

PROPOSAL ABSTRACT

OJP FY 2026 Special Attorneys Program

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

Opportunity Number: O-BJA-2026-172587

Drugs, Guns, Gangs – Cross-Designation of a Special Assistant United States Attorney to Combat Transnational Narcotics Trafficking Networks and Violent Criminal Gangs in the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit of South Carolina

Submitted by:

Thirteenth Judicial Circuit Solicitor's Office

Cindy S. Crick, Solicitor

May 20, 2026

The Thirteenth Judicial Circuit Solicitor's Office, serving Greenville County and Pickens County, South Carolina, requests funding under the OJP FY 2026 Special Attorneys Program for its project Drugs, Guns, Gangs – Cross-Designation of a Special Assistant United States Attorney to Combat Transnational Narcotics Trafficking Networks and Violent Criminal Gangs in the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit of South Carolina to cross-designate one experienced Assistant Solicitor as a Special Assistant United States Attorney (SAUSA) within the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of South Carolina. The designated prosecutor will focus exclusively on the investigation and prosecution of violent offenders, narcotics traffickers, firearms offenders, gang members, and repeat offenders under federal statutes (especially with regard to those crimes committed by criminal aliens). Particular emphasis would be given to the investigation and prosecution of transnational fentanyl, methamphetamine, and cocaine trafficking networks operated by international cartel organizations that utilize the Thirteenth Circuit as part of their distribution networks into the interior of the Southeast United States.

This project will take place in and benefit the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit of South Carolina, comprised of Greenville and Pickens Counties, which combined have almost 725,000 citizens. Greenville County is the most populous county in South Carolina. It serves as a major interstate commerce hub at the intersection of I-85 and I-385, making it a strategic distribution point for drug trafficking networks. South Carolina Attorney General Alan Wilson has publicly described Greenville as the “front porch” of South Carolina for drug trafficking. The project will benefit both the citizens of the Thirteenth Circuit and the law enforcement agencies for both counties by reducing drug and gang-related crime in the circuit.

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

OJP FY 2026 Special Attorneys Program

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Drugs, Guns, Gangs – Cross-Designation of a Special Assistant United States Attorney to Combat Transnational Narcotics Trafficking Networks and Violent Criminal Gangs in the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit of South Carolina

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Section 1: Project Goals and Objectives

Overview

The Thirteenth Judicial Circuit Solicitor's Office, serving Greenville County and Pickens County, South Carolina, respectfully submits this application for the OJP FY 2026 Special Attorneys Program. This proposal seeks funding to support the assignment of an experienced Thirteenth Circuit state prosecutor to serve as a Special Assistant United States Attorney (SAUSA) within the United States Attorney's Office for the District of South Carolina for the purpose of identifying, screening, coordinating, and charging cases suitable for federal adoption and prosecution. The initiative will strengthen collaboration between state and federal law enforcement agencies; increase the prosecution of violent offenders, narcotics traffickers, firearms offenders, gang members, and repeat offenders under federal statutes (especially with regard to those crimes committed by criminal

aliens); and enhance public safety throughout the Thirteenth Circuit. Particular emphasis would be given to the investigation and prosecution of transnational fentanyl, methamphetamine, and cocaine trafficking networks operated by international cartel organizations that utilize the Thirteenth Circuit as part of their distribution networks into the interior of the Southeast United States.

Statement of Need

Violent crime, firearms offenses, narcotics trafficking, organized criminal activity, and repeat offender cases often involve conduct that may be prosecuted more effectively under federal law. However, many potentially eligible cases are never referred for federal consideration due to limited staffing, inconsistent coordination, or lack of dedicated personnel to identify qualifying offenses early in the investigative process. A state prosecutor with primary responsibilities to the state court system cannot and would not be able to support the level of coordination that a cross-designated prosecutor would who is embedded full-time at the U.S. Attorney's Office. That prosecutor's primary work would be to identify cases that serve our office and the Department of Justice's (hereinafter "Department") priorities by charging in federal court.

A dedicated prosecutor embedded within the United States Attorney's Office will bridge the gap between local prosecutors, law enforcement agencies, and federal prosecutors by proactively reviewing arrests, investigations, and indictments for potential federal adoption. This partnership will allow the jurisdiction to leverage stronger sentencing

provisions, federal investigative resources, and multi-agency collaboration to target the most dangerous offenders.

This would be particularly important in the prosecution of narcotics trafficking offenses. The Thirteenth Circuit includes Greenville County, the most populous county in South Carolina. Greenville is one of the state's fastest growing counties, and it serves as a major interstate commerce hub at the intersection of I-85 and I-385, making it a strategic distribution point for drug trafficking networks. South Carolina Attorney General Alan Wilson has publicly described Greenville as the "front porch" of South Carolina for drug trafficking. This position would serve our office and the Department's efforts to identify and prioritize cartel targets and transnational fentanyl, methamphetamine, and cocaine traffickers for federal prosecution. The same is true with respect to criminal conduct committed by illegal aliens, where federal remedies may be more effective than those available in the state system.

The Solicitor's Office regularly works in close coordination with the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED), the Greenville County Multi-Jurisdictional Drug Enforcement Unit, and other law enforcement agencies. Despite this collaboration, the scale of the problem with regard to criminal activity linked to criminal aliens, especially in regard to narcotics trafficking, continues to strain prosecutorial capacity. The cross-designation of a dedicated SAUSA through this grant will allow our office to sustain and expand this enforcement momentum, pursue complex multi-jurisdictional cases that require federal jurisdiction and resources, and contribute meaningfully to the intergovernmental coordination that has made.

Goals and Objectives

The goals of this project are as follows:

1. Increase the number of qualifying state cases referred for federal prosecution.

The Thirteenth Circuit is facing an ever-increasing workload of cases involving matters that could be prosecuted in federal court. This project will facilitate the referral of an increased number of priority cases that would benefit from the resources and potential sentences available in the federal system.

2. Improve coordination between state prosecutors, federal prosecutors, and law enforcement agencies.

While the Thirteenth Circuit enjoys a strong working relationship with the United States Attorney's Office for the District of South Carolina, such interaction can be strengthened. This project will allow greater coordination and cooperation by the two prosecution agencies by having a SAUSA who is regularly reviewing cases that would benefit from prosecution in federal court. Furthermore, the SAUSA would be able to interface with both state and federal law enforcement agencies, leading to greater cooperation on joint investigations leading to significant prosecutions.

3. Enhance prosecution of violent offenders, firearms offenders, drug traffickers, gangs, and organized crime.

This project will make it possible to transfer cases to federal court where criminals face potentially longer sentences for certain crimes, especially those related to firearms and organized crime. The project also gives the Thirteenth Circuit greater access to federal

resources, which can assist the Thirteenth Circuit in investigating and prosecuting those categories of priority offenses.

4. Reduce recidivism and improve public safety outcomes.

Many criminal defendants in the state court system face minimal sentences for certain gun-related offenses or gang-related offenses. Transferring these cases to the federal system for prosecution by the SAUSA funded by this project will ensure that dangerous, violent criminals will serve longer sentences, improving public safety. Furthermore, federal investigations and prosecutions will focus on larger narcotics trafficking organizations, reducing the amount of drugs coming into the Thirteenth Circuit.

5. Streamline case screening and referral processes.

By having a SAUSA dedicated to reviewing Thirteenth Circuit cases for referral to the federal system for prosecution, this project will facilitate those referrals. The SAUSA will meet regularly with prosecutors in the Thirteenth Circuit and law enforcement agencies to evaluate which cases would be best served by federal prosecution.

Objectives include:

- Assign one experienced prosecutor to work full-time within the U.S. Attorney's Office as a full-time, embedded SAUSA.
- SAUSA will meet at least two times a month with prosecutors from the Greenville office of the Thirteenth Circuit and one time a month with prosecutors from the Pickens office of the Thirteenth Circuit to review cases for possible referral for federal prosecution.

- SAUSA will meet separately at least one time a month with law enforcement personnel from Greenville County Sheriff's Office, Greenville Police Department, Pickens County Sheriff's Office, and Greenville County Multi-Jurisdictional Drug Enforcement Unit to discuss any possible investigations and pending cases for possible referral for federal prosecution.
- Development of criteria for determining which cases should be referred for federal prosecution, including consideration of timeframe for prosecution, search warrant expectations from the federal court system, potential sentences, coordination with related pending or potential federal prosecutions, and connections to criminal activity outside of the Thirteenth Circuit but within the Department's reach.
- Track warrants, charges, and defendants transferred for federal prosecution.

Section 2: Project Design and Implementation

Cross-Designation Structure

The proposed SAUSA will serve as a liaison between the Thirteenth Circuit Solicitor's office, local law enforcement agencies, and the United States Attorney's Office for the District of South Carolina, Greenville Division, as agreed upon with the relevant federal office pursuant to the required Memorandum of Understanding. The assigned attorney will retain their employment relationship with the Solicitor's Office while operating on a day-to-day basis under the supervision and direction of their federal counterparts, consistent with the requirements of this program.

The SAUSA will investigate and prosecute drug trafficking offenses, with a primary focus on cases involving violent gang activity, firearms, and transnational criminal organizations particularly responsible for importing and distributing fentanyl, cocaine, and methamphetamine into the Upstate South Carolina region. This will be accomplished by reviewing arrests, warrants, pending state cases, investigative reports, and indictments for federal eligibility, coordinating with federal prosecutors regarding charging decisions, assisting local law enforcement in preparing cases for federal referral, participating in task force meetings and multi-agency operations, providing training and guidance to law enforcement on federal adoption criteria, and tracking data and preparing grant performance reports.

Use of Funding for Other Purposes

Applicant will use up to 20 percent of their award funding for other purposes. This includes hiring and/or assignment of paralegal to assist SAUSA in collection of cases and materials to effectuate referral and transfer. The further includes technology that would be used by both the SAUSA and the paralegal, to include computers, printers, scanners, and other related hardware. The funding would also include required software for the new computers, legal research license for the SAUSA, and licenses for the case management system for both the SAUSA and the attorney.

Implementation Timeline

The project will proceed over a 36-month performance period beginning June 1, 2026:

Months 1–3 (June–August 2026): Execute Memorandum of Understanding with the U.S. Attorney’s Office. Finalize assignment of the cross-designated prosecutor. Complete cross-designation formalities, onboarding, and credentialing. Conduct orientation with federal supervisory personnel and integrate into active caseload. Develop referral protocols and screening criteria. Establish data collection methods.

Months 4–6 (September–November 2026): SAUSA assumes active caseload, including reviewing pending state-level matters for federal nexus and charging decisions. Initiate case development on new trafficking referrals. Attend regular law enforcement briefings and case coordination meetings. Provide quarterly performance reports.

Months 7–18 (December 2026–May 2027): Full prosecutorial operations underway. Submit first semi-annual performance report. Continue active prosecution of trafficking cases through indictment, arraignment, motion practice, trial or plea preparation, sentencing, and appeal.

Months 19–33 (June 2027–February 2029): Sustained operations. Continued prosecution of complex multi-defendant trafficking cases to verdict or disposition. Submit semi-annual performance reports. Evaluate outcomes and document lessons learned for potential renewal.

Months 34–36 (March 2027–May 2029): Assess program effectiveness. Evaluate measurable outcomes. Develop long-term sustainability plan through continued state/federal collaboration.

Key Personnel

The assigned SAUSA will be selected from among the experienced Assistant Solicitors currently employed by the Thirteenth Circuit Solicitor’s Office. The selected attorney will have a demonstrated record of prosecuting complex felony matters, familiarity with the drug trafficking and gang landscape in the Thirteenth Circuit, and an existing working relationship with the federal and state law enforcement partners involved in current investigations. The Solicitor’s Office will ensure the designated attorney holds an active South Carolina Bar admission and a Certificate of Good Standing. Resumes and bar documentation will be provided as required attachments.

The SAUSA would be supervised by Deputy Solicitor Jon Gregory and Solicitor Cindy S. Crick. Crick will serve as the organizational point of accountability for grant compliance, performance reporting, and liaison with BJA program staff. Supervisory oversight of the SAUSA’s day-to-day prosecutorial work will be the responsibility of the U.S. Attorney’s Office (or relevant DOJ Division) pursuant to the MOU.

Project Beneficiaries

This project will first and foremost benefit the 583,125 citizens of Greenville County and the 139,198 citizens of Pickens County by making their communities safer. Drug traffickers, crime guns, and cartels will be targeted by the project. The agencies and organizations that currently serve those citizens will likewise benefit. Apart from the

coordination for increased federal prosecutions described above, the project will allow the Department to have a liaison with the Solicitor's Office as questions or needs arise on other Department priorities.

The Thirteenth Judicial Circuit Solicitor's Office, which consists of 50 attorneys and approximately 120 total employees, will be able to better serve the citizens by prosecuting more cases, as many complex and time-consuming matters would be transferred for federal prosecution. Law enforcement agencies, including but not limited to the Greenville County Sheriff's Office, Greenville Police Department, Pickens County Sheriff's Office, and Greenville County Multi-Jurisdictional Drug Enforcement Unit, each of whom work closely with federal law enforcement, would see a decrease in repeat offenders and would benefit from reduced narcotic trafficking into Greenville and Pickens Counties. Federal law enforcement would also benefit by having a full-time prosecutor from the Solicitor's Office embedded with the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Anticipated Project Outputs and Deliverables

The Thirteenth Circuit would seek to achieve and accomplish several outputs with this project. These outputs, which would be tracked and reported as required, would include:

- Assignment one experienced prosecutor to work full-time within the U.S. Attorney's Office as SAUSA.
- SAUSA meeting at least two times a month with prosecutors from the Greenville office of the Thirteenth Circuit and one time a month with

prosecutors from the Pickens office of the Thirteenth Circuit to review cases for possible referral for federal prosecution.

- SAUSA meeting separately at least one time a month with law enforcement personal from Greenville County Sheriff's Office, Greenville Police Department, Pickens County Sheriff's Office, and Greenville County Multi-Jurisdictional Drug Enforcement Unit to discuss any possible investigations and pending cases for possible referral for federal prosecution.
- Development of criteria for determining which cases should be referred for federal prosecution, including consideration of timeframe for prosecution, potential sentences, relation to other pending or potential federal prosecutions, and relation to criminal activity outside of the Thirteenth Circuit.
- Tracking warrants, charges, and defendants transferred for federal prosecution.

Section 3: Capabilities and Competencies

Project Capacity

The Thirteenth Judicial Circuit Solicitor's Office is the constitutionally established prosecuting authority for the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit of South Carolina, encompassing Greenville County and Pickens County. The office is led by Solicitor Cindy S. Crick and employs a full complement of experienced prosecutors, victim advocates, and support staff. The Solicitor's Office has jurisdiction over all state criminal matters arising in one of the state's most populous and fastest-growing judicial circuits. The Thirteenth Circuit

routinely leads the state in numbers of new warrants and numbers of warrants disposed of through trials, pleas, and other outcomes.

The Thirteenth Circuit employs people with technical expertise to both manage internal systems and investigate technology used by criminals. Additionally, the office has the staff to identify, manage, and transfer cases as needed. The Thirteenth Circuit is supported by Greenville County information systems staff.

The Thirteenth Circuit Solicitor's Office operates under the financial management and internal controls framework of Greenville County, which maintains robust accounting systems, procurement controls, and audit functions consistent with the requirements of 2 C.F.R. Part 200. The office has experience managing state and local grant funds and will comply fully with the DOJ Grants Financial Guide, JustGrants reporting requirements, and all applicable award conditions. The office will maintain complete documentation of all personnel costs, time and effort records, and any equipment or technology expenditures throughout the award period.

Investigatory and Prosecutorial Experience

The Thirteenth Circuit Solicitor's Office has an established and active partnership with the full range of federal law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies relevant to this grant program. The office has served as a named investigative and prosecutorial partner in multiple complex criminal investigations, working alongside the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of South Carolina, the South Carolina Attorney General's State Grand Jury

Division, HSI, ATF, SLED, the SC National Guard Counterdrug Task Force, and multiple local law enforcement agencies across the Upstate. This existing operational relationship provides an immediate foundation for the SAUSA's integration into federal prosecution activities and eliminates the institutional ramp-up time that new partnerships would otherwise require.

Key Personnel Experience

The attorney who would staff the project, Grace Moroney, has eight years of prosecution experience. She has tried multiple complex narcotics cases resulting in hundreds of years of prison sentences. She led the prosecution of the person accused of murdering Greenville County Sheriff's Deputy William Jumper, which resulted in a conviction and life sentence. She has prosecuted several gang members and currently is leading the prosecution of six gang members accused in a pattern of violence and attempted murder against multiple victims. She has the experience and trust from the law enforcement community that would make her immediately effective in this role.

Coordination with Immigration Authorities

The Thirteenth Circuit Solicitor's Office and all attorneys to be cross-designated are willing to coordinate with federal immigration authorities and to investigate and prosecute crimes committed by aliens, including federal immigration offenses

Acknowledgement of Pre-Appointment Adjudication

The Thirteenth Circuit Solicitor's Office is fully committed to the goals of the Special Attorneys Program and to the cross-designation arrangement that is its centerpiece. Solicitor Crick is prepared to execute a Memorandum of Understanding with the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of South Carolina (or the relevant DOJ Division) and to ensure the assigned SAUSA operates in full compliance with program requirements, federal supervisory protocols, and reporting obligations. The office recognizes that the gangs, firearms, and drug trafficking in Greenville and Pickens Counties are both a local emergency and a manifestation of a national problem driven in large part by transnational criminal organizations, and that the cross-designated prosecutor model funded by this program is an essential tool for addressing it at the prosecutorial level.

The Thirteenth Circuit Solicitor's Office understands, with respect to all attorneys participating in this program, the following: an attorney's appointment as a Special Attorney or a Special Assistant U.S. Attorney is conditioned upon a satisfactory pre-appointment adjudication. This includes, among other things, a review and approval of the applicant's completed security form, drug testing, fingerprinting, a tax compliance report and a credit check. Attorney appointments may be denied based on information received during the pre-appointment process (e.g., failure to timely file and pay income taxes, serious credit problems, abuse of alcohol, history of usage of controlled substances, or misrepresentations on the security form). In addition, continued appointment is subject to a favorable adjudication of a background investigation.

Section 4: Budget and Associated Documentation

As set forth in the attached Budget Detail Worksheet, funding is requested to support the following:

- Salary and benefits for the assigned prosecutor.
- Office equipment and technology.
- Support personnel.
- Licenses for research and case management.

The investment will directly support enhanced prosecution efforts and public safety outcomes through strengthened state-federal partnerships.

Authorized Organizational Representative

Solicitor Cindy S. Crick
Thirteenth Judicial Circuit Solicitor's Office
305 E. North St., Ste 325
Greenville, South Carolina 29605
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This grant will sustain and expand the Thirteenth Circuit Solicitor's enforcement capacity by embedding a dedicated SAUSA within the federal prosecutorial framework, enabling the seamless co-prosecution of complex, multi-jurisdictional gang, firearm, and trafficking cases that require federal jurisdiction and resources. The project will leverage existing coordination infrastructure among the Solicitor's Office, SLED, HSI, ATF, the Greenville County Multi-Jurisdictional Drug Enforcement Unit, and other law enforcement agencies to maximize prosecutorial impact across a 36-month performance period.

The project will achieve regular review by the SAUSA of pending state-court cases and investigations to determine which cases will benefit from prosecution in the federal system. The project will further achieve great coordination with local law enforcement agencies in determining which cases might "go federal" earlier and potentially benefit from greater federal law enforcement assistance.

Budget Summary

Budget Summary											
<i>Note: Any errors detected on this page should be fixed on the corresponding Budget Detail tab.</i>											
Budget Category	Year 1		Year 2 (if needed)		Year 3 (if needed)		Year 4 (if needed)		Year 5 (if needed)		Total(s)
	Federal Request	Non-Federal Request	Federal Request	Non-Federal Request	Federal Request	Non-Federal Request	Federal Request	Non-Federal Request	Federal Request	Non-Federal Request	
A. Personnel	\$139,101	\$0	\$143,278	\$0	\$147,572	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$429,951
B. Fringe Benefits	\$40,068	\$0	\$40,419	\$0	\$41,463	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$121,950
C. Travel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
D. Equipment	\$6,326	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$6,326
E. Supplies	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
F. Construction	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
G. Subawards (Subgrants)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
H. Procurement Contracts	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
I. Other	\$3,756	\$0	\$2,927	\$0	\$2,927	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$9,610
Total Direct Costs	\$189,251	\$0	\$186,624	\$0	\$191,962	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$567,837
J. Indirect Costs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Project Costs	\$189,251	\$0	\$186,624	\$0	\$191,962	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$567,837
Does this budget contain conference costs which is defined broadly to include meetings, retreats, seminars, symposia, and training activities? - Y/N										No	