NATIONAL DRUG LAW ENFORCEMENT RESEARCH FUND

INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

2013-14
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This document has been developed to provide information about the National Drug Law Enforcement Research Fund (NDLERF) to potential applicants, and to assist in the development of grant applications. This, along with other information that is available on the NDLERF website, will assist applicants to make a preliminary assessment on whether a proposed project is consistent with the NDLERF funding program. This information will also assist applicants to minimise the potential for delays in the assessment of grant applications caused by the provision of inappropriate or inadequate information.

Applicants are encouraged to seek advice from local law enforcement representatives (for example, jurisdictional Drug and Alcohol Coordinators) regarding the suitability and/or feasibility of potential research prior to proceeding to application. Applicants from the law enforcement sector are also advised to contact their organisation's representative on the NDLERF Board and/or their agency’s Drug and Alcohol Coordinator or Advisor prior to commencing the application process. The Secretariat is able to assist in locating the appropriate law enforcement contacts, and in questions regarding the application process.

Applications for funding must be made on an NDLERF Application Form, which is available at www.ndlerf.gov.au/kit.php.

Organisational Background

The National Drug Law Enforcement Research Fund was established by the Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy (MCDS) on 10 June 1999 and commenced operations in August 1999. This Fund incorporates both the National Drug Crime Prevention Fund (NDCPF) and the National Community Based Approach to Drug Law Enforcement (NCBADLE).

The Fund functions within the broader context provided by the National Drug Strategic Framework.

The Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing funds the NDLERF as part of its commitment to the National Drug Strategy.

NDLERF Board of Management / Secretariat

The Fund is administered by the NDLERF Board of Management. The Board comprises representatives from law enforcement agencies from all States and Territories; the Australian Federal Police; the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service; the Australian Government Attorney-General’s Department; and the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing. The current NDLERF Board membership can be accessed at the Fund’s website (www.ndlerf.gov.au/board.php).

The NDLERF Secretariat is located in the Australian Institute of Criminology in Canberra. Its address is as follows:

NDLERF Secretariat
Australian Institute of Criminology
Street address
74 Leichhardt Street
Griffith ACT 2603
Postal address  
GPO Box 2944  
Canberra ACT 2601  

Telephone: (02)6260 9200  

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS  

Mission Statement  
The National Drug Law Enforcement Research Fund exists to support the implementation of the National Drug Strategy by:  
- funding research which leads to quality evidence-based practice in drug law enforcement;  
- facilitating experimentation and innovation; and  
- enhancing strategic alliances and linkages between law enforcement personnel, human service providers, and research agencies, for the purpose of preventing and reducing the harmful effects of licit and illicit drug use in Australian society.  

Terms of Reference  
Projects developed and funded by the National Drug Law Enforcement Research Fund should:  
- facilitate the research, evaluation and review of drug law enforcement as it relates to licit and illicit drugs;  
- assess the impact that the policies and practices of the law enforcement sector and other stakeholders have on each other and on law enforcement and drug harm reduction outcomes;  
- enhance the capacity of law enforcement to effectively respond to licit and illicit drug misuse and its consequences;  
- enhance the role of law enforcement and justice personnel in the research, development, piloting and evaluation of innovative licit and illicit drug law enforcement practices; and  
- have a national relevance, potential national applicability and be consistent with the National Drug Strategy.  

Current funding priority areas, priority project profiles and application timelines.  
These are updated annually and are available on the NDLERF website at www.ndlerf.gov.au. It is highly recommended that applicants examine these before developing and submitting an application.  

The Application  
Applications for funding must be made on an NDLERF Application form, which is available from the Fund’s website. All sections of the form must be completed, including a detailed justification of each requested item of the budget. Additional funding is generally not granted to researchers after projects have commenced and it is the researcher’s responsibility to ensure the original research is completed within the budget and on time.
Applications should state clearly the objectives, including key research questions, and the benefits of the proposed research. The research design should be logically sound and suited to the problem under investigation. The proposal should also reveal that the applicant is familiar with:

- the sources and reliability of data; and
- techniques of data analysis appropriate to the project.

Applications should include a brief (3-5 pages) review of the relevant literature. The review should be up to date, selective but not necessarily exhaustive. It should convey in a concise manner the applicant’s awareness of the current state of knowledge of the questions on which he or she proposes to conduct research. Proposals to conduct specialised policy analyses or program evaluations should review the methodology of, and substantive findings emerging from, comparable studies conducted elsewhere.

In projects requiring access to governmental, institutional or personal records, or where the project requires consulting/interviewing members of the public, ethics approval must be obtained prior to project commencement. Applicants may use any NH&MRC approved Institutional Human Research Ethics Committee and they should take into account the time required for obtaining ethics committee approval in framing timelines for projects.

In cases where ethics approval is required, the applicant/s must provide evidence of the ethics approval process that is to be used with the grant application and they must comply with requirements relating to the disclosure of information and, where applicable, informed consent and confidentiality requirements. In relation to projects that include consultations/interviews with members of the public, applicants should attach a draft interview schedule to the application.

Applicants are asked to consult with Law Enforcement Agencies or organisations other than the applicant’s, which may be required to assist with their projects prior to submission of applications.

Upon completion, the form should be forwarded to the NDLERF Secretariat.

**Application assessment**

All project grant applications are regarded by NDLERF as new applications for funding and NDLERF receives all applications in confidence. All information contained within applications, once received by NDLERF and during the process of assessment, may only be disclosed to Board members and their advisers, panel members and staff of the Australian Institute of Criminology directly involved in the administration of the Fund.

Applications undergo rigorous peer review by a panel comprising:

- the NDLERF Research Officer; and
- two independent senior academics who have relevant and extensive research backgrounds, and who are appointed by the NDLERF Board.

On occasions, it may also be necessary for panel members to seek the advice of technical experts to assist in the assessment process (for example, experts who have extensive subject matter knowledge about drug manufacture). In such cases, the NDLERF Research Officer, with the NDLERF Executive, will identify and engage the services of a suitable and experienced technical expert.
The two senior academic panel members and NDLERF’s Research Officer assess each application independently in relation to a standard set of criteria. These include:

- alignment with NDLERF’s strategic priority areas;
- the extent to which the proposed research is considered to have law enforcement practice and policy significance. This may include the development of operational tools that have national drug law enforcement policy and practice application;
- the extent to which the proposed research is considered to have national applicability/significance;
- the proposed research methodology (including the clarity of the research questions or research objectives, data to be collected, the strengths and weaknesses of the study design; and any other particular challenges);
- costing/budget;
- the experience and appropriateness of the research team;
- level of engagement of associated law enforcement jurisdictions in development of the application;
- proposed dissemination strategies for project findings;
- other project-relevant external funding granted/not granted; and
- ethics committee approval, where appropriate.

The NDLERF Board does not encourage applications for research which, in its view, are the normal operational responsibilities of Government departments, or institutions, or which are more appropriately funded by other research bodies. Applicants should also note that funds are not available for travel, other than that which is essential to the project.

All applications, together with the panel’s recommendations, are placed before the NDLERF Board and the Board makes the final determination after having read the panel members’ reports and recommendations.

Following the NDLERF Board meeting at which the grant is approved, the applicant is notified in writing by the Chair of the Board.

**Dissemination of the findings of NDLERF-funded research**

The NDLERF Board is keen to ensure the findings of its projects are widely and appropriately distributed and that the insights developed as a result of the research are communicated to law enforcement personnel. Consequently, and as noted above, applicants are required to advise of dissemination, knowledge and skill transfer strategies for project findings, which will be considered as part of the grant application process. Additionally, NDLERF funded projects result in a full final report plus a short five thousand words report and the NDLERF Board has its own dissemination strategies that it may implement to distribute the reports or related abstracts. The nature of project dissemination strategies will be determined by the contents of project reports and any confidentiality or operational sensitivity provisions that may relate to this content.

Any papers relating to NDLERF-funded projects that are proposed for publication, or for presentation at conferences prior to a project’s conclusion, must be provided to the NDLERF Secretariat in sufficient time to allow the NDLERF Executive to approve this occurring. Explicit approval must be granted if the information is to be presented in another forum prior to the Board endorsement of the final NDLERF project report. NDLERF-funded researchers must also gain the approval of the NDLERF Executive before using any data, information or other research material gained as part of NDLERF project for other purposes.
In using any research materials developed using NDLERF monies in presentations, publications or the like, grant recipients must acknowledge the support of NDLERF. The following acknowledgment is recommended: “This is a project supported by a grant from the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing through the National Drug Law Enforcement and Research Fund”.

NDLERF has specific requirements concerning the appearance of final NDLERF Reports and for this reason the publication of NDLERF-funded research is undertaken by the Fund.

**Access and Equity**

The access and equity policy of the Australian Government is designed to ensure that all residents of Australia, who may face barriers of race, culture or language have equal access to, and receive a fair share of, the resources managed by the Government on behalf of the community. Women, Indigenous groups and individuals from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds are key groups within the access and equity policy.

In conducting NDLERF projects, grant recipients should ensure that projects do not disadvantage or discriminate against these groups and should take into account gender differences and the varied cultural and linguistic characteristics of Australian society.

Dissemination of project findings should take the above factors into account and ensure that people involved in the project (either directly, or through their representatives) are advised of the outcomes of the research.

**Legal Issues**

Projects funded by NDLERF must comply with relevant legislation and regulations in the State or Territory in which the research is conducted. NDLERF will not accept responsibility for any lack of adherence to these laws or regulations.