

**Agency Name:** Collin County

**Grant/App:** 3930307 **Start Date:** 9/1/2025 **End Date:** 8/31/2026

**Project Title:** Forensic Evidence Testing

**Status:** Application Pending Submission

#### **Narrative Information**

##### **Introduction**

The District Attorney Testing of Forensic Evidence Grant Program provides reimbursement to district attorney offices for costs associated with forensic analysis of physical evidence.

##### **Certifications**

## **Compliance with State and Federal Laws, Programs and Procedures**

Local units of government, including cities, counties and other general purpose political subdivisions, as appropriate, and institutions of higher education that operate a law enforcement agency, must comply with all aspects of the programs and procedures utilized by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security ("DHS") to: (1) notify DHS of all information requested by DHS related to illegal aliens in Agency's custody; and (2) detain such illegal aliens in accordance with requests by DHS. Additionally, counties and municipalities may NOT have in effect, purport to have in effect, or make themselves subject to or bound by, any law, rule, policy, or practice (written or unwritten) that would: (1) require or authorize the public disclosure of federal law enforcement information in order to conceal, harbor, or shield from detection fugitives from justice or aliens illegally in the United States; or (2) impede federal officers from exercising authority under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), § 1226(c), § 1231(a), § 1357(a), § 1366(1), or § 1366(3). Lastly, eligible applicants must comply with all provisions, policies, and penalties found in Chapter 752, Subchapter C of the Texas Government Code.

Each local unit of government, and institution of higher education that operates a law enforcement agency, must download, complete and then upload into eGrants the [CEO/Law Enforcement Certifications and Assurances Form](#) certifying compliance with federal and state immigration enforcement requirements. This Form is required for each application submitted to OOG and is active until August 31, 2026 or the end of the grant period, whichever is later.

### **Overall Certification**

Each applicant agency must certify to the specific requirements detailed above as well as to comply with all requirements within the PSO Funding Announcement, the *Guide to Grants*, the *Grantee Conditions and Responsibilities*, any authorizing or applicable state and federal statutes and regulations to be eligible for this program.

**X I certify to all of the application content & requirements.**

### **Project Abstract :**

The seriousness of the drug problem in the United States can hardly be overstated. Illegal or illicit drugs represent significant threats to public health, law enforcement, and national security. Prior to the onset of COVID-19, the total number of drug cases received by the Collin County District Attorney (DA) had increased by 11% in three years, with felony growth exceeding misdemeanors. Total drug cases filed with the DA increased by 49% from FY2021 to FY2023. Marijuana cases filed with the DA increased by 27% from FY2022 to FY2023. When the DA applied for the first Forensic Evidence Testing Grant back in FY2019, there was a large backlog of both felony and misdemeanor marijuana cases. This backlog was caused by HB1325 which was passed by the legislature in 2019. This legislation changed the definition of marijuana from cannabis to cannabis that contains more than 0.3% tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). The DPS lab that conducts the testing of drugs in criminal cases in Collin County did not have the ability, at the time the legislation was passed, to conduct quantitative THC concentration testing, to determine THC levels. Likewise, at that time, there were no other public crime labs in Texas with the equipment and capability to perform quantitative analysis. The result being that marijuana cases began to backlog at local law enforcement agencies and at the DA's Office. In an effort to reduce the backlog of outstanding cases and continue processing newly received marijuana cases, the Collin County DA, using the funds provided by the Forensic Evidence Testing Grant, arranged for seized cannabis samples to be tested at private, accredited laboratories in the region, prioritizing testing of felonies and older cases. The DA's Office was able to use the previous Forensic Evidence Grants to reduce the backlog of 277 marijuana cases in the office. Between grant cycles, the backlog grows and the DA's Office is using the current Forensic Evidence Grant to reduce the backlog of marijuana cases and continue testing new cases that are filed with this office. DPS labs now have the equipment, procedures and proficiency to test the THC levels in certain cannabis samples. Due to limits on their capacity, DPS cannot test misdemeanor cases which are approximately 90% of all THC cases and certain types of cannabis samples such as liquids. Likewise, DPS labs have limited capacity to test all of the cases submitted from all the cities and agencies in their areas. Because of these limitations, funds are still needed to test cannabis samples at private labs. Prompt disposition of cases is beneficial for law enforcement and prosecution agencies, as well as for the defendants and all county residents. When any case is delayed, the criminal justice system is put on hold. Rehabilitative services that may be sought or received as part of a diversionary program or probationary requirements may be delayed, which could lead to increased addiction, additional crimes committed, or negative health outcomes. Additionally, since there is a known link between drug use and other criminal activity, prosecution and rehabilitation of defendants positively impacts every community and resident in Collin County. Another problem facing the DA's Office, in its attempt to stop the destructive cycle of drug traffic in Collin County, is the policy of

DPS labs to test only one drug/controlled substance that is found on an offender, and to test that drug only until a minimum threshold is met for the required offense category. The problem created by this policy is that drug traffickers and dealers often appear as just users/possessors at sentencing. At sentencing, it may appear that the defendant only had one drug in his possession and the amount of the drug being barely within the particular felony category they are charged with. When in fact, the defendant might have as many as 10 different drugs on him and the amount of the drug(s) is actually at the top of the felony category for which they are charged. To resolve this problem, the DA's Office is seeking to use funds from this Forensic Evidence Testing Grant to test multiple drugs and the full amount of each drug on high-level offenders. This would help differentiate between offenders who are users/possessors and those deserving increased punishment who are traffickers and dealers. Appropriately addressing drug traffickers and dealers will help curb the drug problem in Collin County.

### **Problem Statement :**

The seriousness of the drug problem in the United States can hardly be overstated. Illicit drugs represent significant threats to public health, law enforcement, and national security. According to the 2019 National Drug Threat Assessment, drug-poisoning deaths are at their highest recorded level and are the leading cause of injury death in the US, outnumbering deaths by firearms, motor vehicle crashes, suicide, and homicide. The connection between drug abuse and crime is well researched and documented. Drug sales account for billions of dollars in illicit proceeds annually and result in criminal activity affecting public safety from the large criminal organizations who manufacture and transport narcotics to the end users who commit ancillary crimes, such as robbery, theft, burglary, or even homicide, in order to finance a "fix". The current state of the public DPS labs is that they do not have the capability to test misdemeanor cannabis/marijuana samples or cannabis samples in certain forms such as liquids to determine if they contain more than 0.3% tetrahydrocannabinol as required by HB 1325. DPS has not revealed any plans to increase the substances that it can currently test. Currently DPS labs do not have the capacity to test more than one drug/controlled substance found on an offender and they only test the amount of the drug necessary to prove a particular offense category. This often leaves the impression that an offender had a much smaller amount of an illegal substance in their possession than they actually possessed. This also leaves the impression that the offender only possessed 1 drug/controlled substance, when in fact they may have possessed multiple drugs for drug trafficking or dealing. The DA has used these Forensic Evidence Testing Grants to reduce the backlog of marijuana cases caused by the new law and lack of testing facilities. In applying for this new Forensic Evidence Testing Grant, the DA endeavors to continue prosecuting marijuana cases received by this office and prevent creating another backlog of cases. Likewise, the DA endeavors to differentiate between offenders who are users/possessors in need of drug treatment and offenders who are profiting and trafficking in drugs/controlled substances. The prosecution of offenders who are dealers and traffickers will help curb the tide of drug traffic in Collin County. Funds are needed in both of these areas to test drugs/controlled substances and thereby decrease drug traffic and crime in Collin County.

### **Supporting Data :**

The Collin County DA saw a 49% increase in drug cases received from law enforcement over the three years (FY21 = 2,524; FY22 = 2,384, FY23 = 3,745). In FY21 misdemeanor drug cases (n = 1,281) slightly exceeded felony cases (n = 1,243). However, felony drug cases (n = 2,566) increased by 106% in FY23, while misdemeanor cases slightly decreased by 8% (n = 1,179), resulting in more felony than misdemeanor cases. This trend has continued through FY2024. The DA uses the grant to move cases through the criminal justice system as soon as practical and avoid creating a backlog of drug cases awaiting labs. The DA's Office estimates its testing needs will exceed funding during the current grant because the costs of testing have increased under the new contract with the lab in all categories. Additionally, law enforcement agencies in Collin County have been cracking down on vape shops in the area that are selling cannabis with high concentrations of THC and selling these substances to minors. Studies are showing that high THC level marijuana can have very harmful and life-long implications if taken by teenagers and young adults. Last year the DA tested 1,604 drug samples. Traditionally 10-12% of these samples result in felony level cases and the remaining 88-90% result in misdemeanor level cases. Approximately 40% of the time, filed cases contain multiple tested samples. With the crack down on vape shops and marijuana trafficking in Collin County, we expect to test at least the same number of samples as we did in the previous grant year if not more. Testing 1,604 samples at the new rate of \$110 a sample would require \$176,440 in grant testing funds. The DA estimates that in order to test all the drugs found on high-level dealers and drug traffickers, we would want to test multiple drugs in approximately 1 case per month, with each case having approximately 3 different drugs/controlled substances. This would result in testing 36 additional substances during the next grant period (1 case x 3 substances = 3 tests x 12 months = 36 additional tests). The cost of testing these 36 cases at \$260 per test would be \$9,360 in grant

money. In total, between testing THC levels in marijuana cases and testing multiple drugs/controlled substances in high-level offender cases, the DA's office would be seeking to test 1,640 drug samples at the cost of \$185,800. Therefore, we are seeking funds in the amount of \$185,800.

### **Project Approach & Activities:**

The new marijuana / hemp distinction changes how marijuana cases are handled. District Attorneys must now prove the THC concentration in seized cannabis to effectively prosecute cases since a defendant's claim that a substance is hemp casts reasonable doubt over criminal proceedings without it. In an effort to reduce the backlog and ensure swift resolution of outstanding and newly received marijuana cases, the Grand Jury Division of the Collin County DA's Office will arrange for seized cannabis samples to be tested at private, accredited laboratories in the region. The Grand Jury Division will prioritize testing of felony cases before misdemeanors and older over newer cases. The Grand Jury Division will inform local law enforcement agencies that quantitative analysis is available and encourage them to send any cases they have been holding. The Grand Jury will also review all drug/controlled substance cases to determine if multiple drugs should be tested in cases involving high level drug dealers and traffickers. The Grand Jury will select a limited number of these cases per month and arrange for the additional drug/controlled substance samples to be sent to a private accredited lab for testing. Following laboratory results, which are expected to take no more than 45 days, Collin County DA staff will review each case to determine if an information will be filed (misdemeanors) or request an indictment from the Grand Jury (felonies). In approximately 10% of misdemeanor cases, qualified defendants choose to participate in the 6 – 12 month pre-trial diversion (PTD) program. When defendants successfully complete the PTD program, the case is dismissed. While the time to final disposition of a case can vary depending on PTD participation, time to hire an attorney, plea versus trial, and other factors, it is anticipated that most cases should be resolved within 8 months from intake. During the COVID-19 crisis, the time needed to resolve cases increased to at least 12 months.

### **Capacity & Capabilities:**

The mission of the Collin County DA is to pursue justice and protect our community. The office employs 150 lawyers, investigators, and staff to fight and prosecute crime in a fearless, just, and ethical manner. This project will be a collaborative effort between the Grand Jury and Civil Divisions to ensure evidence samples are prioritized for analysis, test results are maintained, and case outcomes are recorded. The Collin County DA intends to utilize one private, accredited laboratory to perform quantitative THC analysis. This laboratory has expeditiously handled all grant related testing for the previous grant years. This laboratory is accredited by ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board (ANAB) to perform testing on seized drugs. This laboratory was founded over 35 years ago, holds multiple accreditations and licensures, and employees highly trained scientists, toxicologists, and laboratorians.

### **Performance Management :**

The goal of the project is to ensure swift resolution of all cases received by the Collin County DA through the elimination or drastic reduction of backlogged marijuana cases along with the maximum prosecution of drug traffickers. As such, the project proposes to submit 1,640 drug/controlled substance samples to a private, accredited, laboratory for quantitative THC analysis. The Civil Division of the District Attorney's Office will be responsible for creating an Excel spreadsheet to log each grant-funded lab and invoice. This spreadsheet will track the case through disposition. Local law enforcement agencies will be responsible for submitting samples to the lab and the lab will send the Civil Division the lab results and invoice for each case. The Civil Division will be responsible for tracking the cases with grant-funded labs and completing progress reports. The spreadsheet will be continually updated as each new lab/invoice is received. The spreadsheet will also be updated with case dispositions to include convictions, dismissals, pleas, and acquittals. Case information is collected and maintained in Odyssey, the County's end-to-end criminal justice software solution.

### **Target Group :**

Cannabis samples seized by various local law enforcement agencies will be submitted by the Collin County DA's Office for quantitative THC analysis. Prompt disposition of cases is beneficial for law enforcement and prosecution agencies, as well as for the defendants and all county residents. When any case is delayed, the criminal justice system is put on hold, and prosecution becomes more challenging. Rehabilitative services that may be sought or received as part of the pre-trial diversion program or probationary requirements may be delayed, which could lead to increased addiction, additional crimes committed or negative health outcomes. Additionally, since there is a known link between drug use and other criminal activity, prosecution and rehabilitation of defendants positively affects every community and resident in Collin County. Increased

punishment for high-level drug dealers and traffickers will help differentiate between them and lower-level offenders needing rehabilitation, while doing much to curb the drug trade in Collin County from the top down.

### **Evidence-Based Practices:**

According to the American Bar Association's "Criminal Justice Standards for the Prosecution Function" (4th edition), prosecutors - should act with diligence and promptness to investigate, litigate, and dispose of criminal charges, consistent with the interests of justice and with due regard for fairness, accuracy, and rights of the defendant, victims, and witnesses (Standard 3-1.9a), - should seek or file criminal charges only if the prosecutor reasonably believes that the charges are supported by probable cause, that admissible evidence will be sufficient to support conviction beyond a reasonable doubt, and that the decision to charge is in the interests of justice (Standard 3-4.3a), and - should not offer evidence that the prosecutor does not reasonably believe to be true, whether by documents, tangible evidence, or the testimony of witnesses (Standard 3-6.6a). Quantitative testing by accredited laboratories provides definitive, scientific evidence to support the appropriate prosecution of cases as noted above. Additionally, reducing the backlog of cases adheres to the promptness standard and moves cases toward final disposition, improving public safety and encouraging timely rehabilitation.

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### Project Activities Information

#### Introduction

This section contains questions about your project. It is very important for applicants to review their funding announcement for guidance on how to fill out this section. Unless otherwise specified, answers should be about the EXPECTED activities to occur during the project period.

#### Selected Project Activities:

ACTIVITY	PERCENTAGE:	DESCRIPTION
Crime Lab/Forensics	100.00	Enhance the ability of accredited crime laboratories in reducing the backlog in processing non-DNA forensic evidence such as firearms examinations, latent prints, toxicology, opioid related and non-opioid related controlled substances, opioid related and non-opioid related forensic pathology, questionable documents, and trace evidence. Quantitative Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) analysis of seized cannabis to be conducted by private, accredited laboratories in an effort to reduce backlog of felony and misdemeanor marijuana cases and move these cases toward final resolution. Testing and analysis of multiple drugs/controlled substances found on high-level drug traffickers to curb drug traffic in Collin County.

#### CJD Purpose Areas

PERCENT DEDICATED	PURPOSE AREA	PURPOSE AREA DESCRIPTION
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### Measures Information

#### Objective Output Measures

OUTPUT MEASURE	TARGET LEVEL
Document Examination: Number of pieces of evidence processed.	0
Firarms/Toolmarks: Number of pieces of evidence processed.	0
Forensic Biology: Number of pieces of evidence processed.	0
Material (Trace): Number of pieces of evidence processed.	0
Other: Number of pieces of evidence processed.	0
Seized Drugs: Number of pieces of evidence processed.	1640
Toxicology: Number of pieces of evidence processed.	0

#### Objective Outcome Measures

OUTCOME MEASURE	TARGET LEVEL
Number of exonerations where grant-funded evidence was tested.	10
Number of pieces of evidence used in trials conducted.	4
Number of plea bargains obtained where grant-funded evidence was tested.	1400

Number of successful convictions where grant-funded evidence was tested.	700
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#### Custom Output Measures

CUSTOM OUTPUT MEASURE	TARGET LEVEL
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#### Custom Outcome Measures

CUSTOM OUTCOME MEASURE	TARGET LEVEL
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**Budget Details Information**

**Budget Information by Budget Line Item:**

CATEGORY	SUB CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	OOG	CASH MATCH	IN-KIND MATCH	GPI	TOTAL	UNIT/%
Contractual and Professional Services	Non-DNA Forensic Testing	Quantitative tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) content testing of seized cannabis... Budget/District Attorney Forensic Evidence Testing. Testing: THC 133.6 monthly samples x 12 months total samples: 1604 x \$110 = \$176,440.00/ other drugs: 3 monthly samples x 12 months total samples: 36 x \$260 = \$9,360.00 Grand Total: \$185,800.00. The Vendor is: Armstrong Forensic Laboratory.	\$185,800.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$185,800.00	0

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### Resolution from Governing Body

Applications from nonprofit corporations, local units of governments, and other political subdivisions must include a resolution that contains the following:

1. Authorization by your governing body for the submission of the application to the Public Safety Office (PSO) that clearly identifies the name of the project for which funding is requested;
2. A commitment to provide all applicable matching funds;
3. A designation of the name and/or title of an authorized official who is given the authority to apply for, accept, reject, alter, or terminate a grant (Note: If a name is provided, you must update the PSO should the official change during the grant period.); and
4. A written assurance that, in the event of loss or misuse of grant funds, the governing body will return all funds to PSO.

Upon approval from your agency's governing body, upload the approved resolution to eGrants by clicking on the **Upload Files** sub-tab located in the **Summary** tab.

### Contract Compliance

Will PSO grant funds be used to support any contracts for professional services?

Select the appropriate response:

☒ Yes

☐ No

For applicant agencies that selected **Yes** above, describe how you will monitor the activities of the sub-contractor(s) for compliance with the contract provisions (including equipment purchases), deliverables, and all applicable statutes, rules, regulations, and guidelines governing this project.

Enter a description for monitoring contract compliance:

All County contractors submit monthly reports and/or invoices, including programmatic reports, which are reconciled and audited to ensure contractor is fulfilling statement of work and expenses match receipts. DA Program contractors will be required to submit a detailed invoice including date and type of service. The following are the staff assigned and responsible for conducting, monitoring, and drafting of all documents as well as the ones that reveal any type of deficiencies if found in the Forensic Evidence Testing Grant: Debbie Harrison, DA Civil Division Chief; Christina Skipper, Chief Felony Prosecutor (Grand Jury-Narcotics); Ashleigh Woodall, Felony Prosecutor (Grant Jury-Narcotics); and Evelyn Rutherford, Tracie Tidwell, Office Administrator. The work is done at the Collin County District Attorney's Office and files are sored in the Grand Jury Division of the DA's Office. Billing is done at the Collin County Admin Office by the Collin County Accountant assigned to grant.

### Lobbying

For applicant agencies requesting grant funds in excess of \$100,000, have any federally appropriated funds been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any federal contract, the making of any federal grant, the making of any federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any federal contract, grant loan, or cooperative agreement?

Select the appropriate response:

☐ Yes  
☒ No  
☐ N/A

For applicant agencies that selected either **No** or **N/A** above, have any non-federal funds been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress in connection with this federal contract, loan, or cooperative agreement?

Select the appropriate response:

☐ Yes  
☒ No  
☐ N/A

### **Fiscal Year**

Provide the begin and end date for the applicant agency's fiscal year (e.g., 09/01/20xx to 08/31/20xx).

Enter the Begin Date [mm/dd/yyyy]:

9/1/2025

Enter the End Date [mm/dd/yyyy]:

8/31/2026

### **Sources of Financial Support**

Each applicant must provide the amount of grant funds expended during the most recently completed fiscal year for the following sources:

Enter the amount (in Whole Dollars \$) of Federal Grant Funds expended:

16171898

Enter the amount (in Whole Dollars \$) of State Grant Funds expended:

4246620

### **Single Audit**

Applicants who expend less than \$1,000,000 in federal grant funding or less than \$1,000,000 in state grant funding are exempt from the Single Audit Act and cannot charge audit costs to a PSO grant. However, PSO may require a limited scope audit as defined in 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart F - Audit Requirements.

Has the applicant agency expended federal grant funding of \$1,000,000 or more, or state grant funding of \$1,000,000 or more during the most recently completed fiscal year?

Select the appropriate response:

☒ Yes  
☐ No

Applicant agencies that selected **Yes** above, provide the date of your organization's last annual single audit, performed by an independent auditor in accordance with the State of Texas Single Audit Circular; or CFR Part 200, Subpart F - Audit Requirements.

Enter the date of your last annual single audit:

9/1/2024

### **Debarment**

Each applicant agency will certify that it and its principals (as defined in 2 CFR Part 180.995):

- Are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, sentenced to a denial of Federal benefits by a State or Federal Court, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any federal department or agency;
- Have not within a three-year period preceding this application been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (federal, state, or local) transaction or contract under a public transaction; violation of federal or state antitrust statutes or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property; or
- Are not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (federal, state, or local) with commission of any of the offenses enumerated in the above bullet; and have not within a three-year period preceding this application had one or more public transactions (federal, state, or local) terminated for cause or default.

Select the appropriate response:

☒ I Certify

☐ Unable to Certify

If you selected **Unable to Certify** above, please provide an explanation as to why the applicant agency cannot certify the statements.

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