

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Last Updated September 11, 2025

Contents

General Program/Notification of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) FAQs.....	1
Allowable Uses of Funding FAQs.....	4
Associated Application Documents FAQs.....	5
Performance Metrics Guidance	6
Contacts	8

Question: What is the DNA CEBR Program?

Answer: The DNA Capacity Enhancement for Backlog Reduction (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/Notification of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) FAQs

Question: Are the CEBR Certification forms required?

Answer: Yes. The application process has been streamlined in JustGrants, primarily through the use of an Eligibility Certification form and a Budget Breakdown form. For FY25, applicants will need to have their Certifying Official (as determined by the applicant agency) sign the Eligibility Certification and Budget Breakdown forms. Links to the forms are as follows:

The Eligibility Certification form: <https://bja.ojp.gov/funding/fy25-cebr-eligibility-cert.pdf>

The CEBR Program Budget Breakdown form: <https://bja.ojp.gov/funding/fy25-formula-cebr-budget-breakdown.pdf>

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. The Certifying Official may potentially be a different individual for each form.

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 and (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. A second funding category has been included in the FY25 Competitive CEBR NOFO, which allows applicants to apply for funds to implement RAPID DNA at the booking station. 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. The program enables agencies in need of additional investment to enact meaningful solutions for processing CODIS eligible samples.

Question: To apply to the Competitive FY25 CEBR NOFO, do you also need to apply to the Formula FY25 CEBR NOFO?

Answer: No. They are separate and distinct programs.

Question: Are the Competitive FY25 CEBR NOFO eligibility requirements similar to the Formula FY25 CEBR NOFO?

Answer: Yes. However, these forms must be submitted with each application.

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 no cost extension (NCE) 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 toward the Proposal Narrative?

Answer: A title page and table of contents are not required for the Proposal Narrative. However, if a title page and table of contents are included in the application as part of the Proposal Narrative, they do not count towards the total page count.

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 NOFO under “Contact Information.”

Question: If an applicant was previously awarded funding under this program, can they still apply for FY25 funding?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Do CEBR progress reports still require the performance management tool (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 points of contact for the award.

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

Answer: BJA encourages interested applicants to do the following:

Visit BJA's Forensics Training and Technical Assistance (FTTA) service provider at forensicstta.org. Also, visit this [link](#) to enroll in alerts.

Visit BJA's website at 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: [Subscribe | Bureau of Justice Assistance](#).

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](https://grants.gov) and [JustGrants](https://justgrants.gov).

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 FY25 CEBR Program?

Answer: Yes, however any laboratory seeking to use funding for Rapid DNA analysis must adhere to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Quality Assurance Standards, and samples tested using CEBR funding must be eligible for CODIS. The FBI has approved 2025 Quality Assurance Standards (QAS) expanding the use of Rapid DNA Analysis. Therefore, BJA will accept relevant proposal narratives involving the use of Rapid DNA technology on samples collected from crime scenes for upload to NDIS in accordance with the QAS and NDIS procedures. See the FBI's [Quality Assurance Standards 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, because 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 NOFOs (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 (JAG) 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: 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 FY25 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 judgment 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" and "Application Checklist" sections of the NOFO to determine what documents are required for the application. Regarding the Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form, all applicants must submit the form, but they 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" section in the NOFO 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 by accessing this [link](#).

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

Answer: Although many agencies have their own definitions of backlog, for the purposes of this NOFO, 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 required only when you are using grant funds and reporting the respective performance metrics.

Question: When should grantees start reporting in PMT? In other words, what qualifies as “grant activity” under the award?

Answer: A grantee should start reporting metrics and the respective narrative in PMT (as opposed to selecting “No grant activity”) as soon as the grantee starts working toward any of the goals/objectives outlined in their program narrative/budget. If you have obligated funds under the award, then this would be considered “grant activity” for the purposes of reporting in PMT and JustGrants. For additional training on PMT reporting, access this [link](#).

Question: When are narrative questions required?

Answer: Once grant activity commences, 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. Please note that CEBR-funded cases completed should never exceed total cases completed.

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:

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.

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:

In the example below, they are labeled by casework (CW) or database (DB), and by metric number.

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

Alternatively, some grantees provide separate tabs for casework and databasing metrics.

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.

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 may be released in response to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request.

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

POLICY OFFICE:

Andrea Borchardt

e: andrea.borchardt@usdoj.gov

p: 202-598-1721

Lindsay DePalma

e: lindsay.depalma@usdoj.gov

PROGRAMS OFFICE:

Hannah Aanenson

e: hannah.aanenson@usdoj.gov

p: (202) 826-4046

Kathryn Manning

e: Kathryn.manning@usdoj.gov

p: 202-598-6489

Caroline Shriver

e: caroline.shriver@usdoj.gov

p: (202) 307-1432

Brandon Mitchell

e: brandon.mitchell3@usdoj.gov

p: (202) 802-4623

Ivelisse Hodge

e: ivelisse.hodge@usdoj.gov

p: (202) 598-6880