

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

to Conduct Research on
Improving Pretrial Court Appearance



DECEMBER 13, 2018

Table of Contents

Background	3
RFP Structure and Research Objectives	5
Research Objective 1	5
Research Objective 2	6
Research Objective 3	6
Research Objective 4	7
Research Objective 5	8
Research Objective 6	8
Research Objective 7	9
Research Objective 8	9
Research Objective 9	10
Initial Response to the RFP	11
Research Requirements	11
Research Teams and Foundation Collaboration.....	11
Application Step One — LOI Submission	11
Application Step Two — Proposal Submission.....	12
Project and Award Timeframe	15
Optional Conference Call	15
Eligibility	15
Advisory Board	15
Term	16
References	16
Bidder’s Conference Call Questions and Answers	18

Request for Proposals to Conduct Research on Improving Pretrial Court Appearance

Background

As an increasing number of jurisdictions across the United States engage in pretrial justice reform, the demand for cost-effective practices that improve court appearance rates is higher than ever. However, much remains unknown about what pretrial release conditions are the most effective in getting defendants to return to court, for whom they are most effective, and how to adequately implement and measure interventions. More methodologically rigorous research on pretrial release conditions would help the nation's pretrial justice systems more effectively promote public safety and accountability, as well as become more transparent, fair, and just.

In all 50 states, judges who preside over criminal cases are required to consider whether to release an individual charged with a criminal offense back into the community before trial. Although the exact factors judges consider when making this decision differ across jurisdictions, the decision hinges primarily on whether judges believe an individual will appear for all scheduled pretrial court dates. To incentivize defendants to return to court, judges are authorized through state law and/or court rule to set release conditions, such as financial guarantee or cash bail, pretrial supervision, or electronic monitoring (National Institute of Corrections, 2014).

The requirement to appear before a judge has been part of American criminal justice systems since their inception in the 1600s. However, it was not until the 1920s that scholars began to study failure to appear and the courts' attempts to prevent and respond to the issue, while balancing defendants' liberty. In the 1960s, the Vera Foundation's Manhattan Bail Project demonstrated – through a randomized controlled trial of a risk-based release recommendation – that more defendants could be released without bail while still maintaining high court appearance rates (National Institute of Corrections, 2014). Beginning in the early 2000s, the pretrial phase of the American criminal justice system gained attention, rising to the forefront of policymakers' and practitioners' reform agendas (see Stevenson & Mayson, 2017).

In 2011, the importance of promoting defendants' court appearances was one of the focuses of the U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ) National Symposium on Pretrial Justice. The DOJ's [Summary Report of Proceedings](#) made several recommendations, one of which was an invitation to researchers to help practitioners better understand what conditions of pretrial release improve the performance of different populations of defendants (U.S. Department of Justice, 2011).

Weeks after the National Symposium, the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) and the Pretrial Justice Institute (PJI) jointly published a comprehensive literature review on practices that have empirical support for improving pretrial outcomes, including court appearance. In that report, VanNostrand et al. (2011) reviewed studies of varying degrees of methodological rigor assessing the effectiveness of pretrial release conditions and interventions such as court date notification, drug testing, electronic monitoring, pretrial supervision, and financial conditions. The authors concluded that court

date notifications had the strongest empirical support for improving court appearance, and that there was preliminary support for improved court appearance from pretrial supervision. No studies reviewed showed that drug testing, electronic monitoring, or financial conditions improved appearance.

Around the same time, the Laura and John Arnold Foundation (LJAF) launched its Criminal Justice Initiative, which aims to advance community safety and the values of equity, fairness, effectiveness, and racial justice. LJAF seeks to accelerate progress in five key criminal justice policy domains, including pretrial justice, through methodologically rigorous research and evidence-based innovations to help inform more effective public policy. In a 2016 meta-analysis of pretrial research, LJAF found that the majority of pretrial research studies lack sufficient methodological rigor, limiting conclusions about the impact of pretrial release conditions on court appearance. LJAF called for rigorous research on a variety of pretrial topics (Bechtel et al., 2016).

In the two years since the publication of that review, there have been several studies evaluating the effectiveness of various pretrial release conditions for improving court appearance. These studies, in combination with those published prior to 2011, have shown that court date notifications continue to have the greatest impact on court appearance, oftentimes providing as much as 30 to 50 percent increase in appearance rates. The mechanism of reminders can vary (e.g., in-person meetings, letters, postcards, live callers, robocalls, text messages, email), and the content of the message can be more or less effective with different sub-groups of defendants (Cooke et al., 2018; National Center for State Courts, 2014; Bornstein et al., 2012; Rosenbaum et al., 2012; Schnacke et al., 2012; VanNostrand et al., 2011). This research prompted practitioners in many jurisdictions to implement court date notification procedures, although few include evaluation as part of their strategy. Thus there is still very little known about which sub-groups of defendants benefit from what kind of notifications and when, and which newer technologies (e.g., email, text, social media, mobile phone apps) are most effective.

A few recent studies indicate that pretrial monitoring is also effective for increasing court appearance, particularly for individuals who score higher risk on an actuarial pretrial assessment (Danner et al., 2015; Lowenkamp & VanNostrand, 2013; VanNostrand et al., 2011). Individuals who score lower risk appear to benefit the least (Danner et al., 2015; Lowenkamp & VanNostrand, 2013; VanNostrand et al., 2011). Yet, much remains to be learned about pretrial monitoring, such as which specific activities and dosages have the most benefit and for which sub-groups of individuals.

Other research questions remain unexplored or underexplored. Since 2011, there have been no studies examining the role of other release conditions or interventions, such as drug testing or electronic monitoring, and little research with adequate methodology investigating the role of financial conditions for improving court appearance (see Bechtel et al., 2012).

Almost nothing is known about the effects of court appearance, or lack thereof, on individuals' pretrial criminal activity. Additionally, the influence of other case processing practices, such as prosecutorial filing, court docketing, and defense representation, remains unknown. Finally, almost all research to date has relied on proxy measures, such as judges' responses to non-appearance (e.g., issuance of a warrant), to

measure failures to appear. This introduces the potential for practitioners' biases to influence research results and obscures actual rates of non-appearance.

LJAF remains committed to helping criminal justice professionals improve their knowledge of “what works” to increase community safety, equity, and fairness in the justice system. Through this Request for Proposals (RFP), LJAF will provide funding to selected researchers to conduct rigorously designed research studies that answer lingering questions about improving court appearance alongside other outcomes for justice-involved individuals.

RFP Structure and Research Objectives

With guidance from research in the field and national pretrial experts, LJAF compiled a preliminary list of possible research objectives and questions. The list includes:

- (1) Defining and assessing failure to appear in court
- (2) Defining and improving the accuracy of non-appearance measurements
- (3) Assessing the impact of court date notifications/reminders
- (4) Assessing the impact of pretrial monitoring/supervision/case management
- (5) Assessing the impact of supportive enhancements for appearance
- (6) Incentivizing court appearance
- (7) Responding to non-appearance
- (8) Assessing procedural or structural enhancements for appearance
- (9) Understanding the collateral effects of appearance

The list is not exhaustive, and the RFP is not limited to research answering these questions. In their proposals, respondents are encouraged to offer additional research questions that fall inside or outside of the listed research objectives.¹ Respondents can express interest in conducting studies that address more than one objective and/or that answer multiple questions. For all research questions, respondents need to provide an explanation of how the questions can be addressed by specific study designs, whether quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods.

Research Objective I

Defining and Assessing Failure to Appear in Court —Current research has used any failure to appear as the basis for measuring non-appearance. However, judges and policymakers often make more

¹ Some research questions on this list may be more appropriate for a randomized control trial (RCT), whereas others may be exploratory and not yet ready for an RCT. LJAF is interested in funding a range of studies, as long as they demonstrate strategies that improve court appearance and do not adversely affect public safety or increase unnecessary pretrial detention.

sophisticated distinctions among different types of failure to appear (e.g., whether the non-appearance was willful or not). Objective 1 seeks to further develop ways to measure different types of non-appearance and the factors associated with each.

Potential Research Questions—

- (1) To what extent is it possible to distinguish among different types of non-appearance:
 - a. Non-willful (e.g., defendant is physically prevented from appearing for a variety of reasons, such as incarceration, medical, etc.); or
 - b. Willful (e.g., defendant makes a conscious decision not to attend a court hearing for a variety of reasons, such as job or family considerations or avoidance of potential punishment, but is not actively attempting to avoid detection or arrest); or
 - c. Flight (e.g., defendant makes a conscious decision not to attend a court hearing and is actively attempting to avoid detection or arrest within a jurisdiction or by leaving a jurisdiction)?
- (2) Do risk factors differ for persons who demonstrate these different types of non-appearance, and to what extent can current risk assessments predict the different types of failure to appear?
- (3) Why do defendants fail to appear (e.g., distorted beliefs about the costs and benefits of non-appearance; hassles; forgetfulness; limited attention; impulsivity; confusion)?

Research Objective 2

Defining and Improving the Accuracy of Non-Appearance Measurements—Most studies use proxy measures of non-appearance, such as a warrant issued for failure to appear, rather than non-appearance itself. This can be due to data system limitations or judicial practice. However, the rate of individuals missing their scheduled court dates (i.e. non-appearance) remains unknown in many cases.

Potential Research Questions—

- (1) What are more accurate ways to measure non-appearance/failure to appear, such that proxy measurements (e.g., warrants issued for failure to appear) do not have to be used in research studies and in jurisdictions' pretrial performance measurement?
- (2) What specific actions (e.g., changes to information systems; training, monitoring, and quality assurance) can court systems take to improve the accuracy of tracking and reporting court appearances, failures to appear, and warrants/summonses issued for failure to appear?
- (3) What are the benefits and consequences of measuring the system response for failure to appear in comparison to non-appearance?

Research Objective 3

Assessing the Impact of Court Date Notifications/Reminders —The most commonly researched strategy for improving court appearance has been reminding individuals of the time and date of their upcoming court hearings. While these studies have found promising results, most studies involve data collected in 2011 or prior, before mobile phones, text messaging, and social media became ubiquitous. Thus, many questions remain about the most effective method of contacting individuals, the most effective nature

and timing of the message, and which other methods of notification, if any, work best for individuals who are difficult to contact (e.g., persons without any telephone or residence).

Potential Research Questions—

- (1) Which preventive (i.e., before a failure to appear has occurred) court date notification method (live caller, automated call, text message, email, letter, postcard, social media) is most effective for increasing court appearance?
- (2) What telephone methods (personal cell phone, temporarily issued cell phone, landline) are most effective for contacting defendants throughout their case?
- (3) What message content (e.g., using simplified information regarding rules, requirements, and expectations; being persuasive; using links or information to maps, addresses, and persons to contact, etc.) is most effective?
- (4) Which entity providing notifications (e.g., defense attorney, court, sheriff/police, neutral third-party vendor) is most effective?
- (5) Which time intervals (e.g., seven days prior, three days prior, the day before) are most effective?
- (6) To what extent does requesting or requiring a confirmation/reply to the notification increase appearance?
- (7) Which preventive notification method(s) are most effective for different types of defendants (based on their assessed pretrial risk; category of alleged offense; various demographic factors; whether they were cited/summonsed vs booked into jail when initially charged)?
- (8) To what extent does court appearance increase with notifications for all court dates vs just the initial appearance?
- (9) What technology and other methods increase the reliability of contact information so defendants receive notifications throughout their case?
- (10) To what extent can court case apps that include, for example, court date notifications, defense counsel contact information, calendar of events functions, pretrial monitoring and/or testing appointments, and links to other community-based services increase appearance?
- (11) To what extent do notifications improve or affect justice system, social, and/or economic outcomes in rural or remote areas (e.g., more appearance, case disposition, pretrial criminal activity and longer-term recidivism, residential needs, employment, financial stability)?

Research Objective 4

Assessing the Impact of Pretrial Monitoring/Supervision/Case Management—Several studies indicate that pretrial monitoring shows promise for improving court appearance and appears to have the greatest benefit for persons scoring higher risk on actuarial pretrial assessments. Much remains to be learned, however, such as which specific aspects or interventions (e.g., meeting regularly with a pretrial staff person; staff providing reminders of upcoming court hearings) contribute to observed outcomes. Further research is also needed on which sub-populations benefit the most (e.g., persons with certain charges) and to what extent less frequently utilized methods are more effective (e.g., using various technologies or satellite stations for check-ins vs face-to-face meetings).

Potential Research Questions—

- (1) To what extent does pretrial monitoring/supervision/case management increase court appearance?
- (2) Which pretrial monitoring components/activities/interventions (e.g., type, frequency, intensity, location of delivery, by which agency) are most effective, including telephone and face-to-face contacts, substance testing, electronic monitoring, and using intentional prompts that require defendants to problem-solve how they will get to court hearings?
- (3) Which pretrial monitoring components/activities/interventions are most effective for different types of defendants (based on their assessed pretrial risk; category of alleged offense; various demographic factors; whether they were cited/summonsed vs booked into jail when initially charged)?
- (4) To what extent does pretrial monitoring improve or affect justice system, social, and/or economic outcomes, including in rural or remote areas (e.g., more appearance, case disposition, pretrial criminal activity and longer-term recidivism, residential needs, employment, financial stability)?
- (5) To what extent do pretrial monitoring fees impact compliance with pretrial monitoring and court appearance and other outcomes of interest (e.g., case disposition, pretrial criminal activity and longer-term recidivism, residential needs, employment, financial stability)?
- (6) What are the associated costs and benefits of providing pretrial monitoring?

Research Objective 5

Assessing the Impact of Supportive Enhancements for Appearance—Much remains to be learned about how individuals' participation in community-based or government-provided social services and/or the active involvement of family and friends during pretrial release might improve court appearance, and which individuals benefit the most.

Potential Research Questions—

- (1) To what extent does the use of non-compensated sureties (e.g., family members or friends, community organizations) increase appearance in today's justice system?
- (2) To what extent are additional, community-based services (e.g., transportation, childcare, employment, substance or mental health services) effective in improving appearance, including those informed by an assessment of defendants' strengths or psychosocial needs?
- (3) Which of these strategies or services are most effective for different types of defendants (based on their assessed pretrial risk; based on their assessed psychosocial needs; category of alleged offense; various demographic factors; whether they were cited/summonsed vs booked into jail when initially charged)?
- (4) To what extent do these services improve or affect justice system, social, and/or economic outcomes, including in rural or remote areas (e.g., more appearance, case disposition, pretrial criminal activity and longer-term recidivism, residential needs, employment, financial stability)?
- (5) What are the associated costs and benefits of providing these various services?

Research Objective 6

Incentivizing Court Appearance—Many assumptions are made about what motivates people to appear in court (e.g., loss of bond money, avoiding time in jail, getting rid of one's case as quickly as possible), but

research to date has not investigated what incentives the court system can provide to improve appearance. Additionally, studies have not fully tested how defendants perceive their treatment during the case processing period and how these perceptions may impact court appearance.

Potential Research Questions—

- (1) Which types of incentives, such as forfeiting a secured financial or unsecured financial bond amount; receiving a gift card, coupon, or cash for appearing; verbal recognition or affirmations, or the reduction in required non-financial conditions such as office visits, substance testing, electronic monitoring, etc., increase appearance?
- (2) To what extent do practices that enhance defendants' perceptions of fairness and reciprocity in their interactions with law enforcement, prosecution, defense, judges, detentions, and pretrial services increase court appearance?

Research Objective 7

Responding to Non-Appearance—Judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and pretrial services staff recognize the importance of having a variety of responses to failures to appear that balance (a) the court's need to continue processing the case and (b) individualization of the response based on the nature of the case and the person's past and recent performance on pretrial release. Although responding to non-appearance is often integrated into pretrial monitoring, which has been researched to some degree, no studies have yet tested the effectiveness of different responses, for whom they are most effective and when, and the impact of these responses on the pretrial detention rate.

Potential Research Questions—

- (1) To what extent are responsive (i.e., after a failure to appear has occurred) notifications effective in getting defendants to respond or appear prior to an imminent court response (e.g., issuing a warrant or summons), and what are the optimal grace periods before the court responds?
- (2) To what extent are different court responses (e.g., summonses vs warrants) effective in getting a defendant who failed to appear back into court?
- (3) Which responsive notification method(s) are most effective for different types of defendants (based on their assessed pretrial risk; various demographic factors; whether they were cited/summonsed vs booked into jail when initially charged)?
- (4) To what extent are various responses to the different types of non-appearance (non-willful, willful, flight) effective at preventing additional non-appearance?
- (5) What are the associated costs and benefits of using different methods of responsive notifications?

Research Objective 8

Assessing Procedural or Structural Enhancements for Appearance—Current research has not studied the effects of procedural or structural enhancements (e.g., citations and summonses vs custodial arrests, docketing practices, humanizing interactions between court actors and defendants) for improving court appearance. This line of research has great potential because it involves changes the justice system can

make to its overall design in order to achieve broad set of desired outcomes, including improved court appearance rates.

Potential Research Questions—

- (1) What is the effect of using different charging practices (e.g., more citations instead of custodial arrests) on court appearance?
- (2) Which of these charging practices are most effective for different types of defendants (based on their assessed pretrial risk if possible; category of alleged offense; various demographic factors, if relevant)?
- (3) What is the effect of prosecutorial early case screening (e.g., immediately after arrest and prior to first appearance) and decisions about charging on court appearance?
- (4) Which docketing approaches (e.g., time between citation/arrest and first appearance; time between required appearances; the number of required appearances; duration of total time on pretrial status; having first-appearance-only dockets; docket days of week, including weekends; docket times of day, including evenings; multiple first appearance hearings per day; defendant choice of day, time, and place; community court concepts) increase court appearance?
- (5) Which docketing approaches are most effective for different types of defendants based on their assessed pretrial risk, various demographic factors, and access to transportation?
- (6) To what extent do these docketing practices improve or affect justice system, social, and/or economic outcomes, including in rural or remote areas (e.g., case disposition, pretrial criminal activity and longer-term recidivism, residential needs, employment, financial stability)?
- (7) How does access to a defense attorney and defense representation during first appearance impact court appearance?
- (8) To what extent does defense attorney access impact different types of defendants based on their assessed pretrial risk, various demographic factors, access to transportation?
- (9) To what extent does a defendant's perception or their experience in court impact court appearance?

Research Objective 9

Understanding the Collateral Effects of Appearance—An oft-stated assumption is that court appearance is necessary for public safety, yet research has not studied this relationship. There is also no research aimed at understanding the relationship between court appearance (or lack thereof) and sentencing and longer-term recidivism.

Potential Research Questions—

- (1) To what extent does court appearance (or lack thereof) affect pretrial criminal activity, and which different kinds of criminal activity?
- (2) To what extent does court appearance have an impact on other justice system outcomes (e.g., case disposition, sentencing, longer-term recidivism), and to what extent does this differ for various types of defendants based on their assessed pretrial risk, category of alleged offense,

various demographic factors, and whether they were cited/summonsed vs booked into jail when initially charged?

Initial Response to the RFP

As a first step, respondents should submit a Letter of Interest (LOI). Respondents who intend to conduct multiple studies must submit a separate LOI for each study, unless the studies are linked such that information learned in one study directly informs the methods of, or complements of, the next study. If respondents are invited to submit full proposals, they must submit separate proposals that align with the separate LOIs, if applicable. We provide more information on the submission requirements for LOIs and proposals later in this RFP. To satisfy the research objectives, project teams may involve partnerships among universities, researchers, scholars, policymakers, practitioners, and/or subject matter experts to ensure a highly qualified team. It is not necessary for a research institution or researcher to initiate the study or response to this RFP. Justice system policymakers or practitioners, community-based organizations, and subject matter experts are also highly encouraged to initiate a potential research study, coordinate the formation of the research team, and apply for funding.

LJAF does not have a predetermined limit on the number of studies it will fund, the number of different researchers it will fund, or a funding limit per study. We will support as many quality studies as funding allows, and over a time period not yet determined.

Research Requirements

Our goal is to improve knowledge about what is most effective in increasing court appearance. Research performed in a given jurisdiction will likely need robust data systems, collaborative stakeholders, and a strong commitment to adhering to research methodology to ensure success. Respondents should be able to describe the necessary data to identify and answer the research questions.

Research Teams and Foundation Collaboration

LJAF expects research grantees to work in partnership with our organization. Research teams will be asked to describe a study's research objectives and the steps a jurisdiction must take to fulfill the study's goals. Research teams are expected to provide LJAF with regular updates, enlist us in solving problems and removing obstacles that may interfere with research objectives, and communicate with us about research results as they are obtained.

Application Step One — LOI Submission

Groups and individuals interested in responding to this RFP need to first submit an LOI by 11:59 p.m. ET on January 11. Please send the LOI to CourtAppearanceRFP@arnoldfoundation.org with the subject line, "COURT APPEARANCE RESEARCH RFP LETTER OF INTEREST." All LOIs must adhere to the criteria below. Failure to meet any of these criteria within the specified timeframe will result in disqualification. LJAF may

reach out to the project point of contact with questions following the LOI submission. Teams selected to submit full proposals will be notified on February 1.

- Page length: LOIs are not to exceed five single-spaced pages with 11- or 12-point font.
- Study design: Provide a brief summary of the study design to address the selected research objective and questions. Define data necessary to conduct study, definitions of independent and dependent variables, and an overview of the analytical strategy.
- Letters of support from jurisdiction stakeholders, pretrial services agency, or community-based programs should be included in the proposal materials. These letters should indicate a commitment to the research and the ability and willingness to provide the necessary data to complete the project. Letters of support do not count toward the total page length.
- Deliverables: Provide a brief list of project deliverables. Example deliverables include peer-reviewed articles, technical reports, policy briefs, new monitoring models, implementation guides, and ancillary materials. Respondents are encouraged to explain what deliverables will be most appropriate and what will provide the greatest benefit for target audiences, including researchers, criminal justice agency stakeholders, policymakers, and practitioners. Respondents are encouraged to identify conference and training opportunities that would be appropriate to disseminate the results.
- Project contact: Provide the name, agency, email address, and telephone number for the primary project contact.
- Team biographies: Provide a brief biography for all project team members, specifying their roles and responsibilities for the project. Team biographies do not count toward the total page length.
- Budget: Specify the overall project cost, overall project hours by project team member, and total applicable travel and administrative costs. Offer a budget that reflects the scope of the work proposed. The budget does not count toward the total page length.

Application Step Two — Proposal Submission

Project teams selected to submit proposals will be contacted by February 1. Proposals are due by 11:59 p.m. ET on March 4 and must be submitted via email to CourtAppearanceRFP@arnoldfoundation.org using the subject line "COURT APPEARANCE RESEARCH RFP PROPOSAL." All proposals must adhere to the criteria listed below. Failure to meet any of these criteria within the specified timeframe may result in disqualification. LJAF may reach out to the project point of contact with questions following the proposal submission and will notify project teams of grant awards on or about May 10.

Proposals must clearly label the research objective(s) and research questions under study.

LJAF is strongly committed to the principles of research transparency and integrity, as explained in our [Guidelines for Investment in Research](#). To ensure the utmost in rigor, we require all research involving

statistical inferences be pre-registered, and that all non-confidential materials including, but not limited to, survey instruments, computer code, articles, and reports be open and freely available online without a subscription or license fee. In the case of confidential data, proposals need to briefly discuss whether it would be permissible to create a de-identified dataset for public use, and if so, how much additional labor that would entail.

- Proposal format: The proposal length is limited to 15 pages, single-spaced, with 11- or 12-point font. A table of contents, cover page, references or bibliography, and brief team biographies are all required but do not count toward the 15-page limit.
- Proposal content: The following sections need to be clearly defined and labeled within the proposal. We suggest the table of contents include these sections.
 - Research objective(s): For each research objective(s) addressed, specify the research questions within that objective that the project team intends to study and why those questions are important to the field.
 - Literature review: Provide a brief summary of the literature to date on the research objective(s) and related research questions. Highlight the gaps in the current state of research related to these questions and explain how the proposal intends to respond to these gaps.
 - Study design: Respondents need to provide a detailed description of the research design. Please see the two companion documents accompanying this RFP. The first is titled [Guide to Proposals and Preregistration](#), and the second is titled [Key Items to Get Right When Conducting Randomized Controlled Trials of Social Programs](#)

Both documents define the primary elements that will be incorporated in the study design of the proposal, as applicable. These elements include:

- Data measures and sources needed to answer research questions.
- Primary and secondary measures, including distinguishing both independent and dependent variables.
- Sample size and statistical power.
- If conducting a randomized controlled trial or quasi-experimental design, specify the characteristics of the treatment or intervention group and the comparison or control group.
- Analytical strategy that specifies the statistical analysis that will be used to address all research questions.
- The Guide to Proposals and Preregistration describes the required preregistration process via the Open Science Framework (OSF), hosted by the

Center for Open Science. Research teams will be expected to complete this step prior to conducting the study.

- Letters of support: Letters from jurisdiction stakeholders, pretrial services agency, or community-based programs should be included in the proposal materials. These letters should indicate a commitment to the research and the ability and willingness to provide the necessary data to complete the project. Letters of support do not count toward the total page length.
- Potential study limitations: Describe potential study limitations and how the research team intends to mitigate these challenges.
- Project timeline, milestones, and deliverables: Within a table, clearly identify the project timeline, proposed dates to accomplish project milestones, and project deliverables. Research teams need to consider how to disseminate research results to multiple target audiences, including policymakers, practitioners, and researchers. Respondents are encouraged to develop papers for both peer-review publication and companion briefs that highlight study results and policy implications. The potential deliverables will likely vary based on the research objectives and questions addressed. Respondents are encouraged to identify which tools, guides, policies, and related materials would be helpful for the field when identifying the project deliverables.
- Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocol: If the proposed study needs to be submitted to an IRB for review, briefly describe the steps that will be taken to accomplish this and what documentation or data will be required of the project team. All steps to satisfy IRB protocol needs to be integrated within the project timeline table.
- Data management: Project activities are expected to involve handling of sensitive personal data subject to data privacy legal obligations. Provide a brief summary of the mechanisms (e.g., encryption methods, user access controls such as two factor authentication, etc.) used in the past to protect sensitive data, both in transit and in storage, in accordance with applicable laws and/or agreements.
- Appendices: Include brief project team biographies that specify the roles and responsibilities for all project team members, and organizational chart (if appropriate), and references or a bibliography.
- Budget: All budgets need to specify the costs associated with the primary project activities, personnel responsible for completing the project activities, and the hours necessary by project team member to complete the project activities. Budgets also need to include associated costs for any necessary travel and administrative costs.
- Budget narrative: The narrative serves to offer additional detail about the primary project activities, project timeframe, and project deliverables.

- Proposal Attachments: Resumes and curricula vitae for project team members need to be included as separate attachments. This documentation does not count toward the total proposal page length.

Project and Award Timeframe

Nov 1:	RFP released
Dec 5:	Optional conference call
Jan 11:	LOIs Due
Feb 1:	Notification of invitations to submit full proposals
Mar 4:	Deadline to submit full proposals
May 10:	Notification of award

Optional Conference Call

LJAF will answer questions related to this RFP during an optional call on December 5 at 3:00 p.m. ET. Potential respondents are encouraged to prepare for this conference call in advance by reviewing the research objectives and proposal requirements. To join the call, please dial (877) 594-8353 and use the code: 25475242#. Respondents are welcome to submit questions in advance by emailing CourtAppearanceRFP@arnoldfoundation.org with "COURT APPEARANCE RFP CALL" in the subject line.

Following the call, all questions and responses will be posted on LJAF's website on or about December 12. Respondents are encouraged to check the site and adhere to any changes made to the RFP.

Eligibility

Competitive respondents will assemble a diverse team of experts to accomplish the breadth of work required under this RFP. Project teams will identify and establish a primary project director and fiscal agent for all subcontracts.

Advisory Board

To ensure a comprehensive evaluation of the proposals, an advisory board comprised of scholars and pretrial experts will conduct an independent and objective review of each proposal. The advisory board will make recommendations to LJAF on awards for proposals that demonstrate quality and rigor based on the following criteria: (1) study design, (2) analytical strategy, (3) feasibility, (4) research expertise, (5) benefit to the field and advancement of research and policy, and (6) costs.

No Lobbying or Political Activity

As a 501(c)(3) private foundation, LJAF does not fund or engage in any efforts to influence legislation, distribute propaganda, or participate in a public election or political campaign. For example, LJAF is not permitted to earmark its funds for lobbying activities that may be permissibly conducted by a 501(c)(3) public charity (i.e., via the public charity's 501(h) election). LJAF is also not able to fund any 501(c)(4) lobbying activity. Accordingly, this proposal should not request funding for or list any activities that LJAF is unable to support.

Term

All research projects funded under this RFP will be for the agreed-upon time frame at the time of award.

References

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Bidder's Conference Call Questions and Answers

Below are questions asked during the December 5th bidder's conference call. If you have additional questions that are not addressed here, please feel free to email CourtAppearanceRFP@arnoldfoundation.org. We will attempt to respond within one to two days.

1. Can governmental agencies be the lead applicant on a proposal?

Yes, as long as the team has the research capacity to rigorously and independently answer the research objectives and questions. Researchers can also partner with government agencies to conduct the work.

2. Are there specific constraints in terms of project timeline or budget?

No. We typically fund 1-3 year projects; however, we do not have a strict requirement here. We want to see proposals with reasonable and appropriate timelines and budgets to do the best work possible.

3. What types of deliverables does LJAF hope to see?

We want to see a variety of deliverables to inform appropriate stakeholders in the field. This may be peer reviewed journals, conference presentations, policy reports, technical research reports, etc. Each project should have several deliverables aimed at difference policy audiences.

4. Would LJAF consider funding more than one proposal from the same organization?

Yes, we will consider more than one application from the same group. Applicants should consider whether the multiple projects can be consolidated or streamlined as one application, but we know that this may not always make sense.

5. Do you prefer RCTs over quasi-experimental evaluations or other types of research?

No. We hope that the research teams will select the most rigorous and appropriate statistical method possible to answer the research questions of interest. Some research questions cannot be answered with an RCT. Descriptive or qualitative analysis may be necessary depending on the level of knowledge in the field and the types of questions the team is asking. That said, we do value RCTs and quasi-experimental evaluations when possible and applicable.

6. Would you consider funding a qualitative study?

Yes.

7. Do applicants need to evaluate an intervention to be considered?

Not necessarily. Applicants should articulate why their proposal is important and how it can be used to inform policy.

8. Would a project involving one court or one jurisdiction be considered, or is there a preference for larger scale projects involving multiple cities and/or courts?

In general, we prefer studies that are relevant to the larger pretrial reform movement and that might inform policy in other jurisdictions. However, depending on the proposal, starting in one jurisdiction might make sense. Additionally, there may be opportunities to partner with other applicants, which we may facilitate as we review applications. So if the research is important, a project limited to one jurisdiction will still be competitive.

9. What are the reporting requirements for grantees?

LJAF requires grantees to submit interim reports every six months and a final report at the end of the project. Generally, the reports will ask grantees to describe the progress they've made on their milestones and their spending to date.

10. What are the requirements in terms of making data and research findings publicly available?

Grantees will be required to register their project on the [Open Science Framework](#) and to submit a pre-analysis plan. For more information, please see our [Guidelines](#) document and our [Methods Template](#). The extent to which research findings are made publicly available is up to the grantee as long as they meets all requirements laid out in the grant agreement. However, the Foundation values transparency and will look for proposals to have some public facing deliverables.

11. Will LJAF review research findings and deliverables before they are made public?

Research findings and deliverables will be reviewed by LJAF before they are considered complete. However, for deliverables such as peer-reviewed journals or research reports, we will not ask you to make substantive changes to your work. We want to ensure that you are meeting the requirements of the grant agreement. We will also use grantees' reports and findings to inform our internal research agenda.

12. Is a rubric used during the review process and will the rubric be made publicly available?

Yes, a rubric will be used to review LOIs and proposals that follows the requirements laid out in the RFP. It will not be made public.

13. Is there a limit on the number of proposals LJAF will fund?

No.

14. How soon after a grant is approved can a grantee begin their work?

In general, full execution of the grant agreement takes approximately 30 to 60 days from LJAF approval. In a small number of cases for which the project start was time sensitive, we worked with grantees to permit allocation of grant funds to work begun before the execution of the grant agreement. However, we do not make grant payments before the execution of the grant agreement, so there is some risk with beginning work before an agreement is in place.

15. Are grantees locked into the budget they submit with the LOI, or is there some room for negotiation?

We have worked with potential grantees to adjust the scope of their work and budget as a proposal progresses to approval process. The best advice we can give applicants is to develop a budget that is reasonable and realistic given the work you are proposing.

16. To what extent is the Foundation interested in outcomes other than court appearance?

We are very interested in other outcomes. In addition to court appearance, we are interested in outcomes related to public safety; the impact of courts and pretrial systems on individuals, families, and communities; and measures of system outcomes, such as jail populations, changes in decision making by court stakeholders, and culture change.

Reminder: If you have additional questions that are not addressed here, please feel free to email CourtAppearanceRFP@arnoldfoundation.org.