

BUREAU OF JUSTICE ASSISTANCE

# FY 2024 Missing and Unidentified Human Remains Program

## Grantee Orientation

March 6, 2025





**Congratulations!**



# Introductions

# BJA Policy and Programs Office Staff

- **Hope Zagaria**

Forensic Policy Advisor

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202-812-6420



- **Hannah Barcus**

Senior Forensic Analyst (*Contractor*)

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202- 532-0115



- **Monte Evans**

Grants Management Specialist

[Monte.Evans@usdoj.gov](mailto:Monte.Evans@usdoj.gov)

202-598-1186



# BJA Performance Management Staff

- **Eva Juarez**  
Planning, Performance, and Impact (*Contractor*)  
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(323) 385-1908
- **Armonee Avent**  
Planning, Performance, and Impact (*Contractor*)  
[Armonee.Avent@usdoj.gov](mailto:Armonee.Avent@usdoj.gov)



# Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) Providers

- **Dustin Driscoll**  
Coach - Forensics TTA  
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919-541-5937



- **Allison O'Neal**  
Coach - Forensics TTA  
[aoneal@rti.org](mailto:aoneal@rti.org)  
919-485-5632



# FY 2024 Grantees

- CA Department of Justice
- OK State Bureau of Investigation
- WI Department of Justice
- County of Broward, FL
- County of Suffolk, NY
- Hennepin County, MN
- California State University, Fresno Foundation
- City of Los Angeles, CA
- Prince Georges County, MD
- The University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth



# Agenda

- BJA Overview
- Program Overview
- Next Steps
- Additional Training
- Resources
- Q&A





# BJA Overview

# U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance

**Mission:** 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, governments, and nonprofit organizations to reduce crime, recidivism, and unnecessary confinement, and promote a safe and fair criminal justice system.



<https://bja.ojp.gov/>



# How BJA Supports the Field



## Investments

Provide diverse funding to accomplish goals.



## Sharing Knowledge

Research, develop, and deliver what works to build capacity and improve outcomes.



## Engagement

Consult, connect, and convene.





# Program Overview

# History and Purpose

Implement a comprehensive approach to **establish or improve the reporting, transportation, forensic processing, and identification of missing persons and unidentified human remains in the United States, including those cases involving migrants.**



Established in FY 2022



\$19,670,660 awarded in grants



# Objectives

## Support agencies to:

- Report Missing Persons (MP) and Unidentified Human Remains (UHR) cases to NamUs, NCIC, and ViCAP
- Process MP and UHR cases using forensic methodologies such as anthropology, odontology, fingerprints, and DNA
- Identify MP and UHR and repatriate remains to loved ones and next of kin

## Encourage agencies to:

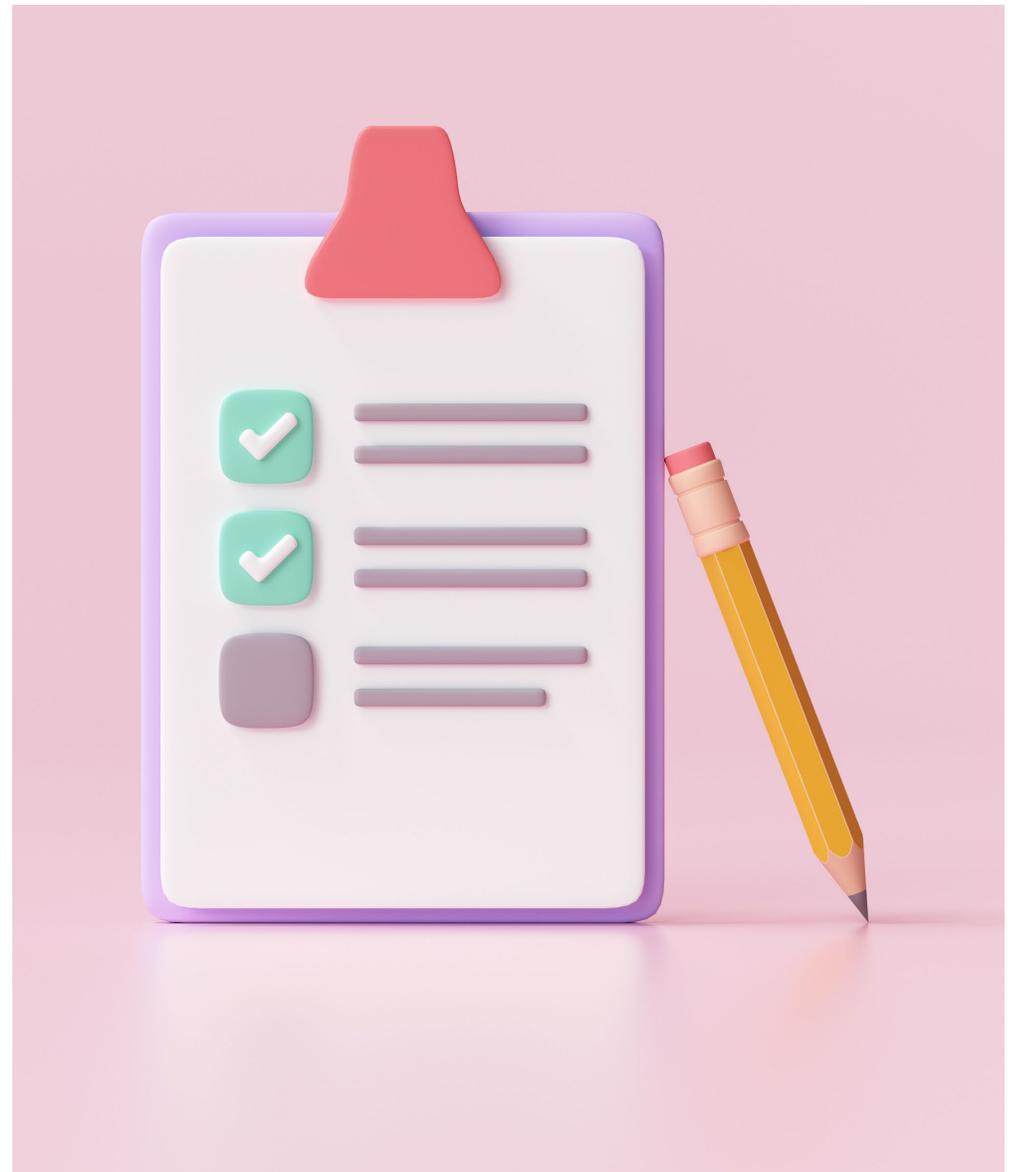
Form collaborative partnerships across the medicolegal, law enforcement, forensic, prosecutorial, and advocacy communities to further enhance their work



# Deliverables

Final Inventory – consisting of cases worked with MUHR funding at the end of the award

**Due date**  
Closeout + 120 days



# Supporting Your Program



## BJA POLICY TEAM

Develops grant programs and directs technical assistance to advance the field's public safety goals.



## BJA PROGRAMS TEAM

Grant monitoring and administration assistance to ensure success and compliance. Primary point of contact.



## BJA PPI TEAM

Sets program goals and collects performance measures data to assess achievement of those goals. All BJA grantees collect and report performance data.

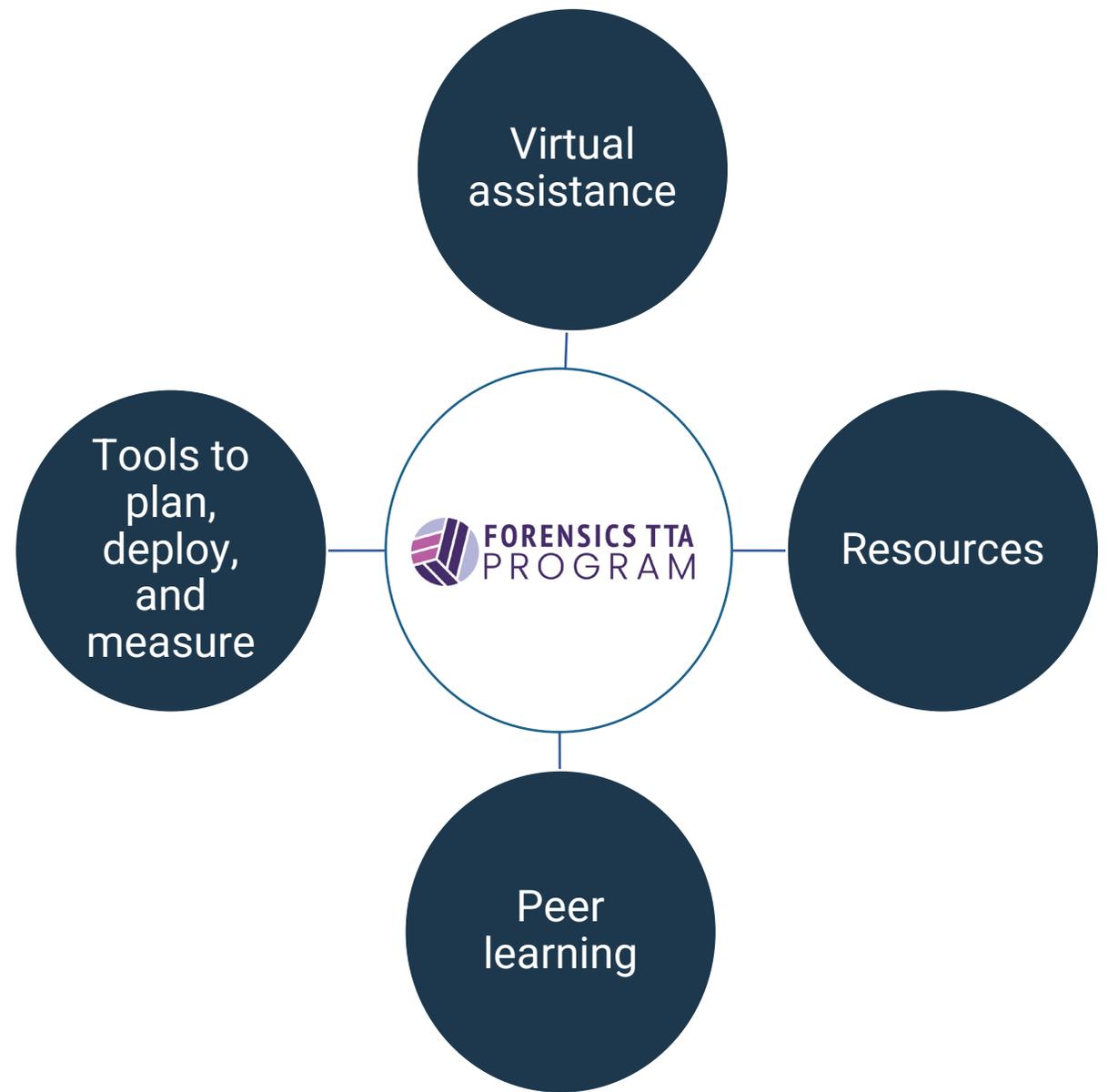


## TTA PROVIDER

Provides subject matter expertise and project management support. Conduit to BJA Policy Team.

# TTA

- Every grantee has a coach
- Quarterly calls
- Annual virtual convenings
- No cost to grantees





# Next Steps

# Two Parts to Success

1

Manage the award to comply with all conditions.

2

Perform project objectives.



# Grant Agreement Award Conditions

Check your award for special conditions to be resolved

- Uncleared budget
- Missing Application Attachments
- #41 – Submission of BJA published materials
- #44 – DNA Analyses

- > Project Information
- > Financial Information
- ✓ Award Conditions

This award is offered subject to the conditions or limitations set forth in the Award Information, Project Information, Financial Information, and Award Conditions.



Meaningful access requirement for individuals with limited English proficiency

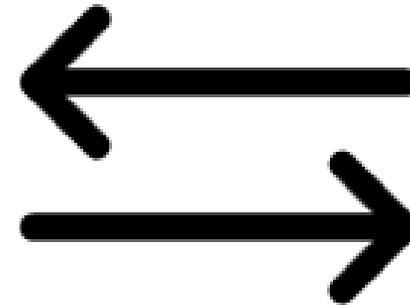
The recipient, and any subrecipient at any tier, must take reasonable steps to ensure that individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP) have meaningful access to their programs and activities to comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of national origin, including discrimination against individuals with LEP. Such steps may require providing language assistance services, such as interpretation or translation services. The Department of Justice guidance on compliance with this requirement may be found at "Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons" (67 Fed. Reg. 41455-41472) (<https://www.federalregister.gov/d/02-15207>) and is incorporated by reference here.



Compliance with general appropriations-law restrictions on the use of federal funds (FY 2024)

# Grant Award Modification (GAM) Overview

- A GAM is used to request project changes that require prior approval
- The assigned Grants Award Administrator must submit GAMS in JustGrants
- GAM types include:
  - Budget Modification
  - Change Project Scope
  - Project Period Extension
  - Sole Source Approval
  - Programmatic Costs



***BEST PRACTICE: Contact your Policy Advisors if you have questions prior to submitting a GAM.***



Bureau of Justice Assistance  
U.S. Department of Justice

# FY24 MUHR Program Requirements



Check-in calls with BJA and Forensics TTA Team



Attendance by key personnel at virtual 2-day Forensics TTA annual conference



Enter/Update all qualifying cases processed with MUHR funding into NamUs, NCIC, and (where applicable) ViCAP by the end of the grant.



All DNA analysis (excluding forensic genetic genealogy) must be performed by a laboratory accredited to the FBI Quality Assurance Standards



Requirements regarding the use of Forensic Genetic Genealogy (FGG) under MUHR



Bureau of Justice Assistance  
U.S. Department of Justice

# MUHR Forensic Genetic Genealogy Requirements

- Award recipients using MUHR funds for FGG must adhere to the **United States Department of Justice Interim Policy: Forensic Genetic Genealogical DNA Analysis and Searching**
- Refer to page 10 of the **FY 24 MUHR Solicitation** for a full list of requirements



# MUHR FGG **Highlighted** Requirements

1. The UHR must be a suspected homicide victim  
Prior approval from BJA will be required for cases in which the manner of death is 'undetermined'. BJA will seek confirmation that the investigating agency and prosecutor with appropriate jurisdiction are investigating the case as a suspected homicide.
2. The UHR must be submitted for entry into NamUs and ViCAP before proceeding with FGG.
3. The UHR must have an STR and mtDNA profile in CODIS.  
Exceptions to this requirement can be granted – must contact Hope Zagaria to receive any exception approvals.
4. Investigator and Prosecutor concurrence is needed to proceed with FGG.



# FY 2024 MUHR Performance Management

- Performance reports are required semi-annually

- Reports are submitted in JustGrants

- Only report on grant funded work



# Next 30 Days

- ✓ Contact BJA Programs about budget clearance.
- ✓ Set up a **quarterly** call with your TTA coach (they will reach out).
- ✓ Review the FY24 solicitation and your proposal.
- ✓ Think about sequencing and procurement, if applicable.
- ✓ Sign up for OJP/BJA trainings, e.g., JustGrants.



# Upcoming Trainings and Meetings

# Trainings

- Managing Your Award
- Civil Rights Obligations
- Performance Measures

Check here for updates and recordings of BJA grantee trainings:

<https://bja.ojp.gov/events/grantee-training-series>

# Meetings

Virtual Grantee's Meeting –  
June 9-10, 2025





# Resources

# MUHR Program Websites

## BJA MUHR Website



## Forensics TTA MUHR Website



# A Guide to Resources for UHR Investigations

For additional support for UHR investigations, including DNA analysis and Forensic Genetic Genealogy requests, consider the following:



**HELPFUL HINT:** If fingerprints were obtained from your UHR case, contact the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to run the fingerprint card against all available databases before requesting DNA analysis. To submit deceased UHR prints for continuous searches and retention in the Next Generation Identification (NGI) system, agencies with an Originating Agency Identifier (ORI) number may send them to the FBI Special Processing Center at [SPC@leo.gov](mailto:SPC@leo.gov). For additional unidentified or missing person questions or inquiries related to NGI, contact [dpiservices@fbi.gov](mailto:dpiservices@fbi.gov).

## Is the UHR believed to be under the age of 21?

Contact the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) ([forensics@ncmec.org](mailto:forensics@ncmec.org)).

## Does the case fall under federal jurisdiction?

Contact the FBI ([missingpersons@fbi.org](mailto:missingpersons@fbi.org)).

## Does the UHR have a tribal affiliation?

Contact the University of North Texas Health Science Center (UNTHSC), a Missing and Unidentified Human Remains (MUHR) grantee ([ISU@unthsc.edu](mailto:ISU@unthsc.edu)), or the FBI ([missingpersons@fbi.gov](mailto:missingpersons@fbi.gov)).

## Is the UHR a victim of a sexually motivated homicide?

Contact UNTHSC, a Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) Purpose Area 2 grantee ([ISU@unthsc.edu](mailto:ISU@unthsc.edu)). This resource is available to SAKI grantees and agencies that fall within the purview of a SAKI grantee. For a list of SAKI grantees, visit <https://sakitta.org/sakisites> or contact the SAKI Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) Team ([sakitta@rti.org](mailto:sakitta@rti.org)).

## Can the case be supported by a MUHR grant?

Contact the Forensics TTA Team ([ForensicsTTA@rti.org](mailto:ForensicsTTA@rti.org)). This resource is available to MUHR grantees and agencies that fall within the purview of a MUHR grantee. For a list of MUHR grantees, visit <https://www.forensicstta.org/programs/missing-and-unidentified-human-remains-muhr-program> or contact the Forensics TTA Team ([ForensicsTTA@rti.org](mailto:ForensicsTTA@rti.org)).

*If the required resources are unavailable via these additional programs and organizations, reconnect with NamUs staff (<https://namus.nij.ojp.gov/contact>) to determine potential next steps.*

- A brief guide produced by BJA's Forensics TTA aimed to provide information on federal programs and other resources that offer support for UHR investigations.

- Full guide can be found here: <https://www.forensicstta.org/a-guide-to-resources-for-unidentified-human-remains-investigations/>



# Free DNA testing available

- Funded by BJA
- Identification efforts on UHR cases with sexual nexus
- Contact:  
Robert.Moore@unthsc.edu

### Funded DNA Testing for SAKI Grantee Agencies for Unidentified Human Remains from Sexually Motivated Homicide Cases

*All work performed on site (no subcontracting)*



#### Contact Us

For general information, requests for FRS collection kits or to schedule a submission:  
CHI Evidence Unit  
MissingPersons@unthsc.edu  
800.763.3147  
unthsc.edu/chi

For law enforcement, medical examiners or justices of the peace:  
Investigative Support Unit  
Robert.Moore@unthsc.edu  
Director, Investigative Support  
817.735.7943

#### DNA Services

ISO/IEC 17025, FBI Quality Assurance Standards

- STR/Y-STR and Mitochondrial DNA development
- CODIS upload and search
- SNP development/FGG, using massively parallel sequencing to identify UHRs (when STR and mitochondrial DNA profiles in CODIS do not lead to identification)
- Family Reference Sample (FRS) testing

#### Investigative Support Services

- Investigative Genetic Genealogy (experienced staff)
- LE Investigative Assistance (retired LE detectives)

#### DNA Technologies

- Qiagen/Verogen Kintelligence Kit using MiSeq FGx Sequencing
- Microarray
- Whole Genome Sequencing (coming soon)

Center for Human Identification  
at The University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth  
3500 Camp Bowie Blvd. | Fort Worth, Texas 76107  
unthsc.edu/chi | @unthsc\_chi

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# Recipient Resources

<https://www.ojp.gov/funding/implement/overview>

Once you receive an award notification that your application was selected for funding, it's time to get to work. The OJP Recipient Resources provide instructions and training from implementing to closing your award.

## Need help managing your OJP award? [🔗](#)

**NEW!** Do You Have Questions About JustGrants? Register to Attend a [Virtual Q&A Session](#) [🔗](#)

- [Legal Notices](#)
- [OJP Grants Overview](#)
- [OJP Training Guiding Principles for Grantees and Subgrantees](#)
- [JustGrants Login](#)
- [JustGrants Informational Website](#)
- [JustGrants Training](#)

## Financial and Grant Reporting Resources [🔗](#)

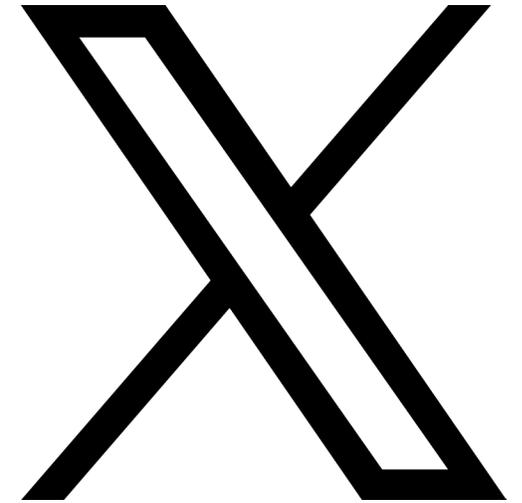
- Real Property Reporting resources:
  - [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
  - [Facility Utilization for Reporting Period Addendum](#)
  - [Instructions for the SF-429 Real Property Status Report](#)
  - [Real Property Status Report Attachment A \(General Reporting\) SF-429-A](#)
- [DOJ Grants Financial Guide](#)
- [OJP Financial Guide](#)
- [Guide to Procurement Procedures for Recipients of DOJ Grants and Cooperative Agreements](#)
- [Policy and Guidance for Conference Approval, Planning, and Reporting](#)
- [FFATA Subaward Reporting Webcast](#)
- Federal Financial Report (SF-425) [Instructions](#) and [Fillable Form](#) for OJP
- [Federal Financial Report \(SF-425\) for COPS Office](#)
- [Audit Confirmation Request Form](#)
- [Grant Performance Measurement and Progress Reporting Information](#)

## Grant System Resources [🔗](#)

- [JustGrants](#)
- [JustGrants Resources](#)
- [JustGrants Training](#)
- [IT State and Territory Points of Contact](#)

# Stay Connected!

- **Facebook:**  
<https://www.facebook.com/DOJBJA>
- **X:** <https://x.com/DOJBJA>
- **YouTube:** <https://www.youtube.com/dojbja>
- Use the QR code to subscribe to “**Justice Matters**” and “**News From BJA**” to receive the latest information from BJA and the field.
- For information on funding opportunities, publications, and initiatives, visit **BJA’s website:** [www.bja.ojp.gov](http://www.bja.ojp.gov).



# Q&A



Submit questions at any time by using the **Q&A feature**.



# Contact Information

## **BJA Policy and Programs Office**

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