

DARYL FOX: Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to today's webinar, "FY 2023 DNA Capacity Enhancement for Backlog Reduction (CEBR) Program Formula and Competitive" solicitations, hosted by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. At this time, it's my pleasure to introduce Andrea Borchardt, Senior Policy Advisor with the Bureau of Justice Assistance for some welcoming remarks and to begin the presentation. Andrea?

ANDREA BORCHARDT: Thank you, Daryl. And thank you everyone for attending this webinar today. On this slide, the agenda for today's solicitation release webinar is to begin with some introduction to the Office of Justice Programs and the Bureau of Justice Assistance, followed by Program Overview of the CEBR Program Formula and Competitive. I'll go over some Eligibility requirements and changes from previous years. The Goals, Objectives, and Federal Award Information for these programs, Permitted Expenses and the Alignment in Uses of Funds, Application Submission, and Application Checklist. Following this we'll do a Q&A session.

What is the Office of Justice Programs? OJP provides grant funding, training, research, and statistics to the criminal justice community. OJP is one of three grant making components of the Department of Justice along with the Office on Violence Against Women or OVW, and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services or COPS. OJP is made of six bureaus: BJA, the Bureau of Justice Assistance; BJS, the Bureau of Justice Statistics; NIJ, the National Institute of Justice; OVC, Office for Victims of Crime; OJJDP, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; and the SMART Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking.

BJA's mission is to provide leadership and services in grant administration and criminal justice policy development to support state, local, and Tribal justice strategies to achieve safer communities. BJA works with communities, government, and nonprofit organizations to reduce crime, recidivism, and unnecessary confinement, and promote a safe and fair criminal justice system.

Appointed by President Biden in February 2022, Director Karhlton Moore leads BJA's programmatic and policy efforts at BJA. It is composed of the Policy Office, the Programs Office, the Operations Office, and the Public Safety Officer Benefits.

The five major strategic focus areas at BJA are to improve public safety, reduce recidivism and prevention of unnecessary confinement and interactions with the criminal justice system; the integration of evidence-based and research-driven strategies into the day-to-day operations of programs at BJA; increase program and effectiveness with a renewed emphasis on data analysis, information sharing, and performance

management; and ensuring organizational excellence through outstanding administration and oversight of all BJA's strategic investments.

Our main focuses are to fund, which is to invest diverse funding streams to accomplish our goals; educate, research, develop, and deliver what works to the community; equip, which creates tools, products to build capacity, and improve outcomes; and partner, consult, connect, and convene.

This slide outlines BJA Funding Resources, and the link at the bottom of this slide bja.ojp.gov/funding is a way to access this information.

Additionally, you can learn about the Department of Justice's grants and payment management systems through the justicegrants.usdoj.gov link.

For the remainder of the webinar, the focus will be on the DNA Capacity Enhancement for Backlog Reduction, or CEBR Program, which increases the number of forensic DNA and database samples processed for entry into CODIS by providing funding to laboratories to process DNA samples and to increase capacity to process DNA samples for CODIS upload.

On this slide is a screenshot from the CEBR page on the BJA website. I encourage you to copy down the link to access this site where you can find additional information about the CEBR Program. The link will be also posted at the end of the webinar if you're unable to copy it down right now. And while you're doing that, I'll also clarify that this webinar is focused on the CEBR solicitation only and does not include application submission mechanics.

In the summer of 2022, BJA announced changes to the FY 2023 CEBR Program. For additional information, it is recommended to review resources available on the CEBR site, including the public webinar from August 2022. The screenshot below is from the main CEBR page with a link again in this slide from the BJA website with the arrow focusing you to the recording and the related links.

In FY 2023, CEBR will have two separate solicitations. The Formula one, which is similar to the one you're used to from previous years and a new Competitive program launched this year. As I proceed through this webinar, I encourage you to have those solicitations available and open for you. I will identify page numbers for references as I highlight components of each solicitation.

A little over \$103 million is available to eligible entities in the United States using a formula to calculate the amount of funding available to each state to process and/or to increase the capacity to process DNA samples for entry into CODIS. And approximately \$5 million is available competitively for state and units of local government with eligible crime laboratories or laboratory systems to maximize the effective utilization of DNA technology to solve crimes and protect public safety.

I want to draw your attention to two important notes about these programs. Entities are not required to apply for the Formula program to be eligible for Competitive funding. Similarly, entities are not required to apply for the Competitive program to be eligible for Formula funding. And second important to note is that awards made under the Competitive program will not impact the distribution amounts of your Formula awards.

For the remainder of the webinar, I will toggle between information about the Formula program and the Competitive program. While doing this, the header of the slide will inform you which program version I am addressing, either the Competitive or the Formula. Additionally, for clarity, I will verbally state whether I'm discussing Formula or Competitive information. This slide outlines important dates for the Formula program. The Grants.gov deadline is April 19, 2023, at 8:59 p.m. Eastern Time. And the JustGrants deadline is April 26, 2023, at 8:59 p.m. Eastern Time. Please note both of these dates and times of the deadline. And remember, if you missed the Grants.gov deadline, you cannot proceed to the JustGrants stuff. I strongly recommend applying early and not waiting until the last minute.

This slide outlines important dates for the Competitive program. The Grants.gov deadline is April 19, 2023, at 8:59 p.m. Eastern Time and the JustGrants deadline is April 26, 2023, at 8:59 p.m. Eastern Time. Again, make note both of the dates and times of these deadlines, and I strongly recommend applying early and not waiting until the last minute.

The eligible entities for both programs is addressed on page one of both solicitations, and further outlined on page 16 of the formula, and page 15 of the Competitive solicitation. It includes city or township governments, county governments, public and state-controlled institutions of higher education, and state governments. For the purposes of these solicitations, the term state means any state in the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

On the latter pages of the eligibility sections of the solicitations, you'll find a link to an eligibility certification form, which is a new component for FY 2023. On the certification

form, there are some changes in eligibility from previous years. An outline of these are as follows:

On your certification form, you must estimate how much of your award will be used to carry out DNA analyses of samples from crime scenes for inclusion in CODIS. The Formula program has a minimum of 40% assigned for this section, while the Competitive form has no minimum requirement for this section. You must estimate the portion of funding with no minimum required that shall be used to carry out DNA analyses from samples collected under applicable legal authority, such as convicted offender or arrestee samples for inclusion in CODIS. If you do not engage in this portion or this section of testing, then you would insert a zero for this section. Similarly, you must estimate the portion of funding, again with no minimum required, that shall be used to increase the capacity of the laboratory to carry out DNA analyses of database and crime scene samples for inclusion in CODIS.

Next, you must provide assurances that the state or unit of local government that 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. Now, you do not need to send us your plan. Instead, you must have the eligibility certification form signed indicating that you meet this requirement. It is up to each laboratory to determine what might meet this requirement for your own agency, but BJA does not suggest one method over another. Things that have been brought up to me by other laboratories include efforts made to improve efficiency, such as a Lean Six Sigma style evaluation, asking samples, shift work, and implementation of automation and robotics. Again, it's up to each laboratory to determine what would qualify as their comprehensive plan for the expeditious DNA analyses of samples in accordance with the purposes of the DNA CEBR solicitation.

Finally, you'll need to 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. And I know most labs likely do follow this with some sort of policy, either formal or informal. But now, you must provide us with assurances that you do in fact have a written policy that prioritizes the analysis of to the extent practicable and consistent with public safety considerations samples from homicide and sexual assaults.

In order to qualify for funding, applicants must submit the appropriate, either Formula or Competitive DNA Capacity Enhancement for Backlog Reduction Program Eligibility Certification form. There's a link in each solicitation. The forms must be signed by the

Chief Executive Officer of the state or unit of local government on the form provided. Please note there are two separate and distinct forms for Competitive and Formula funding. They are not interchangeable. The correct form must be submitted in order to be eligible for funding.

Here's a screenshot of page one of the Formula form. The forms are very similar. The majority of the contents, aside from the information I outlined on the preceding slide, was included in previous years' eligibility statements and language within the solicitation.

Here is a screenshot of page two of the form. Notice that there are sections in yellow as well as the information and signature lines at the bottom of the form that must be properly filled out by the applicant. Guidance has been provided to help applicants assess, "DNA analyses of samples from crime scenes" versus capacity enhancement activities for the purposes of section "F" and "G" of the eligibility certification form, which for your reference are copied again on this slide. This guidance sheet can be found on our CEBR site, which is again referenced on this slide.

This is a screenshot that outlines the majority of the guidance sheet as a summary if the funding is supporting DNA-related activities that must occur in a laboratory to facilitate routine analysis of CODIS eligible crime scene samples, then it would fall under the "Analysis of Crime Scene Samples for CODIS." Or section "F" of the eligibility form. This would include things like personnel conducting QC and QA activities for routine processes, analytics processing CODIS eligible sample, training or travel needed for QAS continuing education requirements, maintenance fee for instruments or software already in use by the laboratory and testing or outsourcing of crime scene samples. On the other hand, activities that increase laboratory capacity or abilities would fall under the, "Increasing the Capacity of the Laboratory to Analyze DNA for CODIS." And this would include activities such as validation work, new analyst training, or newly purchased instrument or software, and associated maintenance costs. If after reviewing the document, you still need additional guidance, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. I'm more than happy to help and my contact information will be displayed on the final slide of the presentation.

Moving on to the Goals and Objectives of the Formula program. Funding under a Formula DNA CEBR Program supports the following purposes:

To carry out for inclusion in CODIS, DNA analysis of database samples collected under applicable legal authority. Two, to carry out, for inclusion in CODIS, DNA analysis of forensic case for crime scene samples. And three, to increase the capacity of publicly

funded forensic DNA and DNA database laboratories to conduct DNA analysis of database and crime scene samples for entry into CODIS.

Moving to page nine of the Formula application, the aggregate amount available is \$103,688,911. There is a link to the state allocations in the solicitation. As in previous years, the period of performance is 24 months, which begins on October 1st, 2023. Note that this year, BJA did not set aside a portion of funding as a secondary allocation for states that certify they have enacted "Test All" legislation. Instead, all funding was put forth in the primary allocation this year. So this allocation table is the final table. Hopefully, that will make things run a little bit more smoothly for agencies that have tight timelines for approval within their chain of command.

The Competitive DNA CEFR Program awards funding to eligible entities with at least one of two program objectives. One, to 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, or two, 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.

Turn to page 10 of the competitive solicitation. We anticipate awarding approximately \$5 million under the Competitive program with a maximum award amount of \$1 million. This does not mean you have to apply for \$1 million. You can apply for less if that is what your agency needs. They expect to make 5 to 10 Competitive awards. And like the Formula program, the period of performance is 24 months, which begins on October 1st, 2023.

Permitted expenses in the Formula program really didn't change much from last year. They include salary and benefits of laboratory employees, limited training and travel, laboratory equipment, supplies, certain contracts such as outsourcing or audits, direct administrative expenses up to three percent of the federal portion of the award, costs associated with and including accreditation, software, LIMS, and limited renovations. Because of the objectives of the Competitive program, there are some differences in how the funds can be used. This slide summarizes that information with the red mark text showing the differences from what is allowable in the Formula program, for example, because the Competitive program is to provide funding to agencies that need an extra boost in order to enact meaningful change to improve operations, funding for things like accreditation, outsourcing, renovations are not allowable, and those activities should be addressed using Formula funding.

Expenses that are not permitted in the Formula program also didn't change much from last year. They include salary and benefits other than as I already described in the permissible uses of funding. Travel, other than authorized travel expenses associated with the appropriate DNA training and visits to outsourcing laboratories as discussed in the permissible use of the funds. Educations of primary benefit to an individual, personal development training, or other trainings that are not directly related to the operation of a forensic DNA laboratory. Trial testimony and associated costs, construction other than as discussed in permissible uses of funds, direct administrative expenses that exceed three percent of the federal portion of the award. And equipment that is not directly related to DNA analysis, has not been approved for use by NDIS or not immediately available for purchase to a commercial entity. And again, because the objectives of the Competitive program, there are slight differences in expenses that are not permitted for this program, you can see the differences using the red strikeout text and the yellow edition in this slide.

In both the FY 2023 Formula and Competitive CEBR, there's also an alignment and uses of funds with the Debbie Smith authorizing legislation. What will likely help you the most is to always remember that all uses of funding must be tied back to processing samples for CODIS and increasing the capacity of the laboratory to process samples for CODIS. And remember, while some types of tests may be incredibly valuable for the case, they just may not be eligible under this program. It doesn't mean you couldn't speak to other sources of federal funding or local funding to achieve some of these goals. Let's run through some examples. So Kinship. Some uses of Kinship would be okay, so long as they're supporting CODIS eligible samples, for example, human remains testing and while incredibly valuable to assist with certain cases, Kinship for non-CODIS samples would not be acceptable. How about Y-STR and mito? If you're using this technology for CODIS illegible purposes, again, yes, it would be acceptable and again while incredibly valuable to assist with certain cases, using Y-STR and mito in ways that are not for CODIS would not be acceptable. How about Genetic Genealogy and SNPs? Because this testing for Genetic Genealogy is not currently CODIS eligible, there are no permitted uses under CEBR.

Continuing with the alignment and uses of funds, accreditation, yeah, expenses relating to maintaining the scope of accreditation for NDIS approved technologies is acceptable for Formula funding. Expanding a scope for non-NDIS approved technologies would not be acceptable. So things like bringing in a team for your annual audit is totally acceptable but expanding your scope to include FGG testing or something like that would not be acceptable. How about conferences and trainings? Most of these would still be acceptable, but remember it really needs to relate to the processing of samples for CODIS increasing the lab's capacity to process samples for CODIS. So, staff

retention and coursework in pursuit of a master's degree or PhD are not permitted under the program, but attending a training to learn how to operate a new instrument or robot in the laboratory would be acceptable. How about validation? Again, most validations would be acceptable so long as they're related to processing samples for CODIS or increasing the capacity to process samples for CODIS.

If you can see, bring up your Formula solicitation and turn to page 16 to 20 to go over the application submission. The requirements in the sections of the proposal narrative have been streamlined since last year. We also have launched an optional template to help reduce barriers to laboratories that struggle with knowing what to address in this section. The CEBR microsite link which is, again, listed on this slide is the same link from previous slides. It has a link to the template as well as an example narrative to help you better understand what is expected.

The next six slides—well, this slide and the next five slides. highlight an example narrative posted to the website, which I'll go over to help applicants better understand how to use the template. Note that this template is only for the Formula program. In this example, we have a fictitious agency applying for Formula funding. The Description of the Issue for this agency outlines three main problems impacting their ability to process samples for CODIS. So, one, they have increased submission from law enforcement agencies. Two, they have legislative changes resulting in increased arrestee collections. And, three, they have advances in DNA technology that are financially out of reach of the agency. These topics that have been brought up in the Description of the Issue section should be the main theme rather than addressing the goals and objectives which I will address in the subsequent slides.

I know this looks really small, but hopefully when you pull up the example template, you can see this more in detail. But the next pages of that template form ask you to pick at least one of the four available goals you are attempting to achieve using funding from the Formula program. Either process crime scene samples for CODIS, or process database samples for CODIS, or increase the capacity to process crime scene samples for CODIS, or, four, increased capacity to process database samples for CODIS. Remember, all your senior CEBR Formula activities should fit under one of these goals, that is what CEBR funding is intended for. In our example fictitious agency, they want to target all four goals, but when you write your proposal, you may choose to only use one of these goals or as many as four. It just completely depends on your plan and what you want to do with your project. If we look to what this fictitious agency is doing, they selected the template for practice crime scene samples, and their objective here is to outsource cases. And you can see that on the left side of the screen here. If you look to the right side of the screen, the agency selected the template for, "Process Database

Samples" and their objective here is to maintain grant- funded personnel. In other words they want to use funding to maintain their grant-funded personnel, which is their objective, to meet the goal of processing database samples to address the main issue, which was the increase in arrestee DNA samples.

Moving onto the next goal, on the left side of the screen, this agency selected the template for increased capacity to process crime scene samples with a handful of objectives that surround the implementation of probabilistic genotyping. And on the right side of the screen, the agency selected the last template, which is to increase capacity to process database samples with the objective to hire and train a new database team—excuse me, to train a new database analyst. Remember, all the goals and objectives should tie back to the original Statement of the Problem on page one.

The next few pages of the template are the timeline development for your project. The form is designed to help with strategic planning of the steps needed to achieve the objectives outlined in the previous pages. You should be able to simply cut and paste your objectives from the program design section to the appropriate area and the timeline. So let's say the first quarter of the award or the second quarter of the award and so forth. Then in the far right column, you identify the steps your agency will undertake to complete the objectives. So for example, if your objective was to hire that new database analyst, you may need to, let's say, post the position publicly and conduct interviews. Those would be the sub-objective. You should outline these tasks in the far right-hand column to give yourself targets in order to keep the project on track.

The next section, moving to the Capabilities and Competencies. This should be relatively straightforward. You must identify the individuals who will be involved in, one, the grants management steps, including award acceptance and submission of progress reports in JustGrants; two, the financial management, including the submission of FFRs; three, project management to include completion of technical aspects of the project. It's expected that you include a couple of sentences about their role and experience.

And finally, the template has a section for your Plan for Collecting Data. It outlines the five specific questions you must answer in this section and provides some examples of how our fictitious agency has answered the question. I want to remind everyone that this full template is optional for the Formula program, though it is encouraged. It's expected to streamline the process for applicants to the Formula program by helping you better understand the necessary content for the Formula proposal narrative and help you avoid spending time on unnecessary content. With all being said, you are not required to use the template and may continue using your own documents for the

development of your proposal narrative so long as it continues to be responsive to the requirements as outlined in the solicitation. If you have any questions about the template or how to use it, you're more than welcome to contact me for assistance. And again, my email address will be listed on the final slide.

So moving on to the Application Submission for Competitive CEBR, please turn to page 16 of the Competitive solicitation. The following elements must be included in the application to meet the basic minimum requirements or BMR to advance to peer review and receive consideration for Competitive funding. One, the Proposal Abstract. Two, the Proposal Narrative. Three, the Budget Web-Based Form, and four the signed Competitive Eligibility Certification form. Remember, this form is separate and distinct from the Formula Certification form. The Formula Certification form is not an acceptable replacement, and it will not satisfy BMR for this program. If you submit the wrong form, that means the application would not proceed to peer review. Additionally, the template I just described in the previous slide is only for the Formula program and will not meet the purposes for Competitive CEBR.

If you please, turn to pages 17 to 19 to get more information about the application submission for Competitive CEBR. In the Proposal Narrative, the Description of the Issue outlines that applicants must demonstrate an understanding of how DNA technology has been used to improve laboratory operations. An applicant should focus on the turnaround time and/or ratio of backlog to cases completed per month and how these are negatively impacted by a lack of DNA technology utilized at the laboratory. The applicants must submit baseline measures for turnaround time and the ratio of backlogs to cases completed per month to demonstrate the laboratory's need for additional funding to improve the measures.

Applicants are to discuss how the proposed DNA technology will positively impact these baseline measures. Priority consideration will be given to applicants falling into the highest percentiles for performance measures such as longest turnaround time reported by CEBR laboratories in the preceding year. And you can find the data about the performance measures on the website found here. The link will be under the previous links that I have outlined in the slides.

When you access that link from the previous page or on the CEBR microsite, you go to the CEBR microsite page and you click Performance Measures so you can see recent performance measures reported by CEBR grantees. This snapshot of data was taken from the FY 2020 grantee population as reported to BJA and the PMT or progress reports from 2022. When applying for Competitive CEBR, you must report these metrics to us as outlined in the Proposal Narrative section. On the left side, you can see the

range of turnaround times from grantees reporting data in 2022. The fastest lab had a 25-day average turnaround time, with the mid-range lab being about 131 days. These are further broken down into 10% increments, as you can see on the slide. Similarly, on the right side of the slide displays the ratio of backlogs and cases completed per month, the same grantee pool in 2022. This ratio is used to better compare the operation of laboratories of different sizes. The larger ratio generally indicating that the laboratory may face more challenges in reducing their backlogs. The smallest ratio was 0.04, which means that the current pace of testing, the laboratory stopped receiving cases today, they should be able to work through their backlog in about one day, which I think we can all agree is pretty darn quick. Contrasting that to the mid-range of 6.4, which means that the current pace of testing, the laboratory stopped receiving cases today, they should be able to work through their backlog in 6.4 months. Again, priority consideration will be given to applicants falling into the highest percentiles of performance measures reported by CEBR laboratories in the preceding year. But this does not mean that applicants with stronger performance measures will not get funding under this program, so I do encourage all of you to apply.

The next section of the Application Submission for Competitive CEBR outlines the Project Design and Implementation plan. This section should address the goals, objectives, and expected results. And a snapshot of the information from the solicitation is included on the slide. Due to time constraints, I will not read through the whole thing, but you can find it in your solicitation.

If you please turn your Competitive CEBR Solicitation to pages 25 to 26, you can see the Merit Review Criteria. So 30% of the weighting will be given to the description of the issue. Actually, let me back up. The applications that meet the basic minimum requirements will be evaluated by peer reviewers on how the proposed products and programs addresses the following criteria. Thirty percent of the rating will be given to the Description of the Issue and how the applicant articulates their understanding of the program and issues to be addressed. Forty percent of the score rating will be to the Product Design and Implementation. Ten percent will be given to the Capabilities and Competencies as outlined in the application. The 10% will be weighted towards the Plan for Collecting the Data Required for the Solicitation's Performance Measures, and 10% weighting will be given to the Budget, which will be evaluated for completeness, cost effectiveness, and allowability.

If you can please turn to page 26 of your Competitive CEBR Solicitation to better understand the review process. For applications submitted under the solicitation that meet the basic minimum requirements will be evaluated for technical merit by a peer review panel in accordance with OJP peer review policy and procedures using the

review criteria listed above. OJP screens applications to ensure they meet the basic minimum requirements prior to conducting the peer review. Although specific requirements may vary, the following are common requirements applicable to all OJP solicitations. The application must be submitted by an eligible type of applicant. The application must request funding within programmatic funding constraint. The application must be responsive to the scope of the solicitation. And the application must include all items necessary to meet the BMR.

Thank you all for bearing with me in this long presentation of mine. We're moving into the homestretch now. But as a summary for both programs, I pulled together this slide. First, both of the Formula and the Competitive CEBR need Eligibility Certification forms. So, there are separate and distinct ones for each program. So make sure you're using the right Eligibility Certification form when you're applying. In Formula, you can either use the new Proposal Narrative template, or you can continue to use your own document to write your Proposal Narrative, whereas in the Competitive program, you must use your own document to write your Proposal Narrative. And there are no BMR elements for the Formula program. Whereas you do have BMR elements in Competitive and those are listed in the Application Checklist. But as a recap, they are Proposal Abstracts, Proposal Narrative, Budget Web-Based form, and the completed CEBR Eligibility Certification form. And finally, there's no secondary allocation this year for Formula, meaning the totality of funds were distributed in the primary allocation. And kind of this is like the other—for Competitive, the application will undergo peer review to help determine which applications will get funded.

I strongly, strongly encourage you to review the Application Checklist prior to submitting your document or as you're submitting your documents into JustGrants. The Application Checklist can be found on pages 28 to 30 of the Formula Solicitation or pages 28 to 31 of the Competitive solicitation.

As a review, important dates and information for the Formula program are displayed on the screen. The Grants.gov Opportunity Number is O-BJA-2023-171625 with the Grants.gov deadline of April 19th, 2023, at 8:59 p.m. Eastern and a JustGrants deadline of April 26th, 2023, at 8:59 p.m. Eastern Time. I strongly encourage you to apply early and not wait until the deadline to apply.

And now to review, important dates and information for the Competitive Program are displayed on the screen. The Grants.gov opportunity number is O-BJA-2023-171623. The Grants.gov deadline is April 19th, 2023, at 8:59 p.m. Eastern Time and the JustGrants deadline is April 26, 2023, at 8:59 p.m. Eastern time. Sorry if I sound like a

broken record here, but again, I strongly recommend that you apply early and do not wait until the last minute to apply.

If you need application assistance, there are a number of resources listed in each solicitation. If you need help with Grants.gov, you can contact the Customer Support Hotline with the phone number listed here or you can email support@grants.gov.

If you need JustGrants technical support, you can, again, contact the Customer Support Hotline with the number listed here and the hours listed on this slide or you can email JustGrants.Support@usdoj.gov. There's also JustGrants training and resources available at justicegrants.usdoj.gov.

And if you need additional solicitation support and general assistance, you may contact the OJP Response Center. The email is grant@ncjrs.gov, or you can contact the phone numbers listed on this slide. The hours are also listed on this line.

Thank you for your attention during the webinar. We appreciate all your hard work and dedication to improve criminal justice in the United States and are proud to support your work with these Grants programs. I'll turn the webinar back to Daryl as we move to the Q&A portion of the webinar, and Daryl, if you can pause on this slide so our listeners and our attendees can see the resources available and the contact information available. Thank you.

DARYL FOX: Certainly. Thanks so much, Andrea, for all that information. While we pause here real quickly, just want to remind everybody that the PowerPoint recording and transcript for today will be posted to the BJA website. Be on a look out for that with the registration email and joined in with today. You have a question, we're happy to answer those with the time remaining. Just go ahead and enter that in the Q&A box, or bottom right of your screen, and select All Panelists. That way, we'll queue them up as they come in. There's been several so far that we'll be able to get to now.

So first one's a little rather technical, Andrea. "So under CEBR, would we purchase a MiSeq instrument for STR casework processing using sig prep to enter profiles into CODIS while still use using the instrument in part for FGD?"

ANDREA BORCHARDT: That is a very technical question and I actually recommend you emailing me because that's something I need to go over with my program counterparts. It depends on how you're using the instrument, how you purchased it, the supplies, if it's unapproved, and the portion of the instrument that would be used for the

FGD, which is not allowable on this versus not. So it's sort of a yes, but it's a longer conversation and likely the cost will need to be shared.

DARYL FOX: "For the mandatory training, is there a designation on who is supposed to attend that? Can you use this grant money to pay for travel?"

ANDREA BORCHARDT: So two parts to that. So the mandatory training, you can use the funding under the Formula Program to pay for up to three key site personnel. Typically, those would be the individual handling the grants management aspects and the principal investigator or the individual, running the technical aspects of the project. It kind of depends on how you run your program at your laboratory. Now, is there a second part for that, Daryl?

DARYL FOX: Yes. "Is the grant money able to be used for travel for the training?"

ANDREA BORCHARDT: For that two-day training, the formula funding can be used to support travel for that two-day training.

DARYL FOX: "Is there no longer a secondary amount for rape kits?"

ANDREA BORCHARDT: Correct. There is no longer a secondary allocation for test-all. All the funding was put forward in that primary allocation in the Formula solicitation and the link is in the solicitation to the allocation per state.

DARYL FOX: "Can samples from crime scene evidence that meet the criteria for CODIS eligibility, however, are not of sufficient quality be entered still count towards that 40% minimum for the Formula grant?"

ANDREA BORCHARDT: Yes, since you never know what you're going to get from a sample, I mean if you did, we'd kind of all be out of job. As long as the sample code is eligible with the intent at the beginning of testing, funds from the Formula Program are eligible to be used for that type of testing. So it's really on the CODIS eligibility on the front end that you want to focus on for that 40%.

DARYL FOX: "Are baseline measures still required for the formula application?"

ANDREA BORCHARDT: Yes.

DARYL FOX: "Page 21 of the formula says that the budget should be submitted as an attachment. But there was a reference on an earlier slide to a web form. Can you just confirm which is to be used for that?"

ANDREA BORCHARDT: Oh, Abby, I love your question. You always dig right into the solicitations. Go with what the solicitation said. I believe I made the reference to the web form on the Competitive Program because it's Competitive versus Formula. This time, we're trying to use a different template in JustGrants to avoid you having to do that web-based form and then subsequently do the attachment. So follow what the solicitation says, please, Abby, and everybody else.

DARYL FOX: "Is there an anticipated date location for that mandatory training that's going to be held? That's going to be in DC area?"

ANDREA BORCHARDT: So for the 23 solicitation, it's expected that the training will likely be held in Washington DC in the fall/winter of 2024.

DARYL FOX: "Can you use formula funding to support IT personnel that oversee laboratory equipment used in CODIS sample testing and CODIS computer server/software?"

ANDREA BORCHARDT: That would depend exactly on the type of activities the individual is conducting. Like are they shared for other aspects of the laboratory? Is a portion of it just for DNA where they're doing work for other sections that are not conducting DNA analysis? So, it really depends. I encourage you to send the specifics of that to me and your current grant manager if you're talking about a current award. If you're talking about for your application submission this year, then I encourage you to send that directly to me in an email.

DARYL FOX: "If you purchase supplies to process crime scene samples using the Formula Grant, can you use overtime to rate the cases on the Competitive Grant?"

ANDREA BORCHARDT: No. The Competitive Grant is not for the processing of crime scene samples. It's to increase your efficiency and your capacity to process crime scene samples. So you really should more likely to be doing things like implementing robotics to process crime scene samples or implement maybe a LIMS or some sort of technology to improve your efficiency or capacity to process crime scene samples. The funding isn't specifically to process the crime scene samples and competitive.

DARYL FOX: Back regarding the trainings. "How are grantees notified of the dates and the details for those?"

ANDREA BORCHARDT: So the two-day mandatory training in DC, that is being hosted by our new forensics training and technical assistant service provider, which is through Research Triangle Institute or RTI. Once the information and the dates are finalized, they will be reaching out via email to the points of contact as listed by your agency in JustGrants. So this is a good time for me to plug a request for you to make sure all of your contacts in JustGrants are current and up to date. That includes whoever's responsible for grants management, authorized representative, financial manager, et cetera.

DARYL FOX: "On page 20 of the solicitation, it mentions PMT is going to be done quarterly, but semi-annual performance reports are due semi-annually. Is this a difference for these?"

ANDREA BORCHARDT: Kelly, this will be semi-annual. Thank you for catching that. That is a correction that needs to be made. So there's no changes to the frequency of PMT and performance reporting for the CEBR program. That is in there just as a BJA kind of template that all the other programs typically follow a semi-annual, but for CEBR, it is—sorry, the other programs are quarterly for CEBR, it is semi-annual as has been done in previous years.

DARYL FOX: "What does BMR elements specifically refer to?"

ANDREA BORCHARDT: BMR stands for Basic Minimum Requirements. There are certain elements that must be submitted in order to proceed to peer review. In this year's solicitation, they are listed. I got to find the slide for you. But for the Competitive Program, they included the Proposal Abstract, the Proposal Narrative, the Budget Web-Based form, and the completed Competitive Eligibility Certification form.

DARYL FOX: "For labs that have 30-day turnaround time for all case types, would a plan for prioritization of sexual assaults or homicides, if turnaround time increases to a determined time, say 60 days, meet the requirement for this?"

ANDREA BORCHARDT: So that written prioritization policy, all we're requiring is exactly what is stated in the eligibility certification form. So, we won't get into—at BJA, we won't get into specifics about how you write it or what you put in there as long as it meets what is written in that eligibility certification form.

DARYL FOX: "If one puts the mandatory training on the last grant from 2022 for both years one and two, then do we not need to put it on year one of this grant since those grant years overlap?"

ANDREA BORCHARDT: That would be acceptable, Kelly. I do recommend, when you submit your budget form, that you make a note in there so it doesn't get flagged. So you can say the mandatory training is not budgeted in the FY23 application because both years were budgeted in the '22 award so that you don't get flagged on the back end during review.

DARYL FOX: "Does continuing education and travel of casework analysts count towards the 40%?"

ANDREA BORCHARDT: Excellent question, Jason. So once you get to dig into that guidance document, that chart that I showed you for the 40% minimum, yes, if the continuing education and travel is specific for meeting FBI's quality assurance standards to continue educational requirement for your accreditation, then yes that could count toward processing samples for crime scene samples because it's supporting a routine process that's necessary for the analysis of crime scene samples.

DARYL FOX: "Then I don't think this was touched upon, but about the mandatory training for the FY 2022 CEBR grantee, that training, has that been identified?"

ANDREA BORCHARDT: I think that's a question from Rebecca. So Rebecca, we are expecting to hold that training. It's outside a little bit of what we're going to talk about at this webinar. But we do expect to hold that training possibly virtually this year. We're not a hundred percent sure. We're having difficulty securing an appropriate venue for the number of people and the timing we have. But that is expected to be in probably fall to winter this year. And you will be contacted again by that new training forensic TTA provider, RTI once that all is solidified and secured.

DARYL FOX: "Can funds from the Formula Grant be used to hire lab technicians who would not be performing processing on DNA samples but would help to increase the ability—DNA elements to focus on sample processing?"

ANDREA BORCHARDT: Yes, Laurie, that's a good question. So again, once you start digging into that fact sheet, that guidance document for the 40%, if those technicians are supporting routine processes that are necessary for the operation of a laboratory such as QC testing or lab stocking for the processing of crime scene samples for CODIS entry, that could count towards that 40%. Even if there are technicians who's not

supporting that, they can still be hired for processing. I mean, they can still be funded under the program. It's just a question of whether or not where you put them in as far as allotting funds for them.

DARYL FOX: "And then who is the chief of the state considered? Is that the governor?"

ANDREA BORCHARDT: I believe so. I think I'd have to Google that, to be honest. But usually, if you Google chief executive officer of your state, it's typically the governor. I think city, it's typically a mayor and then county, it will really vary. It is typically not your laboratory director. I've had that question. It is typically not your chief of police, but it will vary from applicant to applicant.

DARYL FOX: "And are the PMTs due January, July as they have been in the past or has that changed with the October disbursement of funds?"

ANDREA BORCHARDT: No, that will remain the same. It will still be the January, July due dates as it's been in the past. But October disbursement of funds happened with the transition of programs from NIJ to BJA. So, that's been in place since 2020 and all of the processing for PMT and progress reports will remain the same.

DARYL FOX: Back to the mandatory training, that's only once in the two-year-grant, or is it both years of the grant?

ANDREA BORCHARDT: It's an annual training but because typically our grantees receive funding under the Formula Program annually, we were not requiring everybody to put it in for both years on each award. So if you only put it in one year, just make a note that you'll attend the training for the subsequent year using another award.

DARYL FOX: At the end of the queue of questions at this time, we still have a couple more moments, five minutes or so to the end. If you do have a question, go ahead and enter that in. Once again, some information on this slide is up as far as email support and some URLs for more information on the program. And then "Can you apply for both the Formula and Competitive solicitations?"

ANDREA BORCHARDT: Absolutely. We totally strongly encourage you to apply to both if you'd like. We'd love to be able to give the money to all you guys and I'm really excited see what you guys bring as ideas for the competitive portion of the program.

DARYL FOX: "And is there an estimated date on when the awards will be announced knowing that the period of performance will be October?"

ANDREA BORCHARDT: Yes. We expect the awards to be announced September 30th, 2023.

DARYL FOX: "If we bought LIMS software and are currently validating it when this grant is awarded, does this count for the 40% or the other since it's not new or it's in use?"

ANDREA BORCHARDT: Oh, Kelly, I owe you that answer. I thought I emailed you that. So in that situation, that's a pretty unusual situation. You already purchased the software. It's not currently in use yet, so that would fall under a new—because it's a—you haven't implemented it yet, so the maintenance for that would fall under increasing capacity for that first year. You're welcome, Kelly.

DARYL FOX: "Regarding the Formula, do DNA reference standards for casework meet the eligibility for casework samples?"

ANDREA BORCHARDT: If they're associated with your CODIS eligible case, then yes.

DARYL FOX: "Although the project starts in October, we usually see a lag in the release of funding. What's the reasonable lag time to account for the project timeline strategic planning and such? Or is when the funds will be released?"

ANDREA BORCHARDT: That is a fabulous question. So, there's a lot of reasons why there could be "delays" on the funds being released. Some of it is if we are unable to make your awards in a timely manner and in the past couple years have been really later in releasing the solicitation, so it's been making it a little more challenging. We're releasing early this year in hopes that we can have all of our ducks in a row so that when the awards are announced, if you have submitted all the required documents, you should most likely be able to kind of hit the ground running pretty quickly. So a lot of this has to do with really grants management, making sure you're following all the requirements in the application checklist. And the Grants Manager on your side is going through and accepting all the terms and conditions in a timely manner. So, sometimes, it can take a little bit of time if you feel like it's taking longer, you can always reach out to me. I can do my best to help and I know Alan Spanbauer is also on the call and I know his team is committed to making sure you get the money as quickly as you can, but a lot of it really comes down to kind of administrative work and making sure you have all the right information, your budget's accurate, up to date, when you submit your award. So some of that back and forth at the beginning will be applicant-dependent based on what you've submitted and if you've submitted all the correct documents. So I can't answer that with a straight, like, one month, two months, three months. It really depends on

your agency. So, I would probably safely estimate what you've done in the past if it's taken two months to clear the conditions and maybe estimate two months of time for award acceptance.

ANDREA BORCHARDT: "And how close to the 40% for the estimated percentage need to be broken down after they meet that requirement?"

DARYL FOX: Okay. So that is estimated. So, accurate and estimates are not always as used in the same sentence. We want you to estimate. We don't want you to spend a lot of time going down to the single percentage digits. But do your best to estimate that you're meeting at minimum 40%. So, it's not that you've just hit 40% and you're done estimating, you really need to try to have a decent estimate, even if it's, you know, 70%. Just make sure it's as close as you can without spending so much time that you're getting into the weeds of it.

DARYL FOX: "And if one doesn't apply for the total amount allocated in the formula, would they most likely still be awarded that amount?"

ANDREA BORCHARDT: Can you say that again? I'm sorry.

DARYL FOX: Even if we do not apply for the total amount allocated in the formula award, would we most likely still be awarded that amount?

ANDREA BORCHARDT: On a state level, that probably would only apply to state. That's never come up before. I'll have to talk with some of my personnel probably our program's office and our general counsel's office to sort of see how we would handle that. If you have specific concerns that you have too much money, definitely please reach out to me, I'm happy to kind of talk it through with you.

DARYL FOX: Okay. Thanks so much. We're at 4:00 p.m., Andrea. Is there anything else you wanted to mention in closing?

ANDREA BORCHARDT: Just appreciate everybody for attending this webinar. And please reach out to me if you have questions and I do encourage you to access the DNA CEBR microsite, the web link at the bottom right-hand side of this page. I look forward to seeing your applications. And if you need anything, reach out. Thanks, guys.

DARYL FOX: Great. So on behalf of the Bureau of Justice Assistance and our panelist, we want to thank you for joining today's webinar. This will end today's presentation.