

# BUREAU OF JUSTICE ASSISTANCE FACT SHEET

## MISSING AND UNIDENTIFIED HUMAN REMAINS PROGRAM

### Program Summary

According to the Justice Department's National Institute of Justice's, [National Missing and Unidentified Persons System \(NamUs\) Program](#) database, over 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, BJA's Missing and Unidentified Human Remains (MUHR) Program provides funds to enable eligible entities to improve the reporting, transportation, forensic testing, and identification of missing persons and unidentified human remains, including migrants, utilizing various forensic disciplines such as anthropology, odontology, and DNA. The MUHR Program augments and complements the existing services available through the NamUs Program. NamUs is a free, national, centralized

repository, and resource center for locating and identifying missing persons, unidentified human remains, and repatriating unclaimed persons.

In contrast to NamUs, the MUHR Program fills a gap in the national field by providing federal resources directly to jurisdictions. As a result, the MUHR Program helps jurisdictions become more self-reliant and self-sufficient in reducing their backlog of missing persons and unidentified human remains cases.

Three purpose areas are funded under the MUHR Program:

- Purpose Area 1: Statewide Agencies
- Purpose Area 2: Counties and/or Units of Local Government
- Purpose Area 3: Services to Assist Small, Rural, and/or Tribal Entities

### Program Funding & Awards

Since FY 2022, the MUHR Program has made six awards totaling \$4,476,252 million.

Purpose Area 1: Statewide Agencies		
Fiscal Year	Number of Awards	Total Awards Amount
2022	2	\$1,992,090
Purpose Area 2: Counties and/or Units of Local Government		
Fiscal Year	Number of Awards	Total Awards Amount
2022	3	\$1,488,120
Purpose Area 3: Services to Assist Small, Rural, and/or Tribal Entities		
Fiscal Year	Number of Awards	Award Amount
2022	1	\$996,042



## Program Details

### Purpose Area 1 and Purpose Area 2:

- **Inventory:** Inventory all missing persons and unidentified human remains cases in their jurisdictions that fall directly under their authority, or those entities that are servicing jurisdictions that have yet to be processed.
- **Report:** Report into systems such as the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) and NamUs, as well as notifying the relatives of missing persons/unidentified remains, as applicable.
- **Identify:** Establish a multidisciplinary team comprised of forensic experts, investigators, victim advocates, etc., to establish the best method of identification for each inventoried case.
- **Repatriate Human Remains:** Develop and implement a plan to return human remains to appropriate relatives, as determined by law.

### Purpose Area 3:

- Serves small, rural, and/or tribal entities by funding transportation, testing, and identification for missing persons and unidentified human remains, 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 missing persons and unidentified human remains cases are reported into systems such as NCIC and NamUs, as well as notifying the relatives of missing persons/unidentified remains, 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.

## Learn More

For additional information about this program, see the [MUHR Program webpage](#).

## 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](http://bja.ojp.gov) or follow us on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/DOJBJA](https://www.facebook.com/DOJBJA)) and Twitter ([@DOJBJA](https://twitter.com/DOJBJA)). BJA is a component of the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs.