be withheld if reports are delinquent.

Special Reporting requirements may be required by NIC depending on the statutory, legislative or administrative obligations of the recipient or the program.

## **G. Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s)**

For Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s), see the title page.

For contact information for Grants.gov, see the title page.

## **H. Other Information**

### **Provide Feedback to NIC**

To assist NIC in improving its application and award processes, we encourage applicants to provide feedback on this solicitation, the application submission process, and/or the application review/peer review process. Provide feedback to [BOP-NIC/General@bop.gov](mailto:BOP-NIC/General@bop.gov)

**IMPORTANT:** This e-mail is for feedback and suggestions only. Replies are **not** sent from this mailbox. If you have specific questions on any program or technical aspect of the solicitation, **you must** directly contact the e-mail listed on the front of this solicitation document. These contacts are provided to help ensure that you can directly reach an

individual who can address your specific questions in a timely manner.

# Application Checklist

## NIC FY 2016 Classification Instrument Revalidation for NIC Prisons Division

This application checklist has been created to assist in developing an application.

### What an Applicant Should Do:

*Prior to Registering in Grants.gov:*

- Acquire a DUNS Number
- Acquire or renew registration with SAM

*To Register with Grants.gov:*

- Acquire AOR and Grants.gov username/password
- Acquire AOR confirmation from the E-Biz POC

*To Find Funding Opportunity:*

- Search for the Funding Opportunity on Grants.gov
- Download Funding Opportunity and Application Package
- Sign up for Grants.gov email notifications (optional)

*After application submission, receive Grants.gov email notifications that:*

- (1) application has been received,
- (2) application has either been validated or rejected

*If no Grants.gov receipt, and validation or error notifications are received:*

- contact NIC regarding experiencing technical difficulties

### Scope Requirement:

- The federal amount requested is within the allowable limit(s) of **\$202,000**.

### Eligibility Requirement:

- Nonprofit or for-profit organization, including tribal nonprofit or for-profit organization.
- Institution of higher education, including tribal institution of higher education.

### What an Application Should Include:

- Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
- Project Abstract
- Program Narrative
- Budget Detail Worksheet and Narrative
  - Employee Compensation Waiver request and justification
- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)
- Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)
- Tribal Authorizing Resolution (if applicable)
- Applicant Disclosure of High Risk Status
- Additional Attachments
  - Applicant Disclosure of Pending Applications
  - logic model
  - timeline or milestone chart
  - résumés of all key personnel
  - job descriptions outlining roles and responsibilities for all key positions
  - letters of support/memoranda of understanding from partner organizations
  - evidence of nonprofit status, e.g., a copy of the tax exemption letter from the Internal Revenue Service, if applicable.
  - evidence of for-profit status, e.g., a copy of the articles of incorporation, if applicable.
- Financial Management and System of Internal Controls

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