

Department of Justice FY2026 Model Cities Initiative
Frequently Asked Questions

Population and Eligibility

- 1. Our city does not meet the 100,000-population threshold, but we would still like to apply as a county-wide initiative. Would this be considered?**

Yes. Jurisdictions that do not individually meet the population threshold may still participate by partnering with other contiguous local government entities to submit a single, combined application. The total population of the combined area must exceed 100,000. One entity should serve as the lead applicant and include information and partnerships in the application materials.

- 2. If a city government serves as the applicant for a regional proposal, may grant-funded activities, personnel, contracts, subawards, and services be implemented outside the applicant city's boundaries?**

The population threshold applies to the geographic region served by the proposed project, and all grant-funded activities should be implemented within the geographic region referenced in the application.

- 3. If a regional approach is proposed, does DOJ require formal authorization or approval from each participating county or municipal governing body, or are letters of commitment/MOUs from participating agencies and organizations sufficient?**

Applicants must submit Appendix B: *Documentation of Required Partnerships*.

Applicants must include the name and signatures of the relevant individuals to demonstrate partnership and support for participation in the project(s) as proposed in the application. This includes all entities involved in the application.

- 4. Are nonprofit organizations eligible to apply?**

No. Nonprofit organizations are ineligible to apply for this opportunity. Nonprofit organizations could receive MCI funds if they are included as a partner in a city's MCI application.

Application Process

- 5. What are the essential elements of a strong application?**

A strong application presents a comprehensive, well-coordinated strategy that brings together law enforcement, service providers, community organizations, and justice system partners to reduce violent crime and enhance public safety. Applicants should refer directly to the NOFO for detailed guidance on allowable and unallowable costs, noting that MCI is not intended for single, stand-alone equipment purchases but for integrated efforts that strengthen criminal justice processes and collaboration across the community. A compelling application clearly demonstrates how the proposed investments work together to produce lasting, system-wide improvements in safety and stability.

6. What are expectations for community engagement prior to application or implementation, and how should this be documented?

A strong application presents a comprehensive strategy that brings together law enforcement, service providers, community organizations, and justice system partners to reduce violent crime and strengthen public safety. A compelling proposal shows how investments work together to produce lasting, system-wide improvements in safety and stability. To be eligible to apply, any government entity must also demonstrate support from required and other key stakeholders deemed necessary for successful project implementation (see Appendices B and F).

7. Does the DOJ require fully executed, legally binding MOUs between all listed partners during the Phase 1 application submission, or can finalized agreements be deferred until Phase 2?

No. A legally binding MOU is not required for partners listed in Appendix B or Appendix F of the Phase I application. In order to be eligible to apply, a government entity must “[d]emonstrate support from required and other key stakeholders deemed necessary for successful project implementation.” As part of the Phase 1 application, eligible applicants must submit Appendix B, “Documentation of Required Partnerships.” Names and signatures of the partners listed in Appendix B are required along with names and signatures of any other partnership that the applicant would like to include.

8. Who retains final authority over the application submission, certification requirements, implementation decisions, administration of funds, and the management of subrecipients?

The lead applicant entity retains final authority over the application submission, certification requirements, implementation decisions, administration of funds, and the management of subrecipients. However, as a whole-of-city approach, DOJ would expect substantial coordination among all partners listed in Appendix B to demonstrate positive outcomes in reducing crime and restoring law and order to serve as a nationwide example.

9. During Phase 2 of the application process, who from an executive "whole-of-city" coalition (e.g., Mayor, Commonwealth's Attorney, Sheriff, police department leadership) is required to attend and lead the presentation?

DOJ will provide additional guidance about the presentations and potential site visits to the selected finalists.

10. During Phase 2 of the application process, will the presentations and site visits be scored on a rubric independent of the Phase 1 written proposal, or are they simply used to verify what was written in the application?

DOJ will provide additional guidance about the presentations and potential site visits to the selected finalists.

Certifications

11. Are jurisdictions that have policies limiting cooperation with federal immigration enforcement eligible for the MCI program?

Eligible applicants for MCI funding must Submit the Certified Assurances as to Compliance with 8 U.S.C. § 1373 form, located in Appendix A, and comply with the July 29, 2025, Guidance for Recipients of Federal Funding Regarding Unlawful Discrimination issued by the [U.S. Attorney General](#). To advance public safety, applicants also must ensure that their initiatives align with the following DOJ priorities:

1. Directly supporting law enforcement operations (including immigration law enforcement operations);
2. Combatting violent crime;
3. Supporting services to American citizens;
4. Protecting American children;
5. Supporting American victims of trafficking and sexual assault;
6. Enforcing prohibitions on open illicit drug use;
7. Enforcing prohibitions on urban camping and loitering;
8. Enforcing prohibitions on urban squatting; and
9. Enforcing, and where necessary, adopting standards that address individuals who are a danger to themselves or others and suffer from serious mental illness or substance use disorder, or who are living on the streets and cannot care for themselves, through assisted outpatient treatment or by moving them into treatment centers or other appropriate facilities via civil commitment or other available means, to the maximum extent permitted by law.

Allowable Costs

12. Is new construction, such as the construction of a public safety building or training facility, an allowable cost under MCI?

Yes. MCI funds may be used for new construction. However, jurisdictions should demonstrate a comprehensive approach to reducing crime and restoring law and order. Applications are expected to reflect a multi-agency, multifaceted strategy aligned with the goals and objectives outlined in the NOFO, rather than proposals that devote most of the funding to single construction project.

If new construction is proposed, a justification is required describing the need for new construction in lieu of other facility options (i.e., lease, rental, or renovation).

13. Can funds be used to expand a real-time crime center, and if so, is there a limitation on what can be purchased?

Yes. MCI funding may be used to support and expand a real-time crime center. Funds can be used for lease, rental, or renovation expenses for space directly used in program operations

14. Will DOJ publish post-award guidance, standard operating procedures, or memoranda outlining the roles and responsibilities of all participating federal agencies?

DOJ expects to make awards under this program as cooperative agreements, which will allow DOJ to have substantial involvement in carrying out the project. DOJ anticipates the development and implementation of each Model City Initiative and its projects to be an ongoing, collaborative effort between the MCI award recipient and DOJ for the duration of the award. If selected as an MCI awardee, DOJ will work closely with the participating jurisdictions to begin MCI implementation including, but not limited to, the review and approval of a detailed action or implementation plan, review and approval of final budget, and release of funds as milestones are completed.

15. What decisions will require prior DOJ review and approval, and what decisions will remain within the discretion of the award recipient?

To be eligible to apply, any government entity must agree to partner with DOJ to jointly develop, implement, administer, and assess the effectiveness of MCI projects. Applicants must also submit any proposed award subrecipients or partnering entities for DOJ pre-review and approval. If selected as an MCI awardee, DOJ will work closely with the participating jurisdictions to begin MCI implementation including, but not limited to, the review and approval of a detailed action or implementation plan, review and approval of final budget, and release of funds as milestones are completed. DOJ anticipates the development and implementation of each Model City Initiative, and its associated projects, will be an ongoing, collaborative effort between the award recipient and DOJ for the duration of the award.