

BUREAU OF JUSTICE ASSISTANCE (BJA)

Fiscal Year 2024 Solicitation Webinar: BJA's Missing and Unidentified Human Remains (MUHR) Program

DATE: June 7, 2024

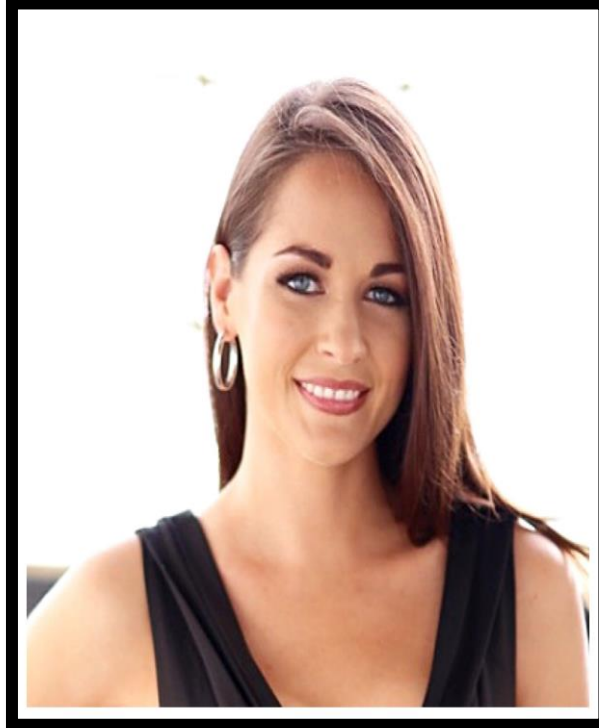


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Today's Presenters



Thurston L. Bryant
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Forensic DNA Social Scientist
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Agenda

Section 1: Welcome and Introduction to OJP and BJA

Section 2: MUHR Program – Solicitation Overview

Section 3: How to Apply

Section 4: RTI International – BJA Forensics Training and Technical Assistance Program

Questions & Answers Session

SECTION 1

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION



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What is the Office of Justice Programs?

- The Office of Justice Programs (OJP) provides grant funding, training, research, and statistics to the criminal justice community.
- OJP is one of three grant-making components of the Department of Justice along with the **Office on Violence Against Women (OVW)** and the **Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS)**.

BJA – Bureau of Justice Assistance



BJS – Bureau of Justice Statistics



NIJ – National Institute of Justice



OVC – Office for Victims of Crime



OJJDP – Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention



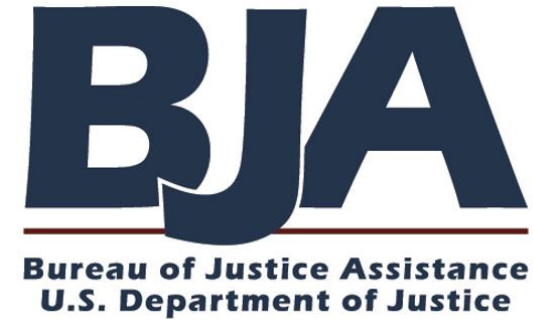
SMART – Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking



U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance

Mission: BJA's mission is to provide leadership and services in grant administration and criminal justice policy development to support state, local, and tribal justice strategies to achieve safer communities. BJA works with communities, governments, and nonprofit organizations to reduce crime, recidivism, and unnecessary confinement, and promote a safe and fair criminal justice system.

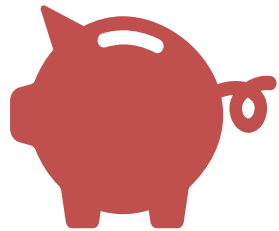
Karhlton F. Moore, BJA Director



<https://bja.ojp.gov/>



How BJA Supports the Field



Investments

Provide diverse funding to accomplish goals.



Sharing Knowledge

Research, develop, and deliver what works to build capacity and improve outcomes.



Engagement

Consult, connect, and convene.

SECTION 2

MUHR PROGRAM – SOLICITATION OVERVIEW



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MUHR Program:

Solicitation Overview

Solicitation Posting and Closing Date Information

View the FY2024 MUHR Solicitation by visiting the link below or by scanning the QR code.

URL: <https://www.bja.ojp.gov/funding/opportunities/o-bja-2024-172155>

Opportunity ID: O-BJA-2024-172155

Posting Date: May 24, 2024

Grants.gov Deadline: July 17, 2024, 8:59pm ET

Application JustGrants Deadline: July 24, 2024, 8:59 pm ET



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MUHR Program:

Solicitation Overview

Program Background:

- According to the U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice's National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) Program database, more than 600,000 individuals go missing in the United States every year.
- In addition, it is estimated that 4,400 unidentified bodies are recovered each year, with approximately 40,000 remaining unidentified at any given time.
- Initiated in Fiscal Year 2022, the MUHR Program provides funds to support eligible applicants for services focused on reporting and identifying missing persons (MP) and unidentified human remains (UHR) in the United States, including migrants.



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MUHR Program: Solicitation Overview

Program Background:

- The MUHR Program is authorized under Jennifer's Law, which enables the Attorney General to increase state and local capacity through grant awards that improve the reporting of unidentified and missing persons.
- The program augments and complements the existing services available through NIJ's NamUs Program. NamUs is a free, national, centralized repository and resource center for locating and identifying MP and UHR, and for repatriating unclaimed persons.
- **MUHR vs NamUs?** MUHR provides federal funding *directly* to jurisdictions to afford agencies the resources needed to independently work MP/UHR cases, and to become more self-reliant and self-sufficient in reducing their backlog.



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Eligible Applicants

- States
- Units of local government
- Accredited, publicly funded, Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) forensic laboratories
- Medical examiner offices
- Accredited, publicly funded toxicology laboratories
- Accredited, publicly funded crime laboratories
- Publicly funded university forensic anthropology laboratories



Eligible Applicants (Continued)

- Nonprofit organizations that have working collaborative agreements with State and county forensic offices, including medical examiners, coroners, and justices of the peace, for entry of data into CODIS or NamUs or both.

NOTE: A state university with an anthropology department, with a forensic tract with labs, would qualify as an eligible applicant under the statutory authority for the MUHR Program, assuming that the applicant also meets all of the other eligibility requirements outlined in the solicitation.

NOTE: BJA will consider applications under which two or more entities (project partners) would carry out the federal award; however, only one entity may be the applicant for the solicitation. Any others must be proposed as subrecipients (subgrantees).



FY 2024 MUHR Program Funding

Approximately \$5,348,227 Available

Category (Purpose Area)	Number of Awards	Dollar Amount for Award	Performance Start Date	Performance Duration
Purpose Area 1: Statewide Agencies	Up to 3	\$500,000– \$1,000,000	October 1, 2024	36 months
Purpose Area 2: Counties and/or Units of Local Government	Up to 6	\$100,000– \$500,000	October 1, 2024	36 months
Purpose Area 3: Services to Assist Small, Rural, and/or Tribal Entities	1	\$1,000,000	October 1, 2024	36 months



NOTE: If an applicant is requesting funding under multiple Purpose Areas, a separate proposal must be submitted for each Purpose Area to which they are applying.

MUHR Program: Solicitation Overview

Program Goals and Objectives:

- **Goals:** The goals of the MUHR Program are to implement a comprehensive approach to establish and/or expand a jurisdiction's ability to improve the reporting, transportation, forensic testing, and identification of MPs and UHRs in the United States, including migrants-- utilizing various forensic disciplines such as anthropology, odontology, and DNA.
- **Objectives:** Each applicant must stay within the scope of the Purpose Area for which they are applying (i.e., Statewide Agencies; Counties and/or Units of Local Government; or Services for Small, Rural, and/or Tribal Entities).



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MUHR Program: Solicitation Overview

Historical Application and Award Information:

- **Application History** - Under FY 2023, 37 total applications were received.
 - PA 1 = 12 applications
 - PA 2 = 22 applications
 - PA 3 = 3 applications
- **Award History** - Since the inception of the program, 19 awards totaling \$13,124,479 have been made.
 - PA 1 = 9 awards
 - PA 2 = 9 awards
 - PA 3 = 1 award



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MUHR Program: Solicitation Overview

Program Details (Under Purpose Areas 1 and 2)

Provide an estimate of the number of MP and/or UHR cases that are within the applicant's internal tracking system, NamUs, and/or National Crime Information Center (NCIC) for the applicant's jurisdiction.

- **Report:** Enter or update case information into systems such as the NCIC, NamUs, and ViCAP as applicable.
- **Identify:** Establish a multidisciplinary team comprised of forensic experts, investigators, victim advocates, etc. to establish the best method of identification for each case.
- **Repatriate Human Remains:** Develop and implement a plan to return human remains to appropriate relatives, as determined by law
- **Inventory:** Provide a final inventory of all MP and UHR cases that were worked using MUHR funds.

All qualified cases worked with MUHR funding must be entered and/or updated in NamUs, NCIC, and (where applicable) ViCAP by the end of the grant period.



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MUHR Program: Solicitation Overview

Program Details (Under Purpose Area 3)

Provide an estimate on the number of MP and/or UHR cases that are within NamUs and National Crime Information Center (NCIC) for small, rural and/or tribal entities.

- **Serves:** Small, rural, and/or tribal entities by funding transportation, testing, and identification for MP and UHR, including migrants. As such, the intent of this purpose area is to ensure that cases in the above jurisdictions receive the critical resources to assist with resolution.
- **Report:** Work with/assist submitting agencies to ensure their jurisdiction's MP and UHR cases are reported into systems such as NCIC and NamUs, as well as notifying the relatives of MP and UHR, as applicable.
- **Identify:** Accept cases from small, rural, and/or tribal entities for identification efforts utilizing forensic technologies.
- **Repatriate Human Remains:** Develop and implement a plan to assist submitting agencies with the return of human remains to appropriate relatives.



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MUHR Program: Solicitation Overview

Application Reminders - For Purpose Areas 1 and 2

- The application must include information on the MUHR Program survey question set (see Pages 19 and 42), showing the number of MP and/or UHR cases found in the applicant's Record Management System (if applicable), NamUs, and NCIC for the applicant's jurisdiction(s).
- The application must include the estimated number of MP and/or UHR cases that the applicant plans to work with MUHR funding, if awarded.
- Provide a description of the processes to review and enter data into CODIS, NCIC, NamUS, and ViCAP, including the names of other entities that will assist with the review of the data and entering of data, if applicable.
- Ensure to submit the appropriate letter of support.



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MUHR Program: Solicitation Overview

Application Reminders (For Purpose Area 3, Only)

- Establish successful outreach campaigns to promote the services your agency offers to small, rural, and/or tribal jurisdictions for missing persons and unidentified human remains cases.
- The application must include information on the MUHR Program survey question set (see Page 42), showing the number of small/rural/tribal MP and/or UHR cases found in NamUs and NCIC.
- The application must include the estimated number of MP and/or UHR cases in small/rural/tribal jurisdictions that the applicant plans to work with MUHR funding, if awarded.



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Permissible Use of Funds



Below are examples of permissible uses of funds that the applicant may utilize upon receipt of the grant award. However, other uses of funds may be allowable on an approved case-by-case basis.

- Exhumations of human remains
- Salary (full-time, part-time, and overtime) and Benefits for Personnel
- Training (limited funding usage)
- Supplies
- Computer Equipment
- Laboratory Supplies
- Transportation of Unidentified Remains/Family Reference Samples
- Processing and Identification
- Forensic Genetic Genealogy DNA Analysis
- Procure State of the Art Multi-modal, Multipurpose Forensic DNA Typing and Analytical Equipment

Non-Permissible Use of Funds



- **Supplanting is not permitted.**
- **Construction costs are not permissible.**
- **In general, the requested items must be in accordance with completion of the specific MUHR project and meeting the goals, objectives, and deliverables of the overall MUHR Program.**
- **For example, equipment for enhancing the laboratory's overall capacity that is not specific solely for this project is not allowable.**
- **Funeral and/or burial costs (after repatriation process) are not allowable.**
- **Expert witness personnel costs are not allowable.**
- **Recipient direct administrative expenses that exceed 10 percent of the total grant amount are not permitted.**
- **Vehicle purchases are not allowable.**

Forensic Genetic Genealogy (FGG)

Must adhere to the DOJ Interim Policy on FGG DNA Analysis and Searching:
<https://www.justice.gov/olp/page/file/1204386/download>

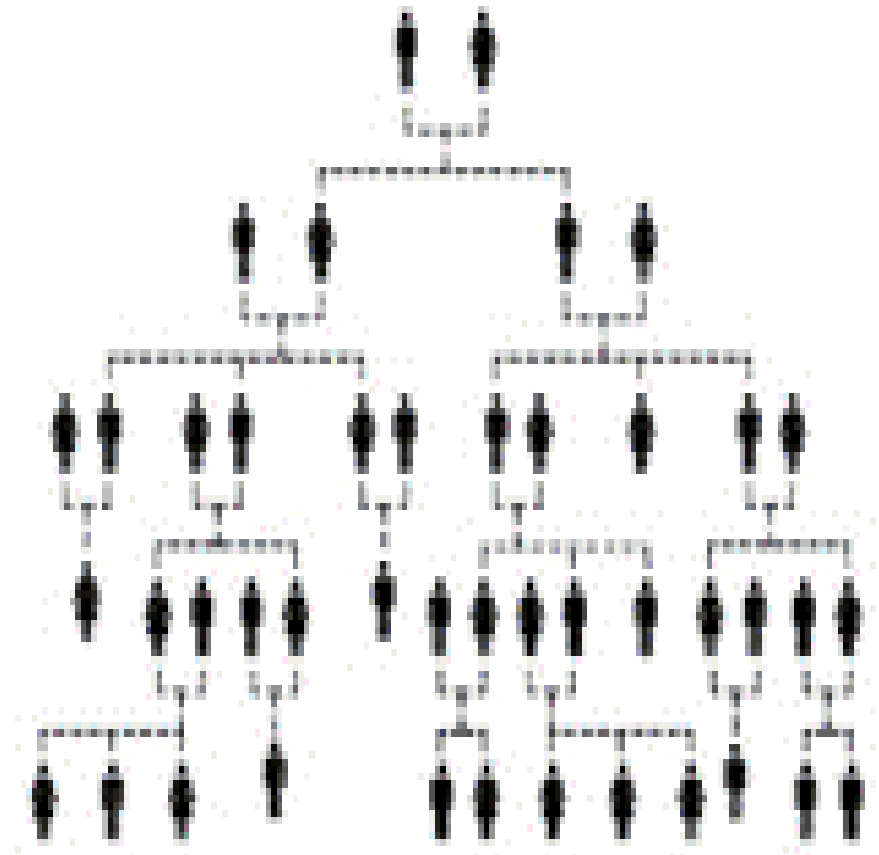
If outsourcing FGG work, the vendor lab must perform their SNP testing in-house.

Highly suggested that the awardee leverage the FBI's resources for the tree-building/investigative portion of FGG (at no cost to the awardee).

Award recipients that are proposing to conduct in-house forensic genetic genealogy (i.e., tree building and subsequent steps in the process) will be required to complete the [BJA/FBI Archived FGG training](#) as well as any future BJA/FBI FGG trainings that may occur during the lifespan of the grant.

Forensic Genetic Genealogy (FGG) – Continued

- It is highly recommended that a CODIS profile be entered, and searches be conducted in CODIS for a minimum of 6 months before proceeding to FGG, unless an immediate and ongoing threat to public safety is identified. In the event of such a threat, BJA will consider exceptions on a case-by-case basis.
- For UHR cases, both short tandem repeats (STR) and Mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) profiles must be uploaded to CODIS before proceeding to FGG.
- In the event that a case has only mtDNA, or only STR technologies in CODIS (and not both), permission will be needed from BJA **before** proceeding to FGG.
- Familial searching is not required for UHRs prior to proceeding to FGG, unless mandated by the awardee's state.
- In order to proceed to FGG for an UHR, the cause of death must be ruled as "homicide."
- Prior approval from BJA will be required for cases ruled as "undetermined cause of death" or "suspected homicide" in order to proceed to FGG.



Family Reference Samples

- For the collection and processing of family reference samples for upload to CODIS, the applicant **must submit a letter of support with a relevant law enforcement agency and medical examiner/coroner.**
- Following FBI guidance and requirements, the relative of a missing person must voluntarily submit their DNA sample, per a consent form. Law enforcement must oversee and confirm that the relative is who they say they are via a form of identification.
- The reference sample can only be used for identification purposes. Once and if a match is made, the law enforcement agency overseeing the case must be notified, as well as the supporting medical examiner/coroner.
- FBI guidance: <https://www.fbi.gov/services/laboratory/biometric-analysis/codis/codis-and-ndis-fact-sheet>

If an agency, such as a medical examiner's office, operates as a criminal justice entity and possesses the appropriate means to operate as such (via approval from the FBI), please include this information in your application, along with the entity's FBI Originating Agency Identifiers (ORI) number.

MUHR Program: Solicitation Overview

Clarifying Information for FY 2024

- **Eligible Applicants:** Entities that meet the Eligible Applicant list should then decide what Purpose Area they will apply for based on their service capabilities and adhering to the goals, objectives, and deliverables for those MUHR Purpose Areas.
- **Purpose Area 3 (Services to Assist Small, Rural, and/or Tribal Entities):** Under this Purpose Area, BJA is seeking to award only one applicant that will be able to provide services to assist small, rural, and/or tribal entities *on a national scale*.
- **Requirement to Address Both Unidentified Human Remains and Missing Persons Cases:** It is acceptable for an applicant to propose working *only* unidentified human remains cases or only missing persons cases (with the provision of a brief explanation and justification in their proposal), if doing both types of cases is not feasible.



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MUHR Program: Solicitation Overview

Clarifying Information for FY 2024

- **Applying under Multiple Purpose Areas** is allowable, but a separate proposal must be submitted for each Purpose Area to which an applicant is applying.
- **Additional Resources:** BJA has included some additional resources from the U.S. Custom and Border Protection (U.S. Border Patrol) and DOJ's Office for Victims of Crime for awareness and potentially assisting with other project components not covered with MUHR funding, and for other resources to assist applicants.
- **Successful Grant Application Examples:** Examples of successful applicants under last year's Purpose Areas 1 and 2 are available online to assist the field. Thank you to those grantees for their help! For more information, visit: <https://bja.ojp.gov/program/muhr/funding>



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SECTION 3

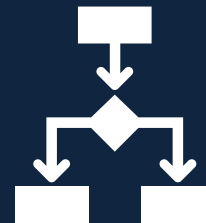
HOW TO APPLY



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Agenda

- Application Submission Process
- Application Review Process
- Additional Application Components
- Merit Selection Criteria



Application Submission Process



Two-Step Process

- **Step 1**: The applicant must submit by the Grants.gov deadline the required Application for Federal Assistance standard form (SF-424) and a Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL) form when they register in Grants.gov at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html>.
- To register in Grants.gov, the applicant will need to ensure that its System for Award Management (SAM) registration is current.
- **Grants.gov DUE DATE: July 17, 2024, 8:59 pm ET**

Application Submission Process



Two-Step Process

- **Step 2:** The applicant must then submit the **full application** including attachments in JustGrants at JustGrants.usdoj.gov. To be considered timely, the full application must be submitted in JustGrants by the JustGrants application deadline.
- OJP encourages applicants to review, the “How to Apply” section in the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) and the JustGrants website for more information, resources, and training.
- **JustGrants DUE DATE: July 24, 2024, 8:59 pm ET**

Application Review Process



1. OJP screens applications to ensure they meet the **basic minimum requirements (BMR)** prior to conducting the peer review.
2. Applications that meet the BMR will be evaluated for technical merit by a peer review panel(s).

Although specific requirements may vary, the following are common requirements applicable to all OJP solicitations:

- The application must be submitted by an **eligible type of applicant**.
- The application must request funding within programmatic funding constraints (if applicable).
- The application must be **responsive to the scope** of the solicitation.
- The application must include all items necessary to meet the **BMR**.

Application Review Process



Basic Minimum Requirements

The following application elements **must** be included in the application to meet the **basic minimum requirements** to advance to peer review and receive consideration for funding:

- **Proposal Abstract:** Should include information on the estimated number of cases to be addressed under the project. However, if this information is unavailable at the time of the application submission, then the applicant should indicate that the number of cases is pending or to be determined.
- **Proposal Narrative:** Will be evaluated based on how the project addresses the various solicitation requirements and information outlined in the Merit Review Criteria – See Slide # 34.
- **Budget Web-based Form** (The web-based form includes the budget details and the budget narrative.)

Additional Application Components



Other Common Application Elements

- Tribal Authorizing Resolution (if applicable)
- Request and Justification for Employee Compensation; Waiver (if applicable)
- Timeline
- Memorandum of Understanding (if applicable)
- **Letters of Commitment**
- Résumés of Key Personnel
- List of Procurement Contracts (if applicable)
- Organizational Chart
- **Potential Environmental Impact Coversheet and Checklist (NEPA)**



National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

Potential Environmental Impact Coversheet and Checklist:

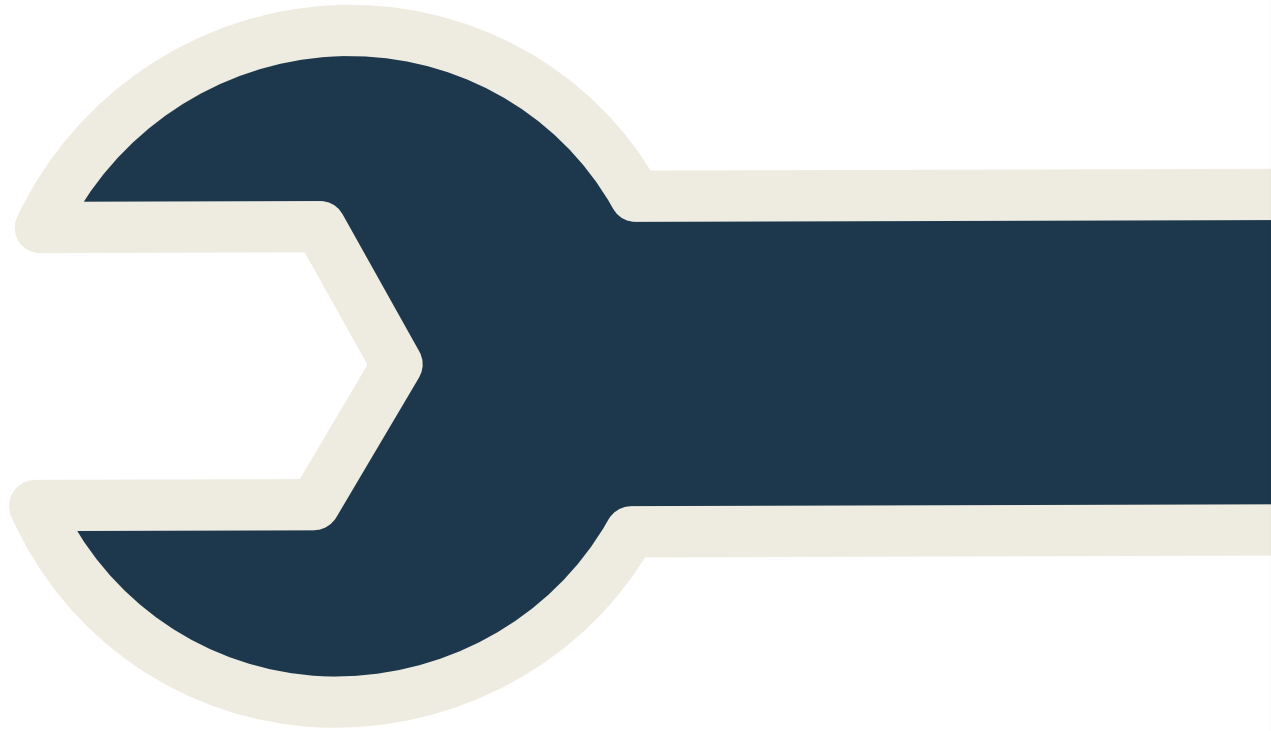
- Each applicant is to submit a BJA Programmatic Cover Sheet and Checklist with its application to assist BJA in assessing the potential environmental impacts of the activities proposed for funding by the applicant.
- The applicant should also submit a Cover Sheet and BJA Programmatic Checklist for any organization identified in the budget worksheet that will receive grant funds through a subaward or procurement contract to perform certain activities.
- Example: The exhumation of human remains will need to be addressed and included in the NEPA Checklist submission.
- See the solicitation for more details, instructions, and links to NEPA materials.

Merit Review Criteria

- **Description of the Issue (15 Percent)** – Evaluate the applicant’s understanding of the program/issue to be addressed.
- **Project Design and Implementation (40 Percent)** – Evaluate the adequacy of the proposal, including the goals, objectives, timelines, milestones, and deliverables.
- **Capabilities and Competencies (30 Percent)** – Evaluate the administrative and technical capacity of the applicant to successfully accomplish the goals and objectives.
- **Plan for Collecting the Data Required for this Solicitation’s Performance Measures (5 Percent)** – Evaluate the applicant’s understanding of the performance data reporting requirements and the plan for collecting the required data.
- **Budget (10 Percent)** – Evaluate for completeness, cost effectiveness, and allowability (e.g., reasonable, allocable, and necessary for project activities).

Please review the solicitation for more detailed information.

JustGrants System



OJP has developed several resources to help grantees navigate the JustGrants system.

We encourage all grantees take the time to review and leverage the various resources available to use the system and execute basic functions. These resources include videos, job aides, and more on procedures for entity management, award acceptance, and grant modifications.

Training Available:

<https://justicegrants.usdoj.gov/training-resources/justgrants-training/grants-management-lifecycle>

Subscribe to the JustGrants Newsletter:

<https://justicegrants.usdoj.gov/news>

For any questions or technical issues regarding JustGrants, please contact the helpdesk at JustGrants.Support@usdoj.gov or 833-872-5175.

Contact Information for Solicitation Questions

- For assistance with the requirements of this solicitation, contact the OJP Response Center at 800-851-3420, at 301-240-6310 (TTY for hearing-impaired callers only), or grants@ncjrs.gov.
- The OJP Response Center operates from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. eastern time (ET) Monday–Friday, and from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. ET on the solicitation close date.

SECTION 4

RTI INTERNATIONAL – BJA FORENSICS TRAINING & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



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The Who:

- Led by RTI International
- Cadre of subject matter experts (SMEs)



The What:

- Provide TTA in support of grantees' strategic goals and objectives across forensic disciplines.
- Proactively engage grantees to develop materials based upon agency needs.
- Support sustainability through TTA surrounding the implementation of new policies/practices and enhancement of existing policies/practices.

The How:

- National Grantees Meeting
- Virtual TTA engagements
- Peer-to-peer connections
- Online learning (webinars, written briefs, working groups)
- Social media

Contact RTI International



forensicstta@rti.org



[Forensics TTA](#)



[Forensics TTA](#)



www.forensicstta.org



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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
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ANY QUESTIONS?



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