

**Webinar:**  
**NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO)**  
**Standards Development Organization Grants**  
**for Forensic Science Standards**  
**2023-NIST-SDO-01**

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The notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) is the official competition document. Nothing in this presentation is intended to contradict or supersede the NOFO in any way. Any questions regarding the terms of the competition must be resolved by referring to the NOFO.

# Agenda

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- Select Topics from Application and Submission Information
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# Overview - 1



- **Funding Opportunity Title:** Standards Development Organization Grants for Forensic Science Standards (SDO GFSS)
- **Funding Opportunity Number:** 2023-NIST-SDO-01
- **Dates:** Full Applications must be received at Grants.gov no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time, September 30, 2023. Applications received after this deadline will not be reviewed or considered. NIST expects to complete its review, selection of successful applicants, and award processing by December 2023. NIST expects the earliest start date for awards under this NOFO to be January 2024.
- **Funding Opportunity Description:** The NIST Standards Development Organization Grants for Forensic Science Standards (SDO GFSS) is seeking applications from eligible applicants to develop, approve, disseminate, maintain, and review forensic science voluntary consensus standards and best practices that shall be made available to the public free of charge.
- **Anticipated Amounts:** NIST anticipates funding up to five (5) awards in the approximate range of \$50,000 to \$500,000 per award, with a project performance period of up to one (1) year. NIST anticipates that a total of \$1,000,000 will be made available for this program. As discussed in Section II.2. of this NOFO, NIST may provide additional multiyear funding to awards made under this NOFO through continuation amendments on an annual basis for up to three additional years. *(additional details on slide 10 and NOFO section II.2)*

# Overview - 2



- **Eligibility:** Nongovernmental standards development organizations (including associations or technical societies), located in the United States or its territories, that plan, develop, establish, or coordinate voluntary consensus standards using a voluntary consensus standards development process and operate in conformity with the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Essential Requirements for American National Standards.
- **Cost Sharing Requirements:** Non-federal cost share is not required for awards issued pursuant to this NOFO but is encouraged. Applicants proposing to leverage NIST grant funding by contributing 25% or more of the total proposed project costs as non-federal cost share may receive a selection preference during NISTs competitive evaluation of grant applications. See Section III.2. of this NOFO for more information on non-federal cost share and Section V.2. of this NOFO for the Selection Factors for this competition.

# Program Description - Background



**Background:** The statutory authority for the NIST SDO GFSS is 15 U.S.C. §§ 272(b)(4), (10) and (13) and (c)(15), and 42 U.S.C. §18952.

Forensic science documentary standards are part of a Forensic Science Service Provider's (FSSP) quality system and serve as an anchor to build training programs, validation studies, protocols, and reporting/testimony guidance for the FSSP.

OSAC is a collaborative body made up of over 800 volunteer participants with the goal of strengthening the nation's use of forensic science by supporting the development and promulgation of forensic science consensus documentary standards and guidelines. OSAC both reviews existing published standards for technical merit and develops OSAC-proposed standards which are sent to an SDO to follow the SDO's formal consensus process, resulting in a published forensic science standard.

The SDO GFSS will increase the number of forensic science standards available for FSSPs to access and implement in their operations. OSAC also will perform technical reviews on the forensic science standards produced under this NOFO to determine if such standards should be placed on [OSAC's Registry](#), which signals to FSSPs across the U.S. that the standards should be adopted.

# Program Description: Requirements – 1



42 U.S.C. § 18952 authorizes NIST to establish a competitive grants program for nongovernmental standards development organizations (SDOs) to develop, approve, disseminate, maintain, and review forensic science voluntary consensus standards and best practices that shall be available to the public free of charge.

This NOFO solicits competitive applications from eligible nongovernmental standards development organizations (see Section III.1. of this NOFO) developing forensic science standards or planning to develop forensic science standards in one or more of the forensic science disciplines supported by the OSAC (e.g., Biology, Chemistry: Seized Drugs & Toxicology, Chemistry: Trace Evidence, Digital/Multimedia, Medicine, Physics/Pattern Interpretation, or Scene Examination).

The standards development process involves many steps which includes but is not limited to initiating the development of a new standard, resolving comments submitted on a draft standard, and finally publishing a completed standard for use by the forensic science community. SDO's are eligible to seek support for the activities included in the standards development process for their existing standards under development and initiating new standards development activities. SDOs are not required to identify the specific existing standards that will be supported under this NOFO.

## Responsive applications must address:

- What objectives will be accomplished with the federal funding;
- What activities will be supported to achieve the objectives;
- How the SDO will measure and report on achieving the objectives;
- How applicants intend to measure and report the extent to which standards developed with Federal funding will be implemented and used in practice;
- How scientific and technical rigor will be integrated into the SDO's process by detailing how the SDO's processes improve and strengthen the scientific and technical basis of standards;
- How applicants will develop, document, and publicly share any research and development (R&D) needs that are identified during the standards development process.
- How applicants plan to become self-sufficient, and over what time period, to support continuing forensic science standards development, dissemination, and maintenance, independent of federal funding; and
- The extent (amount and duration) to which non-federal funding is being leveraged to advance the scope of this funding opportunity.



# Program Description: Requirements – 3



Standards produced under this funding agreement will be reviewed by the relevant [OSAC subcommittee](#) aligned with the content area and the OSAC's [Forensic Science Standards Board](#) for consideration for placement on OSAC's Registry prior to final publication by the SDO.

In accord with the statutory authorization for this program, forensic science voluntary consensus standards and best practices developed pursuant to a NIST grant award shall be made available by the grant recipient to the public free of charge. See 42 U.S.C. § 18952(c). It should be noted that, although Congress has directed that the standards and other related materials developed under this NOFO be made available to the public free of charge, under the Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions and 2 C.F.R. § 200.315(b), the Recipient is entitled to copyright “any work that is subject to copyright and was developed, or for which ownership was acquired, under a Federal award.” In this respect, NIST does not intend to request that an award recipient transfer to NIST any copyrighted works developed pursuant to a NIST grant award under this program.

# Federal Award Information



- **Funding Instrument:** The funding instrument that will be used for awards under this program is a grant.
- **Funding Availability:** NIST anticipates funding up to 5 (five) awards in the approximate range of \$50,000-\$500,000 per award with a project performance period of one (1) year. NIST anticipates that a total of \$1,000,000 will be made available for this program.
- **Multiyear Funding Option:** At its sole discretion, NIST may provide additional multiyear funding to awards made under this NOFO, through continuation amendments on an annual basis for up to three additional years. NIST cannot guarantee, however, that any such multiyear amendments will be funded. Important considerations in decisions regarding multiyear funding include, among other factors, the availability of funding, strategic priorities, NIST's assessment of the quality of the management of the award (for example, timeliness and quality of progress reports), and NIST's assessment of the progress of the work funded under the award. NIST will consider, among other factors, NIST's strategic priorities, a recipient's overall management of the award, and progress of award-funded work, when making multiyear award decisions.
- **Indirect (F&A) Costs:** NIST will reimburse applicants for proposed indirect (F&A) costs in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.414. Applicants proposing indirect (F&A) costs must follow the application requirements set forth in Section IV.2.a.(8) of this NOFO.

# Eligibility Information



**Eligible Applicants:** Nongovernmental standards development organizations (including associations or technical societies), located in the United States or its territories, that plan, develop, establish, or coordinate voluntary consensus standards using a voluntary consensus standards development process and operate in conformity with the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Essential Requirements for American National Standards.

# Cost Sharing or Matching



**Cost Sharing or Matching:** Non-federal cost share is not required for awards issued pursuant to this NOFO but is encouraged. Non-federal cost share included in an award issued pursuant to this program will become a binding legal commitment of the award recipient in accordance with the definition of “voluntary committed cost sharing” in 2 C.F.R. 200.1.

Non-federal cost sharing is that portion of the project costs not borne by the Federal Government. The applicant’s share of expenses may include cash, services, and third-party in-kind contributions, as described at [2 C.F.R. § 200.306](#). The source and detailed rationale of the cost share, including cash, full- and part-time personnel, and in-kind donations, must be documented in the SF-424A and Budget Narrative and Justification submitted with the application and may be considered by NIST as a Selection Factor as set forth in Section V.2. of this NOFO. As with the Federal share, any proposed costs included as non-Federal cost sharing must be an allowable/eligible cost under this program and under the Federal cost principles set forth in 2 C.F.R. part 200, Subpart E. Non-federal cost sharing incorporated into the budget of an approved financial assistance award is subject to audit in the same general manner as Federal award funds. See 2 C.F.R. part 200, Subpart F. For instructions on incorporating cost share into the SF-424A and the Budget Narrative and Justification, see Section IV. Application and Submission Information.

# Select Topics from Application and Submission Information - 1



**(5) Project Narrative.** The Project Narrative is a word-processed document of no more than twenty (20) pages (double-spaced between lines), which is responsive to the program description and the evaluation criteria.

*The page limit includes: Cover Page; Table of Contents (if included); Executive Summary; Project Narrative with all required information, including figures, graphs, tables, images, and pictures).*

The project narrative should contain the following information

- Executive Summary
- Project Approach and Project Execution Plan.
- Project Impacts and Evaluation
- Qualifications
- Dissemination Plan

# Select Topics from Application and Submission Information - 2



- Resumes of Key Personnel
- Budget Narrative and Justification
- Indirect Cost Rate Agreement
- Letters of Commitment
- Current and Pending Support Form

Funding Restrictions: Construction activities are not an allowable cost under this program. In addition, a recipient or a subrecipient may not charge profits, fees or other increments above cost to an award issued pursuant to this NOFO. Applications for product development and/or commercialization not in accordance with the requirements of 42 U.S.C. § 18952 are not considered responsive to this NOFO.

# Application Review Information - 1



**Evaluation Criteria:** The evaluation criteria that will be used in evaluating applications and their assigned weights are as follows:

**a. Rationality.** The logic and soundness of the applicant's approach and the extent to which the successful completion of the proposal work addresses the requirements of the SDO GFSS program (see Section I. of this NOFO). **(30 points)**

**b. Technical Merit and Dissemination of Results.** The potential effectiveness of the proposed activity, and the likelihood and potential impact of the applicant's approach to developing, disseminating, and maintaining scientifically sound forensic science standards and best practices that must be made available to the public free of charge. **(30 points).**

**c. Staff and Institution Capability to Perform the Work.** The quality of the facilities and experience of the staff in connection with successfully achieving the priorities of the proposed activity. The degree of the key personnel's experience and education relevant to the project's proposed scope of work. **(20 points)**

**d. Match of Budget to Proposed Work.** Assessment of the suitability and focus of the applicant's budget against the proposed activities to ascertain whether the budget projections are reasonable and appropriate for the scale of effort to be undertaken by the applicant. **(20 points)**

**2. Selection Factors:** The Selection Factors for this competition are:

- (1) The availability of NIST grant funding;
- (2) Whether the applicant proposes to leverage NIST grant funding by contributing 25% or more of the total proposed project costs as non-federal cost share;
- (3) Whether the project duplicates other projects funded by NIST or other Federal agencies; and
- (4) Diversity of the proposed project topics relative to portfolio of activities funded under this NOFO.



# Application Review Information - 3



**Full Review of Eligible, Complete, and Responsive Applications.** Applications that are determined to be eligible, complete, and responsive will proceed for full reviews in accordance with the review and selection process below:

**(1) Merit Review.** At least three (3) independent, objective reviewers, who may be Federal employees or non-Federal personnel, with appropriate professional and technical expertise relating to the topics covered in this NOFO, will evaluate and score each eligible, complete, and responsive application based on the evaluation criteria. While every application will have at least three (3) reviewers, applications may have more than three (3) reviewers if specialized expertise is needed to evaluate an application. During the review process, the reviewers may discuss the applications with each other, but scores will be determined on an individual basis, not a consensus. Based on the numerical average of the reviewers' scores, a rank order will be prepared and provided to the Selecting Official for further consideration.

**2) Selection.** The Selecting Official, the Special Programs Office Director, or designee, will make final award recommendations to the NIST Grants Officer. The Selecting Official shall generally select and recommend the most meritorious application[s] for an award based upon the rank order of the applications. The Selecting Official retains the discretion to select and recommend an application out of rank order based on one or more of the Selection Factors.

## **Anticipated Announcement and Award Date**

Review of applications, selection of successful applicants, and award processing are expected to be completed by December 2023. The earliest start date for awards under this NOFO is expected to be January 2024.

**Federal Award Notices.** Successful applicants will receive an award package from the NIST Grants Officer.

## Reporting Requirements

**1. Financial Reports.** Each award recipient will be required to submit an SF-425, Federal Financial Report on a semi-annual basis for the periods ending March 31 and September 30 of each year. Reports will be due within 30 days after the end of the reporting period. A final financial report is due within 120 days after the end of the project period.

**2. Performance (Technical) Reports.** Each award recipient will be required to submit a technical progress report on a semi-annual basis for the periods ending March 31 and September 30 of each year. Reports will be due within 30 days after the end of the reporting period. Technical progress reports shall contain information as prescribed in 2 C.F.R. § 200.329 and Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions dated November 12, 2020 Section A.01. A final technical progress report is due within 120 days after the end of the project period.

**Allowable Costs** Funds awarded cannot necessarily pay for all the costs that the recipient might incur in the course of carrying out an award. Generally, costs that are allowable include salaries, equipment, supplies, contractual, and other, as long as these are "necessary and reasonable" specifically for the purpose of the award.

Allowable costs are determined by reference to the OMB Uniform Guidance at 2 C.F.R. part 200, adopted by the Department of Commerce at 2 C.F.R. § 1327.101. All cost reimbursement subawards are subject to those federal cost principles applicable to the particular type of organization concerned. A recipient may request approval of pre-award costs; however, all costs incurred before the Federal awarding agency makes the Federal award are at the recipient's risk.

# Questions?

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