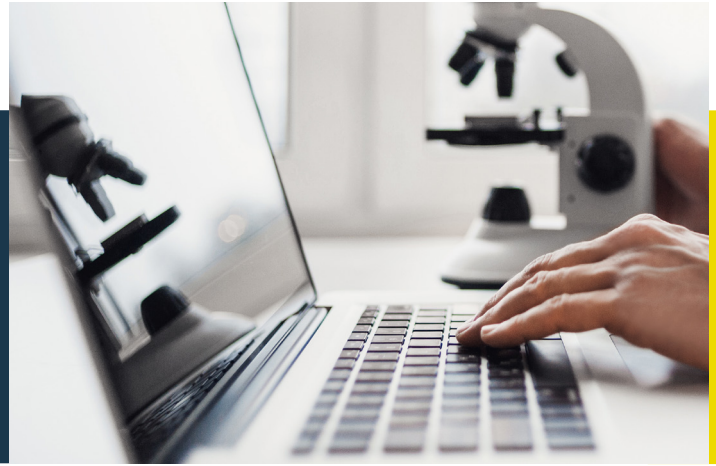


FAQs



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FISCAL YEAR 2024 DNA CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT FOR BACKLOG REDUCTION (CEBR) PROGRAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

Question: What is the DNA CEBR Program?

Answer: The DNA CEBR Program provides funding to states and units of local government with existing crime laboratories that conduct DNA analyses to increase the capacity of publicly funded forensic DNA and DNA database laboratories 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 prevent a backlog of forensic and database DNA samples.

General Program/Solicitation FAQs

Question: Why were changes made to the CEBR Program solicitation? When did these changes go into effect?

Answer: Updates were made to the CEBR Program in FY23 to align with [34 U.S.C. 40701: The Debbie Smith DNA Backlog Grant Program](#).

These changes went into effect with the posting of the FY23 CEBR Program solicitation. These changes do not impact previous awards made under the CEBR Program.

Question: What were the main changes made to the Formula CEBR Program in FY23 and do these carry forward to FY24?

Answer: While allowable uses for funding continues to support the testing of crime scene and database samples for entry into CODIS and to increase the capacity of laboratories to process samples for CODIS, four additional eligibility requirements were added in FY23. These additional requirements, as well as the previous eligibility requirements, are streamlined on two certification forms to be signed by the agency's certifying official. For additional information, please visit the [FY23 Program Updates and Changes](#) on the DNA CEBR Website.

Yes, these changes carry forward to the FY24 solicitation.

Question: How have the changes implemented in FY23 to the CEBR Program solicitation impacted applicants?

Answer: The application process has been streamlined in JustGrants, primarily through the use of an Eligibility Certification form as well as a Budget Breakdown form. For FY24, applicants will need to have their Certifying Official



(as determined by the applicant agency) sign these forms. The Eligibility Certification form includes the following requirements:

A. That the applicant entity:

1. Is a state¹ or unit of local government with an existing crime laboratory or laboratory systems that conduct forensic DNA and/or DNA database sample analysis.
2. Participates in external audits, not less than once every 2 years, that demonstrate compliance with the requirements of the Quality Assurance Standards established by the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).
3. Is accredited by a nonprofit professional organization actively involved in forensic science that is nationally recognized within the forensic science community.
4. Participates in the National DNA Index System (NDIS), or have an agreement with an NDIS participating laboratory to upload their data.
5. Enters all eligible DNA profiles obtained with funding from this program into the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) and, where applicable, are uploaded into the National DNA Index System (NDIS). No profiles generated with funding from this program may be entered into any nongovernmental DNA database without prior express written approval from BJA.
6. Ensures that all profiles uploaded to NDIS follow NDIS DNA Data Acceptance Standards. (See <https://www.fbi.gov/services/laboratory/biometric-analysis/codis/codis-and-ndis-fact-sheet> for more information)
7. Ensures that each DNA analysis conducted and resulting profile generated under this program is maintained pursuant to all applicable federal privacy requirements, including those described in 34 U.S.C. § 12592(b)(3).
8. Prioritizes, to the extent practicable consistent with public safety considerations, DNA testing of samples from rape kits, samples from other sexual assault

evidence, and samples taken in cases without an identified suspect.

- B. Provide assurances that the state or unit of local government has determined, by statute, rule, or regulation, those offenses under State law that shall be treated for the purposes of this program as qualifying State offenses.
- C. Provide assurances that the state or unit of local government has implemented, or will implement, not later than 120 days after the date of such application, a comprehensive plan for the expeditious DNA analyses of samples in accordance with the purposes of the solicitation.
- D. Provide assurances that the DNA section of the laboratory to be used to conduct DNA analyses has a written policy that prioritizes the analysis of, to the extent practicable and consistent with public safety considerations, samples from homicides and sexual assaults.

Applicants will also need their Certifying Official to sign a *CEBR Program Budget Breakdown* form. This form includes the following budget breakdown requirements:

- A. Specify the portion of funding that shall be used to carry out for inclusion in the CODIS.
- B. Specify the portion of funding [*minimum of 40% of the award amount*] that shall be used to carry out DNA analyses of samples from crime scenes for inclusion in CODIS.
- C. Specify the portion of funding that shall be used to increase the capacity of the laboratory to carry out DNA analyses of database and crime scene samples.

Question: For the purposes of the certification forms, who qualifies as a “Certifying Official” within an agency?

Answer: The Certifying Official is any individual who has the authority to make the certification on behalf of the applicant agency and may potentially be a different individual for each form.

¹For purposes of this solicitation, the term “state” means any state of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virginia Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Question: What is the goal of the Competitive CEBR Program?

Answer: Interested applicants may apply to the Competitive CEBR Program to maximize the effective utilization of DNA technology to solve crimes and protect public safety. Funding will be awarded to eligible entities with at least one of the two program objectives:

1. Increase the capacity of laboratories to process CODIS eligible crime scene samples in accredited, publicly funded forensic DNA laboratories through the use of DNA technology.
2. Increase the laboratory efficiency for processing CODIS eligible crime scene samples analyzed in accredited, publicly funded forensic DNA laboratories through the use of DNA technology. This competitive program is designed to fairly and efficiently prioritize jurisdictions facing challenges in addressing backlogs by considering key performance measures reported by publicly funded forensic DNA laboratories and enables agencies in need of additional investment to enact meaningful solutions for processing CODIS eligible samples.

Question: To apply to the Competitive FY2024 CEBR Solicitation, do you also need to apply to the Formula FY2024 CEBR Solicitation?

Answer: No. They are separate and distinct programs.

Question: Does the Competitive FY2024 CEBR Solicitation also include additional eligibility requirements like the Formula FY2024 CEBR Solicitation?

Answer: Yes. However, these forms must be submitted with each application and the Budget Certification form is not interchangeable between the programs.

Question: How long is the project period once the award is made?

Answer: The period of performance duration for awards made under this program is 24 months. Should additional time be needed to complete the goals of your project, a project period extension grant award modification (GAM) can be submitted for consideration by the program manager. For more information on GAMs please refer to the [Grant Award Modification – Job Aid Reference Guide](#).

Question: When should a project period extension grant award modification (GAM) be submitted?

Answer: Project period extension requests should be submitted at least 30 days prior to the end date of the award. It is recommended to reach out to your grant manager 45-90 days prior to the end date to discuss the extension request.

Question: Does the title page and the table of contents count towards the Proposal Narrative?

Answer: A title page and table of contents are not required for the Proposal Narrative.

Question: How should technical issues experienced with grants.gov and JustGrants be addressed?

Answer: If you experience technical issues with grants.gov or JustGrants, please refer to instructions for the appropriate customer support referenced in the solicitation under “Contact Information.”

Question: If an applicant was previously awarded funding under this program, can they still apply for FY2024 funding?

Answer: Yes

Question: Do CEBR progress reports still require the PMT report, or should everything be entered directly into JustGrants now?

Answer: CEBR Progress Reports must still be submitted through the PMT system and uploaded (along with relevant supporting documentation) to JustGrants. Should changes in the process occur in the future, these changes will be clearly relayed to the JustGrants designated POCs for the award.

Question: How do applicants and grantees stay apprised of program specific information?

Answer: BJA encourages interested applicants to:

- Visit BJA’s Forensics Training and Technical Assistance (FTTA) service provider at [forensicstta.org](https://www.forensicstta.org). To enroll in alerts, visit: <https://www.forensicstta.org/contact-us/>.
- Visit BJA’s website at [bjaojp.gov](https://www.bja.ojp.gov) for program specific information, webinars, and updates (select “Forensics” as the topic area).

- Subscribe to receive e-notifications on funding opportunities at: <https://bja.ojp.gov/subscribe>.
- Subscribe to receive text message notifications on funding opportunities, etc. by texting “OJP [your email address]” to 468-311. Note: message and data rates may apply.
- Become familiarized with [Grants.gov](#) and [JustGrants](#).

If you have any further questions, please reach out to the DNA CEBR Team at: forensic.dnacapacity@ojp.usdoj.gov.

Allowable Uses of Funding FAQs

Question: Can CEBR funding be used for Rapid DNA analysis under the Formula or Competitive FY2024 CEBR Program?

Answer: Yes, however any laboratory seeking to use funding for Rapid DNA analysis must adhere to the FBI’s Quality Assurance Standards and samples tested using CEBR funding must be eligible for CODIS. As of the writing of this document (February 2024), this means that (1) there are specific requirements for the CODIS testing of reference samples using Rapid DNA Analysis and (2) CEBR funding cannot be used to support testing of crime scene samples using Rapid DNA Analysis because FBI has yet to authorize such testing for CODIS. See FBI’s [Quality Assurance Standards Audit for Forensic DNA Testing Laboratories](#).

Question: Can Formula or Competitive CEBR Program funding be used for Forensic Genetic Genealogy (FGG) purposes?

Answer: At BJA we recognize the importance of non-CODIS advances in DNA technology for the criminal justice field; however, since the purpose of the CEBR Program is to process samples for CODIS and to increase the capacity of labs to process samples for CODIS, forensic genetic genealogical DNA analysis (**FGG**) **expenses are not allowable under the CEBR Program**. FGG is allowable under many other BJA forensic solicitations (e.g., The Sexual Assault Kit Initiative [SAKI], Prosecuting Cold Cases Using DNA, and Postconviction Testing of DNA Evidence) due to the nature of the goals

and objectives of those programs. FGG is also allowable under the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program. Recipients using funds for FGG under those other programs must adhere to the [United States Department of Justice Interim Policy Forensic Genealogical DNA Analysis and Searching](#).

Question: Will the secondary allocation of funding for “test all” sexual assault kit (SAK) testing be available under the FY2024 DNA CEBR Program?

Answer: No, there will no longer be funding available for “test all” SAK testing. That portion of funding is instead competed for grantees to maximize the effective utilization of DNA technology to solve crimes and protect public safety. This change was initiated in FY23. Those interested in funding to help establish sustainable change in practices, protocols, and policies as they relate to untested SAKs and sexual assault response, visit: <https://bja.ojp.gov/program/saki/overview>.

Question: If a forensic DNA case is being processed with good faith that there will be one or more CODIS-eligible samples, does this qualify the case for reagents purchased under the FY24 CEBR grant?

Answer: Yes. The case is CODIS eligible and therefore it can be tested using CEBR funds. It is expected that agencies will use sound judgement when determining which cases should be tested with CEBR funds.

Associated Application Documents FAQs

Question: Is there guidance on how to submit an application?

Answer: Refer to the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) found on ojp.gov for comprehensive instructions on how to submit an application for funding.

Question: Is there guidance on completing the SF-424 form?

Answer: Refer to the [Grants.gov Form Instructions](#) found on [grants.gov](#) for instructions on completing the SF-424 form.

Question: What if the required forms do not apply to the applicant's organization? For example, the Disclosure of Lobbying Activities Form?

Answer: Please refer to the "Application and Submission Information" section and "Application Checklist" of the solicitation to determine what documents are required for the application. Regarding the Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form, all applicants must submit the form, but can enter "not applicable" in questions 10a and 10b. For further guidance, please refer to the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#).

Question: What other attachments should be included in the application?

Answer: Refer to the "Application Checklist" in the solicitation to ensure that all items required for the respective Purpose Area are included in your application.

Performance Metrics Guidance

Question: Where can I find the performance measures for the CEBR program?

Answer: The performance measures are posted on the BJA website and can be found here: <https://bja.ojp.gov/program/dna-cebr/performance-measures>.

Question: When is a forensic biology/DNA case and/or DNA database sample considered backlogged?

Answer: While many agencies have their own definitions of backlog, for the purposes of this solicitation, any forensic biology/DNA case that has not been completed within 30 days of receipt in the laboratory is considered backlogged. Similarly, a DNA database sample that has not been uploaded to CODIS within 30 days of receipt in the laboratory is considered backlogged.

Question: Does the question requesting the number of backlogged forensic biology/DNA cases at the end of the reporting period refer to all Forensic Biology/DNA cases in the laboratory?

Answer: Yes, the number of casework Forensic Biology/DNA cases is referring to ALL cases that are currently backlogged at the laboratory. This does not include database samples.

Question: What is the difference between casework samples and database samples?

Answer: Casework samples are forensic samples collected from crime scenes to be tested, analyzed, and included in CODIS if eligible. Database samples are those collected under applicable legal authority to be included in CODIS, such as convicted offender and/or arrestee samples.

Question: If there is no grant activity during the reporting period, is an explanation of why there was no grant activity and supporting documentation required?

Answer: If there is no grant activity during the reporting period, an explanation of why there was no grant activity IS required. If there is no grant activity, supporting documentation is NOT required. Supporting documentation is only required when you are using grant funds and reporting the respective performance metrics.

Question: When are narrative questions required?

Answer: Narrative questions are to be submitted on a semi-annual reporting period, with the first in January and second in July. These questions should summarize the activities completed under the award and progress made in achieving the goals and objectives of the project proposal.







Question: What is the difference between total cases completed and CEBR cases completed?

Answer: Total cases completed refers to the total number of Forensic Biology/DNA cases completed by the laboratory, independent of funding source. CEBR cases completed refers to the total number of Forensic Biology/DNA cases completed using CEBR funds for overtime, personnel (e.g. salaries), supplies, and outsourcing using the specific award number for which performance reporting is occurring.

Question: What supporting documents are required when reporting performance data for the CEBR program?

Answer: PMT Reports alone are not considered adequate supporting documentation. In addition to the pdf version of the PMT report, grantees are expected to upload the following documents to JustGrants:

1. A Summary Document that maps a metric question to a file within which a BJA reviewer may find the supporting documentation for that metric. Summary narratives should include a description of how supporting documentation is used to arrive at the numbers provided in the BJA PMT.
2. Objective evidence (e.g., LIMS report, excel file) that was relied upon to obtain the data for how each performance metric was reported. Title files according to the metric question number:
 - i) Example (below they are labeled by CW or DB, and by metric number)

Name	Category	Application Number	Date Added
 _Metric 9_CW.pdf	Performance Report	---	7/25/2022 3:28 PM
 _Metric 10_CW.pdf	Performance Report	---	7/25/2022 3:28 PM
 _Metrics_9_Jan-Jun_2022.pdf	Performance Report	---	7/25/2022 3:28 PM
 _Metrics_7_Jan-Jun_2022.pdf	Performance Report	---	7/25/2022 3:28 PM
 _Metric 5_CW.pdf	Performance Report	---	7/25/2022 3:28 PM
 Metric 8_CW.pdf	Performance Report	---	7/25/2022 3:28 PM

- ii) Alternatively, some grantees provide a separate tab for casework and databasing metrics separately.
- iii) When verifying a performance metric (when using LIMS especially) for CODIS hits where “QTY” shows, have an additional source verify the number of hits received for that reporting period.

- iv) Aggregate the numeric value in the data source submitted when a screenshot is provided of cases analyzed, CODIS uploads, or CODIS hits.

Within supporting documentation make sure the total numbers (i.e., the number you reported for that metrics in BJA PMT) are clearly labeled according to the metric in question.

Remember that anything submitted to BJA can be released in response to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request.

Past Funding

Funding and awards made under the CEBR Program since FY 2017 can be found at the following links:

- [FY 2023 Formula DNA Capacity Enhancement for Backlog Reduction Program Awards](#)
- [FY 2023 Competitive DNA Capacity Enhancement for Backlog Reduction Program Awards](#)
- [FY 2022 DNA Capacity Enhancement for Backlog Reduction Program Awards](#)
- [FY 2021 DNA Capacity Enhancement for Backlog Reduction Program Awards](#)
- [FY 2020 DNA Capacity Enhancement for Backlog Reduction Program Awards](#)
- [FY 2019 DNA Capacity Enhancement for Backlog Reduction Program Awards](#)
- [FY 2018 DNA Capacity Enhancement for Backlog Reduction Program Awards](#)
- [FY 2017 DNA Capacity Enhancement for Backlog Reduction Program Awards](#)

Contacts

JustGrants Support
Email: JustGrants.Support@usdoj.gov
Customer Support: 833-872-5175
[JustGrants User Support](#)
[JustGrants Application Submission training resources page](#)
[DOJ Application Submission Checklist](#)

Grants.gov Support
Email: support@grants.gov
Customer Support: 800-518-4726, 606-545-5035
[Grants.gov customer support webpage](#)

CEBR Policy Office and Programs Office contact information

Andrea Borchardt
e: andrea.borchardt@usdoj.gov
p: 202-598-1721

Tahitia Barringer
e: tahitia.barringer@usdoj.gov
p: 202-616-3294

Alan Spanbauer
e: alan.spanbauer@usdoj.gov
p: 202-305-2436

Ebony Mack
e: ebony.mack@usdoj.gov
p: 202-307-1546

Christine Torres
e: Christine.torres@usdoj.gov
p: 202-305-1978

Caroline Shriver
e: caroline.shriver@usdoj.gov
p: (202) 307-1432

Monte Evans
e: monte.evans@usdoj.gov
p: 202-307-5822

Kathryn Manning
e: Kathryn.manning@usdoj.gov
p: 202-598-6489

ABOUT BJA

BJA helps America's state, local, and tribal jurisdictions reduce and prevent crime, lower recidivism, and promote a fair and safe criminal justice system. BJA provides a wide range of resources—including grants, funding, and training and technical assistance—to law enforcement, courts and corrections agencies, treatment providers, reentry practitioners, justice information sharing professionals, and community-based partners to address chronic and emerging criminal justice challenges nationwide. To learn more about BJA, visit bjajp.gov or follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/DOJBJA) and X ([@DOJBJA](https://twitter.com/DOJBJA)). BJA is a component of the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs.

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