



Request for Proposals

# The National Collaborative on Gun Violence Research

## First Request for Proposals

Deadline for Receipt of Letters of Interest:  
8:00 p.m. EST, February 4, 2019

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## Part 1. Introduction

The mission of the National Collaborative on Gun Violence Research (NCGVR) is to fund and disseminate nonpartisan scientific research that offers the public and policymakers a factual basis for developing fair and effective gun policies. An early mandate for NCGVR's independent research advisory committee was to seek testimony from a wide range of organizations and individuals about gun policy and gun violence research priorities. A consistent message from these diverse stakeholders was that the federal government has underinvested in gun violence research for at least two decades, with the result that the public and policymakers lack basic information on which to base their decisions about gun policies and violence prevention. Indeed, by one estimate, the government spends about \$100 million a year *less* on gun violence research than it does on other leading causes of death that kill similar numbers of people (Stark and Shah, 2017).

There is reason, therefore, to suspect that important contributions to understanding and preventing gun violence remain to be discovered across a wide range of study types, including basic descriptive research and applied policy research. NCGVR recognizes that an important consideration for this research will be the effects of gun policies on the interests of a range of stakeholders, including gun owners, and these effects bear on the fairness and feasibility of many policies or interventions.

To begin addressing this underinvestment in gun violence research, NCGVR plans to issue between \$20 million and \$50 million in research grant funding over a five-year period (July 2018 to June 2023). NCGVR seeks to fund research that will produce scientific knowledge that can be used *to save lives and reduce injuries due to gun violence*, while considering how changes to gun policies affect a range of interests. In developing this request for proposals (RFP), the NCGVR research advisory committee has drawn on research priorities suggested not just in the testimony it received from multiple organizations but also in the findings of earlier studies of where critical gaps in knowledge exist (e.g., National Research Council, 2005, 2013; RAND Corporation, 2018) and in the many suggestions offered to the committee by gun policy researchers.

In addition to its focus on areas in which critically important information is not yet available, the research advisory committee has concluded that the scientific research it funds must have direct relevance to firearm violence reduction *in the United States*, and must pursue a rigorous scientific research protocol. Within these parameters, the committee wants its portfolio of funded research to include projects examining a range of outcomes—for instance, firearm injuries, suicide, defensive gun use, firearm crime and its prosecution, and public attitudes.

This RFP is the first issued by NCGVR. The application process involves two steps. Short letters of interest (LOIs) describing proposed research must be submitted by the deadline listed in “Key Activities and Timeline,” below. NCGVR's research advisory committee will review these letters and will request full proposals from among the LOIs that describe research that the committee believes offers the greatest likelihood of producing rigorous scientific information that will help inform fair and effective gun policies—and thereby reduce deaths and injuries. Full proposals can be submitted only by applicants invited by the research advisory committee to do so after all LOIs are reviewed. Two types of awards will be made: research project awards and dissertation awards, as discussed in Parts 3 and 4, below.

## Part 2. Program Description

NCGVR will fund scientific research on topics likely to provide valuable information needed by the public and policymakers in their efforts to create programs and policies that will save lives and prevent violence. NCGVR seeks proposals for projects that use rigorous scientific methods and that forthrightly acknowledge the limitations of these methods and the projects' data sources. More information on standards of scientific rigor that will be considered by NCGVR can be found in Part 4.

NCGVR will fund descriptive or basic science studies and applied or policy research. NCGVR encourages collaborations between researchers and practitioners, as well as research on multidisciplinary interventions, such as those that integrate medical systems and policing. Research that integrates data

from law enforcement agencies, public health departments, researchers, courts, prosecutors, and advocates may offer promising new strategies for reducing gun violence.

Identifying ways to increase data availability and comparability across jurisdictions—as well as enhance the communication and collaboration between jurisdictions—holds the potential to improve knowledge and operations related to firearm violence. Therefore, this is also of interest to NCGVR in its funded research portfolio.

NCGVR has identified specific topical areas of interest for this first RFP. Although the NCGVR research priorities will continue to evolve as the research advisory committee receives additional input from stakeholder groups and individuals, for its initial RFP, the research advisory committee identified seven broad categories of research to prioritize, given their potential to improve the understanding of the characteristics of firearm violence, inform effective interventions or strategies for reducing gun violence, or provide new data that would improve the understanding and investigation of gun violence. These seven topics are listed below, grouped into three broader priority areas.

## Characteristics of Firearm Use and Violence

Topics in this priority area include basic research that will fill knowledge gaps about who uses firearms, what factors drive firearm use and firearm ownership prevalence, how firearms are acquired illegally, how firearm laws are enforced, and what the risks and benefits—both perceived and observed—of firearm use and ownership are. This priority area also addresses specific situations that involve firearm use—such as suicide and officer-involved shootings, and mass shootings.

### 1. Characterizing Firearm Use, Violence, and Crime

Surprisingly little is known about gun ownership trends, and gun use in the United States, beyond what is reported in a few large surveys. There are, however, reasons to suspect that prior surveys may provide unreliable evidence on these questions (Cook, 2013). We also lack basic information about the prevalence of

nonfatal firearm injuries, how different classes of high-risk individuals acquire their firearms, and the harms or benefits associated with carrying a firearm (National Research Council, 2013). Finally, although we know that levels of firearm violence in the United States are unacceptably high, we need better information about the causal mechanisms leading to the well-documented association of firearm availability and overall levels of violence. NCGVR identified two broad categories in this area where additional research is needed.

#### Firearm Violence

Significant gaps remain in our understanding of violent behavior, its causes, and prevention, including the dynamics of the social transmission of gun carrying, threats, and violence; whether and by what amount the prevention of firearm violence reduces overall violence; the incidence of firearm violence and the proportion of firearm assaults resulting in injury; the prevalence and trends in nonlethal firearm injuries; the proportion of firearm violence committed by those prohibited by law from possession of a firearm; the use of firearms to intimidate and control, such as between domestic partners; rates of enforcement of firearm laws and the effect of enforcement on firearm violence rates; and the types and sources of firearms used in different types of violence. This category also contains research on mass shootings, including trends and predictors of mass shootings and school shootings.

Considerable research has examined risk factors for firearm violence (e.g., individual, societal, situational). Nevertheless, additional research could help characterize different types of firearm violence and their associated risk factors; establish new approaches to estimating the risk of violence perpetration or victimization associated with ownership of or access to firearms; identify what experiences, conduct, or criminal convictions are associated with increased risk for nonfatal but illegal gun use, mass shootings and school shootings, and other types of firearm violence; and understand the relationship between (1) different types of substance use (e.g., alcohol, marijuana) and different firearm behaviors (e.g., access, unsafe handling, violence, carrying) and (2) dementia and risk of violence toward oneself or others.

## Acquisition and Use of Firearms

This research area has a range of questions about how and why individuals own or acquire firearms and what the effects of this ownership may be. Although many such questions have been investigated in the past, results are often contested or ambiguous. More research is needed about patterns of gun ownership, including characterization of gun owners' and nonowners' preferences, exposures, households, or risk perceptions; drivers of gun ownership trends; prevalence of gun ownership or easy access to firearms by those legally entitled to possess a firearm and by prohibited possessors; the role of armed citizens in preventing or escalating violence; conditions under which gun ownership, or the prevalence of gun ownership in a community, deters or promotes crime; and improving the measurement of defensive gun use and its prevalence.

More research is also needed to understand how individuals acquire firearms, especially illegally, including the number of firearms changing hands legally and illegally over a specific period, the sources and costs of firearms acquired by prohibited possessors or used in crimes, the frequency with which illegally obtained firearms are used in crimes and violence, how buyers engaged in straw purchases (illegally purchasing a weapon on behalf of another person) differ from those legally purchasing a weapon for their own use, the frequency and conditions under which straw purchasers are identified and prosecuted, and variation in the organization and operation of illegal firearm markets serving different geographic regions or buyers.

For this topic, we also include research on regional or other demographic differences in attitudes toward gun regulations.

## 2. Characterizing Firearm Suicide

Research is needed to improve understanding of specific risk factors for firearm suicide to better inform targets, approaches, and implementation of public policies. The link between suicide and access to guns is underappreciated by the general public, and education is needed (Morgan et al., 2018). Research is lacking on the risk profiles of people most likely to die by firearm suicide, the choice of lethal means used in suicides and attempts, the origin of firearms used in suicides, or the time between purchase and suicide attempt. New approaches

to establishing the risk of suicide associated with the purchase, ownership, or access to firearms could provide a stronger basis for interventions to reduce suicide. Although it is clear that many who are prevented from killing themselves with a firearm will not die by suicide using another lethal means, some will go on to kill themselves by another means. Better understanding of the magnitude of means substitution that occurs when firearms are unavailable, and the conditions contributing to means substitution, is needed. Related topics include the identification of distinguishing features between suicide and murder-suicide and when and for whom extreme risk protection orders are appropriate.

## 3. Characterizing Officer-Involved Shootings

This topic includes both officer-involved shootings of civilians and firearm injuries sustained by law enforcement officers in the performance of their duties. Research questions that might be investigated include the following: How often are civilians shot and injured, but not killed, by police? What circumstances or characteristics elevate the risk of officer-involved shootings in the United States? Are there important differences in the circumstances leading to fatal versus nonfatal firearm injuries in officer-involved shootings? How does the prevalence of gun ownership in a community influence officer decisionmaking in a shooting? Do local and state laws relating to guns have an impact on police departments' use of force?

## Interventions and Strategies for Firearm Violence Reduction

Topics in this priority area involve applied research on existing and emerging policies, programs, or interventions to reduce gun suicide and violence.

## 4. Community, Law Enforcement, and Service System Interventions to Reduce Gun Violence

Although many interventions have been designed to disrupt firearm violence, prevent firearm suicides, or safely minimize officer-involved shootings, only a few have been sufficiently well studied to suggest they have their intended effects and that those effects may be generalizable to other settings or providers. Research

on such interventions—implemented by families or community groups, police and prosecutors, schools, health care providers, and other service systems—is important for establishing which interventions will save the most lives. NCGVR is interested in prevention research that leverages the coordinated efforts of multiple community or service systems, such as interventions that encourage information sharing and joint response by police and health care providers. Research needed in this area might examine, for instance, how policing strategies, training, or interventions affect firearm crime, firearm violence, or officer-involved shootings; interventions designed to encourage gun safety practices among gun owners; interventions to encourage gun owners in crisis to voluntarily and temporarily relinquish their weapons; interventions designed to reduce youth gun carrying, brandishing, or violence; the deterrence effects of prosecutorial or sentencing strategies; and the effects of firearm risk assessments and counseling by primary care providers.

## 5. Effects of Gun Regulations Within and Across States

This topic includes research on the effects of federal, state, and local gun laws and policies on a range of outcomes, such as violence, suicide, crime, self-defense, gun availability, and criminal prosecutions. Research is needed to understand the effects of gun laws or policies on outcomes of concern to multiple stakeholders; the joint effect of multiple laws working within and across states, which could include the effects on state firearm use and misuse that results from more- or less-permissive gun regulations in neighboring states; and the effects of state laws on the effectiveness of local firearm ordinances. More and better research is needed on the variation in implementation and enforcement of gun laws within and across jurisdictions and how these differences affect outcomes.

## New Data Collection

### 6. Collection of Data Needed for Understanding Gun Violence and Evaluating Programs and Policies

Fundamental information about gun use, gun injuries, defensive gun use, gun crime, gun markets,

prosecution of gun crime, and many other topics is unavailable for most states but could contribute to new and better understanding of the causes and prevention of gun violence (National Research Council, 2005, 2013). Often, collection of such data would be prohibitively expensive for an individual research project, but the federal government has surveillance systems or surveys that could be leveraged to obtain the needed data. In some cases, this might involve using existing data, such as improving the usability of data from the National Violent Death Reporting System for research purposes. In other cases, it may be possible to work with government providers of data to supplement or revise existing data systems to better capture information about gun use, risk factors for violence, attitudes and beliefs, and other basic information.

### 7. Collection of State-Level Prosecution and Enforcement Data

State and regional differences in the enforcement and prosecution of gun laws may contribute to differences in the effectiveness of these laws. Nevertheless, there are few accessible sources of information on prosecution and enforcement at the state or regional level. Collecting and making public such data could materially improve the understanding of differences in the effectiveness of state laws, as well as highlighting where better enforcement might reduce gun violence and crime.

## Study Categories That NCGVR Will Not Fund

NCGVR discourages LOIs in the following categories, because they will be determined to be nonresponsive to this RFP:

- *Pilot studies designed to inform later research:* NCGVR will not provide funding for projects that are primarily intended to plan and design a future, larger research project. NCGVR welcomes proposals that may lead to future research, but development of that future research cannot be the primary goal of the NCGVR-funded project.
- *Demonstration projects, educational programs, or other provision of services without a strong*

*scientific research design likely to produce generalizable knowledge about the services:* NCGVR will not provide funding solely for program development or implementation. Any programs or services receiving NCGVR funds must be a required part of a research project that has scientific discovery as its primary objective.

- *Technology development research:* NCGVR will not provide funding that will primarily be used to invent, create, or design new technologies or to fabricate technology already under development. NCGVR will consider funding research that concerns the use of technologies, such as studies that evaluate the use of new and existing technologies by, for instance, police, schools, medical centers, or individuals at risk of committing or being victimized by firearm violence. Similarly, NCGVR will consider funding studies of public attitudes, acceptance, or adoption of new technologies, such as smart guns or firearm storage devices.
- *Research on the treatment or rehabilitation of shooting victims:* NCGVR will not provide funding for research designed to improve the medical or other treatment of shooting victims. NCGVR will consider research to evaluate programs that are implemented in, or in partnership with, hospitals and other medical care providers designed to reduce firearm suicide and other firearm violence.
- *Projects involving gun policy advocacy activities:* NCGVR will not provide funding for advocacy activities, including lobbying or public-influence campaigns designed to change public policy. NCGVR will support investigators' efforts to broadly disseminate the findings of their NCGVR-funded projects.
- *Projects focused on firearm violence or policy outside the United States, **unless** that research has clear relevance to firearm policy or violence prevention in the United States:* NCGVR will not fund work that primarily investigates firearm use or violence in foreign countries or the effects of U.S. firearm laws on foreign countries, unless that research is likely to provide valuable insights into how to save lives and reduce injuries in the United States. NCGVR

will consider funding research focused on foreign countries when applicants can make a compelling case that the project will have clear implications for injury prevention in the United States.

- *Legal, historical, or journalistic research, unless that research is a required part of a scientifically rigorous study likely to yield generalizable information:* For instance, research on a state's implementation of specific laws as part of a rigorous study estimating the effect of those laws on firearm outcomes would be acceptable legal research.

### Part 3. Information for Prospective Applicants

NCGVR is governed by the independent Research Advisory Committee (RAC). The role of the RAC is to ensure the intellectual quality, research effectiveness, and academic independence of the NCGVR program. The RAC serves as the decisionmaking and oversight body regarding all approved research under NCGVR. The RAC's operations are supported by the RAND Corporation. Additional information about NCGVR, its funding, advisory committee membership, governance documents, and its RFPs may be found at [www.ncgvr.org](http://www.ncgvr.org).

Grant funding for all NCGVR research is provided through a donor-advised fund operated by Schwab Charitable. The fund was created by the Laura and John Arnold Foundation as a philanthropic mechanism that other donors could also contribute to. NCGVR serves as the donor adviser for this fund, instructing Schwab Charitable when and to whom to issue research funding. The RAND Corporation staffs NCGVR, providing grants management and oversight for all projects and dissertation awards. More information on NCGVR, how it is managed, and funding relationships can be found at [www.ncgvr.org](http://www.ncgvr.org).

### Available Funding

NCGVR expects to issue ten to twenty-five research grant awards, including three or more \$25,000

dissertation awards, for a total of up to \$10 million in research funding through this first of four planned RFPs.

## Eligibility

Eligible organizations include 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charitable organizations in good standing with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).<sup>1</sup> Organizations whose tax-exempt status has been suspended are not eligible.

International organizations that meet the same requirements as a U.S.-based 501(c)(3) public charity under U.S. tax law and can demonstrate capacity to carry out the research funded by NCGVR are also eligible.

Ineligible grant recipients are nonfunctionally integrated Type III supporting organizations,<sup>2</sup> private nonoperating foundations, lobbying and 501(c)(4) organizations, political campaigns, other political entities, any organization whose purpose is not entirely charitable, and certain organizations that receive a substantial amount of their support from Schwab Charitable.

Applicants for dissertation awards are accredited, nonprofit universities that meet the organizational eligibility criteria listed above. These applications may list an advanced doctoral student or the chair of his or her dissertation committee as the principal investigator of the dissertation award. To be eligible for a dissertation award, the student must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident and have completed all coursework, passed all preliminary exams, and have a dissertation research proposal on a topic related to gun violence or gun policy that has received all necessary departmental approvals by June 1, 2019. Students must have a plan to complete their dissertations and receive their degree between April 1, 2020, and September 30, 2020. Students who have already received fellowships or grants to support the completion of their dissertations are not eligible for NCGVR dissertation awards.

<sup>1</sup> Charity recipients cannot be classified as private foundations under Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Section 509(a). Additionally, some charities classified as “supporting organizations” under Section 509(a)(3) do not qualify. *501(c)(3)* refers to IRC Section 501(c)(3).

<sup>2</sup> See IRS instructions on supporting organizations: [www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/charitable-organizations/supporting-organizations-requirements-and-types](http://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/charitable-organizations/supporting-organizations-requirements-and-types).

Students may not accept additional fellowships or grant awards to support the same dissertation research supported through an NCGVR dissertation award.

Students must be in a full-time Ph.D. or Sc.D. program, pursuing their first doctoral degree. Students studying outside the United States are eligible to apply. Doctoral students engaged in any research-oriented degree program that is relevant to gun policy or gun violence prevention research are eligible to apply, including students pursuing degrees in economics, political science, psychology, sociology, criminology, demography, public health, statistics, public policy, and psychometrics. Doctoral students at the Pardee RAND Graduate School are ineligible to apply for these dissertation awards.

## Key Activities and Timeline

**LOIs are due by 8:00 p.m. EST on February 4, 2019**, via email to [proposals@ncgvr.org](mailto:proposals@ncgvr.org) using the subject line “LOI-RFP1 [name of organization].” **Full proposals** will be due approximately 30 days after applicants receive an invitation to submit a full proposal and will be submitted via email to [proposals@ncgvr.org](mailto:proposals@ncgvr.org) using the subject line “RFP1 [name of organization].” Please take the time zone into account if you plan to submit an application close to this deadline. Applicants must include all requested components listed under the “What to Include” section in Part 4. Failure to include any of these components by the proposal due date may result in disqualification.

Key Activities	Timeline
Applicant questions related to this RFP	8:00 p.m. EST January 18, 2019
NCGVR responses to questions	8:00 p.m. EST January 25, 2019
LOIs due	8:00 p.m. EST February 4, 2019
Invitations for full proposals issued by NCGVR	By the end of February 2019
Full proposals due	By the date listed in the invitation for full proposals, approximately 30 days after receipt of the invitation
Notification of awards	June–July 2019

## Part 4. Application Instructions

The application process for research project awards and dissertation awards includes two steps. First, an LOI describing the proposed research must be submitted by the date listed in “Key Activities and Timeline,” above. Selected applicants will be asked to submit a full proposal. Second, applicants who receive a request for full proposals must submit those by the corresponding deadline listed in “Key Activities and Timeline.” NCGVR will consider full proposals only from those applicants who have been invited by NCGVR to submit a full proposal, after review of their LOI. Individual researchers may be included in multiple LOIs, although individuals may be listed as the principal investigator on at most one LOI.

Project materials sent to NCGVR will not be returned to applicants.

### Research Project Awards

#### Instructions for Letters of Interest

To submit an LOI, please include the following:

1. Administrative information
  - a. Organization’s name
  - b. Organization’s address
  - c. Organization’s tax ID number
  - d. Organization’s authorized representative name, title, email, direct telephone number
  - e. Total requested amount (direct and indirect costs combined; do **not** complete the full budget proposal included in the appendix, as this is not required at this LOI stage)
  - f. Start date and duration of the proposed grant project
  - g. Proposed principal investigator(s) and key personnel, title, email, and direct telephone numbers
  - h. The level of effort by the proposed investigator(s) on the project (days per year)
  - i. In 200 words or fewer, describe the experience of the proposed investigator(s) with conducting research of similar complexity, requiring similar skills or expertise
  - j. In 200 words or fewer, describe the organization, its past related experience (within three years), and any key resources the

organization has that will support project performance

2. Project narrative
  - a. Project title
  - b. Problem analysis and statement: Describe the project’s research objectives, explain the gap in the scientific literature they address, and explain how addressing these gaps could make an important contribution to understanding or preventing gun violence
  - c. Approach: Summarize your study design, interventions, outcomes, and planned analytic methods; NCGVR is most interested in funding projects with rigorous research methodologies likely to yield reproducible, generalizable, and persuasive evidence
  - d. Proposed partners or subgrantees, if applicable, and their role and responsibilities

There is no page limit for the first section, on administrative information, although two subsections have the word limits listed above. The second section, on the project narrative, may not exceed three single-spaced pages, using one-inch margins and no smaller than ten-point font. LOIs that violate these instructions might not be reviewed. Letters of support from proposed partner organizations are not required to be included with the LOI but may be submitted as attachments to the project narrative, and these will not count toward the project narrative’s page limits.

#### Instructions for Full Proposals

Full proposals will not be requested from all applicants who submit LOIs. Do not submit full application materials unless you receive a written request from NCGVR to do so.

Those who receive written notification that NCGVR would like to review their full proposals should prepare and submit a full proposal by the deadline listed in “Key Activities and Timeline,” above. Proposals should carefully follow the guidance in this section, as failure to comply with these instructions or to provide all materials by the deadline could result in the proposal not being reviewed.

Proposals should be prepared single-spaced, with one-inch margins, using no smaller than ten-point fonts. The project summary has a word limit, listed

below, and the project narrative (4a through 4e, below) may not exceed ten pages. No other parts of the proposal are subject to page or word limits. All sections of the full proposal listed below are required, with the exception of 6d (letters of support), which is only required if the project entails a collaboration with outside organizations or individuals.

#### What to Include

1. Project title
2. Project summary (no more than 500 words)
3. Table of contents
4. Project narrative, including
  - a. *Problem analysis and statement*: Describe the project’s research objectives and research questions, and document the gap in the scientific literature they address, either by reference to a systematic review or by explaining how you established this as a gap in the literature. Explain how addressing these gaps could make an important contribution to understanding or preventing gun violence. Specify whether the proposed research is confirmatory or exploratory. If confirmatory, specify the hypothesis to be tested.
  - b. *Study design and implementation*: Describe the study design and planned analytic methods, including a detailed description of any planned intervention. If the proposed study involves an intervention, the applicant must demonstrate that it has partnerships necessary to execute the study—for example, with agencies or community organizations whose cooperation may be required. Any description of partnerships should be accompanied by attached letters of support indicating what the organization has agreed to. Explain how interventions and exposures, outcomes, and relevant covariates will be measured, as well as the quality of those measures. If proposing significance testing, present a power analysis for the sample size decisions, including subgroup analyses, that are implied by key aims. The power analysis should include a theoretical or empirical justification for the effect sizes being assumed.

Specify what new or existing data will be collected and the source of the data. Applicants must demonstrate access to the necessary data—which may include partnerships with agencies or organizations from which data will be collected. Letters of support from data sources should be provided to indicate that the applicant will have access to those data, unless data are publicly available.

If the published literature contains criticisms or identifies limitations of the proposed measures or data sources, discuss how these will be addressed. Similarly, discuss any expected limitations due to unmeasured confounds or unavailable covariates. Discuss how missing data will be handled in analyses (including possible survey nonresponse and attrition from longitudinal panels). If linking data sets, explain the data elements on which those linkages depend, their availability, and their reliability.

Describe the limitations of the data, design, and analytic methods for drawing reliable and generalizable inferences. Indicate a plan to preregister the research protocol on the Open Science Framework website (see “Terms and Conditions,” below). Explain likely implementation challenges or other project risks.

- c. *Study deliverables and dissemination plan*: Describe each of the planned deliverables, including reports, data, and code that will be released and other products. If it will not be possible to make some data or code produced for this study public on the Open Science Framework website, explain that here (see “Terms and Conditions,” below). Describe your plan for ensuring that deliverables are seen and understood by stakeholders who will benefit from them (e.g., the public, policymakers, other researchers).
- d. *Quality assurance plan*: NCGVR funds research to provide a more objective, scientific basis for discussions about gun violence and gun policy. It is important, therefore, that grantees do not use NCGVR funding to promote political or advocacy positions

that are not directly supported by their empirical research. Proposals must discuss the quality assurance steps they will take to ensure that the research findings they report are independently and carefully reviewed before they are disseminated in venues likely to attract widespread attention. This review should consider not only the soundness of the methods and conclusions but also (1) whether the report acknowledges alternative arguments when they are relevant and (2) that the report avoids adopting advocacy positions that are not thoroughly evaluated in the report. If prepublication of reports is anticipated (on SSRN or National Bureau of Economic Research or another such widely accessible venue), describe what quality assurance steps will be taken before the report is so posted.

- e. *Relevant organizational and project staff experience*: Describe the experience and capabilities of the applicant organization, key staff, and any proposed subgrantees (including consultants) that are relevant to the successful performance of this project, highlighting any previous experience implementing projects of similar scope, design, and complexity.
5. Project budget (see the appendix for a budget template) and budget narrative providing the justification for each planned expenditure.
  6. Appendixes
    - a. Bibliographic references
    - b. Timeline and milestones: Provide a project timeline indicating when key phases of the project begin and end and the dates on which key deliverables will be completed; time required for institutional review board (IRB) review and approval should be accounted for in the project timeline
    - c. Résumés or curricula vitae of the key investigators
    - d. Letters of support or agreement from partner organizations or individuals (only for projects engaging partner organizations or individuals)
    - e. IRB approval is required for all NCGVR research; please indicate the organization

that will conduct the IRB review of your research and its Federalwide Assurance number

- f. List of all other funding organizations currently considering a substantially similar proposal from the applicant, and list of all previous projects the applicant has received grant or contract funding for to pursue similar project aims, specifying the aims of those similar projects
- g. Conflict-of-interest disclosure: Describe any real or potentially perceived organizational conflicts of interest the applicant organization may have and the plan for mitigating that conflict in pursuing the proposed research. Describe any real or potentially perceived financial conflicts of interest that any member of the study team may have and the plan for mitigating that conflict.

#### Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated primarily on their scientific merit, for which five primary criteria will be used.

For the LOI, although NCGVR asks that applicants address the selection criteria detailed below, we do not expect applicants to have finalized every aspect of the study. Therefore, reviewers will focus on the first two selection criteria—significance and approach—in determining which applicants to invite to submit a full proposal.

For full proposals, the overall score for each proposal's scientific merit will be a weighted combination of each criterion. Weights are listed in parentheses:

1. *Significance* (30%): The potential for the project to advance knowledge and to reduce gun violence.
2. *Approach* (25%): The extent to which the study plan is scientifically rigorous and likely to produce interpretable and generalizable findings.
3. *Innovation* (20%): The extent to which the project is original, creative, and potentially transformative.
4. *Research team (and resources)* (20%): An assessment of how well qualified and resourced the project team is.

5. *Dissemination plan* (5%): The likelihood that those who could best use the results to reduce violence, improve policy, or advance scientific research will learn of the research and understand how it should inform their decisions.

Cost will be separately evaluated for reasonableness but not assigned a score. Reviewers will assess the proposed level of effort (e.g., proposed number of days, percentage of time, calendar or academic months) and other resources requested against the proposed approach to conducting the research or completion of tasks, data requirements, dissemination efforts, and expected work products.

## Dissertation Project Awards

The objectives of the dissertation awards program are to improve scientific knowledge and to build research capacity in the domains of gun violence prevention and gun policy research in the United States. NCGVR anticipates making three or more awards designed to support the final year of work on a student's dissertation.

Dissertation award funds may be used for research-related expenses, such as tuition, living expenses, travel to conferences or to collect data, books, and computer supplies. Recipients of the award will meet by phone with an NCGVR scientist several times over the year to discuss progress and will be required to prepare a final report on their research accomplishments at the conclusion of the funding period.

Applicants for dissertation awards are the universities at which the beneficiary of the award is an advanced doctoral candidate (see "Eligibility," above). The university must agree to administer the award and to charge no overhead or fees to the grant for providing this service. Before submitting an LOI, the doctoral candidate must confirm in writing with the university's office of sponsored research or office of research, grants, and contracts that the university agrees to work with the student and dissertation adviser to submit a full dissertation grant proposal, if one is requested by NCGVR after review of the LOI.

Advanced doctoral students whose dissertation research concerns U.S. gun policy or gun violence prevention wishing to be considered for these awards

should submit LOIs, being careful to include all the required information listed below.

## Instructions for Letters of Interest

To submit an LOI, please include the following:

1. Administrative information
  - a. Dissertation title (please append "Dissertation Award:" to the beginning of the title)
  - b. Doctoral candidate's name, address, phone number, and email address
  - c. University name
  - d. University address
  - e. Adviser's name, title, and department
  - f. Statement acknowledging that the student meets the dissertation award eligibility criteria listed above
  - g. Letter from the university's office of sponsored research or office of research, grants, and contracts, indicating that it is prepared to accept an NCGVR dissertation grant award on which it will forgo overhead charges and all other fees for managing the award
2. Narrative
  - a. Project description: Provide the title of the dissertation and a brief discussion of the study, and explain the significance of this work and where the data for it will come from (if applicable) (400 words, at most).
  - b. Project status: Describe what work has been completed, what remains, the timeline, and expected completion date. Also indicate the date on which the dissertation project was approved (200 words, at most).
  - c. Personal statement: Describe the student's academic performance and accomplishments to date, including any publications or presentations. Describe how the award will facilitate completion of the dissertation (400 words, at most).

Receipt of dissertation awards is conditional on the applicant providing documentation confirming eligibility, which will be requested as part of the second-stage application. There are no page limits, only the three word limits listed above.

## Instructions for Full Applications

Full applications will be requested by NCGVR from applicants whose LOIs were judged to be outstanding. Do not submit full application materials unless you receive a written request from NCGVR to do so.

Full applications include the following:

1. Applicant's name, address, phone number, and email address
2. University's tax ID number
3. A statement by the applicant describing the dissertation study design that specifies research objectives, procedures, analytic methods, and data sources (up to 500 words)
4. A budget describing how the award money will be spent
5. A copy of the applicant's résumé or curriculum vitae
6. A letter from the university official who will administer the grant award, acknowledging that no overhead or fees will be charged to the grant or student for this service
7. University transcripts for all courses taken by the applicant in pursuit of the degree
8. A letter from the applicant's adviser or chair that
  - a. confirms the applicant's eligibility to receive this dissertation award, including that the applicant's dissertation research proposal will have been approved by June 1, 2019, and the expected date when a Ph.D. or Sc.D. degree will be conferred on the applicant
  - b. describes the applicant's progress on dissertation work and potential to successfully complete the dissertation by September 2020
  - c. describes the outstanding performance or characteristics that make the applicant a worthy recipient of this dissertation award
  - d. describes the adviser's or chair's role in monitoring the applicant's work and presents evidence of both the department's and the dissertation committee chair's abilities to mentor doctoral candidates through the completion of their degrees

The letter from the applicant's adviser (item 8 in the above list) should be sent directly by email from the adviser to [proposals@ncgvr.org](mailto:proposals@ncgvr.org), noting in the subject

line the name of the applicant. Required elements 1–7 should be combined into a single PDF file and sent by the applicant to [proposals@ncgvr.org](mailto:proposals@ncgvr.org) by the submission deadline.

## Evaluation Criteria

Dissertation award decisions will be made by the NCGVR research advisory committee, after considering the applicant's scholarly excellence, the significance of the applicant's dissertation research objectives, the quality of the research design, the feasibility of the project and schedule, the applicant's qualifications, the adviser's nominating comments, and the applicant's potential to make a significant contribution to the fields of gun violence prevention research or gun policy research.

## Terms and Conditions

Certain terms and conditions will apply to grant awards made by NCGVR. These include, but are not limited to, demonstrating adequate performance completing project milestones and deliverables, as documented in routine progress reporting and periodic phone calls with NCGVR grants monitors; preregistering research protocols at the Open Science Framework (<https://osf.io>) and fulfilling other open-science expectations; adhering to a human subject's protection plan approved by an accredited IRB; adhering to quality assurance review procedures specified in the proposal or subsequently agreed to as part of the grant agreement; and other terms and conditions described in the final grant agreement. Some of these required terms and conditions are described in greater detail below.

1. **Prohibited Uses.** Grantee may not use Grant funds or the income therefrom for any of the following purposes: (1) to fulfill any existing legally binding pledge of the RAC, the Administrative Entity, or any other adviser to the Account; (2) to provide more than an incidental benefit to the RAC, Administrative Entity, or any other adviser to the Account, any family member thereof, or to any individual who is not an appropriate beneficiary of the Grantee's charitable programs; or (3) for any other purpose other than one specified in Section 170(c)(2)(B) of the Code. Grantee will not

provide any tax substantiation letter in connection with this grant.

2. **Reporting Schedule.** All progress and financial reports should, in each case, compare actual expenditures and accomplishments during the period being reported.

a. **Semiannual progress report(s)** documenting grant activity and interim research results for the period being reported.

b. **Final progress report** due 30 days before the end of the project term.

c. **Semiannual financial report(s).**

d. **Final financial report** due no later than 60 days after the project term.

e. If the Grant funds are not fully expended by Grantee in accordance with the budget as set forth in Grantee's proposal, Grantee will disclose this in the final financial report, and Schwab Charitable, in consultation with the RAC through the Administrative Entity, will make a determination about such funds upon receipt of such information, including whether Grantee shall be required to return unspent funds to Schwab Charitable. Grantee may not reallocate any unspent funds and may not spend or retain unspent funds after the Ending Date without prior written approval from Schwab Charitable, in consultation with the RAC through the Administrative Entity.

f. Reports shall be delivered electronically to [SFCGgrants@schwabcharitable.org](mailto:SFCGgrants@schwabcharitable.org). Copies must also be provided to [grants@ncgvr.org](mailto:grants@ncgvr.org).

3. **Registration and Openness.** For any empirical research study performed with NCGVR funding, Grantee must meet (and must ensure that any third parties involved in the research meet) certain transparency requirements, as further elaborated in a document prepared by the Laura and John Arnold Foundation (LJAF) entitled "Guidelines for Investments in Research," available at the LJAF

website (the "*Guidelines*").<sup>3</sup> The Guidelines' specific applicability to Grantee's empirical research study may vary as determined by the NCGVR Research Director. Moreover, both the applicability of the Guidelines and the requirements of this section may be modified by the NCGVR Research Director during the Term as deemed appropriate by the NCGVR Research Director. Grantee acknowledges and agrees that the obligations imposed by this section shall continue for the duration of the empirical research study or evaluation related to the Purpose, even if such duration expands beyond the Term.

a. Grantee must establish an account with the Open Science Framework ("*OSF*") (<https://osf.io>) and must create a new project for any new empirical research study. Unless there is an express legal restriction on doing so, Grantee must (i) add Dr. Andrew Morral and Dr. Meagan Cahill (or their delegates) as collaborators with "Administrator" permissions on the OSF project webpage so that they can view the empirical research study materials saved there and (ii) make the empirical research study publicly viewable by selecting the "Make Public" option on the study's project, unless the NCGVR Research Director agrees to allow the project or a component thereof to remain private.

b. The project's OSF webpage must include an analysis plan describing the hypothesis or hypotheses to be examined in the empirical research study, the primary and secondary outcomes, the statistical model(s) and methodologies to be used, and further details as specified in the Guidelines. This analysis plan must be completed, approved, and registered in a manner satisfactory to the NCGVR Research Director. To the extent that a particular research design changes substantially after the first preregistration but before statistical analyses have been completed, Grantee should create a subsequent preregistration for the empirical research study in a manner satisfactory to the NCGVR Research Director.

c. To the maximum extent allowed under any applicable federal or state law, institutional review

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<sup>3</sup> [www.arnoldfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/Guidelines-for-Investments-in-Research.pdf](http://www.arnoldfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/Guidelines-for-Investments-in-Research.pdf).

board (“*IRB*”) procedures, memorandum or contract signed with a government agency (including any regulations applicable thereto), and/or license, all of the data sets, computer code, and other materials (such as codebooks, protocols, survey instruments, administrative records) related to the empirical research study must be (i) saved at the OSF’s project webpage in the version-controlled system there or linked to in a trusted digital repository, such as DataVerse, and (ii) made publicly available at the time of a final evaluation report or scholarly article publication (unless the NCGVR Research Director agrees to a later date).

Notwithstanding the above, to the extent that any data set contains information subject to privacy and/or confidentiality duties or obligations under applicable law or agreement, Grantee shall release as much data as is allowed, subject to compliance with such privacy and/or confidentiality duties or obligations. For example, only if, and to the extent, legally permissible, Grantee shall release a public-use version of a data set after removing certain identifying variables or taking any necessary actions that statistically anonymize the data. Further, even for private and confidential data, Grantee shall share that data set with a third-party researcher if that researcher has first (i) obtained official written approval from all governmental agencies that provided data access to Grantee, (ii) obtained written approval from an accredited IRB, and (iii) signed a nondisclosure agreement pertaining to all private and/or confidential data. The third-party researcher’s access to the data set shall take place on whatever terms are negotiated with the governmental agencies mentioned above (such as, by way of example, password protection, access via remote software such that the data set is not downloaded to the researcher’s local computer, or the removal or alteration of personally identifiable information).

d. The final results of Grantee’s research must be made available at the project’s OSF webpage,

including but not limited to any final evaluation report and/or a link to any publication generated from the empirical research study’s data set. In cases where the results may be published in a journal that embargoes results before publishing, this information may remain private until the article is published. For any publication in a journal that imposes subscription or per-article fees, Grantee must either (i) make a copy of the publication freely available on the OSF webpage (if allowed under the journal’s copyright policies) or (ii) write a report on the same finding(s) and make that report freely available on the OSF webpage directly or via a link to a preprint server. If no official report or publication is otherwise available, the OSF webpage must be updated within one (1) year of the endpoint of data collection (unless the NCGVR Research Director agrees to a later date) to include a detailed written report of the findings or to provide a link to the detailed written report of the findings on a preprint server.

4. ***Human Subjects.*** If human subject data are used in the conduct of the work supported by NCGVR, Grantee warrants and agrees to comply with the applicable federal laws, regulations, and policies that govern the ethical treatment of individuals who are participants of the work supported by NCGVR through observation, intervention, interaction, or use of data about them. Grantee further agrees to provide certification within thirty (30) days of request that an institutional committee has reviewed and approved the procedures which involve human subjects. Grantee shall bear full responsibility for the proper and safe performance of all work and services involving the use of human subjects.

5. ***Quality Assurance.*** Grantee’s quality assurance review plan will be included as an appendix to the grant agreement. It shall ensure that the research findings reported are independently and carefully reviewed before they are disseminated in venues likely to attract widespread attention.

## References

Cook, Philip J., “The Great American Gun War: Notes from Four Decades in the Trenches,” *Crime and Justice*, Vol. 42, No. 1, 2013, pp. 19–73.

Morgan, Erin R., Ali Rowhani-Rahbar, Deborah Azrael, and Matthew Miller, “Public Perceptions of Firearm- and Non-Firearm-Related Violent Death in the United States: A National Study,” *Annals of Internal Medicine*, Vol. 169, No. 10, 2018, pp. 734–737.

National Research Council, *Firearms and Violence: A Critical Review*, Washington, D.C.: National Academies Press, 2005.

National Research Council, *Priorities for Research to Reduce the Threat of Firearm-Related Violence*, Washington, D.C.: National Academies Press, 2013.

RAND Corporation, *The Science of Gun Policy: A Critical Synthesis of Research Evidence on the Effects of Gun Policies in the United States*, Santa Monica, Calif., RR-2088-RC, 2018. As of January 2, 2019: [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR2088.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2088.html)

Stark, David E., and Nigam H. Shah, “Funding and Publication of Research on Gun Violence and Other Leading Causes of Death,” *JAMA*, Vol. 317, No. 1, 2017, pp. 84–85.

## Appendix: Budget Template and Budget Narrative

An Excel version of the budget template, presented in the following pages, will be made available on NCGVR’s website: [www.ncgvr.org/rfp](http://www.ncgvr.org/rfp).

### Budget Narrative Requirements

The budget narrative is where detailed information is provided to assist reviewers in evaluating estimated costs for reasonableness.

Budget narrative categories may include, but are not limited to, the following: personnel, fringe benefits, travel, other direct costs, subcontractors/collaborators, and indirect costs.

**Personnel:** Provide a description of each individual’s role and responsibilities related to the proposed research. Personnel categories may include

- Project director, principal investigator, scholar, fellow
- Project staff
- Administrative staff (if normally charged direct)
- Other staff

**Fringe benefits:** Provide the percentage, basis of calculation, and whether the rate is approved for estimating or pricing by a U.S. federal government agency.

**Travel:** Provide details on each proposed itinerary, including origin and destination, purpose of trip, and number of travelers. Travel costs must be estimated using the most economical means of travel and in accordance with the Federal Travel Regulations. For domestic travel, please go to the General Services Administration’s “Per Diem Rates Look-Up” webpage, [www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates/per-diem-rates-lookup](http://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates/per-diem-rates-lookup). For international travel, please go to the Department of State’s “Foreign Per Diem Rates by Location” webpage, [https://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per\\_diem.asp](https://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp).

**Other direct costs:** Provide a description of each item and a brief justification for its cost to assist reviewers in evaluating its applicability and direct allocability to the project. Equipment that could be used for general purposes or benefit more than one project is not allowed.

**Subcontractors/collaborators:** Provide a brief description of each organization’s role and responsibilities and list of key staff. Subcontractors and collaborators must also provide a detailed budget and budget narrative in the same format as required in this RFP.

**Indirect costs:** Provide your organization’s negotiated indirect rate agreement, if applicable. Also include the percentage used in estimating indirect costs and basis (or bases) of calculation to assist reviewers in evaluating your organization’s methodology for allocating indirect costs and determining reasonableness.

**Applying fee or profit to any and all cost categories is not allowed.**





**National Collaborative on Gun Violence Policy  
RFP 1**

**Name of Applicant:** [insert name of organization here]  
**Year 2 Start and End Dates:** [insert dates here]

<b>Personnel</b>					
	<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Days</b>	<b>Daily Rate</b>	<b>Total</b>
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
	[Add more rows if necessary]				
<b>Fringe Benefits</b>					
	[Include percentage and basis of calculation—e.g., 25% on base salaries for full-time and part-time staff, except for graduate students]				
<b>Travel</b>					
1	[Include summary of trips—e.g., 2 trips, 3 nights, Los Angeles, CA, to Denver, CO]	[Include purpose of trip]			
2					
3					
4					
	[Add more rows if necessary]				
<b>Other Direct Costs</b>					
1	[Include description of item]	[Include purpose of item]			
2					
3					
4					
	[Add more rows if necessary]				
<b>Subcontractors/Collaborators</b>					
	[Include name of organizations with whom you are subcontracting/collaborating and brief description of role]				
<b>Indirect Costs</b>					
	[Include percentage and basis of calculation—e.g., 50% applied to base of personnel, travel, other direct costs]				
<b>Total Project Budget</b>					



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## About the Collaborative

Despite more than 38,000 firearm deaths and more than 115,000 injuries from firearms per year in the United States, the public and policymakers lack basic information on the causes of gun violence and how it can be prevented.

The National Collaborative on Gun Violence Research will support carefully selected, rigorous research designed to broaden agreement on the facts associated with gun policy, and support development of fair and effective policies.

Research priorities will be selected by the Research Advisory Committee, based on a review of existing science and the recommendation of gun policy researchers and stakeholders. Broadly, the collaborative will fund projects that focus on understanding the patterns of gun ownership and use; the benefits and harms of firearms in the United States; and evaluating policy interventions and technologies designed to reduce harms or increase the benefits of firearms use in the United States.

The collaborative is not an advocacy organization. Despite often contentious and partisan disagreement over gun policies, most people agree we need policies that will reduce gun violence, and many are interested in trustworthy information about how that could be accomplished while protecting individual rights. We aim to support research that will broaden agreement on the facts, and provide policymakers with the data-driven solutions and tools they need to make changes that will have a real and lasting effect on reducing gun violence.

## Mission

Our mission is to fund and disseminate nonpartisan, scientific research that offers the public and policymakers a factual basis for developing fair and effective gun policies.