

The New Jersey Center on Gun Violence Research: Notice of Fund Availability

Introduction:

The New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE) announces availability of funds to establish a Center on Gun Violence Research (CGVR) at a public research university in the state of New Jersey. The purpose of the Center will be to produce research reports and recommendations on the issue of gun violence in order to benefit the state of New Jersey and the nation as a whole.

It is anticipated that one (1) grant of \$2,000,000 will be awarded for an institution of higher education in New Jersey to establish and administer the CGVR. Upon award of the grant, the recipient will receive a lump sum payment of \$1 million, and the remainder of the grant will be disbursed as expenses are incurred, in accordance with the plan outlined by the proposed Center. This grant is open to any public research university in the state of New Jersey.

The following summarizes the funding schedule:

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| August 3, 2018 | Notice of Funding Availability |
| September 4, 2018 | Deadline for Proposals from Prospective Applicants |
| October 15, 2018 | Applicants notified no later than this date |
| October 31, 2018 | Initial disbursement of State Funds released to successful applicant. |

Purpose:

In response to the ongoing epidemic of gun violence in the United States, the Fiscal Year 2019 State Budget signed by Governor Philip D. Murphy allocates \$2 million to establish a Center on Gun Violence Research (CGVR) at an institution of higher education in New Jersey. The CGVR will work as an independent source of information and analysis on gun violence.

The CGVR's mandate will include:

- Providing high-quality, multi-disciplinary research on gun violence causality and prevention in New Jersey and the nation;
- Establishing a robust system for the ongoing reporting of gun violence data as well as other related factors (e.g. systems that get data from more real-time sources such as trauma centers are likely warranted);
- Responsible linking of gun violence with other public health indicators and datasets, in order to better identify communities and profiles of individuals at risk (e.g. those who would most benefit from interventions);

- Data modelling for policy recommendations that will allow policymakers to test different budgetary and legislative scenarios and provide prevention guidance across the state;
- Comparative research into remediation of gun violence in other jurisdictions and regions of the world (such as randomized controlled trials)
- Consideration of how innovative technologies could be employed to improve gun safety and reduce the incidence of gun violence;
- Developing clear and accessible language for messaging, public awareness, and communicating to youth, target groups, and the general population statewide.

The CGVR will be a best-in-class research center providing timely and thoughtful analysis of a critical social crisis.

Uses of Funds/Administrative and Operational Expenses:

The CGVR will be housed in and operated by one of New Jersey’s leading research universities. In addition to providing leadership for the center and management of its research objectives, the select university will provide facilities and other in-kind services and resources. This university will receive seed funding of \$2 million from the State of New Jersey to operate the center. The seed funding should be used for:

- Staffing expenses for a full-time center research director, multidisciplinary researchers, communications staff, and administrative support.
- Expenses for facilities, IT/software, and equipment.
- Research-related expenses for interviews, publications, subscriptions, surveys, statistical analysis, and access to databases that will facilitate all necessary information.
- Communications expenses for printing, website, social media, and digital media as necessary to publish white papers, studies, articles, and research data.
- Event production expenses to cover the costs for small-scale conferences, roundtables, panels, and web-based teleconferences to convene experts from New Jersey and other regions around the country and world.

Upon award of the grant, the recipient will receive a lump sum payment of \$1 million, and the remainder of the grant will be disbursed as expenses are incurred, in accordance with the plan outlined by the proposed Center. The grant agreement will be subject to the terms and conditions set forth in Circular 07-05-OMB: Grant Agreements – Agency Contracts.

Selection Criteria:

The State seeks a university partner that can fully execute the CGVR and is positioned to sustain the center independently upon exhaustion of the seed funding. This university will take the lead in implementing a high-quality research initiative. The selection criteria will weigh heavily on the following:

- The select university must be officially designated as a “public research university” by the state, as defined in N.J.S.A. 18A:3B-3, where all tenured and tenure-track faculty are expected to engage in continual publication in their respective discipline.
- The select university must be prepared to engage with experts, institutions, agencies, and municipal bodies throughout the State of New Jersey to ensure that all research conducted will encompass the full geographic scope of the state (cities, suburbs, and counties).
- The select university must possess a robust multidisciplinary academic environment and capacity to draw expertise from programs such as (but not limited to) sociology, psychology, cultural studies, medicine, public health, business administration, engineering, statistical sciences, health services research, information technology, workforce development, housing, education, and areas of law (e.g., criminal justice, domestic violence, civil rights, civil liberties, national security, etc.)
- The select university should demonstrate a record of scholarly research and other contributions in the study of gun violence and related subjects.
- The select university must demonstrate a willingness to provide as many in-kind resources as possible to optimize the \$2 million allocation. This includes a secured space for administration and researchers, IT/equipment, conference facilities, parking, etc. In addition, the select university must demonstrate a willingness to provide in-kind services to support the operation of the CGVR. This includes IT, administrative, communications, and utilities services.
- The select university must demonstrate a capacity for effective fundraising to ensure the work of this center is sustained over time.
- The select university must demonstrate access to large public health data sets (statewide, federal, or broader), off of which correlative analyses could be performed linking gun violence to causal factors. The select university must also demonstrate the analytics capacity and resources required to clean and analyze data, in order to produce high-quality research.

Research Outputs:

It is expected that the CGVR will fulfill its mission by providing high-quality research on the problems and potential solutions related to gun violence in New Jersey and the nation. This research should be conducted in accordance with sound scientific principles and methodologies (research design, data-collection, experimentation, prospective trials, and analysis) and should be accessible and understandable to policymakers and the general public. It is expected that research outputs from the CGVR will be used in the formulation of:

- Policy Design – The CGVR’s research will guide and inform the development of legislation and policies designed to reduce or eliminate, where possible, different forms of gun violence and trafficking in the State of New Jersey.
- Public Education – The CGVR’s research will guide and inform New Jersey state government and partner institutions in the development of public awareness initiatives and programs to educate all segments of the population on gun violence in respect to its causalities, social impacts, and remediation.
- Institutional Collaboration – The CGVR’s research will guide and inform New Jersey state government regarding the development of alliances and partnerships that can be created among institutions, marketplace actors (weapons manufacturers, distributors and retailers), schools, community organizations, and media groups.

- New Technologies and Related Applications – The CGVR’s research is encouraged to explore how emerging technologies included in surveillance, Big Data, artificial intelligence, virtual and augmented reality, and more can be used to address gun violence. In this respect, such technologies may have applications in the manufacture of weapons; monitoring of individuals in possession of such weapons; public security; tracking of such weapons; and the creation of databases, analytics, and intelligence necessary to predict and prevent instances of gun violence.
- It is anticipated that most research outputs will be provided in the form of reports, studies, white papers, or data outputs (e.g. spreadsheets) that can be shared with other researchers and mined for unique insights.

The CGVR’s Relationship with the State of New Jersey:

The OSHE is responsible for overseeing the application process, the selection of the university that will house the CGVR, and the disbursement of the seed funding to the selected institution. The CGVR will be accountable to the OSHE by submitting mid-year and end-of-year progress reports detailing budgetary information, staff performance, works in progress, and the emergence of challenges or impediments to the Center’s mission and operations, until the funding has been fully distributed. In addition, the Center will be expected to engage in ongoing reporting with the OSHE regarding its research, events, and other activities. Further, the grant agreement with the CGVR will be subject to the terms and conditions set forth in Circular 07-05-OMB: Grant Agreements – Agency Contracts.

The State will partner to support the Center in initial (year 1) activities, including the hiring of an inaugural executive director, the publication of initial reports, policy briefs, and blog posts. The Center will also be expected to partner in the development of events and activities in coordination with the broader States for Gun Safety coalition. The Center should also demonstrate a willingness to partner with existing state agencies to share datasets and develop and/or co-sponsor programs, in order to carry out its research mission.

Items for Submission:

Each public research university responding to this notice should provide the following information, including as much detail as is practicable where applicable (e.g. including dollars, staff numbers, units of equipment, square footage, etc.):

- Statement explaining how and why the university is ideally positioned to fulfill the Governor’s mission for the CGVR, based on the selection criteria outlined in this document.
- Complete operational plan and budget forecast for the FY19 fiscal year, as well as a projected budget for FY20, with an indication of how in-kind contributions from the University, potential research grants, and other philanthropic support will be leveraged to support ongoing operational costs of the Center.
- List of academic programs and departments that can contribute to gun violence research.
- List of expected staff bios and corresponding publications related to gun violence research.
- List of in-kind resources (office, workspace, desktop stations, software, IT equipment, and more) that the university is willing to advance the CGVR’s mission.

- Proposed list of full- and part-time staff (inclusive of hourly rates per month) along with total contributions in hours per month for each staff member.
- Process for identifying an Executive Research Director with appropriate experience and qualifications for the leadership role of the CGVR.
- List of relevant linkable public health data sets to which the university has access or is currently building.
- Proposed research reports, policy briefs, and/or blog posts that could be published within the first 3 months, 6 months, and year of the Center’s creation, respectively.
- List of potential events related to gun safety that could occur within the first 6 months of the Center’s creation.

Total Budgetary Itemization and Projection:

The Budgetary Forecast for CGVR should provide estimates for funds drawn from the \$2 million State of New Jersey allocation as well as a dollar amount to reflect the value of in-kind provisions from the university. Applicants should be able to demonstrate how resources (financial and in-kind) will be used in FY2019. As set forth in Circular 07-05-OMB, to the extent that any portion of the grant funds are not dispersed in FY19, they are subject to appropriation for use in FY20 and beyond. The below budgetary forecast serves as a sample template for prospective applicants.

| Expense Category | State Budget Allocation | In-Kind Provisions |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Staff and Contractors | | |
| Research Director (Full-time) | | |
| Fiscal Manager | | |
| Administrative Support | | |
| Senior Researchers | | |
| Researchers | | |
| Paid Interns | | |
| Specialized Contractors (statisticians, data analysts, programmers, etc.) | | |
| Overhead Costs | | |
| Office Space | | |
| Equipment (Computers, Telephone, Software) | | |
| Utilities (electric, telephone, internet) | | |
| Support Services | | |
| IT Support | | |
| Communications (print, P/R, social media, web development) | | |
| Human Resources | | |
| Printing/Shipping | | |
| Research Costs | | |
| Security | | |
| Parking | | |
| Janitorial | | |
| Additional Amenities | | |
| Events | | |
| Conferences, Roundtables, and Web-Events | | |
| Catering | | |
| Set-Up, A/V and Support | | |
| Honorariums for speakers | | |
| Research Expenses | | |

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|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Subscriptions | | |
| Publications | | |
| Software (survey design) | | |
| Travel Expenses and Lodging | | |
| Total Expenses for FY2019 | | |

Deadline for Submission:

The above requested information should be submitted to the Office of the Secretary for Higher Education (OSHE) no later than 5:00pm on September 4, 2018. Submissions may be emailed to OSHE@oshe.nj.gov with the subject line “Gun Violence Research Initiative”.

Questions about the RFP should be directed to the above email address or sent to:

Office of the Secretary of Higher Education
 Attn: Gun Violence Research Initiative
 1 John Fitch Plaza, 10th Floor
 P.O. Box 542
 Trenton, NJ 08625-0542