



Office of the Inspector General
U.S. Department of Justice



**Audit of the
Office of Justice Programs
School Safety Initiative Grants
Awarded to the University of Virginia,
Charlottesville, Virginia**

**AUDIT OF THE OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE
SCHOOL SAFETY INITIATIVE GRANTS
AWARDED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA,
CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The U.S. Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General completed an audit of three Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice Comprehensive School Safety Initiative grants awarded to the University of Virginia. The three awards – grant numbers 2014-CK-BX-0004, 2014-CK-BX-0005 and 2015-CK-BX-0008 – totaled over \$7.1 million and sought to increase the overall safety of schools and students nationwide through climate improvement, violence prevention, and culturally responsive classroom management. As of August 2016, the University of Virginia had drawn down \$1,097,440 (15 percent) of the total funds awarded.

The objectives of this audit were to determine whether costs claimed under the grants were allowable, supported, and in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, guidelines, and terms and conditions of the award; and to determine whether the grantee demonstrated adequate progress towards achieving program goals and objectives. To accomplish these objectives, we assessed performance in the following areas of grant management: program performance, financial management, expenditures, budget management and control, drawdowns, and federal financial reports.

Our audit found that the University of Virginia generally managed the reviewed grants appropriately. We discussed with the grant-funded principal investigators and co-investigators their research methods in detail and with the independent research analysts the progress they had made on each grant and found that the UVA appeared to be on track to achieve the stated goals and objectives of each award. Additionally, we found that all tested expenditures were allowable, supported, and in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, guidelines, and the terms and conditions of the grants. The audit also did not identify any irregularities with federal financial reports, use of funds, progress reports or other required documentation. Therefore, the report provides no recommendations and is issued closed.

We discuss our audit results in further detail in the body of the report. Our audit objective, scope, and methodology appear in Appendix I.

**AUDIT OF THE OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE
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AWARDED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA,
CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA**

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NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE
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AWARDED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA,
CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA**

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Office of the Inspector General (OIG) completed an audit of three grants awarded by the Office of Justice Programs (OJP), National Institute of Justice (NIJ) to the University of Virginia (UVA), located in Charlottesville, Virginia. The NIJ competitively awarded the UVA the three grants totaling \$7,113,686 shown in the table below.

**Table
Grants Awarded to UVA**

Award Number	Award Date	Project Start Date	Project End Date	Award Amount (\$)
2014-CK-BX-0004	09/30/14	01/01/15	12/31/18	2,497,529
2014-CK-BX-0005	09/30/14	01/01/15	12/31/18	3,616,205
2015-CK-BX-0008	09/30/15	01/01/16	12/31/17	999,952
Total				\$7,113,686

Source: OJP's Grants Management System (GMS)

NIJ Comprehensive School Safety Initiative

The NIJ researches, develops, and evaluates evidence and tools to reduce crime and promote justice particularly at the state and local levels. The NIJ awarded the three grants listed in the Table above to the UVA as part of its Comprehensive School Safety Initiative (School Safety Initiative). Launched in 2014, the School Safety Initiative is research-based and seeks to leverage relationships between educators, researchers, law enforcement, and health professionals to address the external and internal causes of and ultimately prevent school violence. The specific objectives of the School Safety Initiative are to: (1) increase scientific knowledge about the root causes, characteristics, and consequences of school violence and other threats to school and student safety; (2) develop, support, and rigorously evaluate a wide-range of school and student safety programs and practices; and (3) develop and test a comprehensive school safety framework based on the acquired information and evidence.

The Grantee

Thomas Jefferson founded the UVA in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 1819. The UVA is home to roughly 21,000 students, 12 academic schools, and over 100 research centers. One of the UVA's academic schools is the Curry School of Education (Curry), which provides online and in-person education options at regional centers across the Commonwealth of Virginia.

OIG Audit Approach

We performed this audit as directed by Section 4 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014.¹ The objectives of this audit were to determine whether costs claimed under the grants were allowable, supported, and in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, guidelines, and terms and conditions of the grant; and to determine whether the grantee demonstrated adequate progress towards achieving the program goals and objectives. To accomplish these objectives, we assessed performance in the following areas of grant management: program performance, financial management, expenditures, budget management and control, drawdowns, and federal financial reports.

We tested compliance with what we considered the most important conditions of the grants. The DOJ Financial Guide, the OJP Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) Financial Guide (OJP Financial Guide), and the award documents contain the primary criteria we applied during the audit.²

This report details the results of our analysis. Appendix 1 contains additional information on our audit objectives, scope, and methodology.

Program Performance and Accomplishments

The UVA proposed and the NIJ approved unique objectives and goals for each award:

- Grant Number 2014-CK-BX-0004. The primary objective of this grant is to evaluate and improve Virginia public school student threat assessments and offer a scalable model of a violence prevention strategy that reduces the use of student suspension, particularly concerning the reported disproportionate suspension of minority students. The goals of this grant include determining: (1) how to implement student threat assessments, the types of threats, and the demographics of students involved; (2) how to assess threat assessment models adopted by schools; and (3) evaluating whether training and technical assistance improved student threat assessment results.
- Grant Number 2014-CK-BX-0005. The overall objective of this grant is to evaluate an augmented version of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), which provides school personnel with safety and social climate data, technical assistance, and training in evidence-based intervention. The goals included: (1) adapting and piloting the Maryland

¹ Pub. L. No. 113-76.

² OJP requires that recipients of awards made during or after FY 2015 follow the 2015 DOJ Grants Financial Guide. Recipients of awards made before FY 2015 should follow the tenets of OJP Financial Guide. As a result, UVA must comply with the requirements of the 2014 OJP Financial Guide for grant numbers 2014-CK-BX-0004 and 2014-CK-BX-0005 but comply with the 2015 DOJ Grants Financial Guide for funds administered under grant number 2015-CK-BX-0008.

Safe and Supportive Schools (MDS3) model to middle schools and (2) testing the efficiency and effectiveness of the MDS3 model in 40 middle schools selected through a randomized controlled trial.³

- Grant Number 2015-CK-BX-0008. The objective of this grant is to increase the ability of teachers to detect and mitigate bullying behaviors and thus improve a school's safety climate. The goals of the grant include (1) developing and testing an evidence-based, interactive course for teachers referred to the Bullying Classroom Check-Up (BCCU) module and (2) evaluating and testing the BCCU module to ascertain training results.

Both the DOJ and OJP Financial Guides require that award recipients collect, maintain, and report data to measure and demonstrate the effectiveness of their award-funded activities. As such, progress reports must accurately compare anticipated objectives and goals with actual program accomplishments. We reviewed performance reports and associated documents and interviewed UVA officials to determine whether the UVA was on track to achieve the goals and objectives of each award. We also reviewed the July 2016 Progress Reports for each grant to determine if the reports were accurate.

To verify the progress reported by the UVA for each grant, we acquired from UVA officials documents to support the work performed. We then selected research and output-based performance measures from progress reports submitted by the UVA for each grant, as well as budget change requests and approvals. We then traced specific research deliverables, such as conference presentations, pamphlets, and surveys distributed to research subjects, coaching evaluation forms, and associated subject letters to grant objectives and goals. We also discussed grant performance with NIJ personnel.

Based on this review, we believe that the UVA appears to be on track to achieve the stated goals and objectives of the grants under audit. Moreover, we determined that the UVA research teams are performing research that comports with approved budgets. We also found that supporting documents corroborate both research accomplishments and challenges.

The NIJ included special terms and conditions with each grant, including a special condition that precluded any consultant or contractor from receiving more than \$650 in grant funds per day for work. Through our transaction testing, we discovered that the UVA relied on consultants to coach and evaluate faculty from selected high schools. As a result, we reviewed consultant payments to ensure that payments were below this \$650-daily threshold. Although we found that there were recorded consultant transactions for as much as \$1,000 per day, these transactions included reimbursements for mileage, lodging, and per diem costs. As a result, we found that consultant payments aligned with the \$650 per-day requirement.

³ MDS3 is a federally funded initiative that helps high schools select and implement evidence-based practices to improve their social climates.

Because its studies relied on human subjects, the UVA was also required to submit forms pertaining to informed consent and associated approvals. UVA principal investigators provided us with the relevant forms documenting compliance with this requirement.

Grant Financial Management

The OJP Financial Guide requires that all grant recipients and subrecipients establish accounting systems and maintain financial records that accurately account for awarded funds. To assess the UVA's financial management of the three grants, we reviewed its Single Audit Reports for 2013, 2014, and 2015 for weaknesses and non-compliance issues that could involve the awards. We also interviewed personnel responsible for the financial management of the awards at both the UVA and its Curry School of Education. We inspected grant documents, budget narratives, and various financial policies and procedures to determine whether the UVA adequately safeguarded grant funds. Finally, we performed testing in the areas that were relevant for the management of this grant, as discussed throughout this report.

Based on this review, we did not identify any concerns related to grant financial management.

Grant Expenditures

For Grant Numbers 2014-CK-BX-0004, 2014-CK-BX-0005 and 2015-CK-BX-0008, UVA's approved budgets included personnel, fringe benefits, travel, contractors, and other charges, such as conference and coaching fees. To determine whether costs charged to the awards were allowable, supported, and properly allocated in compliance with award requirements, we judgmentally tested a sample of transactions. Considering the types of expenses allocated to the awards, we focused on testing high-dollar transactions, contractor and subgrantee expenses, coaching expenses, and expenses listed in the general ledger that did not denote the vendor.

As of September 2016, there were a total of 544 transactions for Grant 2014-CK-BX-0004 with a dollar amount of \$766,579, 142 transactions for Grant 2014-CK-BX-0005 for \$453,962, and 12 transactions for Grant 2015-CK-BX-0008 for \$6,469. We reviewed accounting records and their supporting documentation, and performed verification testing related to grant expenditures. The following sections describe the results of that testing.

Labor and Contractor Costs

We judgmentally tested labor charges for personnel, including faculty and individual contractors, paid by grant funds to ensure that the UVA was under the approved budget amounts submitted in their proposals. In their initial proposal, the UVA allocated grant monies for each co-investigator based on a projection of

the amount of time, for the duration of the project, for each co-investigator's respective duties. We also tested labor charges to ensure that general ledger entries matched the amounts actually allocated and paid to faculty members and contractors for the work they performed.

For employee labor costs, we examined general ledger records, level of effort reports, and payroll screenshots from the UVA's enterprise resource system that showed the amounts paid to personnel and budget narratives that specified maximum percentages for effort reporting. For 2 of the 49 entries tested, ledger records showed an amount higher than the amounts paid to the faculty for the grant. However, these entries were the result of adjusting entries recorded in the following month, with those corresponding adjusting entries recorded separately in the general ledger. Otherwise, we identified no exceptions in reconciling the general ledger to supporting documentation. Thus, our review found that the UVA generally recorded labor costs that complied with the approved budget for each grant.

The approved grant budgets also provided for fringe benefit charges incurred by employees. We tested these charges to ensure that the amounts the UVA charged to fringe benefits were allowable and complied with established policies. For personnel, that amount was 27.8 percent of salary costs. We calculated the fringe benefit for each salary cost in our judgmental sample and compared our figure to the amount the UVA recorded in its general ledger. We identified no discrepancies between our calculated rate and the amount the UVA charged to each grant.

Due to the number of high-dollar subgrantee and contractor expenses recorded in the general ledger, we judgmentally selected contractor and subgrantee transactions for testing. We requested and reviewed invoices, timesheets, statements of work and relevant agreements, detailed breakdowns of multiple line-item invoices, and receipts for travel-related charges. To verify receipt of services, we also checked material related to presentations prepared and provided and human-subject research results. Additionally, we interviewed three co-investigators from two different subgrantee organizations to gain an understanding of their research. We determined that all tested subgrantee and contractor expenses were allowable, allocable, reasonable, and supported.

Other Direct Costs

We tested a range of other costs charged to the academic research supported by the NIJ grants. Such costs included travel and conference fees for presentations and discussions, supplies for pamphlets, posters, and other materials distributed to research participants, and payments to post-doctoral students involved in research efforts. We tested these payments for agency approval, allocability, allowability, authorization, and ultimately payment and noted no exceptions.

Indirect Costs

Indirect costs are costs of an organization that are not readily assignable to a particular project, but are necessary to the operation of the organization and the performance of the project. Examples of indirect costs include overhead and administrative expenses. According to the OJP Financial Guide, grantees need to establish and seek approval for an indirect cost rate with their cognizant federal agency to receive reimbursement for indirect expenses.

The indirect costs that we tested were facilities and administration costs (F&A) that are a percentage of a faculty member's given salary. UVA policies stipulate that faculty members who conduct organized research have an F&A rate of 58 percent allocated to their salaries. We judgmentally sampled 16 salary charges for testing and calculated the corresponding F&A costs for each. We then compared our calculations to the associated line items that incorporated F&A charges on the UVA general ledger. We found no discrepancy between the calculated rate and the amount in the actual line items.

Budget Management and Control

According to both the DOJ and OJP Financial Guides, each grant recipient must establish and maintain an adequate accounting system to provide it with the ability to compare actual expenditures or outlays with budgeted amounts for each award. Additionally, a grant recipient must request from its granting agency approval to modify an award's approved budget to reallocate funds between budget categories whenever the proposed cumulative change is greater than 10 percent of the total award amount.

We compared expenditures by category to the approved budgets for each grant and determined that actual expenditures aligned with approved budgets and the UVA did not require OJP approval to modify approved budgets.

Drawdowns

According to both the DOJ and OJP Financial Guides, grant recipients must establish an adequate accounting system that documents and supports all receipts of federal funds. At the end of the grant award, if a recipient received or drawn down funds in excess of federal expenditures, the recipient must return unused funds to the awarding agency.

The U.S. Department of the Treasury transfers grant funds electronically to the grant recipient through NIJ's Grant Payment Request System (GPRS). UVA officials told us that they request drawdowns only on a reimbursable basis. According to UVA officials, accountants at its Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) calculate and prepare drawdown requests by tracking approved and paid invoices for each award.

As of August 2016, the UVA had drawn down a total of \$1,097,440 from two of the three NIJ grants.⁴ To assess whether the UVA managed award receipts according to federal requirements, we compared the total amount of grant funding that the UVA received to the total amount it recorded as spent in its accounting records for each award through August 2016. We determined that the UVA properly received grant funds and did not identify any significant deficiencies related to UVA's process for developing drawdown requests. We also found that the amount of funds that the UVA drew down did not exceed grant expenditures recorded in its accounting records.

Federal Financial Reports

According to the 2015 DOJ Financial Guide, award recipients must submit for each grant a quarterly Federal Financial Report (FFR) that details the actual expenditures and unliquidated obligations incurred throughout the reported period. FFRs also should report cumulative expenditures. To determine whether UVA submitted accurate FFRs, we reviewed the four most recent FFRs submitted by the UVA for each of the three grants and compared reported expenses to UVA accounting records. We determined that quarterly and cumulative expenditures for the reports reviewed matched the accounting records.

Conclusion

Because of our audit testing, we concluded that the UVA generally managed the grants that we reviewed appropriately and demonstrated adequate progress towards achieving the research-based goals and objectives of each grant. We did not identify reportable issues regarding the UVA's overall grant and financial management, including federal financial reports, budget management, or drawdowns.

Further, based on our audit testing, we determined that the UVA generally managed the grants that we reviewed appropriately and demonstrated adequate progress towards achieving the grants' stated goals and objectives. We found that all tested expenditures were allowable, supported, and in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, guidelines, and the terms and conditions of the grants. Lastly, we also noted that UVA policies – as well as its function-driven decentralized organizational structure – has allowed for the UVA to manage its grants effectively. Therefore, this report includes no recommendations to the OJP and is issued closed.

⁴ As of August 2016, the UVA had not drawn down funds associated with grant number 2015-CK-BK-0008.

OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

The objectives of this audit were to determine whether costs claimed under the grants were allowable, supported, and in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, guidelines, and terms and conditions of the grant; and to determine whether the grantee demonstrated adequate progress towards achieving the program goals and objectives. To accomplish this objective, we assessed performance in the following areas of grant management: program performance, financial management, expenditures, budget management and control, drawdowns, and federal financial reports.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

This was an audit of Office of Justice Programs (OJP), National Institute of Justice (NIJ) grants awarded to the University of Virginia (UVA), under the Comprehensive School Safety Initiative. On September 30, 2014, OJP awarded Grant Number 2014-CK-BX-0004, totaling \$2,497,529, to UVA. OJP also awarded \$3,616,205 under Grant Number 2014-CK-BX-0005 to UVA on the same date. On September 30, 2015, OJP subsequently awarded Grant Number 2015-CK-BX-0008, totaling \$999,952, to UVA.

As of August 19, 2016, UVA had drawn down \$1,097,440 of the total grant funds awarded. The scope of our audit focused on, but was not limited to, September 30, 2014 – the award date for Grant Numbers 2014-CK-BX-0004 and 2014-CK-BX-0005 – through January 31, 2017, the last day of our audit work.

To accomplish our objectives, we tested compliance with what we identified as the most important conditions of the UVA's activities related to the audited grants. We performed sample-based audit testing for grant expenditures including payroll and fringe benefit charges, subgrantee and subcontractor charges, financial reports, drawdowns and progress reports. In this effort, we employed a judgmental sampling design to obtain broad exposure to numerous facets of the grants reviewed. This non-statistical sample design did not allow projection of the test results to the universe from which we selected the samples. The OJP Financial Guide and the award documents contain the primary criteria we applied during the audit.

During our audit, we obtained information from OJP's Grants Management System as well as UVA's accounting system specific to the management of DOJ funds during the audit period. We did not test the reliability of those systems as a

whole. However, we verified any findings identified involving information from those systems with documentation from other sources.

We discussed our audit results with UVA and OJP officials throughout the audit and at a formal exit conference. We also provided the UVA and OJP with a draft of our report and allowed an opportunity to respond. The UVA and OJP provided written responses, which appear in Appendices 2 and 3, respectively. UVA disagreed with the \$1,096,682 amount of total drawdowns from two of three NIJ grants reported by the OIG as of August 2016. The OIG previously obtained this amount from UVA's Grant Manager. After discussing with UVA representatives, we determined the correct amount of total drawdowns as of August 2016 was \$1,097,440 and updated the report to reflect this figure.

As this issue does not affect the audit results and no further actions are necessary, we issue this report closed.

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA RESPONSE TO THE DRAFT AUDIT REPORT¹



April 17, 2017

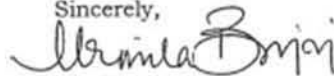
John J. Manning
Regional Audit Manager
Washington Regional Audit Office
Office of the Inspector General
U.S. Department of Justice
1300 N. 17th Street, Suite 3400
Arlington, VA 22209

Dear Mr. Manning:

This is to confirm that we have reviewed the draft audit report on the Audit of the Office of Justice Programs (OJP), National Institute of Justice, School Safety Initiative Grants Awarded to the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA.

We respectfully requested DOJ OIG to review the amount stated in the report as drawdown on two grants. The OIG responded and UVA agreed with the amount drawn down by UVA on grants 2014-CK-BX-0004 and 2014-CK-BS-0005 as of August 2016 to be \$1,097,439.69. With the exception of this change, we do not have any other comments on the draft report.

Sincerely,



Urmila Bajaj
Director of Post Award, Office of Sponsored Programs
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Enclosure. Management Representation Letter

Cc. Elizabeth Hope Adams
Assistant Vice President, Research Administration
University of Virginia

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¹ Enclosures referenced in the grantee's response were not included in this final report.

OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS RESPONSE TO THE DRAFT
AUDIT REPORT



U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Justice Programs

Office of Audit, Assessment, and Management

Washington, D.C. 20531

APR 20 2017

MEMORANDUM TO: John J. Manning
Regional Audit Manager
Washington Regional Audit Office
Office of the Inspector General

FROM: *for* Ralph E. Martin *Jeffery A. Haley*
Director

SUBJECT: Response to the Draft Audit Report, *Audit of the Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice, School Safety Initiative Grants Awarded to the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia*

This memorandum is in response to your correspondence, dated March 29, 2017, transmitting the subject draft audit report for the University of Virginia. The draft report does not contain any recommendations directed towards the Office of Justice Programs (OJP). OJP has reviewed the draft audit report and does not have any comments.

We appreciate the opportunity to review and comment on the draft audit report. If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Jeffery A. Haley, Deputy Director, Audit and Review Division, on (202) 616-2936.

cc: Maureen A. Henneberg
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