



The U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice is seeking applications for funding under the fiscal year (FY) 2009 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program. This program furthers the Department's mission by providing States and units of local government with tools needed to meet the challenges of crime and justice. Specifically, this program seeks to improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science and medical examiner services, including services provided by laboratories operated by States and units of local government.

Solicitation: Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program

Eligibility

Applicants are limited to States (including territories) and units of local government. State Administering Agencies (SAAs) apply on behalf of States.

(See "Eligibility," page 3)

Deadline

Registration with OJP's Grant Management System (GMS) is required prior to application submission.

(See "Registration," page 3)

All applications are **due May 29, 2009, 11:45 p.m. eastern time.**

Contact Information

For assistance with the requirements of this solicitation, contact Alan Spanbauer, Program Manager, at 202-305-2436 or alan.spanbauer@usdoj.gov.

This application must be submitted through OJP's Grants Management System (GMS). For technical assistance with submitting the application, call the Grants Management System Support Hotline at 1-888-549-9901, option 3.

Note: The GMS Support Hotline hours of operation are Monday-Friday from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. eastern time.

SL# 000870

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Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program CFDA No. 16.742

Overview

The Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program (the Coverdell program) awards grants to States and units of local government to help improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science and medical examiner services. Among other things, funds may be used to eliminate a backlog in the analysis of forensic evidence and to train and employ forensic laboratory personnel, as needed, to eliminate such a backlog. States may apply for both “base” (formula) and competitive funds. Units of local government may apply for competitive funds.

The Coverdell program is authorized by Title I of the Omnibus Safe Streets and Crime Control Act of 1968, Part BB, codified at 42 U.S.C. § 3797j-3797o (the Coverdell law).

Deadline: Registration

Applicants must register with GMS prior to applying. **The deadline to register is May 29, 2009, 11:45 p.m. eastern time.**

Deadline: Application

The due date for applying for funding under this announcement is **May 29, 2009, 11:45 p.m. eastern time.**

Eligibility

States¹ and units of local government may apply for FY 2009 Coverdell funds. States may be eligible for both “base” (formula) and competitive funds. Units of local government within States may be eligible for competitive funds and may apply directly to NIJ. State applications for funding **MUST** be submitted by the Coverdell State Administering Agency (SAA) listed on the OJP website at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/saa/index.htm>. (Other interested State agencies or departments must coordinate with their respective SAAs.) Each applicant must satisfy the specific application requirements outlined in this announcement, the general requirements for NIJ and OJP grants, and all other applicable legal requirements.

The Coverdell law (at 42 U.S.C. § 3797k) requires that, to request a grant, an applicant for the Coverdell funds must submit:

1. *A certification and description regarding a plan for forensic science laboratories.* Each applicant must submit a certification that the State or unit of local government has developed a plan for forensic science laboratories under a program intended to improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services in the State, including such services provided by the laboratories operated by the State and those

¹ For purposes of the Coverdell program, the term “State” means each of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. For certain purposes, American Samoa and the Northern Mariana Islands are treated as one State.

operated by units of local government within the State. Applicants must also describe the manner in which the grant will be used to carry out that plan.

2. *A certification regarding use of generally accepted laboratory practices.* Each applicant must submit a certification that any forensic laboratory system, medical examiner's office, or coroner's office in the State, including any laboratory operated by a unit of local government within the State, that will receive any portion of the grant amount (whether directly or through subgrant) uses generally accepted laboratory practices and procedures established by accrediting organizations or appropriate certifying bodies.
3. *A certification and description regarding costs of new facilities.* Each applicant must submit a certification that the amount of the grant used for the costs of any new facility constructed as part of a program to improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services will not exceed certain limitations set forth in the Coverdell law at 42 U.S.C. § 3797m(c). (See information on "permissible expenses" in the next section of this announcement.) Applicants must also describe specifically any new facility to be constructed as well as the estimated costs of the facility.
4. *A certification regarding external investigations into allegations of serious negligence or misconduct.* Each applicant must submit a certification that "a government entity exists and an appropriate process is in place to conduct independent external investigations into allegations of serious negligence or misconduct substantially affecting the integrity of the forensic results committed by employees or contractors of any forensic laboratory system, medical examiner's office, coroner's office, law enforcement storage facility, or medical facility in the State that will receive a portion of the grant amount."

Applicants are expected to review the requirements of each certification carefully before determining whether the certification may be properly made. Any certification that is submitted must be executed by an official who is both familiar with the requirements of the certification and authorized to make the certification on behalf of the applicant agency (that is, the agency applying directly to NIJ). **Certifications must be made by using the templates that appear in Appendix 2.**

Certifications made on behalf of subrecipients of award funds—rather than certifications made on behalf of the agency applying directly to the National Institute of Justice (NIJ)—are **not** acceptable to satisfy the certification requirements.

In connection with the certification regarding external investigations described above, applicants **must** provide, prior to receiving award funds, the name(s) of the existing "government entity" (or government entities). This information is to be provided as an attachment to the program narrative section of the application. See "What An Application Must Include," below, and Appendix 3, which includes a template for the attachment.

Please note that funds will not be made available to applicant agencies that fail to provide the necessary information.

Important Note on Referrals in Connection With Allegations of Serious Negligence or Serious Misconduct

The highest standards of integrity in the practice of forensic science are critical to the enhancement of the administration of justice. We assume that recipients (and subrecipients) of Coverdell funds will make use of the process referenced in their certification as to external investigations and will refer allegations of serious negligence or misconduct substantially affecting the integrity of forensic results to government entities with an appropriate process in place to

conduct independent external investigations, such as the government entities identified in the grant application.

For each fiscal year of an award, recipients will be required to report to the National Institute of Justice on an annual basis---

- 1) the number and nature of any such allegations;*
- 2) information on the referrals of such allegations (e.g., the government entity or entities to which referred, the date of referral);*
- 3) the outcome of such referrals (if known as of the date of the report); and*
- 4) if any such allegations were not referred, the reason(s) for the non-referral.*

Payments to recipients (including payments under future awards) may be withheld if the required information is not submitted on a timely basis.

Special Guidance on Certification Regarding External Investigations Into Allegations of Serious Negligence or Misconduct.

The certification regarding external investigations has a number of requirements, each of which must be satisfied before the certification may be made. The official authorized to make the certification on behalf of the applicant agency must review each of the statutory elements and this guidance carefully before determining whether a certification may be properly made. After reviewing the information and guidance provided here, the official, on behalf of the applicant agency, must determine whether:

- A government entity exists
- With an appropriate process in place
- To conduct independent, external investigations
- Into allegations of serious negligence or misconduct
- Substantially affecting the integrity of the forensic results
- Committed by employees or contractors
- Of any forensic laboratory system, medical examiner's office, coroner's office, law enforcement storage facility, or medical facility in the State that will receive a portion of the grant amount.

Note: In making this certification, the certifying official is certifying that these requirements are satisfied not only with respect to the applicant itself but also with respect to each entity that will receive a portion of the grant amount. Certifying officials are advised that: (1) a false statement in the certification or in the grant application that it supports may be subject to criminal prosecution, including under 18 U.S.C. § 1001, and (2) Office of Justice Programs grants, including certifications provided in connection with such grants, are subject to review by the Office of Justice Programs and/or by the Department of Justice's Office of the Inspector General.

The following guidance, provided by way of examples for applicants' review, is designed to illustrate elements of the external investigation certification that the official authorized to make the certification on behalf of the applicant agency must take into account in determining whether the certification may be properly made.

Because it is not possible for NIJ to provide examples relating to every type of government entity with an appropriate process in place to conduct independent, external investigations into allegations of serious negligence or misconduct substantially affecting the integrity of the forensic results committed by employees or contractors, this guidance should not be viewed as all inclusive. In addition, this guidance is not intended to constitute legal advice from NIJ on the question of whether the required certification may properly be made on behalf of the applicant. Such a determination must be made by an appropriate official and based on the statutory requirements of the certification after review of this guidance.

Illustrative Examples:

1. The only government entity that will receive Coverdell award funds is a forensic laboratory that is a unit of a local law enforcement agency (e.g., a police department). The law enforcement agency has an Internal Affairs Division (IAD) that reports directly to the head of the law enforcement agency (the Police Chief) and the head of the unit of local government (the Mayor/City Commissioner). The IAD has the authority to conduct investigations into allegations of serious negligence or misconduct by laboratory employees **and** contractors.

Guidance: Execution of the certification might be appropriate under these facts. Nevertheless, the official authorized to make the certification on behalf of the applicant agency must be satisfied that the IAD at issue has the requisite authority to conduct independent investigations (for example, whether the IAD is completely free from influence or supervision by laboratory management officials) into allegations relating to employees or contractors of the laboratory.

2. A State intends to distribute Coverdell award funds to State and local forensic laboratories and medical examiners' offices. There is an Office of the Inspector General (OIG) in the State with authority to conduct investigations into allegations of serious negligence or misconduct by employees and contractors of forensic laboratories and medical examiners' offices, both at the State and local levels.

Guidance: Execution of the certification might be appropriate under these facts. Nevertheless, the certifying official must be satisfied that the State IG's authority in this regard is not circumscribed in such a way that the IG's ability to conduct independent investigations is limited (for example, through a reporting hierarchy that does not provide for the IG to report directly to the chief executive officer or another equally independent State official or office).

3. A city has applied for a Coverdell award and all funds will go to the city's forensic laboratory. There is a process in place whereby the city's District Attorney (DA) may appoint an independent investigator to conduct an investigation into allegations concerning the city's forensic laboratory. If the DA appoints an independent investigator, the investigator will have authority to investigate allegations of serious negligence or misconduct by both laboratory employees and contractors.

Guidance: Execution of the certification might be appropriate under these facts. In this regard, however, the certifying official must be satisfied that the process at issue (appointment of an independent investigator by the city DA) includes procedures under which allegations involving the laboratory are submitted to or are made known to the DA, and that the DA's authority and responsibility to appoint an independent investigator to conduct investigations of such allegations is sufficiently delineated in city policies and/or regulations so that the "appropriate process" in place is clearly defined.

4. An applicant agency determines that the forensics laboratory director (or some other individual in the chain of command at the laboratory) has sole responsibility to conduct investigations into allegations of serious negligence or misconduct committed by laboratory employees.

Guidance: Under these circumstances, execution of the certification would not be appropriate because there is no process in place to conduct independent, external investigations into allegations of serious negligence or misconduct committed by laboratory employees and contractors.

5. A State applicant intends to distribute Coverdell award funds to forensic laboratories at both the State and local level. An independent commission established by the Governor has authority to investigate allegations of serious negligence or misconduct by employees, including employees of units of local government within the State.

Guidance: Under these circumstances, the existence of this commission is not itself a sufficient basis for execution of the certification. In this regard, the commission does not have authority to investigate allegations of serious negligence or misconduct by contractors of State and local government forensic laboratories that receive Coverdell funds. (If, however, some other government entity, distinct from the commission, has a process in place to conduct independent external investigations of allegations of serious negligence or misconduct by such contractors, execution of the certification might be appropriate depending on all the facts.)

6. A local forensic laboratory, which is intended to receive a portion of the funds from a Coverdell award to a State, notifies the State applicant that a quality assurance official is responsible for investigating allegations of serious negligence or misconduct by employees and contractors of the local forensic laboratory. The quality assurance official reports to the director of the forensic laboratory.

Guidance: Under these circumstances, execution of the certification would not be appropriate because the quality assurance official reports to the director of the forensic laboratory and, therefore, there is no process in place to conduct independent, external investigations of allegations against the forensics laboratory as required to make the certification.

7. An applicant agency (a forensics laboratory) intends to employ a contractor or a nongovernmental organization to conduct investigations into allegations of serious negligence or misconduct committed by laboratory employees.

Guidance: Under these circumstances, execution of the certification would not be appropriate, as there is neither a government entity nor an appropriate process in place to conduct independent, external investigations of allegations against the laboratory, whether alleged to be committed by laboratory employees and/or contractors, because the contractor or nongovernmental entity is employed by and responsible to the forensics laboratory.

8. An applicant agency is accredited by an independent accrediting or certifying organization such as CALEA, ASCLD-LAB, NAME, FQS-I, etc.

Guidance: In this situation, execution of the certification would not be appropriate. The fact of accreditation or certification by an outside entity on its own does not demonstrate that the agency has a process in place to investigate allegations of serious negligence or

misconduct committed by employees or contractors. There is insufficient information to properly make the required certification in this situation.

Specific Information—Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program

Coverdell grants may be used to improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science and medical examiner services, including services provided by laboratories operated by States and/or units of local government. Among other things, funds may be used to eliminate backlogs in the analysis of general forensic evidence or to train and employ forensic laboratory personnel to eliminate such backlogs.

A. Available funding

Because certain program-related deductions may be taken, between \$22,500,000 and \$25,000,000 is anticipated to be available for Coverdell awards in FY 2009. The figures and calculations reflected in this solicitation (for example, the estimated minimum award to States and the estimated amount of “base” funds, by State) are based on an estimated total amount available of \$22,500,000, although, as indicated, the amount could be as much as \$25,000,000.

1. “Base” funds for States

Approximately 75 percent of the funds available for Coverdell grants will be allocated among eligible States based on population (“State base funds”). The approximate amount for each eligible State is listed in Appendix 1: “Estimated Amount of Base Funds, by State.”²

2. Competitive funds for States and units of local government

Twenty-five percent of the available funds will be allocated among States and units of local government through a competitive process. The average annual number of part 1 violent crimes reported by each State to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for calendar years 2005, 2006 and 2007, existing resources, and current needs of the potential grant recipient will be considerations in award decisions. For FY 2009, the maximum amount a State or unit of local government may receive in competitive funds is **\$125,000**.

Units of local government that provide forensic science or medical examiner services (whether through a forensic science laboratory, medical examiner’s office, or coroner’s office) may apply directly to NIJ for competitive funds. A State may apply through its SAA for competitive funds for forensic sciences improvements **above and beyond** those it can accomplish with its estimated amount of base funds.

3. Minimum awards to States

The Coverdell law sets a floor for the total amount an eligible applicant State will receive as its Coverdell grant. For FY 2009, the minimum Coverdell grant to an eligible State is estimated to be not less than \$135,000³. If the amount a State would otherwise receive as its total Coverdell grant (including both base funds and any competitive funds) is less than the minimum grant amount set by the Coverdell law, NIJ will increase that State’s total grant to the minimum grant amount.

² Under the provisions of the Coverdell law, several factors (including the number of eligible State applicants) affect “base” amounts.

³ Minimum awards for America Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands are lower.

All awards are subject to the availability of appropriated funds and any modifications or additional requirements that may be imposed by law.

B. Grant Period

Coverdell grants generally are limited to a 12-month period. Applicants are asked to establish a project period of October 1, 2009, to September 30, 2010. Applicants should be aware that the total period of an award, including one that receives project period extensions, ordinarily will not exceed 3 years.

C. Grant purposes

A State or unit of local government that receives a Coverdell grant must use the grant for one or more of these three purposes:

1. To carry out all or a substantial part of a program intended to improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services in the State, including those services provided by laboratories operated by the State and those operated by units of local government within the State.
2. To eliminate a backlog in the analysis of forensic science evidence,⁴ including, among other things, a backlog with respect to firearms examination, latent prints, toxicology, controlled substances, forensic pathology, questioned documents, and trace evidence.
3. To train, assist, and employ forensic laboratory personnel as needed to eliminate such a backlog.

D. Expected results and outcomes

The result of Coverdell grants to applicant States should be a demonstrated improvement over current operations in the quality and/or timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services provided in the State, including services provided by laboratories operated by the State and services provided by laboratories operated by units of local government within the State. Reduction of forensic analysis backlogs is considered an improvement in timeliness of services. The result of Coverdell grants directly to units of local government should be a demonstrated improvement over current operations in the quality and/or timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services provided by the local jurisdiction.

The output measures for Coverdell awards are:

1. Change in the number of days between submission of a sample to a forensic science laboratory and delivery of test results to a requesting office or agency.
2. The number of backlogged forensic cases analyzed with Coverdell funds, if applicable to the grant.
3. The number of forensic science or medical examiner personnel who completed appropriate training or educational opportunities with Coverdell funds, if applicable to the grant. (See item 6 under "Permissible expenses," below.)

E. Permissible expenses

The types of expenses listed below generally may be paid with Coverdell funds.

Note: The following list details the types of expenses allowed under the Coverdell program. These expenses should **NOT** be used as budget categories—instead they are to be

⁴ A backlog in the analysis of forensic science evidence exists if forensic evidence has been stored in a laboratory, medical examiner's office, coroner's office, law enforcement storage facility, or medical facility and has not been subjected to all appropriate forensic testing because of lack of resources or personnel.

incorporated into the appropriate standard OJP budget categories. For more information on OJP's standard budget format, please see the section titled "What an Application Must Include."

1. **Personnel.** Funds may be used for forensic science or medical examiner personnel, overtime, fellowships, visiting scientists, interns, consultants, or contracted staff.
2. **Computerization.** Funds may be used to upgrade, replace, lease, or purchase computer hardware and software for forensic analyses and data management.
3. **Laboratory equipment.** Funds may be used to upgrade, lease, or purchase forensic laboratory or medical examiner equipment and instrumentation.
4. **Supplies.** Funds may be used to acquire forensic laboratory or medical examiner supplies.

Note: To help ensure compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Department of Justice regulations, Coverdell awardees who intend to use funds for activities involving the use or purchase of chemicals will be required to submit additional information. Please see the "Additional Requirements" section of this announcement.

Applicants should note that award recipients whose proposals involve the use or purchase of chemicals may encounter delays in the release of their award funds pending satisfactory completion of the NEPA review process.

5. **Accreditation.** Funds may be used to prepare for laboratory accreditation by the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors/Laboratory Accreditation Board (ASCLD-LAB), the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME), or other appropriate accrediting bodies. Funds also may be used for application and maintenance fees charged by appropriate accrediting bodies.
6. **Education, training, and certification.** Funds may be used for appropriate internal and external training of staff that are directly and substantially involved in providing forensic science or medical examiner services. In appropriate cases, funds also may be used for fees charged by appropriate certifying bodies for certification of staff in specific forensic discipline areas. All education, training, and certification activities must be designed to improve the quality and/or timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services. The grant application should demonstrate that the proposed training or certification is directly related to the job position and duties of the individual(s) receiving the training or seeking certification.
7. **Facilities.** Funds may be used for program expenses relating to facilities, provided the expenses are directly attributable to improving the quality and/or timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services. Funds also may be used for renovation and/or construction undertaken as part of the applicant's program to improve the quality and/or timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services.

Limitations on use of funds for costs of new facility. The Coverdell law limits the amount of funds that can be used for the costs of a new facility or facilities. See 42 U.S.C. § 3797m(c). Maximum amounts are determined by the total amount of the Coverdell grant (including both base and competitive funds) and the total amount of funds available for Coverdell grants nationwide. The maximum amounts that may be used for costs of new facilities are as follows. (Estimates and calculations are based on the assumption that the

total available funds for Coverdell awards in FY 2009 are \$22,500,000. See "Available funding" at page 8.)

- a. Grants that do not exceed 0.6 percent of the total available funds (estimated at \$135,000) for FY 2009: If the total Coverdell grant to an applicant State or unit of local government is less than or equal to 0.6 percent of the total available funds (estimated here at \$135,000), no more than 80 percent of the total grant may be used for the costs of any new facility.
- b. Grants that exceed 0.6 percent of the total available funds: If an applicant State receives a total grant that exceeds 0.6 percent of the total available funds (estimated here at \$135,000), the amount of the grant that can be used for the costs of any new facility cannot exceed the sum of 80 percent of 0.6 percent of the total available funds (such 80 percent estimated here at \$108,000) plus 40 percent of the amount of the grant in excess of 0.6 percent of the total available funds.

For example, assuming that the total available funds for Coverdell awards for FY 2009 are \$22,500,000, if a State receives a total Coverdell grant of \$150,000, no more than \$114,000 may be used for the costs of any new facility.

A sample calculation for a \$150,000 grant would be as follows:

Eighty percent of 0.6 percent of the total available funds: $\$135,000 \times .80 = \$108,000$
Amount in excess of \$135,000: $\$150,000 - \$135,000 = \$15,000$
40% of amount in excess of \$135,000: $\$15,000 \times .40 = \$6,000$
Sum of \$108,000 + \$6,000 = \$114,000.

Note: To help ensure compliance with NEPA and Department of Justice regulations, Coverdell awardees who intend to use funds for activities involving the renovation or construction of facilities will be required to submit additional information (see "Additional Requirements").

Applicants should note that award recipients whose proposals involve construction or renovation may encounter delays in the release of their award funds pending satisfactory completion of the NEPA review process.

8. **Administrative expenses.** Not more than 10 percent of the total amount of a Coverdell grant may be used for direct or indirect administrative expenses.

F. Expenses that are not permitted

1. Expenses other than those listed above (including expenses for general law enforcement functions or non-forensic investigatory functions).
2. Costs for any new facility that exceed the limits described above.
3. Administrative expenses (direct or indirect) that exceed 10 percent of the total grant amount.

G. Match requirement. There is no State or local match required under the Coverdell program.

Performance Measures

To assist in fulfilling the Department's responsibilities under the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), P.L. 103–62, applicants who receive funding under this solicitation must provide data that measure the results of their work. Additionally, applicants must discuss their data collection methods in the application. Performance measures for this solicitation are as follows:

Objective	Performance Measures	Data Grantee Provides
<p>To improve the quality and timeliness of forensic services and to reduce the number of backlogged cases in forensic laboratories.</p>	<p>Outcome Measure</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Percent reduction in the average number of days from the submission of a sample to a forensic science laboratory to the delivery of test results to a requesting office or agency. 2. Percent reduction in the number of backlogged forensic cases. <p>Output Measure The number of forensic science or medical examiner personnel who completed appropriate training or educational opportunities with Coverdell funds (if applicable to the grant).</p>	<p>Average number of days to process a sample at the beginning of the grant period.</p> <p>Average number of days to process a sample at the end of the grant period.</p> <p>Number of backlogged cases at the beginning of the grant period.</p> <p>Number of backlogged cases at the end of the grant period.</p> <p>Number of forensic science personnel attending training.</p> <p>Number of medical examiner personnel attending training programs.</p>

How to Apply

Grants Management System Instructions. Applications must be submitted through OJP's online Grants Management System (GMS). To access the system, go to <https://grants.ojp.usdoj.gov>. Applicants should begin the process a few weeks prior to the GMS registration deadline, especially if this is the first time they have used the system. Each application requires a separate GMS registration. For a step-by-step guide, visit <http://www.ojp.gov/gmscbt/> and refer to the section entitled "External Overview: Locating & Applying for Funding Opportunities." For additional assistance, call the GMS Help Desk at 1-888-549-9901 from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. eastern time.

Note: OJP will not review any application whose attachments are in Microsoft Vista or Microsoft 2007 format. Applications submitted via GMS must be in the following formats: Microsoft Word (*.doc), Word Perfect (*.wpd), PDF files (*.pdf), or Text Documents (*.txt), and may include Microsoft Excel (*.xls) files. GMS is not yet compatible with Vista and cannot yet process Microsoft Word 2007 documents saved in the new default format with the extension ".docx." Please ensure that any Word documents you are submitting are saved using "Word 97–2003 Document (*.doc)" format. Additionally, GMS does not accept executable file types as application attachments. These disallowed file types include, but are not limited to, the following extensions: ".com," ".bat," ".exe," ".vbs," ".cfg," ".dat," ".db," ".dbf," ".dll," ".ini," ".log," ".ora," ".sys," and ".zip."

CFDA Number: The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number for this solicitation is **16.742**, titled “Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program.”

A DUNS number is required: The Office of Management and Budget requires that all businesses and nonprofit applicants for Federal funds include a DUNS (Data Universal Numeric System) number in their application for a new award or renewal of an award. Applications without a DUNS number are incomplete. A DUNS number is a unique nine-digit sequence recognized as the universal standard for identifying and keeping track of entities receiving Federal funds. The identifier is used for tracking purposes and to validate address and point-of-contact information for Federal assistance applicants, recipients, and subrecipients. The DUNS number will be used throughout the grant life cycle. Obtaining a DUNS number is a free, simple, one-time activity. Obtain a DUNS number by calling 1–866–705–5711 or by applying online at <http://www.dnb.com/us>. Individuals are exempt from this requirement.

Central Contractor Registration (CCR) is required: In addition to the DUNS number requirement, OJP requires that all applicants (other than individuals) for Federal financial assistance maintain current registrations in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database. The CCR database is the repository for standard information about Federal financial assistance applicants, recipients, and subrecipients. Organizations that have previously submitted applications via Grants.gov are already registered with CCR, as it is a requirement for Grants.gov registration. Please note, however, that applicants must update or renew their CCR at least once per year to maintain an active status. Information about registration procedures can be accessed at www.ccr.gov.

What an Application Must Include

Those interested in submitting applications in response to this announcement must complete the required application forms and related documents. You will complete some of the forms shown as part of the development of your user profile during the GMS online application process; others must be attached to your application file. GMS accepts PDF, Word, WordPerfect, Excel and Text document files. It does not accept zip or executable files.

Note: Proposals containing maps, tables, digital photos, and other types of graphics will produce large file sizes that may affect the speed of electronic transfer. Please take this into consideration when submitting your application online.

Required documents

- 1. Application for Federal assistance—Standard Form SF 424**
- 2. Proposal abstract:** The proposal abstract is an important part of the application. When read separately from the rest of the application, the abstract should serve as a succinct and accurate description of the proposed work. Applicants should concisely describe project goals and objectives, project plans, and methods for achieving the goals. Once an award has been granted, the abstract is computerized and serves as a summary available to all interested parties for the duration of the grant.
- 3. Program narrative:** The program narrative must address the project objectives, the expected results, and the implementation approach. The narrative must not exceed **15** double-spaced pages, no matter the amount or types of funds requested. (Appendixes, government forms, tables, charts, and figures do not count toward the page limit.)

- a. **State (base) applicants:** The program narrative must specifically describe the manner in which Coverdell grant funds will be used to carry out the State plan to improve the quality and/or timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services over current operations. (Reduction of forensic analysis backlogs is considered an improvement in timeliness of services.) States are expected to consider the needs of laboratories operated by units of local government as well as those operated by the State.
- b. **State (base/competitive) applicants:** A State that seeks competitive funds in addition to base funds must include a **separate** program narrative (as well as a **separate** proposed budget detail worksheet, budget summary, and budget narrative) that describes how competitive funds will be used to support improvements in forensic science or medical examiner services **above and beyond** the improvements it will accomplish with its estimated amount of base funds. As noted earlier, existing resources and current needs will be considered in awarding competitive funds and should be addressed in any request for competitive funds. Requests for competitive funds should specify the dollar amount requested, which should not exceed **\$125,000**.
- c. **Unit of local government:** The program narrative must specifically describe the manner in which Coverdell grant funds will be used to carry out the unit of local government plan to improve the quality and/or timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services over current operations. (Reduction of forensic analysis backlogs is considered an improvement in timeliness of services.) Existing resources and current needs will be considered in awarding competitive funds and should be addressed in any request for competitive funds. Requests for competitive funds should specify the dollar amount requested, which should not exceed **\$125,000**.
- d. If grant funds will be used for costs of a new facility, the program narrative must specifically describe the new facility to be constructed and the estimated costs of that facility.

4. External Investigations Attachment to the Program Narrative

Applicants are to provide—as an attachment to the program narrative—the name(s) of the existing “government entity” (or government entities) that is the subject of the certification (see Appendix 2) that—

A government entity exists and an appropriate process is in place to conduct independent external investigations into allegations of serious negligence or misconduct substantially affecting the integrity of the forensic results committed by employees or contractors of any forensic laboratory system, medical examiner's office, coroner's office, law enforcement storage facility, or medical facility in the State that will receive a portion of the grant amount.

Appendix 3 includes a template for this attachment. Please note that funds **will not be made available** to applicant agencies that fail to provide the necessary information.

5. **Budget narrative:** The Budget Narrative is a plain-language description of each of the proposed expenditures listed in the Budget Detail Worksheet. It should clearly explain the purpose and reason for all expenditures in the budget. There should be no ambiguities about any budget item. The narrative should also include details for calculated rates or other figures.

- 6. Budget detail worksheet and budget summary:** The budget detail worksheet should address the specific cost breakdowns for the proposed project and should be organized into the standard OJP budget categories. This information should be presented in a manner that details how the cost for each of the major categories was determined.

The budget summary should list the total amount of funding requested for each OJP budget category listed below and the total amount requested for the project. The categories are:

- a. Personnel
- b. Fringe benefits
- c. Travel
- d. Equipment
- e. Supplies
- f. Construction
- g. Consultants/Contracts
- h. Other
- i. Indirect costs

Templates for filling out the Budget Detail Worksheet may be found online at http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/forms/budget_detail.pdf, OJP Standard Forms & Instructions. If you have any questions, please contact the Office of the Chief Financial Officer's Customer Service Center at 1-800-458-0786.

- 7. Coverdell Statutory Certifications:** As described above in the “Eligibility” section, the Coverdell law provides that, to request a grant, each applicant must submit **four** certifications. A certification can only be completed by an official familiar with its requirements and authorized to certify on behalf of the applicant agency (that is, the agency applying directly to NIJ). Templates for the statutory certifications appear in Appendix 2. (Note that there are two versions of the first template – one for State applicants, the other for unit of local government applicants). Certifications must be completed by using these templates and must be returned in the online application. Certifications made on behalf of subrecipients of award funds—rather than certifications made on behalf of the agency applying directly to NIJ—are **not** acceptable to satisfy the certification requirements.

Please note: Specific information and guidance with respect to the “Certification as to External Investigations” is provided above, under “Eligibility.” Certifying officials must read and review this information and guidance prior to executing the certification.

- 8. Description of the Applicant’s Plan for the Collection of the Data Required for Performance Measures.**

9. Other Program Attachments

These include several forms, available on OJP’s funding page at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/forms.htm>.

Selection Criteria

Base funds and minimum awards

Subject to the availability of appropriated funds, States that satisfy the specific application requirements (including eligibility requirements) outlined in this announcement, the general requirements for NIJ and OJP grants, and all other applicable legal requirements, will be awarded "base" funds or minimum awards determined in accordance with the Coverdell law.

Requests for competitive funding

Statement of the Problem/Program Narrative—15%

Refer to "What an Application Must Include," "Program narrative" section.

Project/Program Design and Implementation—15%

1. Soundness of approach to reduce and/or eliminate a backlog.
2. Soundness of approach to improve the quality of forensic services.
3. Soundness of approach to train and employ forensic personnel to eliminate a backlog and increase capacity.
4. Innovation and creativity in the approach to reducing and/or eliminating a backlog and increasing capacity.
5. Feasibility of the proposed project and awareness of pitfalls.

Capabilities/Competencies—10%

1. Adequacy of the plan to manage the project, including how various tasks are subdivided and resources are used.
2. Successful past performance on NIJ grants and contracts (when applicable).
3. Demonstrated ability of proposed staff and organization to manage the effort.

Budget—25%

1. Total cost of the project relative to the perceived benefit.
2. Use of existing resources to conserve costs.
3. Cost effectiveness of proposed activities applicable to backlog reduction and/or timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services.
4. Cost effectiveness of proposed activities applicable to improvement in the quality of forensic science or medical examiner services.
5. Cost effectiveness of education and training as related to quality and/or timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services.

Impact/Outcomes and Plan for Collecting Data for Performance Measures—30%

1. Improvement in Quality and Timeliness
 - a. Anticipated reduction in backlog.
 - b. Anticipated improvement in quality and timeliness of forensic results.
 - c. Anticipated benefit of education and training to reduce backlog and improve timeliness of results.
 - d. Planned steps to achieve accreditation to positively impact quality and/or timeliness of forensic results.

2. Anticipated Impact of Eligible Project Activities
 - a. *Personnel*: If applicable, anticipated impact of requested personnel resources (e.g., overtime) on improvement in quality and/or timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services.
 - b. *Equipment/Supplies*: If applicable, anticipated impact of requested equipment and supplies on improvement in quality and/or timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services.
 - c. *Computerization*: If applicable, anticipated impact of requested computerization on improvement in quality and/or timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services.
 - d. *Renovation/Construction of Facilities*: If applicable, anticipated impact of proposed action on improvement in quality and/or timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services.

3. Demonstrated data collection plan for the performance measures as described in the solicitation.

Other—5%

Average annual number of Part 1 violent crimes reported to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for calendar years 2005, 2006, and 2007.

Review Process for Requests for Competitive Funds

OJP is committed to ensuring a standardized process for awarding grants. NIJ reviews the application to make sure that the information presented is reasonable, understandable, measurable, achievable, and consistent with program or legislative requirements as stated in the solicitation.

Peer reviewers will be reviewing the requests for competitive funds submitted under this solicitation as well. NIJ may use either internal peer reviewers, external peer reviewers, or a combination of both to review the applications under this solicitation. An external peer reviewer is an expert in the field of the subject matter of a given solicitation who is NOT a current U.S. Department of Justice employee. An internal reviewer is an expert in the field of the subject matter of a given solicitation who is a current U.S. Department of Justice employee. Applications will be screened initially to determine whether the applicant meets all eligibility requirements. Only applications submitted by eligible applicants that meet all other requirements (such as timeliness, proper format, and responsiveness to the scope of the solicitation) will be evaluated, scored, and rated by a peer review panel. Peer reviewers' ratings and any resulting recommendations are advisory only. In addition to peer review ratings, considerations may include, but are not limited to, underserved populations, strategic priorities, past performance, and available funding.

When awards will be made: All applicants, whether they are accepted or rejected, will be notified. The review and approval process takes about 6 months. You should not propose to begin work until at least 6 months after the application deadline on the cover of this solicitation. Also, you should not expect to receive notification of a decision for at least 6 months after that date. Lists of awards are updated regularly on NIJ's Web site at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/funding/welcome.htm>.

Absent explicit statutory authorization or written delegation of authority to the contrary, all final grant award decisions will be made by the Assistant Attorney General (AAG), who may also give consideration to factors including, but not limited to, underserved populations, strategic priorities, past performance, and available funding when making awards.

Additional Requirements

Successful applicants selected for an award must agree to comply with additional applicable requirements prior to receiving grant funding. We strongly encourage you to review the list below pertaining to these additional requirements prior to submitting your application. Additional information for each can be found at http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/other_requirements.htm.

- Civil Rights Compliance
- Funding to Faith-Based Organizations
- Confidentiality and Human Subjects Protection
- Anti-Lobbying Act
- Financial and Government Audit Requirements
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- DOJ Information Technology Standards
- Single Point of Contact Review
- Nonsupplanting of State and Local Funds
- Criminal Penalty for False Statements
- Compliance with Office of Justice Programs Financial Guide
<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/financialguide/>
- Suspension or Termination of Funding
- Nonprofit Organizations
- For-Profit Organizations
- Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA)
- Rights in Intellectual Property
- Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) of 2006

Reporting

If your proposal is funded, you will be required to submit several reports and other materials, including:

Each grantee under the Coverdell program must submit semiannual progress reports, quarterly financial status reports, and, if applicable, an annual audit report in accordance with Office of Management and Budget Circular A-133. In addition, Coverdell grantees must submit a final report that must, among other things, (1) include a summary and assessment of the program carried out with FY 2009 grant funds, (2) identify the number and type of cases accepted during the FY 2009 award period by the forensic laboratory or laboratories that received FY 2009 grant funds, and (3) cite the specific improvements in the quality and/or timeliness of forensic science and medical examiner services (including any reduction in forensic analysis backlog) that occurred as a direct result of the FY 2009 grant award. Future awards and fund drawdowns may be withheld if reports are delinquent.

In addition, as noted earlier under "Eligibility," for each fiscal year of an award, recipients will be required to report to the National Institute of Justice on an annual basis---

- 1) the number and nature of any allegations of serious negligence or misconduct substantially affecting the integrity of forensic results;*
- 2) information on the referrals of such allegations (e.g., the government entity or entities to which referred, the date of referral);*
- 3) the outcome of such referrals (if known as of the date of the report); and*
- 4) if any such allegations were not referred, the reason(s) for the non-referral.*

Payments to recipients (including payments under future awards) may be withheld if the required information is not submitted on a timely basis.

The highest standards of integrity in the practice of forensic science are critical to the enhancement of the administration of justice. We assume that recipients (and subrecipients) of Coverdell funds will make use of the process referenced in their certification as to external investigations and will refer allegations of serious negligence or misconduct substantially affecting the integrity of forensic results to government entities with an appropriate process in place to conduct independent external investigations, such as the government entities identified in the grant application.

Appendix 1. Estimated Amount of Base Funds, by State.⁵

Estimated Amount of Base Funds, by State, for the FY 2009 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grant Program			
*Note: If the amount a State would otherwise receive as its total Coverdell grant award, including both base funds and any competitive award, is less than the minimum grant amount set by the Coverdell law, the total Coverdell grant award will be increased to the minimum grant amount, which is estimated to be not less than \$135,000.			
Alabama	\$ 229,755	Nevada*	\$128,208
Alaska*	\$ 37,546	New Hampshire*	\$ 71,986
Arizona	\$ 320,353	New Jersey	\$ 427,913
Arkansas	\$ 140,724	New Mexico*	\$ 108,562
California	\$ 1,811,502	New York	\$ 960,553
Colorado	\$ 243,434	North Carolina	\$ 454,514
Connecticut	\$ 172,554	North Dakota*	\$ 35,095
Delaware*	\$ 47,766	Ohio	\$ 566,067
District of Columbia*	\$ 32,379	Oklahoma	\$ 179,509
Florida	\$ 903,287	Oregon	\$186,788
Georgia	\$ 477,349	Pennsylvania	\$ 613,496
Hawaii*	\$ 70,476	Rhode Island*	\$ 57,487
Idaho*	\$ 83,366	South Carolina	\$ 220,781
Illinois	\$ 635,836	South Dakota*	\$ 43,997
Indiana	\$ 314,271	Tennessee	\$ 306,292
Iowa	\$ 147,977	Texas	\$ 1,198,922
Kansas	\$ 138,099	Utah*	\$ 134,927
Kentucky	\$ 210,404	Vermont*	\$ 33,989
Louisiana	\$ 217,380	Virginia	\$ 382,889
Maine*	\$ 72,022	Washington	\$ 322,770
Maryland	\$ 277,644	West Virginia*	\$ 99,267
Massachusetts	\$ 320,243	Wisconsin	\$ 277,367
Michigan	\$ 493,005	Wyoming*	\$ 29,142
Minnesota	\$ 257,280	American Samoa/ Northern Mariana Islands ⁶	\$ 8,285
Mississippi	\$ 144,826	Guam*	\$ 9,628
Missouri	\$291,345	Puerto Rico	\$ 194,869
Montana*	\$52,928	Virgin Islands*	\$ 6,009
Nebraska*	\$97,570		

⁵ Under the provisions of the Coverdell law, several factors (including the number of eligible State applicants) affect "base" amounts.

⁶ The Coverdell law includes specific provisions with respect to allocations to American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Please contact NIJ for additional information on this allocation.

Appendix 2. Templates for Coverdell Statutory Certifications

(Instructions: Scan signed certifications and submit image files electronically as part of your application package.)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE

**FY 2009 Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement
Grants Program**

Certification as to Plan for Forensic Science Laboratories—
Application from a **State**

On behalf of the applicant agency named below, I certify the following to the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice:

The State has developed a plan for forensic science laboratories under a program intended to improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services in the State, including such services provided by the laboratories operated by the State and those operated by units of local government within the State.

I have authority to make this certification on behalf of the applicant agency (that is, the agency applying directly to the National Institute of Justice).

Signature of Certifying Official

Printed Name of Certifying Official

Title of Certifying Official

Name of Applicant Agency (Including Name of State)

Date

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE

**FY 2009 Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement
Grants Program**

Certification as to Plan for Forensic Science Laboratories—
Application from a **Unit of Local Government**

On behalf of the applicant agency named below, I certify the following to the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice:

This unit of local government has developed a plan for forensic science laboratories under a program intended to improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services provided by the laboratories operated by the applicant unit of local government and any other government-operated laboratories within the State that will receive a portion of the grant amount.

I have authority to make this certification on behalf of the applicant agency (that is, the agency applying directly to the National Institute of Justice).

Signature of Certifying Official

Printed Name of Certifying Official

Title of Certifying Official

Name of Applicant Agency
(Including Name of Unit of Local Government)

Date

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE

**FY 2009 Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement
Grants Program**

Certification as to Generally Accepted Laboratory
Practices and Procedures

On behalf of the applicant agency named below, I certify the following to the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice:

Any forensic laboratory system, medical examiner's office, or coroner's office in the State, including any laboratory operated by a unit of local government within the State, that will receive any portion of the grant amount uses generally accepted laboratory practices and procedures, established by accrediting organizations or appropriate certifying bodies.

I have authority to make this certification on behalf of the applicant agency (that is, the agency applying directly to the National Institute of Justice).

Signature of Certifying Official

Printed Name of Certifying Official

Title of Certifying Official

Name of Applicant Agency
(Including Name of State or Unit of Local Government)

Date

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE

**FY 2009 Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement
Grants Program**

Certification as to Use of Funds for New Facilities

On behalf of the applicant agency named below, I certify the following to the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice:

The amount of the grant (if any) used for the costs of any new facility or facilities to be constructed as part of a program to improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science and medical examiner services will not exceed the limitations set forth at 42 U.S.C. § 3797m(c) and summarized in the FY 2009 Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program Announcement.

I have authority to make this certification on behalf of the applicant agency (that is, the agency applying directly to the National Institute of Justice).

Signature of Certifying Official

Printed Name of Certifying Official

Title of Certifying Official

Name of Applicant Agency
(Including Name of State or Unit of Local Government)

Date

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE

**FY 2009 Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement
Grants Program**

Certification as to External Investigations

On behalf of the applicant agency named below, I certify the following to the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice:

A government entity exists and an appropriate process is in place to conduct independent external investigations into allegations of serious negligence or misconduct substantially affecting the integrity of the forensic results committed by employees or contractors of any forensic laboratory system, medical examiner's office, coroner's office, law enforcement storage facility, or medical facility in the State that will receive a portion of the grant amount.

I personally read and reviewed the section entitled "Eligibility" in the Fiscal Year 2009 program announcement for the Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program. I acknowledge that a false statement in this certification or in the grant application that it supports may be subject to criminal prosecution, including under 18 U.S.C. § 1001. I also acknowledge that Office of Justice Program grants, including certifications provided in connection with such grants, are subject to review by the Office of Justice Programs and/or by the Department of Justice's Office of the Inspector General.

I have authority to make this certification on behalf of the applicant agency (that is, the agency applying directly to the National Institute of Justice).

Signature of Certifying Official

Printed Name of Certifying Official

Title of Certifying Official

Name of Applicant Agency
(Including Name of State or Unit of Local Government)

Date

Appendix 3. Template for “External Investigations” Attachment

(Instructions: Scan the completed document and submit image file electronically as part of your application package.)

FY 2009 Coverdell Forensic Science Improvements Grants Program

Attachment: External Investigations

The "Certification as to External Investigations" that is submitted on behalf of the applicant agency as part of this application certifies that—

A government entity exists and an appropriate process is in place to conduct independent external investigations into allegations of serious negligence or misconduct substantially affecting the integrity of the forensic results committed by employees or contractors of any forensic laboratory system, medical examiner's office, coroner's office, law enforcement storage facility, or medical facility that will receive a portion of the grant amount.

Prior to receiving funds, the applicant agency (that is, the agency applying directing to the National Institute of Justice) must provide—for each forensic laboratory system, medical examiner's office, coroner's office, law enforcement storage facility, or medical facility that will receive a portion of the grant amount—the name of the "government entity" (or entities) that form the basis for the certification. Please use the template below to provide this information. (Applicants may adapt this template if necessary, but should ensure that the adapted document provides all the required information.)

IMPORTANT NOTE: If necessary for accuracy, list more than one entity with respect to each intended recipient of a portion of the grant amount. For example, if no single entity has an appropriate process in place with respect to allegations of serious negligence as well as serious misconduct, it will be necessary to list more than one entity. Similarly, if no single entity has an appropriate process in place with respect to allegations concerning contractors as well as employees, it will be necessary to list more than one entity.

Additional guidance regarding the "Certification as to External Investigations" appears in the "Eligibility" section of the program announcement for the FY 2009 Coverdell program.

Name of Applicant Agency (including Name of State or Unit of Local Government):

Date: _____

Name of any forensic laboratory system, medical examiner's office, coroner's office, law enforcement storage facility, or medical facility that will receive a portion of the grant amount

Existing government entity (or entities) with an appropriate process in place to conduct independent external investigations

1. _____

2. _____

FY2009 External Investigations Attachment (continued)

Name of Applicant Agency: _____

- 3. _____

- 4. _____

- 5. _____

- 6. _____

- 7. _____
