

SOLICITATION FOR PROPOSALS
INSTITUTE FOR POLICE RESEARCH
SARASOTA, FLORIDA

The Institute for Police Research (IPR), located in Sarasota, Florida, is researching the use of reflective gear by law enforcement officials, in particular for work occurring on or near highway/street work zones. This sub-award involves developing a data collection instrument (e.g., survey, questionnaire) for assembling information on policies and practices related to use of reflective gear in the field. The results of this sub-award will be used to inform improvements to reflective gear and its use, which may include training, policy, and/or new gear designs and devices. This project is a cooperative agreement between the Institute for Police Research and the National Institute of Justice (Department of Justice), and is fully funded by Federal funds in the amount of \$375,000.

Background

The Institute for Police Research seeks to continuously improve the working environment for law enforcement personnel through research, training and outreach. The work environment for law enforcement personnel includes not only on-going challenges related to professional development, community outreach and crime prevention, but also response to emerging trends in crime and response to new rules and regulations.

One such regulation, the Federal Highway Administration's *The Worker Visibility Final Rule*, is set to take effect November 24, 2008. The rule mandates use of American National Standards Institute (ANSI) public safety vests by any personnel working in or around roadways receiving federal highway funds. In response to concerns about accessibility, a special class of vests has been developed for police/fire personnel, featuring a shorter length for access to tactical belts, tear-away shoulders/waists and clips for microphones/badges. While an improvement, this shorter vest design only addresses one of many concerns raised about the new requirements on visibility and vests.

Law enforcement occupations present a distinct challenge with respect to visibility. Unlike other occupations where high visibility can be considered an asset in helping to mitigate struck-by hazards at virtually all times, the on-duty visibility requirements of a law enforcement officer can range from conspicuous as possible (e.g., in managing traffic, maintaining a highly visible public presence, etc.) to inconspicuous as possible (e.g., arrests, confrontations with known or suspected felons, border patrol, surveillance, etc.). Moreover, an officer may need to convert from low visibility to high visibility within seconds to ensure safety of the public, fellow Officers and suspects.

Although requirements on reflective gear are not new, accidents and fatalities of personnel in work zones continue to be a problem. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, between 1996 and 2005, a law enforcement officer was struck and killed at a rate of one a month. The FHWA outlined several tasks when a vest need not be worn,

though the exemptions occur when risk of being struck are high. Even with provisions in the new rule for new ANSI standards, law enforcement professionals continue to voice concerns over visibility requirements that may trump professional judgment. Thus, this project seeks to address operational changes and potential improvements to gear needed to adequately balance safety objectives while supporting law enforcement professionals' decisions on visibility and safety.

Outline

IPR anticipates a study design that includes:

- 1) *Using results from a completed literature review to inform the eventual study design* – IPR is conducting research to assess trends in law enforcement risks related to street and highway patrol duty, current practice in use of reflective and safety gear, the range of tactical situations faced by law enforcement personnel related to safety, and desired applications to meet visibility, safety and tactical needs.
- 2) *Consulting with a Core Committee on study design and use of results* – IPR is assembling a team of Core Committee members from across the country to provide direction and feedback related to the actual work environment. The Committee Members were chosen to provide a range of experience (geographic diversity, Department size and law enforcement functions). Moreover, IPR is affiliated with the International Union of Police Associations (I.U.P.A.). I.U.P.A. has ties with over 200 units across the country which can be potential study participants.
- 3) *Submitting the Study Design and Protocol to an Independent Review Board for Approval*. Because the study may involve research involving human subjects, the study design must satisfy federal statutes and regulations governing research on human subjects. The I.U.P.A. has retained an Independent Review Board, the duties of which include review and approval or disapproval of study design, research protocols, and new protocols; review and approval, disapproval or modification of consent forms and privacy certificate(s); review and approval or disapproval of the researcher(s); monitoring of serious adverse event reports; monitoring of serious protocol deviations and maintenance of required IRB records.
- 4) *Development of a data collection instrument* - In consultation with IPR and the Core Committee, researchers will develop a data collection instrument designed to fully assess current practice, trends and potential new options related to visibility and gear. Researchers will also assist in a distribution and collection plan for the instrument. IPR intends to disseminate the questionnaire or survey to at least 10 Departments nationwide.
- 5) *Consultation on study design* – IPR anticipates adjustments to the initial study design based on guidance from the Core Committee and the Department of Justice, as well as local reaction once the new requirements take effect. As such, IPR will use the research team to monitor and adjust the study design as needed to produce valid results and applications.

Scope of Work

The main goal of this two-year project is to produce research on visibility, vest and gear design, and operational requirements to support the safety of law enforcement officials and the general public. The main objective of this Solicitation is to produce data and research that will inform the law enforcement community, the Department of Justice and counterparts in transportation safety on (1) operational expectations with the new requirements, (2) current and expected compliance trends, and (3) law enforcement observations on visibility gear that meets both safety and surveillance needs while operating in highway work zones. While the initial driver for this study was legislation related to Highway Work zones, IPR expects this work product to meet a wider range of applications related to visibility, safety, and operations occurring along *any* public road or Highway.

IPR expects the successful Applicant will have specific expertise in (1) the development of questionnaires, surveys and sample design, (2) data management, (3) designing survey material for use in formulating policy, and (4) privacy and quality assurance.

Objectives

The Objectives related to this Solicitation are:

- To identify and assemble research and policy partners (including DOJ);
- To produce a data collection instrument designed to assess current and trend information on law enforcement use of reflective gear, vests and other safety equipment in roadway work zones (both federal-aid and regional/arterial). This research will also investigate safety policies, enforcement of those policies, and education (current and expected);
- To gather information on expected compliance with new visibility requirements;
- To relate a questionnaire or survey to the range of tactical situations faced by law enforcement professionals vis a vis visibility;
- To develop parameters to objectively link tactical situations and visibility needs; and
- To develop information that can be used to inform development of visibility protocols that can be used by a manufacturer, the US Department of Transportation or others conducting research or monitoring use of safety/reflective gear.
- To highlight any other research needs identified during the course of this investigation.

Tasks

Below is a description of how IPR envisions how each objective could be accomplished. IPR also recognizes that, as the project progresses, information gathered may influence the ultimate research program. As such, the scope anticipates an iterative process for research design and certain deliverables. IPR may issue a second Solicitation to link survey results to tangible improvements in policy and gear design.

1) Meet with IPR staff (by telephone if needed) to discuss study and adjust time frames and work plan as needed. (February 2009)

Before a contract is signed the researcher will review the work with IPR and adjust the timeline for completing the study if needed.

2) Review literature search to date, identify gaps, suggest additional avenues of information, and discuss potential questionnaire, survey or data collection methods. (February 2009)

The research team will meet to review the body of literature assembled to date and help identify gaps in knowledge. In addition, the researcher will be asked to augment the literature search with other sources, other resources, and any other research underway related to visibility and/or reflective gear.

3) Consult with Core Committee. (February/March 2009)

The researcher will consult with several members of the Core Committee (by phone or in person) to obtain insights on the relationship between visibility needs, operations and training and the new regulations.

4) Develop draft questionnaire/survey and study protocol. (April 2009)

The researcher will submit a first draft questionnaire/survey and study protocol to IPR for comments. Once comments have been incorporated, IPR will circulate the draft first with DOJ and the Core Committee, and then the Institutional Review Board. As comments are addressed, the researcher, working with IPR, will develop a distribution plan, which will follow IPR's Privacy and Data Collection procedures. IPR will contact potential participants and secure agreements (note: IPR has an approved informed consent agreement to be used in this study).

5) Conduct survey/questionnaire. (May/June 2009)

IPR will distribute the survey and may need to consult the researcher as need arises.

6) Write draft report. (August/September 2009)

The researcher will provide IPR with a report including draft language that IPR may insert into a Draft Final Technical Report, a 2,500 to 4,000 word Draft Summary, and a 400 word Draft Abstract which IPR will submit to the Department of Justice. Such reports must include a detailed description of data collection and analysis procedures, modifications to or problems with the original research design, and findings and conclusions. Research goals and objectives, research design and methods for achieving the goals and objectives should be concisely described.

Note that under the terms and conditions applied by the Department of Justice, the draft language must be capable of submission for peer review. IPR will be using data collection and reporting criteria included in the handbook “Depositing Data with the Data Resources Program of the National Institutes of Justice.”

7) Revise report and issue final report. (September 2009)

Criteria for Selection

IPR reserves the right to revise, amend or cancel this Solicitation at any time; IPR reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals. The cost of developing the proposal is the sole responsibility of the applicant. Selection of a researcher will be based on the following criteria, in order of preference:

- Ability to meet time frames presented in Scope of Work;
- Timely response to this Solicitation;
- Experience and qualifications in research related to law enforcement operations and policies related to safety, with weight given to research related to visibility and/or operations in work zones;
- Experience in survey and/or questionnaire design;
- Research and data collection involving Human Subjects;
- Quality of research team;
- Documentation of secure data handling, management and transfer;
- Projected Cost of Services.

Qualifications

The researcher must demonstrate in its proposal:

- Broad knowledge of law enforcement operations and policies;
- A successful track record of designing studies similar to one described in this Solicitation;
- Ability to conduct and complete the study design proposed;
- Capacity to develop recommendations that are practical and supported by information reviewed and data collected; and
- The ability to work collaboratively.

Expected Contract Terms

The terms of this project are governed in part by regulations issued by the Department of Justice. As such, the contract will include stipulations that include, but are not limited to:

- Conducting studies using Human Subjects
- Anti-Discrimination Policies
- Drug free workplace
- Prohibitions on Lobbying
- Conflict of Interest
- Patents and use of data
- Federal rules governing payment and use of funds

These terms will be included in the final contract with researchers.

Expected Deliverables

The deliverables related to this Solicitation will include:

- Work Plan
- Draft study instrument and study protocol
- Draft Final Report
- Final Report with final study instrument and study protocol.

Submittal Format

Please submit two copies of your proposal by February 6, 2009 to:

Leah Cheli
Institute for Police Research/I.U.P.A.
1549 Ringling Boulevard
6th Floor
Sarasota, Florida
34236
lcheli@iupa.org

Proposal Content and Submission

Proposals shall be limited to 8 pages or less not including resumes and appendices. Please ensure that the following information is included in the proposal:

- Name of primary contact for the proposal;
- Name of principal investigator (person responsible for study design and leading the work);
- Contact information including addresses, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses for the above;
- Names of any additional persons that will assist with conducting the study;
- Resumes for all members of the research team;
- Outline of the proposed study, its design, suggested sample size and geographic/demographic spread needed to ensure the results are representative, strategies for addressing low response rates and/or missing demographic sectors, a description of how quantitative and qualitative data will be collected and analyzed including proposed test for significance that will be conducted;
- Overview of data handling procedures to ensure privacy;
- List of deliverables that will be submitted electronically and programs that will be used;
- Timeline for completing the study and submitting deliverables;
- Statement of qualifications for consultant/contractor;
- Budget including fees (rate/day), number of days, and an itemized list of estimated expenses. The total estimated value of this sub-award is \$45,000. Consultant rates may not exceed \$450/day per person;
- Proposed payment schedule that is tied to deliverables;
- Note – IPR will not provide office space, telephone service, postage, or clerical support.

Questions

For any questions on this Solicitation or additional information on this award, please contact Leah Cheli (lcheli@iupa.org) or Lisa Nisenson (lisan@iupa.org) at 941-487-2560.