

BJA FY 2026 Postconviction Testing of DNA Evidence

Grants.gov Funding Opportunity Number: O-BJA-2026-172771

Application Deadlines in Eastern Time (ET):

1. Complete SF-424 and submit in Grants.gov: **December 8, 2026, by 11:59 PM ET**
 2. Submit full application in JustGrants: **December 15, 2026, by 8:59 PM ET**
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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 Postconviction Testing of DNA Evidence** program. This opportunity will assist states and units of local government in defraying the costs associated with postconviction case review, evidence location, and DNA testing in violent felony cases (as defined by state law) where the results of such testing might show actual innocence.

This NOFO provides for two categories:

- **Category 1: Case reviews and DNA testing**
Funds will be used to defray the costs (e.g., additional personnel, overtime, testing supplies, and services) associated with postconviction DNA testing for violent felony offenses (as defined by state law) in which actual innocence might be demonstrated. Funds may be used to review suitable postconviction cases and locate and analyze biological evidence.
- **Category 2: Improve preservation of biological evidence and/or modernization of record storage systems**
Funds will be used to improve the preservation of biological evidence and/or modernize record retention for postconviction violent felony offenses (as defined by state law) in which actual innocence might be demonstrated.

Applicants should review the BJA FY 2026 POST – [Forensic Appendix](#) for specific definitions and additional program specific 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	16.820
Statutory Authority	Department of Justice Appropriations Act, 2026 (Pub. L. No. 119-74, 140 Stat. 5, 32, para. 9(C))
Grants.gov Opportunity Number	O-BJA-2026-172771
Competition ID Number	Category 1, C-BJA-2026-00042-PROD: Case reviews and DNA testing Category 2, C-BJA-2026-00043-PROD: Improve preservation of biological evidence and/or modernization of record storage systems
Expected Total Amount of Funding	Up to \$11,179,802
Anticipated Number of Awards	Category 1: 12 Category 2: 2
Award Type(s)	Grant
Anticipated Award Amount	Up to \$1,000,000
Expected Award Period(s)	36 months starting on January 1, 2027

Key Dates and Times

NOFO Release Date	October 28, 2026
SAM.gov Registration/Renewal	Begin the process by November 5, 2026, and no later than November 20, 2026
Step 1: Grants.gov Deadline	11:59 p.m. ET on December 8, 2026
Step 2: JustGrants Deadline	8:59 p.m. ET on December 15, 2026

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

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 Entities

- Public and state-controlled institutions of higher education.

Other

“Other” Entities Definition:

- Other Units of Local Government

State Government Entities: For the purposes of this NOFO, “state” means any state of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

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.

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 should apply to only one category of the NOFO. Also, an entity may be proposed as a subrecipient in more than one application.

Applications for which two or more entities (project partners) would carry out the project or program will be considered. However, only one entity may be the applicant; any others must be proposed as subrecipients. See 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. If an award is made, prior to receiving award funds, the recipient must submit an express [certification](#) from the chief legal officer of the state (typically the attorney general) that the state:

1. Provides postconviction DNA testing of specified biological evidence under a state statute, or under state rules, regulations, or practices, for persons convicted after trial and under a sentence of imprisonment or death for a state offense of murder or forcible rape, in a manner intended to ensure a reasonable process for resolving claims of actual innocence.

2. Preserves biological evidence secured in relation to the investigation or prosecution of a state offense of murder or forcible rape, under a state statute, local ordinances, or state or local rules, regulations, or practices, in a manner intended to ensure that reasonable measures are taken by all jurisdictions within the state to preserve such evidence.

Any certification that is submitted must be personally executed by the chief legal officer of the state after a determination that the certification may properly be made. Certification must be provided on the BJA-provided template found [here](#).

Note to all applicants, in particular applicants proposing postconviction DNA testing projects involving cases outside of the applicant's state: The certification must be executed by the chief legal officer of the appropriate state for each state for which postconviction cases are sought to be funded consistent with this NOFO. Funds will not be made available to applicants (if awarded) that fail to submit a properly executed certification(s).

Certification Required (state or local government applicants): In order to request a federal grant award under this program, an applicant that is a state or local government entity must submit a certification (using only the template provided in [Appendix 1](#)) entitled "Certification by the Chief Executive Officer (or senior official) of the Applicant Government." Tribal government entities and educational organizations (e.g., public or state-controlled institutions of higher education) are not required to submit this certification. This certification is a basic minimum requirement of this funding opportunity, such that applications from applicants that are required to submit it and fail to do so will be denied.

Also, such applicants should anticipate that awards to state or local government entities under this NOFO will include an award condition addressing compliance with 8 U.S.C. § 1373.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Statutory Authority

Department of Justice Appropriations Act, 2026 (Pub. L. No. 119-74, 140 Stat. 5, 32, para. 9(C))

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.
- (f) State/local law enforcement efforts that are coordinated with federal law enforcement efforts (including immigration law enforcement efforts)—at minimum as shown by—
 - (1) compliance with 8 U.S.C. § 1373, which provides that state and local government entities may not prohibit, or in any way restrict, any government entity or official from sending to, receiving from, maintaining, or exchanging information regarding citizenship or immigration status, lawful or unlawful, of any individual with components of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security or any other federal, state or local government entity; and
 - (2) having in place a statute, ordinance, rule, regulation, policy, or practice that is designed to ensure both (A) that agents of the United States acting under color of federal law in fact are given access to any pertinent correctional facility for the purpose of permitting such agents to meet with individuals who are (or are believed by such agents to be) aliens and to inquire as to such individuals' right to be or remain in the United States; and (B) that, when any such facility receives from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security a formal written request authorized by the Immigration and Nationality Act that seeks advance notice of the scheduled release date and time for a particular alien in such facility, then such facility in fact will honor such request and (as early as practicable) provide the requested notice to such Department.

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

Category 1

Goal: Conduct review of cases involving violent felony offenses (as defined by state law) where actual innocence might be demonstrated through the use of DNA testing.

- **Objective 1:** Identify potential postconviction DNA testing cases.
- **Objective 2:** Review appropriate postconviction cases to identify those in which DNA testing could prove the actual innocence of a person convicted of a violent felony offense as defined by state law.
- **Objective 3:** Locate biological evidence associated with such postconviction cases.
- **Objective 4:** Perform DNA analysis of appropriate biological evidence and report and review the DNA test results.

Category 2

Goal: Improve practices involving preservation of biological evidence and/or modernization of record retention in adjudicated cases.

- **Objective 1:** Locate, record, store, and retain biological evidence in adjudicated cases in accordance with best practices.
- **Objective 2:** Modernize evidence retention practices for biological evidence in accordance with best practices.
- **Objective 3:** Modernize and digitize the storage of existing files and records in adjudicated cases.
- **Objective 4:** Implement modern, digitized file and record retention systems.

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 do not need to submit any deliverables other than the standard items in the [Post-Award Requirements and Administration](#) section.

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.

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 - Financial Management and System of Internal Controls Questionnaire (including Applicant Disclosure of High-Risk Status) - Agency Funding Priorities Inventory - Proposal Questionnaire *Required*	Online Form
Budget *Required*	Online Form
Other Budget/Financial Attachments Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)	Attachment

• 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)	
<u>Additional Application Components</u> • Certification by the Chief Executive Officer (or senior official) of the Applicant Government (using <u>Appendix template</u>) *Required* • Tribal Authorizing Resolution (if applicable) • Certification as to Provision of Postconviction DNA Testing and Preservation of Biological Evidence	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 application is responsive to the scope of the NOFO.
- 1373 Certification signed by the Chief Executive Officer (or senior official) of the Applicant Government **applicant state or local government entities only.**

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

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 Questionnaire ***Required***

Complete the Proposal Questionnaire in JustGrants. The response to each question should be no more than 1 – 2 paragraphs. The questions are:

- **Description of the Need (5% of application score):**
 - What is the need, gap, or issue to be addressed by the proposed project?
 - What supporting information, data, or evidence demonstrates the need's existence, size, and impact on the target population and community?
 - How does the need relate to the purpose of the NOFO?
- **Project Goals and Objectives (15% of application score):**
 - What are the project goals (goals are broad, visionary statements on what you hope to accomplish)?
 - What are the project objectives (objectives are specific outcomes you plan to achieve through project activities)?
 - How do your project goals and objectives relate to the [goals and objectives of the funding opportunity](#)?
- **Project Design and Implementation (35% of application score):**
 - What activities will you conduct to achieve the proposed goals and objectives?
 - How will you deliver or complete those activities?
 - When will the activities 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. What will be their role in conducting project activities?

- **Capabilities and Competencies (30% of application score):**
 - What is your capacity to deliver the proposed project and meet the post-award requirements, if funded?
 - What projects or activities has your organization conducted, or is currently conducting, that demonstrate your ability to undertake the proposed project activities?
 - What is the relevant experience of team members with key responsibilities for implementing the project?
- **Note on 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% of application score) ***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 [BJA FY 2026 POST - 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.

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.

- **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.

Additional Application Components

Attach these in JustGrants:

- **Tribal Authorizing Resolution (if applicable):** Read information on whether you may need to submit a [Tribal Authorizing Resolution](#).
- **Certification by the Chief Executive Officer (or senior official) of the Applicant Government:** *Applicant state or local government entities only*—upload properly executed “Certification by the Chief Executive Officer (or senior official) of the Applicant Government,” using only the certification template provided in the specified [Appendix](#) to this NOFO.
- **Certification as to Provision of Postconviction DNA Testing and Preservation of Biological Evidence**

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)

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.

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 Questionnaire](#) and [Budget](#) sections of this NOFO indicates the weight of technical review criteria.

AWARD NOTICES

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

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](#).

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.

APPENDIX 1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS

Certification by the Chief Executive Officer (or senior official) of the Applicant Government

On behalf of the applicant named below, and in support of its application, I certify under penalty of perjury to the Office of Justice Programs ("OJP"), U.S. Department of Justice ("USDOJ"), that all of the following are true and correct:

- (1) I am the chief executive officer of the State or local government ("the jurisdiction") of which the applicant entity named below is a part (or a senior official of the jurisdiction, with the legal authority to bind the same), I have received appropriate legal advice as to this certification, and I have the authority to make this certification on my own behalf as chief executive officer (or senior official) and on behalf of the jurisdiction and the applicant entity. I understand that OJP will rely upon this certification as a material representation in any decision to make an award to the applicant entity.
- (2) I have carefully reviewed (or have received pertinent legal advice concerning) 8 U.S.C. §§1373(a) & (b) and 1644, including the prohibitions on certain actions by State and local government entities, agencies, and officials regarding information on citizenship and immigration status.
- (3) I (and the applicant entity) understand that, for purposes of this certification, the term "program or activity" means what it means under title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (see 42 U.S.C. § 2000d-4a), and that terms used in this certification that are defined in 8 U.S.C. § 1101 mean what they mean under that section 1101, except that the term "State" also shall include American Samoa (*cf.* 42 U.S.C. § 901(a)(2)).
- (4) I (and the applicant entity) assure that the applicant entity (and its officials and other personnel) will comply with 8 U.S.C. §§ 1373 and 1644 in any "program or activity" receiving federal financial assistance under any award made by OJP pursuant to this application. I further certify that any subrecipient (at any tier) of such federal financial assistance (and its officials and other personnel) will also comply with 8 U.S.C. §§ 1373 and 1644.

I acknowledge that a materially false, fictitious, or fraudulent statement (or concealment or omission of a material fact) in this certification, or in the application that it supports, may be the subject of criminal prosecution (including

under 34 U.S.C. § 10271 or under 18 U.S.C. § 1001 or 1621, and may subject me and the applicant entity to civil penalties and administrative remedies for false claims or otherwise (including under 31 U.S.C. §§ 3729–3730 and §§ 3801–3812). I also acknowledge that OJP awards, including certifications provided in connection with such awards, are subject to review by USDOJ, including by OJP and by the USDOJ Office of the Inspector General.

Signature of Chief Executive Officer (or senior official) of the Applicant Government

Date of Certification

Printed Name of Chief Executive Officer (or senior official)

Title of Chief Executive Officer

Name of Applicant Government Entity