

BJA FY 2026 DNA Capacity Enhancement for Backlog Reduction (CEBR)— Competitive Grants Program

Grants.gov Funding Opportunity Number: O-BJA-2026-172680

Application Deadlines in Eastern Time (ET):

1. Complete SF-424 and submit in Grants.gov: **November 3, 2026, by 11:59 p.m. ET**
 2. Submit full application in JustGrants: **November 10, 2026, by 8:59 p.m. ET**
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Contents

1. Basic Information	3
2. Eligibility	5
3. Program Description	6
4. Application Contents and Format	8
5. Submission Requirements and Deadlines.....	15
6. Application Review Information	15
7. Award Notices	15
8. Post-Award Requirements & Administration.....	15
9. Questions?	16

1. BASIC INFORMATION

Purpose of the Funding

The Office of Justice Programs (OJP) is committed to advancing work that furthers the U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ) mission to keep our country safe and secure and uphold the rule of law and protect the rights of American citizens. OJP provides federal leadership, funding, and other critical resources to directly support law enforcement, combat violent crime, protect American children, provide services to American crime victims, and address public safety challenges, including human trafficking and the opioid crisis.

This is a notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) for the **BJA FY 2026 DNA Capacity Enhancement for Backlog Reduction (CEBR)—Competitive Grants Program**. This opportunity will increase capacity of states and units of local government with existing crime laboratories to process DNA samples for entry into the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS). The purpose of the CEBR Competitive Program is to maximize the effective utilization of DNA technology to strengthen evidence-based criminal justice responses. The priorities of the CEBR Competitive Program are (1) to use DNA technology to increase the capacity and/or efficiency of publicly funded forensic DNA laboratories to conduct analysis of DNA samples for entry into CODIS and (2) implementing Rapid DNA in the booking station(s) in eligible jurisdictions. The program is designed to fairly and efficiently prioritize jurisdictions facing operational challenges by considering key performance measures reported by publicly funded forensic DNA laboratories.

This program is for **Competitive** funding only. The **BJA FY 2026 DNA Capacity Enhancement for Backlog Reduction (CEBR)—Formula Grants Program** for formula funding is available at <https://bja.ojp.gov/funding/opportunities/o-bja-2026-172718>. Eligible agencies may apply for both Competitive and Formula CEBR Funding.

This NOFO provides two categories of funding:

- **Category 1: Implement DNA technology in forensic laboratories to increase the number of CODIS-eligible samples processed.**
Category 1 supports projects that maximize the effective use of DNA technology to enhance the operational capacity or efficiency of accredited public forensic DNA laboratories to process CODIS-eligible DNA samples.
- **Category 2: Rapid DNA at the booking station**
Category 2 supports the implementation or expansion of Rapid DNA technology in booking stations to generate CODIS-eligible DNA profiles from arrestees.

Applicants should review the [BJA FY2026 CEBR Competitive—Forensic Appendix](#) for specific forensic definitions and additional program specific budget information that will inform their application and grant activities if awarded.

See the [Eligible Applicants](#) section for eligibility details.

Funding Details

Announcement Type	Initial
Assistance Listing Number	16.036
Statutory Authority	Department of Justice Appropriations Act, 2026 (Pub. L. No. 119-74, 140 Stat. 5, 31, para. 9(A))
Grants.gov Opportunity Number	O-BJA-2026-172680
Competition ID Number	Category 1: Implement DNA technology in forensic laboratories to increase the number of CODIS-eligible samples processed Category 2: Rapid DNA at the booking station
Expected Total Amount of Funding	Up to \$4,900,000
Anticipated Number of Awards	Category 1: 7 Category 2: 1
Award Type(s)	Grant
Anticipated Award Amount	Up to \$1,000,000
Expected Award Period(s)	24 months starting on January 1, 2027

Key Dates and Times

NOFO Release Date	September 23, 2026
SAM.gov Registration/Renewal	Begin the process by September 23, 2026, and no later than October 10, 2026
Step 1: Grants.gov Deadline	11:59 p.m. ET on November 3, 2026
Step 2: JustGrants Deadline	8:59 p.m. ET on November 10, 2026

See [Questions?](#) at the end of this NOFO for agency contact information.

2. ELIGIBILITY

Eligible Applicants

The types of entities that are eligible to apply are:

Government Entities

- State governments
- County governments
- City or township governments
- Special district governments

Educational Organizations

- Public and state-controlled institutions of higher education

Other

- Units of local government

“Other” Entities Definition:

- **Other units of local government:** For the purposes of this notice of funding opportunity, other units of local government include towns, boroughs, parishes, villages, or other general purpose political subdivisions of a state.

A state or unit of local government (or any department, agency, or instrumentality of the foregoing) that does not own, control, or operate a crime laboratory or laboratory system is not an eligible applicant under this program. For example, a state or unit of local government that receives forensic services only by way of an inter- or intragovernmental arrangement or contract, but does not own, control, or operate its own crime laboratory within its jurisdiction, is not eligible under this program. See the “Definitions” section in the [BJA FY2026 CEBR Competitive—Forensic Appendix](#) for additional information.

Cost Sharing (Match) Requirement: This NOFO does **not** require cost sharing (match).

Limit on Number of Applications: You may submit more than one application if each application proposes a different project. Each application shall apply to only one category of the NOFO.

Applications under which two or more entities (project partners) would carry out the project will be considered. However, only one entity may be the applicant; any others must be proposed as subrecipients. Read the [Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information on subawards.

Additional Eligibility Factors

Certifications: You must submit the following certification. See [Additional Application Components](#) for how to submit.

- **CEBR Eligibility Certification:** In order to qualify for funding, an applicant for **Category 1** and **Category 2** funds must submit the signed and completed [DNA Capacity Enhancement for Backlog Reduction \(CEBR\) Program Eligibility Certification](#) form.

Required Partnership: For **Category 2** applicants only. If the applicant is not the entity that will operate the Rapid DNA instrument, then a [MOU or Letter of Support](#) from the agency that will operate the instrument must be provided.

3. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Statutory Authority

Department of Justice Appropriations Act, 2026 (Pub. L. No. 119-74, 140 Stat. 5, 31, para. 9(A))

Agency Funding Priorities

To help meet its mission, OJP may give priority consideration to applications proposing (as applicable within the scope of this NOFO) projects designed to advance the goals listed below:

- (a) Directly supporting law enforcement operations (including immigration law enforcement operations);
- (b) Combatting violent crime;
- (c) Supporting services to American citizens;
- (d) Protecting American children; and
- (e) Supporting American victims of trafficking and sexual assault.

Additional priority considerations:

- OJP will give priority consideration to **Category 1** applicants falling into the highest percentiles of performance measures (e.g., longest turnaround times) reported by CEBR laboratories. This data is posted on the BJA website at: bja.ojp.gov/program/dna-cebr/performance-measures. Instructions for providing this information are outlined in the [Additional Application Components](#) portion of this NOFO. This strategy is designed to fairly and efficiently address jurisdictions facing the greatest challenges in delivering timely services within their jurisdiction.

Note: Addressing these priorities is one of many factors that OJP considers in making funding decisions. Receiving priority consideration does not guarantee funding.

Unallowable Activities: The following are certain unallowable costs and certain activities that are out of the program scope and will not be funded.

1. Out of program scope is any program or activity, at any tier that, directly or indirectly, violates (or promotes or facilitates the violation of) federal immigration

law (including 8 U.S.C. § 1373) or impedes or hinders the enforcement of federal immigration law—including by failing to comply with 8 U.S.C. § 1373, give access to DHS agents, or honor DHS requests and provide requested notice to DHS agents.

2. Out of program scope is any program or activity, at any tier that violates any applicable Federal civil rights or nondiscrimination law. This includes violations that (1) indirectly violate the law, including by promoting or facilitating violations; or (2) unlawfully favor individuals in any race or protected group, including on a majority or minority, or privileged or unprivileged, basis, within a given area, population, or sector.
3. As specified in the [DOJ Grants Financial Guide](#), in Chapter 3.13 “Unallowable Costs” (“Legal Services for Aliens”), any obligations of funds, at any tier, under this award to provide (or to support the provision of) legal services to any removable alien or any alien otherwise unlawfully present in the United States shall be unallowable costs for purposes any award made under this notice, but the foregoing shall not be understood to apply: (1) to legal services to obtain protection orders for victims of crime; or (2) to immigration-related legal services that may be expressly authorized or required by any law, or any judicial ruling, governing or applicable to the award.

Goals and Objectives of This Funding Opportunity

Goal 1: Implement DNA technology in forensic laboratories to increase the number of CODIS-eligible samples processed.

- **Objective 1:** Increase the capacity of laboratories to process CODIS-eligible samples in accredited, publicly funded forensic DNA laboratories through the use of DNA technology.
- **Objective 2:** Increase the efficiency of laboratories to process CODIS-eligible samples in accredited, publicly funded forensic DNA laboratories through the use of DNA technology.

Goal 2: Implement Rapid DNA at the booking station.

- **Objective 1:** Increase the number of qualifying arrestee DNA samples uploaded to CODIS in the booking environment.
- **Objective 2:** Reduce the time between DNA collection and disposition of arrestee-related CODIS hits.

For a description of how awards under this NOFO will contribute to achieving these goals and objectives, see the [Performance Reports](#) section below.

Expected Outcomes

OJP expects recipients to submit deliverables and performance reports, as described below. Read the [Application Resource Guide](#) for more information. OJP will measure success by reviewing a recipient's submission of performance reports and data and the extent to which project implementation reflects progress toward the goals and objectives of this NOFO.

Deliverables

Recipients will be expected to submit the following:

- A **final report** must be submitted by award recipients. The report must include (1) a summary of activities carried out under the grant, (2) an analysis of pre- and post-award performance indicators (e.g., turnaround time, backlog), and (3) an assessment of whether the activities carried out using grant funds are meeting the needs identified in the application and resulted in an improvement in performance indicators.

Performance Reports

OJP requires recipients to submit regular performance reports that communicate progress toward achieving [Program Goals and Objectives](#). Read information on [performance reporting](#).

Award recipients will receive further guidance on post award reporting requirements.

4. APPLICATION CONTENTS AND FORMAT

Application Contents List

OJP will only consider applications that contain all required parts, which are marked ***Required*** below. Refer to the [DOJ Grant Application Submission Checklist](#) for application instructions.

Application Item	Submission Type
Step 1: Grants.gov	
Application for Federal Assistance: SF-424 *Required*	Online Form
Step 2: JustGrants	
Standard Applicant Information *Required*	Online Form
Proposal Abstract	Text Box
Data Requested With Application	Online Form

Application Item	Submission Type
- Financial Management and System of Internal Controls Questionnaire (including Applicant Disclosure of High-Risk Status) - Agency Funding Priorities Inventory	
Proposal Narrative *Required*	Attachment
Budget *Required*	Online Form
Other Budget/Financial Attachments - Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable) - Consultant Rate (if applicable) - Limitation on Use of Award Funds for Employee Compensation for Awards Over \$250,000; Waiver (if applicable) - Disclosure of Process Related to Executive Compensation (if applicable)	Attachment
Memorandum of Understanding *Required for Category 2 applicants if they are not the entity that will operate the Rapid DNA instrument*	Attachment
Additional Application Components DNA Capacity Enhancement for Backlog Reduction (CEBR) Program Eligibility Certification form *Required* - Baseline Measures—Category 1 Applicants - Program Income Declaration - Proof of DNA Laboratory Accreditation	Attachment

In addition to the items marked ***Required*** in the table above, the following are considered basic minimum requirement elements that are considered in the responsiveness review:

- The application is submitted by an eligible applicant.
- The requested award amount does not exceed the award ceiling.
- The application is responsive to the scope of the NOFO.

Standard Applicant Information ***Required***

Review and edit as needed the information imported from the SF-424 submitted in Grants.gov. Add ZIP codes for areas affected by the project.

Proposal Abstract ***Required***

Specific forensic definitions for this NOFO can be found in the “Definitions” section of the [BJA FY2026 CEBR Competitive—Forensic Appendix](#).

In JustGrants, enter a proposal abstract (limited to 2,000 characters) summarizing the proposed project. As abstracts for funded projects are public, do not include any personally identifying information (e.g., staff names). The abstract should include the following information:

- The name of the applicant’s proposed project.
- The purpose of the proposed project (i.e., what the project will do and why it is necessary).
- Where the project will take place (i.e., the service area, if applicable).
- Who will be served by the project (i.e., who will be helped or have their needs addressed by the project).
- What activities will be carried out to complete the project.
- The subrecipient(s)/partner organizations or entities, if known.
- Deliverables and expected outcomes (i.e., what the project will achieve).

View an example of a [proposal abstract](#).

Data Requested With Application

Financial Management and System of Internal Controls Questionnaire (including Applicant Disclosure of High-Risk Status)

Review information on this [questionnaire](#).

Agency Funding Priorities Inventory

Applicants seeking priority consideration under the [Agency Funding Priorities](#) section should answer the inventory questions in their entirety in the web-based form in JustGrants.

Proposal Narrative ***Required***

Format of the Proposal Narrative

Submit the narrative as an attachment in JustGrants. The document should:

- Be double-spaced, using a standard 12-point size font
- Have no less than 1-inch margins
- Have numbered pages
- Not exceed 10 pages

If the Proposal Narrative does not follow this format, OJP may reduce the score/ranking of the application.

Tables, charts, references and other relevant materials may be submitted as an appendix to the proposal narrative if needed and will not count toward the page limit.

Sections of the Proposal Narrative

The Proposal Narrative must include the four sections listed below. If you want priority consideration, the Proposal Narrative must state which [priority\(ies\)](#) your project will advance and describe how it will do so.

1. Description of the Need (5% of application score): What critical issue or problem do you propose to address with this project? Please include:

- A brief explanation of the need, gap, or issue to be addressed by the proposed project.
- Supporting information, data, or evidence to demonstrate the need's existence, size, and impact on the target population and community.
- How the need relates to the purpose of the NOFO.

2. Project Goals and Objectives (15% of application score): How will the proposed project address the need identified and address the purpose of the NOFO? Please include:

- Project goals (goals are broad, visionary statements on what you hope to accomplish).
- Project objectives (objectives are specific outcomes you plan to achieve through project activities).
- How your project goals and objectives relate to the [goals and objectives of the funding opportunity](#).

- **3. Project Design and Implementation (35% of application score):** How will you implement project activities that meet the project goals and objectives? Please include:

- What activities you will conduct to achieve the proposed goals and objectives.
- How you will deliver or complete those activities.
- When the activities will take place.
- Who in your organization will staff the activities, including key staff.
- Who will participate in and benefit from the activity.
- What deliverables, reports, and other items will be produced as part of the project.
- If you plan to use subrecipients to help conduct the project, please name them (if they are known) or describe how you will identify them. Please describe their role in conducting project activities.

4. Capabilities and Competencies (30% of application score): What administrative and technical capacity and expertise do you bring to successfully complete this project? Please include:

- A short description of your capacity to deliver the proposed project and meet the post-award requirements, if funded.

- A description of projects or activities your organization has conducted, or is currently conducting, that demonstrates your ability to undertake the proposed project activities.
- A summary of relevant experience of team members with key responsibilities for implementing the project.

Project Evaluations: An applicant that proposes to use award funds to conduct project evaluations must follow the guidance on [project evaluations](#).

Budget and Associated Documentation

Budget (15%) ***Required***

Use the Budget Detail Worksheet (Web-Based Form) or Separate Attachment (attach file in JustGrants) to submit the budget. Read information on [budget preparation](#) and [JustGrants Application Submission Training](#).

- List each cost needed to implement the project under the appropriate cost category.
- Clearly name and describe each cost.
- Show the computation of each cost (e.g., cost per unit, number of units, and total cost).
- Enter narrative, as needed, to explain the cost calculations and connection to your project goals, objectives, and activities.
- Include only costs that are reasonable, allocable, and necessary to implement the project. They must be allowable under the funding statute and agency requirements.¹

Additional information specific to this funding opportunity that will help you develop your project budget, including generally allowable and unallowable costs, can be found in the Budget Information section of the [BJA FY2026 CEBR Competitive—Forensic Appendix](#)

Budget/Financial Attachments

- **Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable):** If the budget includes indirect costs calculated using a current, federally approved indirect cost rate, upload your indirect cost rate agreement. Read information about [indirect costs](#).
- **Consultant Rate (if applicable):** Read information on [limits to consultant rates](#) and whether you need to request approval to exceed those limits.
- **Limitation on Use of Award Funds for Employee Compensation for Awards Over \$250,000; Waiver (if applicable):** Read information on this [limitation](#) and to determine whether you need to submit a waiver.

¹See [2 C.F.R. Part 200, Subpart E](#) and the [DOJ Grants Financial Guide](#). Read information on [unallowable costs](#) that apply to all funding opportunities.

- **Disclosure of Process Related to Executive Compensation (if applicable):**
An applicant that is a nonprofit organization may be required to make certain disclosures relating to the processes it uses to determine the compensation of its officers, directors, trustees, and key employees. Read information about this [disclosure and documentation](#) to upload.

Applicants to this funding opportunity are not required to provide this disclosure.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Supporting Documents

Required for Category 2 applicants if they are not the entity that will operate the Rapid DNA instrument

Attach a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or letter of intent between the applicant and each of the project partner(s). Read information on what to include in an [MOU/letter of intent](#). A MOU is required for any Category 2 applicant if they are not the entity that will operate the Rapid DNA instrument. The MOU must be between the applicant entity and the entity that will operate the instrument defining roles and responsibilities with each entity planning to establish Rapid DNA booking station enrollment of arrestees. See [National Rapid DNA Booking Operational Procedures Manual](#).

MOUs should be submitted as one separate attachment to the application. Unsigned draft MOUs may be submitted with the application, but you should describe in a cover page to the attachment why they are unsigned.

Additional Application Components

Attach these in JustGrants:

- **DNA Capacity Enhancement for Backlog Reduction (CEBR) Program Eligibility Certification** ***Required***: Each applicant must submit a signed and completed [DNA Capacity Enhancement for Backlog Reduction \(CEBR\) Program Eligibility Certification form](#). This document further outlines requirements for a state or unit of local government to be eligible to receive a grant under the DNA CEBR Program. **The certification must be submitted on the template provided.**
- **Baseline Measures: Category 1 applicants must submit baseline measures** to demonstrate the laboratory's need for additional laboratory funding to improve these measures. Applicants are to discuss how the proposed DNA technology will positively impact these baseline measures. **Priority consideration will be given to applicants falling into the highest percentiles of performance measures (e.g., longest turnaround times) reported by CEBR laboratories in the preceding year. This data is posted on the BJA website at:** <https://bja.ojp.gov/program/dna-cebr/performance-measures>.

Baseline Measures—Casework Laboratories

1. Total number of forensic biology/DNA cases completed in 2025.

2. Number of untested/not completed forensic biology/DNA cases more than 30 days old (backlogged) on December 31, 2025.
 3. The average number of days needed to complete (including peer review and report) forensic DNA cases for calendar year 2025.
- **Program Income Declaration:** All applications submitted in response to this NOFO are to comply with the Program Income Policy for the FY 2026 DNA CEBR Program. Applicants should carefully read the updated policy to complete the FY 2026 DNA CEBR grant application as well as to ensure compliance with the policy post-award. This policy can be found at <https://bja.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh186/files/media/document/dna-program-income-policy.pdf>.

Applicants are to submit a Program Income Declaration with their grant applications. The declaration should be attached as a separate document in the grant application, and the electronic file should be labeled as “Program Income Declaration.”

The Program Income Declaration should indicate one of the four statuses below for the applicant in light of any proposed activities to be funded by a grant award.

- Does not employ a fee-for-service model or otherwise accept compensation from external organizations or jurisdictions to conduct DNA sample testing.
 - Employs a fee-for-service model or otherwise accepts compensation from external organizations or jurisdictions to conduct DNA sample testing but does not plan to use grant funds for any fee-for-service- related activity.
 - Employs a fee-for-service model or otherwise accepts compensation from external organizations or jurisdictions to conduct DNA sample testing and does plan to accept fees for activities and/or services performed using grant funds, in whole or in part, from the programs referenced in this policy.
 - Employs a fee-for-service model or otherwise accepts compensation from external organizations or jurisdictions to conduct DNA sample testing but can claim the exclusion in Section 8 of the Program Income Policy and can produce the required documentation in support of this exclusion.
- **Proof of DNA Laboratory Accreditation:** Acceptable types of documentation of current accreditation include an electronic (scanned) copy of the current accreditation certificate(s), a digital photograph of the current accreditation certificate(s), or a letter from the accrediting body that includes the certificate number. Additionally, if a certificate references another document that contains key information on the type or scope of the accreditation, provide a copy of that supplemental documentation.

Disclosures and Assurances

Read the [disclosures and assurances](#) and complete them in JustGrants:

- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities
- Disclosure of Duplication in Cost Items (if applicable)
- DOJ Certified Standard Assurances
- DOJ Certifications
- Applicant Disclosure and Justification—DOJ High-Risk Grantees (if applicable)

5. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES

The [DOJ Grant Application Submission Checklist](#) provides instructions for how to submit your application by the [deadlines](#). [Executive Order \(E.O.\) 12372](#) (Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs) does not apply to this funding opportunity: read the [Application Resource Guide](#) for details. Read OJP's policy for applicants to [request late submission](#) due to technical difficulties, severe weather, or natural or manmade disasters.

6. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

The [Application Resource Guide](#) explains the responsiveness review, review criteria, and review and selection process, including risk review, and deciding official. Refer to the [Application Contents List](#) for all required application components and other basic minimum requirement elements that are considered in the responsiveness review. The [Proposal Narrative](#) and [Budget](#) sections of this NOFO indicates the weight of peer review criteria.

7. AWARD NOTICES

Read about the [award notification](#) process.

8. POST-AWARD REQUIREMENTS & ADMINISTRATION

Read the [Application Resource Guide](#) for more information about standard award terms and conditions, administrative and national policy requirements, and post-award reporting requirements.

Potential Environmental Impact: Grant programs that involve chemicals must comply with [NEPA requirements](#).

9. QUESTIONS?

NOFO Contact	Name: OJP Response Center Phone: 800-851-3420 or 202-353-5556 (TTY for hearing-impaired callers only) Email: OJP.ResponseCenter@usdoj.gov Hours: 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. ET, Monday–Friday
SAM.gov Help Desk	Website: sam.gov/help Hours: 8 a.m.–8 p.m. ET, Monday–Friday (closed federal holidays)
Grants.gov Help Desk	Phone: 800-518-4726 Email: support@grants.gov Website: grants.gov/support Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (closed federal holidays)
JustGrants Help Desk	Phone: 833-872-5175 Email: JustGrants.Support@usdoj.gov Hours: 7:00 a.m.–9:00 p.m. ET, Monday–Friday and 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. ET on Saturday, Sunday, and federal holidays.