

BJA FY26 CEBR Competitive - Forensic Appendix

Definitions

For the purposes of the BJA FY26 CEBR Competitive NOFO, the following are defined:

Backlogged forensic biology/DNA case: A forensic biology/DNA case that has not been completed within 30 days of receipt in the laboratory.

Case: An analysis request for examination in one forensic investigation area (forensic biology/DNA for this purpose).

CODIS: The Combined DNA Index System, the generic term used to describe the FBI's program of support for criminal justice DNA databases, as well as the software used to run these databases.

CODIS hit: CODIS hits are tracked as either an offender hit (where the identity of a potential suspect is generated) or as a forensic hit (where the DNA profiles obtained from two or more crime scenes are linked but the source of these profiles remains unknown).

DNA analysis/analyses: Activities conducted to facilitate processing and entry of forensic DNA samples into CODIS once the sample has been collected from a crime scene or a known individual; this may include screening (the location, assessment, identification, and characterization of body fluid(s) and other biological areas of interest), laboratory processing (e.g., extraction, quantitation, amplification), and/or issuing reports (e.g., fragment/sequence analysis, DNA profile evaluation and comparison, report writing and associated technical/administrative reviews of DNA reports).

Forensic sample: A biological sample originating from and associated with evidence from a crime scene. A sample associated with evidence from a crime scene may include a sample that has been carried away from the crime scene. May also be referred to as a crime scene sample.

Laboratory: For the purposes of the BJA FY26 CEBR Competitive NOFO, a laboratory is defined as a facility:

1. Employing at least two full-time employees who are qualified DNA analysts; and
2. Having and maintaining the capability to perform the DNA analysis of forensic samples and/or casework reference samples at that facility that complies with [FBI's Quality Assurance Standards](#) and the accreditation requirements of the Federal DNA Identification Act (34 U.S.C. §12592) or subsequent laws. Having Rapid DNA as the only DNA capability does not satisfy the definition of a laboratory.

LIMS: Laboratory Information Management System is a software-based system that collects, creates, and stores all data related to forensic examinations in a crime laboratory. Key features

include, but are not limited to, workflow and data tracking support, flexible architecture, and data exchange interfaces.

LIMS module: A sample/case tracking component separate from the laboratory's LIMS that functions only for the purposes of the forensic biology/DNA unit. **Note:** The module may be a product of the same vendor as the laboratory's current LIMS or a different one.

NDIS: The National DNA Index System, and one part of CODIS, containing the DNA profiles contributed by federal, state, and local participating forensic laboratories. All 50 states, the District of Columbia, the federal government, the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Laboratory, and Puerto Rico participate in NDIS.

Rapid DNA; Rapid DNA Analysis: Describes the fully automated (hands-free) process of developing a CODIS acceptable STR profile from a database, known, casework reference or forensic sample. The "swab in, profile out" process consists of automated extraction, amplification, separation, detection, and allele calling without human intervention. See [Guide to Rapid DNA-FBI](#) and [Quality Assurance Standards for Forensic DNA Testing Laboratories](#).

Rapid DNA in the Booking Station: The use of Rapid DNA on buccal (inner cheek) swabs collected from certain arrested individuals that are legally required to provide such samples at the time of arrest for the purposes of entering and searching the resulting DNA profiles in CODIS. A state seeking to use funding for booking station Rapid DNA must adhere to the [Standards for the Operation of Rapid DNA Booking Systems by Law Enforcement Booking Agencies](#) and the [National Rapid DNA Booking Operational Procedures Manual](#).

Ratio of backlog/cases completed per month: This ratio is one method that can be used to normalize backlogs across laboratories of various sizes. It is calculated by taking the backlog of the laboratory and dividing it by the average number of cases the laboratory completes within a month.

Total number of forensic biology/DNA cases completed by the laboratory: Laboratory resource attribution that contributes to the testing of a case to completion regardless of CEBR, local, or other agency funds.

Turnaround time: The average number of days from the date a laboratory receives a case to the date that the laboratory issues a final report for the case.

Budget Information

Generally Allowable Costs

- **Salary and Benefits for Laboratory Employees**
Funds may be used to hire **additional** full-time or part-time laboratory employees to support activities that maximize the effective utilization of DNA technology to solve crime and protect public safety. Tasks that could fall under this category include collaborating with stakeholders (e.g. law enforcement entity) to better understand their needs to increase

capacity and by evaluating, validating, and implementing improved workflows for efficient laboratory processing, improved testing results (e.g., enhanced techniques to recover higher quantities of DNA) or acceptance of new crime scene sample types (e.g., fired cartridge cases). *Funds may not be used to process casework—only to increase capacity to process casework through tasks such as (but not limited to) validation or method development.*

- **Overtime for Laboratory Staff**

Funds may be used to pay overtime for laboratory employees (excluding executive personnel) to support activities that maximize the effective utilization of DNA technology to solve crime and protect public safety. Any payments for overtime must be in accordance with the applicable provisions of the [DOJ Grants Financial Guide](#). *Funds may not be used to process casework—only to increase capacity to process casework through tasks such as (but not limited to) validation or method development.*

- **Training (Limited)**

Funds may be used to train forensic DNA laboratory personnel on topics directly related to activities proposed to maximize the effective utilization of DNA technology to solve crime and protect public safety. See [Unallowable Costs](#) below, for specific training that is excluded from the FY 2026 program.

- **Travel (Limited)**

Funds may also be used for travel associated with DNA training, as described in “Training” above. See [Unallowable Costs](#) below for specific travel that is excluded from the FY 2026 program.

Justification for the number of staff traveling and the benefit of their attendance at the annual event must be included as well as justification as to why other forms of travel/training (e.g., webinars or review of journal articles) are not sufficient.

- **Equipment**

In general, funds may be used to upgrade or purchase laboratory equipment, instrumentation, and associated computer hardware for the forensic DNA laboratory or Rapid DNA in the booking station that maximizes the effective utilization of DNA technology to solve crime and protect public safety. For example, purchasing/implementing new and more efficient instruments/robotics to automate routine laboratory processing steps. See [Unallowable Costs](#) below for specific equipment items that are excluded from the FY 2026 program.

- **Supplies**

Justification for supplies must support activities that maximize the effective utilization of DNA technology to solve crime and protect public safety. Funds may not be used to process casework—only to increase capacity to process casework through tasks such as (but not limited to) validation or method development.

- **Contracts**

- **Contracts for process mapping or other efficiency studies**

Contracts may be established for an outside vendor to conduct a process mapping or efficiency-type study, such as a Lean Six Sigma-type efficiency study, of the DNA laboratory. One of the potential benefits from such an approach is highlighted in the report, [Increasing Efficiency of Forensic DNA Casework Using Lean Six Sigma Tools](#).

- **Warranty, service, or maintenance contracts for equipment**

Contracts may be established to provide warranty, service, or maintenance contracts for laboratory equipment purchased as part of the project proposal.

- **Contracts for temporary laboratory employees**

Contracts may be established to hire personnel to support activities that maximize the effective utilization of DNA technology to solve crime and protect public safety such as validation or performance check activities.

- **Contracts for validation studies for new DNA analysis technologies**

Contracts may be established for an outside vendor to validate new instruments, processes, procedures, or chemistries that are National DNA Index System approved within the DNA laboratory.

- **Contracts for in-house training services**

Contracts may be established for an outside vendor to provide in-house training that is directly related to activities that maximize the effective utilization of DNA technology to solve crime and protect public safety. See [Training](#) for more information about allowable training expenses.

- **Direct Administrative Expenses**

Up to 3 percent of the federal portion of an award under this program may be used for direct administrative expenses specifically related to grant administration and management, including travel and training costs related to federal grant management.

- **Software**

Allowable software which is associated with running the DNA laboratory and/or Rapid DNA in the booking station and will maximize the effective utilization of DNA technology to solve crime and protect public safety may be purchased. Allowable purchases may include, but are not limited to, software and licenses associated with running DNA instrumentation, implementing Rapid DNA in the booking station, software associated with quality control systems, and software for DNA mixture interpretation.

- **Criminal History and Booking Software for Booking Station Rapid DNA**

Upgrades to criminal history and booking software to meet the specifications outlined in the FBI's [CODIS Arrestee Enrollment Format](#) and [CODIS Rapid Import Format](#) specification documents, as well as to meet the requirements outlined in the [Standards for the Operation of Rapid DNA Booking Systems by Law Enforcement Booking Agencies](#) and the [National Rapid DNA Booking Operational Procedures Manual](#) are allowed.

- **Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS)**

- **New LIMS to upgrade or replace existing systems**

Contracts may be established to purchase and install a new LIMS to upgrade or replace an existing system or to install a LIMS in a laboratory previously without one. Projects to purchase and install a new LIMS are expected to be completed by the end of the 2-year award period. Applicants should consider a phased approach and submit requests for one phase or more, if appropriate, that can be completed within the 2-year timeframe of the DNA CEBR award.

- **Existing LIMS**

Contracts may be established to purchase and add **DNA modules to an existing LIMS** or software upgrades for an existing LIMS or DNA module. **NOTE:** See the [Definitions](#) section for additional information.

- **Accessories for LIMS**

Accessories for LIMS in the forensic biology and/or DNA section of the laboratory may be purchased. Allowable accessories include items such as barcode printers and barcode scanners; however, these do not include hardware items such as laptops, desktop computers, or computer tablets. A detailed justification for these items would need to be submitted with the application documents.

- **Annual maintenance and service contracts and licensing agreements for new LIMS**

Contracts may be established for annual maintenance and service contracts, as well as licensing agreements for users in the forensic biology/DNA section of the laboratory.

Unallowable Costs

Federal funds awarded under this program may only be used for the permissible uses of funds outlined above. Among other things, they may not be used for:

- Salaries and benefits other than as discussed in [Generally Allowable Costs](#)
- Any funds used to process casework—these activities may instead be supported through the CEBR Formula program.
- Travel, other than authorized travel expenses associated with appropriate DNA training as discussed in [Generally Allowable Costs](#)
- Education that is of primary benefit to an individual (e.g., doctoral degree), personal development training (e.g., general human resources or staff retention trainings), or other trainings that are not directly related to the operation of a forensic DNA laboratory.
- Trial testimony (e.g., hearings, jury/judge trials, depositions) and associated travel costs.
- Construction and renovations.
- Direct administrative expenses that exceed 3 percent of the federal portion of the award.

- Any expenses associated with Forensic Genetic Genealogy.
- Equipment: Purchase of equipment or technologies that have not been approved for use by the National DNA Index System, including personnel and supplies that would be needed to validate equipment or technologies not approved for use by NDIS. This includes Rapid DNA Analysis instruments or supplies proposed to be used in a way not compatible with the FBI's most recent [Quality Assurance Standards](#) (QAS) revision and [explicitly approved by NDIS](#), or other instruments not available for purchase through a commercial entity.