

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

Grants.gov Funding Opportunity Number: O-BJA-2026-172718

Application Deadlines in Eastern Time (ET):

1. Complete SF-424 and submit in Grants.gov: **October 29, 2026, by 11:59 p.m. ET**
 2. Submit full application in JustGrants: **November 5, 2026, by 8:59 p.m. ET**
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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)—Formula Grants Program**. This opportunity will support states and units of local government with existing crime laboratories that conduct DNA analysis to process, and/or to increase the capacity to process, more DNA samples for entry into the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS), thereby helping to reduce the number of forensic DNA and DNA database samples awaiting analysis and/or to prevent a backlog of forensic and database DNA samples.

This program is for **Formula** funding only. See **BJA FY 2026 DNA Capacity Enhancement for Backlog Reduction (CEBR)—Competitive Grants Program** for competitive funding. Eligible agencies may apply for both Competitive and Formula CEBR Funding.

Funding under this program supports the following purposes:

- To carry out, for inclusion in CODIS, DNA analysis of database samples collected under applicable legal authority.
- To carry out, for inclusion in CODIS, DNA analysis of forensic case (e.g., “crime scene”) samples.
- To increase the capacity of publicly funded forensic DNA and DNA database laboratories to conduct DNA analysis of database and crime scene samples for entry into CODIS.

Jurisdictions may have different needs depending on their size, population, crime rate/type, and other factors. Therefore, this program affords laboratories the flexibility to use CEBR Formula funding to strategically bridge any resource gaps identified by their specific agency.

Applicants should review the [BJA FY26 CEBR Formula—Forensic Appendix](#) for specific forensic definitions and additional program specific information that will inform their application, budget, and grant activities.

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-2026-172718
Expected Total Amount of Funding	Up to \$88,898,250
Anticipated Number of Awards	130
Award Type(s)	Grants
Anticipated Award Amount	Up to \$3,500,000
Expected Award Period(s)	24 months starting on January 1, 2027

The aggregate amount of FY26 Formula CEBR Program funds expected to be awarded to eligible applicants from each state (including the state and its units of local government with existing crime laboratories) will be based on the criteria detailed below.

The formula for distribution of funds to each state is calculated based on the number of [Uniform Crime Reporting \(UCR\) Violent Crimes and UCR Property Crimes](#) reported to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and on the state's population. Any state falling below the minimum allocation of \$575,000, which is calculated as 0.5 percent of the total amount appropriated in FY26 for this purpose, is increased such that each state is awarded at least this minimum value of \$575,000.

The number of state and local applicants may also affect funding allocations. See "[Chart 1: Estimated Aggregate Amounts Available for Each State—FY26](#)" for a chart that identifies the estimated aggregate amount available for each state to fund eligible public forensic DNA laboratories.

If there is more than one publicly funded DNA laboratory within a state, the publicly funded DNA laboratories MUST coordinate prior to application submission to ensure that the amounts requested by each entity's application do not exceed the total amount allocated for the state. Funds generally are expected to be allocated among eligible applicants on the basis of [UCR Part 1 Violent Crimes, UCR Property Crimes](#), and the population size of the jurisdiction.

Key Dates and Times

NOFO Release Date	September 21, 2026
SAM.gov Registration/Renewal	Begin the process by September 21, 2026, and no later than September 30, 2026
Step 1: Grants.gov Deadline	11:59 p.m. ET on October 29, 2026
Step 2: JustGrants Deadline	8:59 p.m. ET on November 5, 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” Definition:

- **Other Units of Local Government:** For the purposes of this NOFO, “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 intra-governmental 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 Formula—Forensic Appendix](#) for additional information.

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

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 funds must submit the signed and completed [DNA Capacity Enhancement for Backlog Reduction \(CEBR\) Program Eligibility Certification](#) form.

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.

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: Increase the number of CODIS-eligible samples analyzed in forensic DNA and DNA databasing laboratories.

- **Objective 1:** Process CODIS eligible crime scene samples.
- **Objective 2:** Process CODIS eligible database samples.

Goal 2: Increase the capacity to process DNA samples for entry into CODIS in forensic DNA and DNA databasing laboratories.

- **Objective 1:** Reduce the DNA backlog for CODIS eligible DNA samples.
- **Objective 2:** Reduce the forensic case and DNA database sample turnaround time for CODIS entry.

The goals and objectives can be achieved by implementing allowable long-term capacity enhancement activities and short-term direct case analysis activities.

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.

All numerical data must include supporting documentation (e.g. excel files, LIMS reports) confirming the values input into the performance reporting software system. Additional information regarding the performance measures can be found in the Baseline Data section of the [BJA FY2026 CEBR Formula—Forensic Appendix](#).

4. APPLICATION CONTENTS AND FORMAT

Application Contents List

The table below lists the contents for your application. 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	Online Form
Step 2: JustGrants	
Standard Applicant Information	Online Form
Proposal Abstract	Text Box
Data Requested With Application - Financial Management and System of Internal Controls Questionnaire (including Applicant Disclosure of High-Risk Status) - Agency Funding Priorities Inventory	Online Form
Proposal Narrative	Attachment
Budget	Attachment
Other Budget/Financial Attachments - Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable) - Consultant Rate (if applicable)	Attachment

Application Item	Submission Type
• 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) • Formula CEBR Budget Certification	
Additional Application Components • DNA Capacity Enhancement for Backlog Reduction (CEBR) Program Eligibility Certification Form • Baseline Data • Program Income Declaration • Proof of DNA Laboratory Accreditation	Attachment

Standard Applicant Information

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

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

Proposal Narrative

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.

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.

Applicants may elect, but are not required, to use this [template](#) to submit all elements of the CEBR Formula proposal narrative.

Sections of the Proposal Narrative

The Proposal Narrative must include the four sections listed below.

1. Description of the Need: 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: 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: 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: 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

- Use the Budget Detail Worksheet/Narrative (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 Formula—Forensic Appendix](#).

¹ See [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.

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.
- **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.

- **Formula CEBR Budget Certification:** Applicants must submit a signed and completed [Formula DNA Capacity Enhancement for Backlog Reduction \(CEBR\) Program Budget Certification](#) form. This form, to be filled out by the applicant, outlines the proportion of funding that is planned to be used for (1) processing database samples for CODIS, (2) processing crime scene samples for CODIS (shall be a minimum of 40% of the award) and (3) increasing the capacity of the laboratory to process crime scene and/or database samples for CODIS. Review this [link](#) for more information on how to complete the form.

Additional Application Components

Attach these in JustGrants:

- **DNA Capacity Enhancement for Backlog Reduction (CEBR) Program Eligibility Certification:** 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 Formula program. **The certification must be submitted on the template provided.**
- **Baseline Data:** To assist BJA in determining baseline national backlogs, all applicants must submit the baseline backlog data to include all elements described in the Baseline Data section of the [BJA FY2026 CEBR Formula—Forensic Appendix](#). If grant funds are awarded, this information, to include supporting documentation—see [Performance Measures Section](#)—is required for submission during the first period of performance in which award funds are expended.

- **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 described in section 7a of the BJA Program Income Policy in light of any proposed activities to be funded by a grant award.

- **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

OJP will review applications to ensure the information presented is reasonable, understandable, measurable, achievable, and consistent with the goals of the funding opportunity. See the [Application Resource Guide](#) for information on the application review process for formula grants, including risk review, and the deciding official.

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.