

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO)
Standards Development Organization Grants for Forensic Science Standards

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **Federal Agency Name:** National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), United States Department of Commerce (DoC)
- **Funding Opportunity Title:** Standards Development Organization Grants for Forensic Science Standards (SDO GFSS)
- **Announcement Type:** Initial
- **Funding Opportunity Number:** 2023-NIST-SDO-01

Assistance Listing (CFDA Number): 11.609: Measurement and Engineering Research and Standards.

- **Dates:** Full Applications must be received at [Grants.gov](https://www.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.

Applicants should be aware, and factor in their application submission planning, that the Grants.gov system closes periodically for routine maintenance. Applicants should visit [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) for information on any scheduled closures.

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.

- **Application Submission Address:** Applications must be submitted using Grants.gov. Paper applications will not be accepted.
- **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.

- **Funding Instrument:** Grant.
- **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 NIST's 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.
- **Webinar Information Session:** NIST Special Programs Office will host a webinar information session for applicants that are interested in learning about this funding opportunity. This webinar will provide general information regarding 2023-NIST-SDO-01 and offer general guidance on preparing proposals. Please reference <https://nist.gov/spo/forensic-science-program/sdo-gfss-webinar> for the most up to date information, including scheduling details about the webinar. Proprietary technical questions about specific proposal ideas will not be permitted, and NIST will not critique or provide feedback on any proposal ideas during the webinar or at any time before the deadline for all applications. However, questions about the funding opportunity, eligibility requirements, evaluation and award criteria, selection process, and the general characteristics of a competitive application will be addressed at the webinar and by e-mail to john.jones@nist.gov. There is no cost to attend the webinar, but participants must register in advance. Participation in the webinar is not required and will not be considered in the review and selection process.

Table of Contents

I.	Program Description	3
II.	Federal Award Information	5
III.	Eligibility Information	6
IV.	Application and Submission Information	7
V.	Application Review Information	17
VI.	Federal Award Administration Information	20

VII. Federal Awarding Agency Contacts	24
VIII. Other Information	25

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Program Description

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.

- 1. Background Information.** Forensic Science Service Providers (FSSPs) across the U.S. generate examination and testing results that are used routinely in the criminal justice system. Ensuring that the results produced by these FSSPs are both reliable and generated from validated methods is important for all stakeholders involved in each case, including the prosecutors, defense attorneys, judges, criminal defendants, and the local jurisdictions themselves. FSSPs have quality systems in place with a variety of components that build confidence that quality requirements are being met and the work performed is reliable. Forensic science documentary standards are part of a FSSP’s quality system and serve as an anchor to build training programs, validation studies, protocols, and reporting/testimony guidance for the FSSP. These forensic science documentary standards are generated through a consensus process that consists of many stakeholders (e.g., forensic science practitioners, academic researchers, legal professionals, etc.) and published by Standards Development Organizations (SDOs) for use by the forensic science community.

In 2009, The National Academy of Sciences, National Research Council published a report entitled "Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States - A Path Forward" which criticized forensic science in the U.S. as being too fragmented across disciplines and across laboratories. It recommended that NIST help strengthen the scientific basis and harmonize forensic science standards which were described as inconsistent from one discipline to the next, and not uniformly adopted by forensic science facilities across the U.S. In 2014, NIST established the [Organization of Scientific Area Committees \(OSAC\) for Forensic Science](#) in response to the recommendations in the National Academy’s report.

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.

The production of high-quality and scientifically sound forensic science standards by SDOs will provide needed information to FSSPs to enable continuous improvement of their quality system. These standards define minimum requirements, best practices, standard protocols and other guidance to help ensure that the results of forensic analysis are reliable and reproducible.

Ultimately, implementation of standards by FSSPs will assist in improving consistency within and across forensic science disciplines, ensuring confidence in the accuracy, reliability, and reproducibility of results, and positively impacting admissibility and expert testimony in courts of law.

- 2. Program Requirements.** 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.

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.

II. Federal Award Information

1. Funding Instrument

The funding instrument that will be used for awards under this program is a grant.

2. 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.

3. 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.

3. 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.

III. Eligibility Information

1. 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.

2. 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.

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Application Package.

The application package is available at [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) under Funding Opportunity Number 2023-NIST-SDO-01.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission. Set forth below are the required content and form of applications submitted pursuant to this NOFO.

a. Required Forms and Documents. The Application must contain the following:

(1) SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance. The SF-424 must be signed by an authorized representative of the applicant organization.

For SF-424, Item 8.d. Zip/Postal Code field, should reflect the Zip code + 4 (#####-####) format.

For SF-424, Item 12, should list the NOFO number 2023-SDO-01.

SF-424, Item 18, should list the total budget information for the duration of the project.

The list of certifications and assurances referenced in Item 21 of the SF-424 is contained in the Federal Financial Assistance Certifications and Representations (Certs and Reps) as part of the SAM.gov entity registration.

(2) SF-424A, Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs.

The budget should reflect anticipated Federal and non-Federal expenses for the entire project, considering all potential cost increases, including cost of living adjustments.

- a) In Section A, the Grant Program Function or Activity on Line 1 under Column (a) should be entered as “Measurement and Engineering Research Standards” or an abbreviation thereof. The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number on Line 1 under Column (b) should be entered as “11.609”. The total federal budget amount for the term of the award should be listed in Section A, Line 1, Column (e). The total non-federal budget amount for the term of the award should be listed in Section A, Line 1, Column (f).
 - b) Section B, Column (1) of the SF-424A should reflect the costs for each object class category, to include indirect charges, for the one year project period. These costs should reflect the total Federal share and if applicable, the non-Federal cost share for each category.
 - c) Section C may be blank since Non-Federal cost sharing is not required for awards issued pursuant to this NOFO. However, applicants who wish to pledge voluntary cost share to the project must complete the following sections: For Column (b) enter resources provided by the applicant. If not applicable, leave blank. For Column (c), enter resources provided by one or more States. If not applicable, leave blank. For Column (d) enter resources provided by other sources (e.g., in-kind contribution, program income). If not applicable, leave blank.
 - d) Section D requires a breakdown of the Federal share and non-Federal share of the budget by quarter.
 - e) Section E requires the budget estimate of Federal funds needed for the project. Enter the amount in Line 16, Column (b).
- (3) CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying.** Enter “2023-NIST-SDO-01” in the Award Number field. Enter the title of the application, or an abbreviation of that title, in the Project Name field.
- (4) SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities** (if applicable).
- (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 projective narrative should contain the following information:

- a) Executive Summary.** An executive summary of the proposed project, consistent with the requirements of this program (see Section I. of this NOFO). The executive summary should include information indicating how each evaluation criterion (see Section V.1. of this NOFO) and its sub-factors are addressed. A table can be helpful in providing this information. The executive summary should not exceed two (2) pages.
- b) Project Approach and Project Execution Plan.** A detailed discussion of the applicant's approach in planning for and in executing the proposed project consistent with the requirements and priorities of this program (see Section I. of this NOFO). This section should provide a description of the proposed project plan and execution strategy sufficient to permit evaluation of the proposal, in accordance with details included in the proposal Evaluation Criteria (see Section V.1. of this NOFO). This section should also specifically provide descriptions of how the applicant will develop scientifically sound forensic science standards and best practices to the public free of charge; and of how, if at all, the applicant is leveraging any non-federal funding in support of their operations; and describe their pathway to becoming self-sufficient for the development, dissemination, and maintenance of forensic science standards.
- c) Project Impacts and Evaluation:** A detailed discussion of the: (i) anticipated impacts of the proposed project; (ii) methodology for identifying and evaluating project outcomes; and (iii) methodology to measure and report the extent to which standards and best practices developed with federal funding pursuant to this NOFO are being implemented and used in practice.
- d) Qualifications.** A description of the qualifications of the key personnel, the time commitments of the key personnel, and how the project staff qualifications will enable them to complete the project work. This section should address the Staff and Institution Capability to Perform the Work evaluation criterion.
- e) Dissemination Plan.** A description of the applicant's approach to broadly disseminate the scientifically sound standards and best practices to the public free of charge. The plan should include

generating awareness of these freely available standards through presentations at public meetings or events.

(6) Resume(s) of Key Personnel. Resumes for all key personnel assigned to the project must be provided. Resumes are limited to two (2) pages per individual.

(7) Budget Narrative and Justification. There is no set format for the Budget Narrative and Justification; however, further explanation must be provided for the specific cost categories and line items that you identified in the SF-424A form as well as any other information you deem necessary for NIST's consideration.

The written justification should include the necessity and the basis for the cost, as described below. Proposed funding levels must be consistent with the project scope, and only allowable costs should be included in the budget. Information on cost allowability is available in the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at [2 C.F.R. part 200](#), which apply to awards in this program.

When cost share is included in the budget, the written justification must also identify the Federal and non-Federal portion of each cost, to include indirect costs, as applicable (see Cost Sharing section of this NOFO for match requirements).

The Budget Narrative does not count against the twenty (20) page limit of the Project Narrative.

This section will be evaluated in accordance with the Budget Narrative evaluation criteria. It will also be reviewed to determine if all costs are reasonable, allocable, and allowable under 2 C.F.R. part 200, Subpart E, Cost Principles.

Information needed for each budget category is as follows:

- a) Personnel**—At a minimum, the budget justification for all personnel should include the following: job title, commitment of effort on the proposed project in terms of average number of hours per week or percentage of time, salary rate, total personnel charges for each identified position on the proposed project, description of the role of the individual on the proposed project and the work to be performed.

- b) Fringe Benefits**– Fringe benefits for each position should be identified separately from salaries and wages and based on rates determined by organizational policy. The items included in the fringe benefit rate (e.g., health insurance, parking, etc.) should not be charged under another cost category.
- c) Travel**– For all travel costs, the budget justification for travel should include the following: destination; names or number of people traveling; dates and/or duration; mode of transportation, lodging and subsistence rates; and description of how the travel is directly related to the proposed project. For travel that is yet to be determined, please provide best estimates based on prior experience. If a destination is not known, an approximate amount may be used with the assumptions given for the location of the meeting.
- d) Equipment**– Equipment is defined as an item of property that has an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more (unless the organization has established lower levels) and an expected service life of more than one year. The budget justification should list each piece of equipment, the cost, and a description of how it will be used and why it is necessary to the successful completion of the proposed project. Please note that any general use equipment (computers, etc.) charged directly to the award should be allocated to the award according to expected usage on the project.
- e) Supplies**– Supplies are defined as all tangible personal property other than that described as equipment. Provide a list of each supply, and the breakdown of the total costs by quantity or unit of cost. Include the necessity of the cost for the completion of the proposed project.
- f) Contractual (i.e., Contracts or Subawards)**– Each contract or subaward should be treated as a separate item. Identify the cost and describe the services to be provided and the necessity of the subaward or contract to the successful performance of the proposed project. Contracts are for obtaining goods and services for the non-Federal entity’s own use and creates a procurement relationship with the contractor. A subaward is for the purpose of carrying out a portion of a Federal award and creates a Federal assistance relationship with the subrecipient.
- g) Construction**– Not an allowable cost under this NOFO.

- h) Other Direct Costs**– For costs that do not easily fit into the other cost categories, please list the cost, and the breakdown of the total costs by quantity or unit of cost. Include the necessity of the cost for the completion of the proposed project. Only allowable costs can be charged to the award.
- i) Indirect Costs**– Commonly referred to as Facilities & Administrative Costs, Indirect Costs are defined as costs incurred by the applicant organization that cannot otherwise be directly assigned or attributed to a specific project. The justification should include a cost calculation that reflects the applicable indirect cost rate. For more details, see Section IV.2.a.(8) of this NOFO.

(8) Indirect Cost Rate Agreement. If indirect costs are included in the proposed budget, provide a copy of the approved negotiated agreement, if this rate was negotiated with a cognizant Federal audit agency. If the rate was not established by a cognizant Federal audit agency, provide a statement to this effect. If the successful applicant includes indirect costs in the budget and has not established an indirect cost rate with a cognizant Federal audit agency, the applicant will be required to obtain such a rate in accordance with Section B.06 of the [Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions](#), dated November 12, 2020.

Alternatively, in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f), applicants that do not have a current negotiated (including provisional) indirect cost rate except for those non-Federal entities described in [appendix VII, paragraph D.1.b.](#) of 2 C.F.R. part 200 may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC). Applicants proposing a 10 percent de minimis rate pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f) should note this election as part of the budget portion of the application.

(9) Letters of Commitment. Letters of Commitment must be submitted by all funded and unfunded entities that will have an active role in executing the activities outlined in the Project Narrative. Letters of Commitment must address the level of participation, qualifications of the personnel who will be actively involved, and how successful completion of this project would positively impact their profession or community. Letters of Commitment must also specify any voluntary committed cost-share, including the specific services and/or products to be used in the project. Letters of Commitment must be signed by an individual with authority to legally bind the organization to its commitment. Letters of Commitment do not count against the page limit of the Project Narrative.

(10) Current and Pending Support Form. Any application that includes investigators, researchers, and key personnel must identify all sources of current and potential funding, including this proposal. Any current project support (e.g., Federal, state, local, public or private foundations, etc.) must be listed on this form. The proposed project and all other projects or activities requiring a portion of time of the Principal Investigator (PI), co-PI, and key personnel must be included, even if no salary support is received. The total award amount for the entire award period covered, including indirect costs, must be shown as well as the number of person-months per year to be devoted to the project, regardless of the source of support. Similar information must be provided for all proposals already submitted or that are being submitted concurrently to other potential funders.

Applicants must complete the Current and Pending Support Form, using multiple forms as necessary to account for all activity for each individual identified in the PI, co-PI and key personnel roles. A separate form should be used for each identified individual.

Applicants must download the Current and Pending Support Form from the NIST website at <https://www.nist.gov/oaam/grants-management-division/current-and-pending-support> and reference the guidance provided as it contains information to assist with accurately completing the form.

b. Attachment of Required Documents

Items IV.2.a.(1) through IV.2.a.(4) above are part of the standard application package in Grants.gov and can be completed through the download application process.

Items IV.2.a.(5) through IV.2.a.(10) should be attached to field 15 of the SF-424 form by clicking on “Add Attachment”.

Following these directions will create zip files which permit transmittal of the documents electronically via Grants.gov.

Applicants should carefully follow specific Grants.gov instructions at www.Grants.gov to ensure the attachments will be accepted by the Grants.gov system. A receipt from Grants.gov indicates only that an application was transferred to a system. It does not provide details concerning whether all attachments (or how many attachments) transferred successfully. Applicants will receive a series of e-mail messages over a period of up to two business days before learning whether a Federal agency’s electronic system has received its application.

Applicants are strongly advised to use Grants.gov's "[Download Submitted Forms and Applications](#)" option to check that their application's required attachments were contained in their submission.

After submitting the application, check the status of your application here: [CHECK APPLICATION STATUS](#). If any, or all, of the required attachments are absent from the submission, follow the attachment directions found above, resubmit the application, and check again for the presence of the required attachments.

If the directions found on the [Grants.gov Online Help](#) page are not effective, please contact the Grants.gov Help Desk immediately. If calling from within the United States or from a U.S. territory, please call 800-518-4726. If calling from a place outside the United States or a U.S. territory, please call 606-545-5035. E-mails should be addressed to support@grants.gov. Assistance from the Grants.gov Help Desk will be available around the clock every day, with the exception of Federal holidays. Help Desk service will resume at 7:00 a.m. Eastern Time the day after Federal holidays.

Applicants can track their submission in the Grants.gov system by following the procedures at the [Grants.gov Track My Application](#) page. It can take up to two business days for an application to fully move through the Grants.gov system to NIST.

NIST uses the Tracking Numbers assigned by Grants.gov and does not issue Agency Tracking Numbers.

c. Application Format

- (1) Paper, Email, and Facsimile (fax) Submissions.** Will not be accepted.
- (2) Figures, Graphs, Images, and Pictures.** Should be of a size that is easily readable or viewable and may be displayed in landscape orientation. Any figures, graphs, images, or pictures will count toward the page limits for the Project Narrative.
- (3) Font.** Easy-to-read font (10-point minimum). Smaller type may be used in figures and tables but must be clearly legible.
- (4) Page Limit.** The Project Narrative is limited to twenty (20) pages double-spaced, noting the limit of two (2) pages for the Executive Summary.
- (5) Page Limit Exclusions:**

SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance;
SF-424A, Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs;
CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying;
SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable);
Resumes;
Budget Narrative and Justification;
Indirect Cost Rate Agreement;
Letters of Commitment; and
Current and Pending Support Form.

(6) Page Layout. The Proposal must be in portrait orientation.

(7) Page size. 21.6 centimeters by 27.9 centimeters (8 ½ inches by 11 inches).

(8) Page numbering. Number pages sequentially.

(9) Application language. All documents must be in English, including but not limited to the initial application, any additional documents submitted in response to a NIST request, all reports, and any correspondence with NIST.

(10) Typed document. All applications, including forms, must be typed; handwritten forms will not be accepted.

d. Application Replacement Pages.

Applicants may not submit replacement pages and/or missing documents once an application has been submitted. Any revisions must be made by submission of a new application that must be received by NIST by the submission deadline.

3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM).

Pursuant to 2 C.F.R. part 25, every applicant and recipient is required to: (i) be registered in SAM before submitting its application; (ii) provide a valid unique entity identifier in its application; and (iii) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency, unless otherwise excepted from these requirements pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 25.110. NIST will not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time that NIST is ready to make a Federal award pursuant to this NOFO,

NIST 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.

4. Submission Dates and Times.

Applications must be received at Grants.gov no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time, September 30, 2023. NIST will consider the date and time recorded by Grants.gov as the official submission time. Applications received after this deadline will not be reviewed or considered. Paper applications will not be accepted.

Applicants should be aware, and factor in their application submission planning, that the Grants.gov system closes periodically for routine maintenance. Applicants should visit [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) for information on any scheduled closures.

When developing the submission timeline, please keep in mind that: (1) all applicants are required to have current registrations in the electronic System for Award Management (SAM.gov) and Grants.gov; (2) the free annual registration process in the SAM.gov generally takes between three and five business days but can take more than three weeks; and applicants will receive e-mail notifications over a period of up to two business days as the application moves through intermediate systems before the applicant learns via a validation or rejection notification whether NIST has received the application. (See [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) for full information on application and notification through Grants.gov.) Please note that a Federal assistance award cannot be issued if the designated recipient's registration in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov) is not current at the time of the award.

5. Intergovernmental Review.

Applications submitted by State and local governments are subject to Executive Order (E.O.) 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs," pursuant to which each State designates an entity to coordinate, and review proposed federal financial assistance and direct federal development. All other applicants should consult the Intergovernmental Review State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to determine whether the application is subject to State review pursuant to E.O. 12372. The current SPOC List may be found here:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SPOC-4-13-20.pdf>

6. 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.

7. Other Submission Requirements

- a. **Applications must be submitted at [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). Paper applications will not be accepted.**

(1) Applicants should carefully follow specific Grants.gov instructions to ensure that all attachments will be accepted by the Grants.gov system. A receipt from Grants.gov indicating an application is received does not provide information about whether attachments have been received. For further information or questions regarding applying electronically for the 2023-NIST-SDO-01 announcement, contact the Grants.gov Help Desk at 800-518-4726.

- b. **Amendments.** Any amendments to this NOFO will be announced through Grants.gov. Applicants may sign up on Grants.gov to receive amendments by e-mail or may request copies by e-mail from john.jones@nist.gov.

V. 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 the overall portfolio of activities funded under this NOFO.

3. Review and Selection Process

Proposals, reports, documents, and other information related to applications submitted to NIST and/or relating to financial assistance awards issued by NIST will be reviewed and considered by Federal employees, or non-Federal personnel who have entered into conflict of interest and confidentiality agreements covering such information, when applicable.

a. Initial Administrative Review of Applications.

Applications received by the deadline will be reviewed to determine eligibility, completeness, and responsiveness to this NOFO and to the scope of the stated program objectives. Applications determined to be ineligible, incomplete, and/or nonresponsive may be eliminated from further review. However, NIST, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for an application that is missing non-substantive information, the absence of which may easily be rectified during the review process.

b. 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.

NIST reserves the right to negotiate the budget costs with any applicant selected to receive an award, which may include requesting that the applicant remove certain costs. Additionally, NIST may request that successful applicants modify objectives or work plans and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to award. NIST also reserves the right to reject an application where information is uncovered that raises a reasonable doubt as to the responsibility of the applicant. NIST may select some, all, or none of the applications, or part(s) of any application. The final approval of selected applications and issuance of awards will be by the NIST Grants Officer. The award decisions of the NIST Grants Officer are final.

c. Federal Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants. After applications are proposed for funding by the Selecting Official, the NIST Grants Management Division (GMD) performs pre-award risk assessments in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.206, which may include a review of the financial stability of an applicant, the quality of the applicant's management systems, the history of performance, and/or the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-Federal entities.

In addition, prior to making an award where the total Federal share is expected to exceed the simplified acquisition threshold (currently \$250,000), NIST GMD will review and consider the publicly available information about that applicant in the Federal Awardee Performance and

Integrity Information System (FAPIIS). An applicant may, at its discretion, review and comment on information about itself previously entered into FAPIIS by a Federal awarding agency. As part of its review of risk posed by applicants, NIST GMD will consider any comments made by the applicant in FAPIIS in making its determination about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards. Upon completion of the pre-award risk assessment, the Grants Officer will make a responsibility determination concerning whether the applicant is qualified to receive the subject award and, if so, whether appropriate specific award conditions that correspond to the degree of risk posed by the applicant should be applied to an award.

4. 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.

5. Additional Information

- a. Safety.** Safety is a top priority at NIST. Employees and affiliates of award recipients who conduct project work at NIST will be expected to be safety-conscious, to attend NIST safety training, and to comply with all NIST safety policies and procedures, and with all applicable terms of their guest research agreement.
- b. Notification to Unsuccessful Applicants.** Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by e-mail and will have the opportunity to receive a debriefing after the opportunity is officially closed. Applicants must request within 10 business days of the email notification to receive a debrief from the program office. The program office will then work with the unsuccessful applicant in arranging a date and time for the debrief.
- c. Retention of Unsuccessful Applications.** Unsuccessful applications will be retained in accordance with the [General Record Schedule 1.2/021](#).

VI. Federal Award Administration Information

- 1. Federal Award Notices.** Successful applicants will receive an award package from the NIST Grants Officer.
- 2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements**
 - a. Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements.** Through [2 C.F.R. § 1327.101](#), the Department of Commerce adopted Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost

Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at [2 C.F.R. Part 200](#), which apply to awards in this program.

- b. Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions.** The Department of Commerce will apply to each award in this program, the Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions in effect on the date of award. The current version, dated November 12, 2020, is accessible at [Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions](#). Refer to Section VII. of this NOFO, Federal Awarding Agency Contacts, Grant Rules and Regulations, if you need more information.
- c. Pre-Award Notification Requirements.** The Department of Commerce will apply the Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements dated December 30, 2014 ([79 FR 78390](#)). Refer to Section VII. of this NOFO, Federal Awarding Agency Contacts, Grant Rules and Regulations, for more information.
- d. Funding Availability and Limitation of Liability.** Funding for the program listed in this NOFO is contingent upon the availability of appropriations. NIST or the Department of Commerce will not be responsible for application preparation costs, including but not limited to if this program fails to receive funding or is cancelled because of agency priorities. Publication of this NOFO does not oblige NIST or the Department of Commerce to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.
- e. Collaborations with NIST Employees.**
All applications should include a description of any work proposed to be performed by an entity other than the applicant, and the cost of such work should ordinarily be included in the budget. If an applicant proposes collaboration with NIST, the statement of work should include a statement of this intention, a description of the collaboration, and prominently identify the NIST employee(s) involved, if known. Any collaboration by a NIST employee must be approved by appropriate NIST management and is at the sole discretion of NIST. Prior to beginning the merit review process, NIST will verify the approval of the proposed collaboration. Any unapproved collaboration will be stricken from the application prior to the merit review. Any collaboration with an identified NIST employee that is approved by appropriate NIST management will not make an application more or less favorable in the competitive process. NIST's costs should not be included in the application.

- f. Use of Federal Government-Owned Intellectual Property.** If the applicant anticipates using any Federal Government-owned intellectual property, in the custody of NIST or another Federal agency, to carry out the work proposed, the applicant should clearly identify such intellectual property in the proposal. This information will be used to ensure that no Federal employee involved in the development of the intellectual property will participate in the review process for that competition. In addition, if the applicant intends to use the Federal Government-owned intellectual property, the applicant must comply with all statutes and regulations governing the licensing of Federal government patents and inventions, described in 35 U.S.C. §§ 200-212, 37 C.F.R. part 401, 2 C.F.R. § 200.315, and in Section C.03 of the [Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions](#), dated November 12, 2020. Questions about these requirements may be directed to the Chief Counsel for NIST, (301) 975-2803, nistcounsel@nist.gov.

Any use of Federal Government-owned intellectual property by a recipient of an award under this announcement is at the sole discretion of the Federal Government and will need to be negotiated on a case-by-case basis by the recipient and the Federal agency having custody of the intellectual property if a project is deemed meritorious. The applicant should indicate within the statement of work whether it already has a license to use such intellectual property or whether it intends to seek a license from the applicable Federal agency.

If any inventions made in whole or in part by a NIST employee arise in the course of an award made pursuant to this NOFO, the United States Government may retain its ownership rights in any such invention. Licensing or other disposition of the Federal Government's rights in such inventions will be determined solely by the Federal Government, through NIST as custodian of such inventions, and include the possibility of the Federal Government putting the intellectual property into the public domain.

- g. Signage and Public Acknowledgements.** Recipients are encouraged to post project signage and to include public acknowledgments in published and other collateral materials (e.g., press releases, marketing materials, website, etc.) satisfactory in form and substance to NIST, that identify the nature of the project and indicate that “the project is funded by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023.” In addition, recipients employing project signage are encouraged to use the official Investing in America emblem in accordance with the Official Investing in America Emblem Style Guide: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Investing-in-America-Brand-Guide.pdf>. Costs

associated with signage and public acknowledgments must be reasonable and limited. Signs or public acknowledgments should not be produced, displayed, or published if doing so results in unreasonable cost, expense, or recipient burden. The Recipient is encouraged to use recycled or recovered materials when procuring signs.

3. Reporting

a. **Reporting Requirements.** The following reporting requirements described in Sections A.01, Reporting Requirements, of the [Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions](#) dated November 12, 2020, apply to awards in this program:

- (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.
- (3) **Patent and Property Reports.** From time to time, and in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Requirements and other terms and conditions governing the award, the recipient may need to submit property and patent reports.
- (4) **Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters.** In accordance with section 872 of Public Law 110-417 (as amended; see 41 U.S.C. 2313), if the total value of a recipient's currently active grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement contracts from all Federal awarding agencies exceeds \$10,000,000 for any period of time during the period of performance of an award made under this NOFO, then the recipient shall be subject to the requirements specified in [Appendix XII to 2 C.F.R. Part 200](#), for maintaining the currency of information reported to

SAM that is made available in FAPIIS about certain civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings involving the recipient.

- b. Audit Requirements.** The Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions, Section D.01, and 2 C.F.R. Part 200, Subpart F, adopted by the Department of Commerce through 2 C.F.R. § 1327.101, require any non-Federal entity (i.e., including non-profit institutions of higher education and non-profit organizations) that expends Federal awards of \$750,000 or more in the recipient’s fiscal year to conduct a single or program-specific audit in accordance with the requirements set out in the Subpart. Additionally, unless otherwise specified in the terms and conditions of the award, entities that are not subject to Subpart F of 2 C.F.R. Part 200 (e.g., for-profit commercial entities) that expend \$750,000 or more in DOC funds during their fiscal year must submit to the Grants Officer either: (i) a financial-related audit of each DOC award or subaward in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards; or (ii) a project-specific audit for each award or subaward in accordance with the requirements contained in 2 C.F.R. § 200.507. Applicants are reminded that NIST, the Department of Commerce Office of Inspector General, or another authorized Federal agency may conduct an audit of an award at any time.
- c. Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006.** In accordance with 2 C.F.R. Part 170, all recipients of a Federal award made on or after October 1, 2010, are required to comply with reporting requirements under the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (Public Law No. 109-282). In general, all recipients are responsible for reporting sub-awards of \$30,000 or more. In addition, recipients that meet certain criteria are responsible for reporting executive compensation. Applicants must ensure they have the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with the reporting requirements should they receive funding. Also see the [Federal Register](#) notice published September 14, 2010, at 75 FR 55663.

VII. Federal Awarding Agency Contacts

Questions should be directed to the following:

Subject Area	Point of Contact
Programmatic and Technical Questions	John Paul Jones II Phone: 301-975-2782 E-mail: john.jones@nist.gov with ‘2023-NIST-SDO-01’ in subject line
Technical Assistance with Grants.gov Submissions	grants.gov Phone: 800-518-4726

Subject Area	Point of Contact
Grant Rules and Regulations	E-mail: support@grants.gov Dean Iwasaki Phone: 301-975-8449 E-mail: Dean.Iwasaki@nist.gov

VIII. Other Information

1. Personal and Business Information

The applicant acknowledges and understands that information and data contained in applications for financial assistance, as well as information and data contained in financial, performance and other reports submitted by applicants, may be used by the Department of Commerce in conducting reviews and evaluations of its financial assistance programs. For this purpose, applicant information and data may be accessed, reviewed and evaluated by Department of Commerce employees, other Federal employees, and also by Federal agents and contractors, and/or by non-Federal personnel, all of whom enter into appropriate conflict of interest and confidentiality agreements covering the use of such information. As may be provided in the terms and conditions of a specific financial assistance award, applicants are expected to support program reviews and evaluations by submitting required financial and performance information and data in an accurate and timely manner, and by cooperating with Department of Commerce and external program evaluators. In accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.303(e), applicants are reminded that they must take reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other confidential or sensitive personal or business information created or obtained in connection with a Department of Commerce financial assistance award.

In addition, Department of Commerce regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. § 552, are found at 15 C.F.R. part 4, Disclosure of Government Information. These regulations set forth rules for the Department regarding making requested materials, information, and records publicly available under the FOIA. Applications submitted in response to this Notice of Funding Opportunity may be subject to requests for release under the Act. If an application contains information or data that the applicant deems to be confidential commercial information that should be exempt from disclosure under FOIA, that information should be identified, bracketed, and marked as Privileged, Confidential, Commercial or Financial Information. In accordance with 15 C.F.R. § 4.9, the Department of Commerce will protect from disclosure confidential business information contained in financial assistance applications and other documentation provided by applicants to the extent permitted by law.

2. Webinar Information Session:

NIST Special Programs Office will host a webinar information session for applicants that are interested in learning about this funding opportunity. This webinar will provide general information regarding 2023-NIST-SDO-01 and offer general guidance on preparing proposals. Please reference <https://nist.gov/spo/forensic-science-program/sdo-gfss-webinar> for the most up-to-date information, including scheduling details about the webinar. Proprietary technical questions about specific proposal ideas will not be permitted, and NIST will not critique or provide feedback on any proposal ideas during the webinar or at any time before the deadline for all applications. However, questions about the funding opportunity, eligibility requirements, evaluation and award criteria, selection process, and the general characteristics of a competitive application will be addressed at the webinar and by e-mail to john.jones@nist.gov. There is no cost to attend the webinar, but participants must register in advance. Participation in the webinar is not required and will not be considered in the review and selection process.

3. 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.