



April 18, 2023

DOJ OIG Releases Report on the Office of Justice Programs' Administration of the Comprehensive School Safety Initiative

Department of Justice (DOJ) Inspector General Michael E. Horowitz announced today the release of a report evaluating the Office of Justice Programs (OJP), National Institute of Justice's (NIJ) administration and oversight of its Comprehensive School Safety Initiative (CSSI) \$240 million grant program. Between 2014 and 2017, OJP's NIJ awarded more than 100 grants to research the root causes of school violence and evaluate strategies to improve the safety of schools. Since 2017, OJP and NIJ have assessed and communicated the research findings.

The DOJ Office of the Inspector General (OIG) found that CSSI resulted in valuable research products and that NIJ received positive feedback from stakeholders. However, the DOJ OIG identified areas for improvement in grant program management. We made the following findings:

- **Lack of Accessibility and Availability of CSSI Research.** NIJ shared some school safety research at in-person events and online. However, not all of these research products were available, linked, or easily accessible online to school safety stakeholders. These limitations potentially limited awareness and impacted the accessibility and value of CSSI research efforts. Dissemination of research results is important so that teachers, administrators, security professionals and others charged with making schools safe have access to them.
 - **Improvements Needed to Strengthen Conflict of Interest Resolution.** While NIJ logged various conflicts of interest that arose from its program personnel, we found that it did not always document its rationale and decisions made in addressing these matters.
 - **Lack of Efficient Coordination and Documentation of CSSI Progress.** NIJ's social science research analysts conducted site visits without coordinating these visits with the NIJ grant manager. These particular social science research analysts also did not document their conclusions when evaluating CSSI grantees' progress reports. Such input is necessary to provide NIJ and other stakeholders an accurate and complete determination of how well a research project has progressed or if it required additional oversight, monitoring, or review.
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The DOJ OIG made three recommendations for OJP to improve NIJ's administration and oversight of the CSSI award program. OJP agreed with all 3 recommendations.

Report: Today's report can be found on the OIG's website at the following link:

<https://oig.justice.gov/reports/audit-office-justice-programs-administration-comprehensive-school-safety-initiative>

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