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Strengthening the Medical Examiner-Coroner System Program Discussion Forum – Session One

Utilizing the Loan Repayment Option of the Forensics Pathology Fellowships Purpose Area

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Disclaimer

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Today's Agenda: Discussion Forum – Session One

- Introductions and Updates
- Purpose Area One: Forensic Fellowship – Alan Spanbauer, BJA
- Q&A with Guest Speakers from the Connecticut Office of the Chief Medical Examiner
- Open Discussion

Forensics TTA – ME/C TTA Lead Coaches



Erica Christensen
Forensic Scientist



Kelly Keyes
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Forensics Training and Technical Assistance (Forensics TTA) Program

- Led by RTI International in partnership with subject matter experts, practitioners, and researchers
- 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

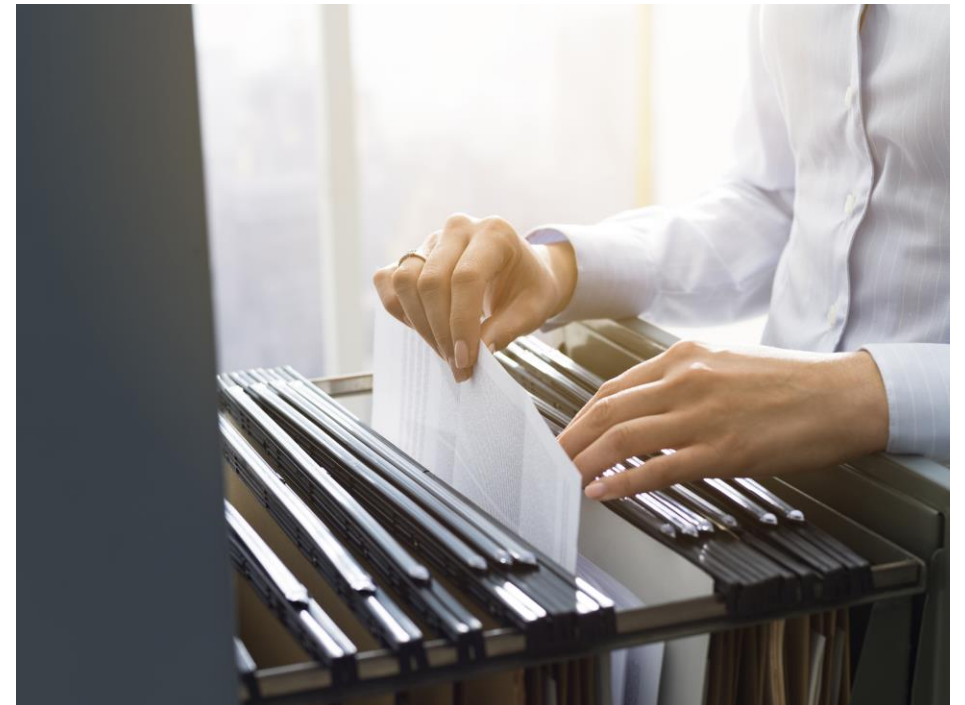


ForensicsTTA.org

Forthcoming Forensics TTA!

ME/C Accreditation Repository

- The online repository will feature policies, procedures, and other documents necessary for accreditation
- IACME and NAME Accredited Offices can share their documents to support offices seeking accreditation
- Featuring Annual Reports, Mass Fatality Plans, Family Resource documents and more
- Coming Spring 2025



Microsoft 365 Stock Photo

BJA – ME/C Team



Alan Spanbauer
Senior Policy Advisor



Monte Evans
State Policy Advisor



Lindsay DePalma
Associate Contractor

Updates from the BJA ME/C Team

- BJA anticipates administering a FY 2025 ME/C Program notice of funding opportunity (NOFO). However, this will ultimately be based on available funding.
- We need your help – Please continue to contact us with your success stories! Also, continue to make us aware of any webinar or annual virtual grantee training topics of interest.
- Remember that your views are important with enhancing other grantees' efforts and the overall ME/C Program as well.



Purpose Area One: Forensic Fellowship

Alan Spanbauer, *BJA Senior Policy Advisor*

Strengthening the ME/C System Program: Solicitation Overview

Program Background:

The medicolegal death investigation (MDI) workforce is experiencing a national shortage of practicing, board- certified forensic pathologists. Furthermore, there is variability in the practice of death investigation across the United States, resulting in an inconsistent provision of MDI services.

Created in Fiscal Year (FY) 2017, the ME/C Program is a competitive and discretionary grant program designed to help address medical death investigation workforce needs to increase the number of practicing board-certified forensic pathologists, and ME/C offices need to implement and follow quality standards and performance criteria, in an effort, to provide consistent and equitable application of death investigation services.

<https://bja.ojp.gov/program/strengthening-mec/overview>

Strengthening the ME/C System Program

BJA funds applications to strengthen the ME/C system by increasing the number of qualified forensic pathologists and enhance the quality of medicolegal death investigations nationwide.

This program furthers the DOJ's mission to uphold the rule of law, to keep our country safe, and to protect civil rights by providing resources to improve medicolegal death investigations (MDIs) in the United States.

Two purpose areas are funded under this program:

1. Forensic Pathology Fellowships (up to two allowed, per application).
2. Medical Examiner Coroner Office Accreditation.

Purpose Area 1: Forensic Pathology Fellowships

- Recruit quality candidates who have completed all the necessary medical education and pathology residency requirements by soliciting applications from institutions with current Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) accredited forensic pathology fellowship programs.

Benefits of the Fellowship Purpose Area

- Increase the number of qualified forensic pathology practitioners.
 - The medicolegal death investigation (MDI) workforce is experiencing a national shortage of practicing board-certified forensic pathologists.
- Since the program was initiated in 2017, funding under the Fellowship/Purpose Area 1 has resulted in:
 - 61 fellowships funded.
 - 43 participants completed fellowship training.
 - 10,710 deaths investigated by fellows.
 - 11,540 autopsies performed by fellows.



Allowable Uses of Funds

Purpose Area 1: Fellowships

- Salaries/Stipends and Fringe Benefits
- Loan Repayments
- Recruitment Travel
- Minor Equipment and Supplies
- Training
- Medical License Reimbursement



Allowable Uses of Funds

Budget Information for BOTH Purpose Areas

- Training – To attend BJA’s forensics grantee workshop.
- No-Cost Extensions
- Certification Fees



Loan Repayment Option

To offset the financial burden associated with educational debt and assist with recruiting qualified candidates may apply for the following:

Number of Fellows	Maximum Allowable Award Amount	Maximum Allowable Loan Repayment Amount
1	\$150,000	\$75,000
2	\$300,000	\$150,000 (\$75,000/Fellow)

Please Note:

- The loan is paid to the agency directly through the ME/C award as long as it is properly documented in their approved budget.
- Only the grant-funded fellow qualifies for the loan repayment offered through the ME/C program (fellows not funded through the ME/C program are not eligible).
- The applicant/grantee should consult with an accountant or a tax lawyer regarding tax implications associated with the loan repayment. OJP will not be able to provide advice on this issue.

JustGrants System

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

We encourage all of our 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.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

ANY QUESTIONS?

Discussion Forum with Guest Speakers from the Connecticut Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (CT OCME)



- **James R. Gill, M.D.** | Chief Medical Examiner
- **Lincoln Dwayne Gordon** | Fiscal Office Administrator
- **Cori E. Clark, D.O.** | Associate Medical Examiner

Open Discussion



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