

FAQs



Kite_rin/Shutterstock.com

FISCAL YEAR 2024 STRENGTHENING THE MEDICAL EXAMINER AND CORONER OFFICES PROGRAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

General Solicitation FAQs

Question: What is the authorizing language for the Strengthening the Medical Examiner-Coroner (ME/C) System Program?

Answer: The Strengthening the Medical Examiner and Coroner (ME/C) Offices program is a discretionary program.

Question: What are the submission deadlines for the FY23 ME/C applications?

Answer:

- **Grants.gov Deadline:** April 10, 2024, 8:59 p.m. Eastern Time
- **JustGrants Deadline:** April 15, 2024, 8:59 p.m. Eastern Time

Question: Can one organization apply for both Purpose Areas outlined in the Solicitation? If so, does that organization submit one application covering both purpose areas or one application for each purpose area?

Answer: Yes. An applicant may apply for both purpose areas. However, an applicant must submit a separate application for each purpose area. (see page 4 of the solicitation under “Eligibility”)

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 **36 months** (see page 10 of solicitation under “Federal Award Information”)

Question: When will applicants be notified of the funding decisions?

Answer: It is anticipated that awards will be announced prior to September 30, 2024. (Refer to the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))

Question: Does the title page, the table of contents, and bibliography/references count towards the Proposal Narrative?

Answer: A title page and table of contents are not required for the Proposal Narrative (See page 16 of the



solicitation under “Proposal Narrative” of the “Content of the JustGrants Application Submission” section for section requirements). Regarding Bibliography/Reference, that information can be included (cited) within the 12-page Proposal Narrative to support specific content that is necessary by the applicant to address the application and submission information requirements. However, if the applicant has an extensive listing of Bibliography/Reference material, they can include it as a separate attachment. The applicant should clearly title the separate attachment and reference it in the Proposal Narrative as needed. This will help ensure that DOJ – during the BMR process, subsequent peer review process, and for internal review by DOJ program managers – are clearly aware of its existence as a separate attachment.

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 contact the appropriate customer support referenced on page 5 of the solicitation under “Contact Information.”

Question: If an applicant was previously awarded funding under this program, can they still apply for FY 2024 funding?

Answer: Yes.

Allowable Uses of Funding FAQs

Question: Under both Purpose Area 1 and 2, what expenses are NOT allowable uses of award funds?

Answer: The following expenses are NOT permitted uses of funds under both Purpose Areas:

1. Supplanting.
2. Construction costs.
3. Recipient administrative expenses (direct or indirect) that exceed 10 percent of the total grant amount.
4. The purchase and/or lease of vehicles such as crime scene vans.
5. Unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), including unmanned aircraft vehicles (UAV) and/or any accompanying accessories to support UAS or UAV devices/systems.
6. Stipends (Purpose Area 2 ONLY)

Purpose Area 1 (Fellowships)

Question: Under Purpose Area 1, can funding be used for Forensic Pathologist Assistants, as well as Forensic Pathology Fellowships?

Answer: No. Under Purpose Area 1, funds may only be used for Forensic Pathology Fellowships.

Question: Under Purpose Area 1, are applicants required to have an accredited forensic pathology fellowship program?

Answer: Yes, eligible applicants for Purpose Area 1 must have a current Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)-accredited forensic pathology fellowship program. (see page 11 of the solicitation under “Eligibility Information.”)

To learn more, visit: <https://www.acgme.org>

Question: Under Purpose Area 1, is the purchase of minor equipment/supply items (e.g. microscopes, etc.) an allowable cost for fellows?

Answer: Yes, these types of items are an allowable cost. However, all purchases will need to be justified and the applicant will need to include information within their application materials that the purchase of the item(s) is needed for that individual to complete the fellowship program.

Question: Under Purpose Area 1, if one fellow is funded through the grant and a second fellow is funded through the applicant’s organization, are both fellows eligible for the loan repayment offered by the ME/C Program?

Answer: Under Purpose Area 1 (Forensic Pathology Fellowships), applicants may apply for one fellowship position (for up to \$150,000), or they may apply for two fellowship positions (for up to \$300,000 = \$150,000/each). To offset the financial burden associated with educational debt and assist with recruiting qualified candidates, applicants may use up to \$75,000 for fellowship loan repayments.

Therefore, applicants may use up to \$75,000 in loan repayments for each fellowship position that they are applying for (either 1 or 2 fellowship positions). If the applicant is applying for 2 fellowship positions, the

applicant may use up to \$75,000 in loan repayments for fellowship position # 1, and also use up to \$75,000 in loan repayments for fellowship position # 2.

Question: Under Purpose Area 1, are the Loan Forgiveness Payments taxable or non-taxable to each Pathology Fellow? Also, if the Loan Forgiveness Payments are taxable, can an applicant pay up to 39% of the Loan Payment funds to the IRS to mitigate the impact of the taxable income?

Answer: This is not a question within OJP's bandwidth and is more of a tax issue. It is suggested that the applicant consult with an accountant or a tax lawyer. OJP will not be able to provide advice on this issue.

Question: Under Purpose Area 1, what are the minimum criteria benchmarks for this activity to be documented to pass a DOJ/BJA desk audit?

Answer: See DOJ Grants Financial Guide, Section 3.19 Audit Requirements at: <https://www.ojp.gov/funding/financialguidedoj/iii-postaward-requirements#u4mxg4>

Purpose Area 2 (Accreditation)

Question: Under Purpose Area 2, can award funds be used for improvements to the facilities to become eligible to apply for accreditation?

Answer: Yes, award funds may be used for improvements to the facilities as long as the applicant can justify that the improvements are necessary to achieve accreditation.

Question: Under Purpose Area 2, the solicitation notes that BJA expects to make 10 awards at a dollar amount of \$100,000 per award. Does this mean you have to apply for \$100,000?

Answer: No. You can apply for any amount below \$100,000. However, the request may not exceed \$100,000.

Question: Under Purpose Area 2, can award funds be used to purchase equipment?

Answer: Yes, award funds may be used to purchase equipment under Purpose Area 2 as long as the applicant can justify that the equipment is necessary to achieve accreditation.

Question: Under Purpose Area 2, can award funds be used to maintain existing accreditation?

Answer: Yes, funds may be used to maintain existing accreditation under this program.

Question: Under Purpose Area 2, can an application be submitted pending the outcome of an inspection by an appropriate ME/C accrediting agency?

Answer: Applicants need to be able to meet the eligibility requirements at the time of the application submission.

Question: Under Purpose Area 2, can an application be submitted if a potential applicant received the following information from ACGME – “Status: Continued Accreditation with Warning.”

Answer: The applicant will need to meet the eligibility requirements at the time of the application submission.

Question: Under Purpose Area 2, can award funds be used to pay personnel who are not certified but are working towards certification?

Answer: Funds may be used for the purpose of paying personnel within the ME/C agencies that are seeking certification.

Question: Under Purpose Area 2, can award funds be used for travel?

Answer: Travel costs may be allowable under Purpose Area 2 if funds are used to support ME/C office accreditation.

Question: Under Purpose Area 2, if an applicant is accredited by NAME but not IACME, can funds be used for IACME accreditation?

Answer: As noted in the solicitation, through this funding opportunity, applications are being solicited from ME/C agencies seeking obtain or maintain accreditation through an appropriate ME/C accrediting agency. Under “Eligibility” on page 11 of the solicitation it notes: “Eligible applicants for Purpose Area 2: ME/C Office Accreditation are limited to domestic ME/C offices actively seeking or maintaining accreditation through an independent accrediting organization such as the National Association of Medical Examiners, the International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners, or other appropriate accrediting bodies.”

Associated Application Documents FAQs

Question: What is the federal requested amount in the SF-424?

Answer: The federal requested amount in the SF-424 is the funding amount the applicant is requesting in their application.

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

Answer: Refer to the OJP Grant Application Resource Guide at: <https://www.ojp.gov/funding/apply/ojp-grant-application-resource-guide#complete-application> for information on completing the SF-424.

Question: One of the questions on the SF-424 form is if this solicitation is subject to [Executive Order 12372](#). What is the appropriate response to this question?

Answer: This solicitation is not subject to Executive Order 12372. As noted in the solicitation, an applicant is to answer that question by selecting the response that the “Program is not covered by E.O. 12732.” (see page 14 of the solicitation under “Content of the SF-424 in Grants.gov.”)

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. In regard to 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 [Application Resource Guide](#). (See page 24 of the solicitation under “Disclosures and Assurances”, and page 32 of the solicitation under “Disclosures and Assurances”)

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. (See page 30 of the solicitation under “Application Checklist”)

Question: In the “Additional Application Components” section of the solicitation, are all items in that section required for both Purpose Areas?

Answer: The Additional Application Components are required if they are applicable to the applicant’s agency and the respective purpose area of the solicitation. Items in the Additional Application Components section, such as a) a list of key personnel and b) a timeline, are required for all applicants under this solicitation. (See page 22 of the solicitation under “Additional Application Components”)

Question: Should an applicant upload an Organizational Chart as an individual PDF file, named as such, in JustGrants under Additional Application Components?

Answer: Yes, please refer to Page 23 which lists the Organizational Chart as an additional application component where the applicant should attach as a separate attachment in JustGrants.

Question: Should applicants provide position descriptions and resumes for individuals with significant responsibilities as two distinct file uploads, or only provide resumes for named staff?

Answer: Please refer to Page 23 where it states, “Position Descriptions and Résumés — Curriculum vitae, résumés, or biographical sketches for key personnel. Attach this as a separate PDF file titled “Curriculum Vitae or Resumes.”

Performance Metrics Guidance

Purpose Area 1: Fellowships

*Question numbers below match the respective metrics in BJA’s Performance Measures Table found at: <https://bja.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh186/files/media/document/MEC-Measures.pdf>

3. **Metric:** The number of participants who began the forensic pathology fellowship training using funding from this grant for the Strengthening the ME/C Program. (Baseline, this response should not change across reporting cycles)

Guidance: The reported metric should reflect the number of fellowship positions you requested ME/C Program funding for in your application. This number will remain the same throughout the life of your award.

4. **Metric:** The number of forensic pathology fellowship participants in the ME/C Office (to include the fellowship funded by this grant from the Strengthening the Medical Examiner-Coroner System Program).

Guidance: The reported metric should reflect the number of active fellows in your office at the end of the performance period for which you are reporting.

5. **Metric:** The number of participants who completed forensic pathology fellowship training under this grant from the ME/C Program.

Guidance: The reported metric should reflect the total number of fellows **funded under the ME/C Program** who completed their fellowship training. Do not include fellows funded under other ME/C awards – only fellows funded under the ME/C award for which you are currently reporting.

6. **Metric:** If possible to report, provide the number of forensic pathology fellowship participants funded under the Strengthening the Medical Examiner-Coroner System Program who became board-certified forensic pathologists for this grant.

Guidance: The reported metric is not always captured during the award period. However, if it is possible to report, please only report on fellows funded under the current ME/C Program who became board certified. Do not include fellows funded under other ME/C awards – only fellows funded under the award for which you are currently reporting.

7. **Metric:** Total number of death Investigation by Medical Examiner/Coroner Office six months prior to award start date (baseline, this response should not change across reporting cycles).

Guidance: The reported metric should reflect the six months prior to the beginning of the period of performance. For example, for FY 2024 awards the period of performance starts on October 1, 2024, so

this metric should reflect data collected from March 31, 2024 – September 30, 2024. The reported metric should be the same for every reporting period over the lifetime of that award.

8. **Metric:** Total number of death investigations performed by the ME/C office during the current reporting period.

Guidance: The reporting period for this award is semi-annually/every six months. Therefore, the number of death investigation performed metric would cover only those six months of the reporting period for the entire office (not just the BJA-funded forensic pathology fellow(s)).

9. **Metric:** Total number of death investigations performed by this grant for the BJA-funded forensic pathology fellow(s) during the current reporting period.

Guidance: The reporting period for this award is semi-annually/every six months. Therefore, the number of death investigation performed metric would cover only those six months of the reporting period for ONLY the BJA-funded forensic pathology fellow(s).

- 12-15. For questions 12, 14, and 15 follow the same guidance provided above for the number of autopsies performed.

Purpose Area 2: Accreditation

22. **Metric:** Number of individuals in the Medical Examiner–Coroner (ME/C) Office in medicolegal death investigation (MDI) supporting positions at the beginning of the award.

Guidance: FY 2024 award's period of performance starts on October 1, 2024. Therefore, you would report how many individuals in the ME/C office were in MDI supporting positions on October 1, 2024. The reported metric should be the same for every reporting period over the lifetime of that award.

23. **Metric:** Number of certified individuals in the Medical Examiner-Coroner office in medicolegal death investigation supporting positions at the beginning of the award.

Guidance: FY 2024 award's period of performance starts on October 1, 2024. Therefore, you would report

how many certified individuals in the ME/C office were in MDI supporting positions on October 1, 2024. The reported metric should be the same for every reporting period over the lifetime of that award.

24. **Metric:** Target number of individuals to be certified with Strengthening the Medical Examiner-Coroner System Program funding at the beginning of the award.

Guidance: FY 2024 award's period of performance starts on October 1, 2024. Therefore, you would report how many individuals you plan to certify, using BJA funding, on October 1, 2024. The reported metric should be the same for every reporting period over the lifetime of that award.

25. **Metric:** Number of individuals who initiated the certification process with Strengthening the Medical Examiner-Coroner System Program funding during the current project period.

Guidance: The reported metric should reflect the total number of individuals who have started and/or are currently undergoing the certification process, using BJA-funding, at the end of the progress reporting period.

26. **Metric:** Number of individuals who achieved certification with Strengthening the Medical Examiner-Coroner System Program funding during the current project period.

Guidance: For this metric, report the total number of individuals who achieved certification using BJA funding during the current reporting period (do not include individuals certified during previous reporting periods).

Past Funding

Funding and awards made under the Strengthening the Medical Examiner and Coroner Offices Program since FY 2017 can be found at the following links:

- [FY 2023 Strengthening the Medical Examiner and Coroner Offices Program Awards](#)
- [FY 2022 Strengthening the Medical Examiner and Coroner Offices Program Awards](#)
- [FY 2021 Strengthening the Medical Examiner and Coroner Offices Program Awards](#)
- [FY 2020 Strengthening the Medical Examiner and Coroner Offices Program Awards](#)
- [FY 2019 Strengthening the Medical Examiner and Coroner Offices Program Awards](#)
- [FY 2018 Strengthening the Medical Examiner and Coroner Offices Program Awards](#)
- [FY 2017 Strengthening the Medical Examiner and Coroner Offices Program Awards](#)

Contacts and Resources

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](#)

For assistance with the requirements of this solicitation, contact the OJP Response Center by phone at 800-851-3420 or 301-240-6310 (TTY for hearing-impaired callers only) or email 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 closing date.

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 bja.ojp.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.

NCJ 308588