

**Paul Coverdell
Forensic Science Improvement Grant Program
Grant Announcement Fiscal Year 2004
May 28, 2004**

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ), a component of the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) U.S. Department of Justice, is pleased to announce that funding is now available to States,¹ Territories, and units of local government through the fiscal year 2004 Paul Coverdell Forensic Sciences Improvement Grant Program. These funds are intended to improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science and medical examiner services. Please read this announcement carefully for important information on eligibility, funding amounts, and application instructions.

The deadline for applications is July 6, 2004. Applications must be submitted through OJP's Web-based Grants Management System (GMS). Begin the process early by registering at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/fundopps.htm>.

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1 In this announcement, the terms "State" or "States" are defined as the designated State Administering Agency (SAA) from each of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the U.S. 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.

I. Appropriations for Paul Coverdell Forensic Sciences Improvement Grants Program

On January 23, 2004, President Bush signed into law the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2004 (Pub. L. No. 108-99). The Act appropriated approximately \$10 million to the U.S. Department of Justice for Paul Coverdell Forensic Sciences Improvement Grants (“Coverdell grants”) under part BB of Title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. § 3797j *et seq.*) (the “Coverdell law”).

II. Program Description and Eligibility

Coverdell grants are intended to improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science and medical examiner services, including services provided by laboratories operated by States and those operated by units of local government. Both States and units of local government may apply directly to NIJ for funding. A total of \$9,508,587 is available for awards in fiscal year 2004.

All applicants for Coverdell grants—whether States or units of local government—must have developed a program for improving the quality and timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services and must specifically describe how grant funds will be used to carry out all or a substantial part of that program. States are expected to consider the needs of laboratories operated by units of local government as well as those operated by the State.

Any forensic laboratory, forensic laboratory system, medical examiner’s office, or coroner’s office that will receive any portion of a Coverdell grant must use generally accepted laboratory practices and procedures as established by accrediting organizations or appropriate certifying bodies.

A. Base Funds for States

Seventy-five percent of the funds available for Coverdell grants will be allocated among eligible States based principally on population (“State base funds”). To be eligible, a State must satisfy the specific application requirements outlined in this announcement and all other general requirements for NIJ and OJP grants. The approximate amount each State is eligible to receive as base funds is listed in Section VIII, Estimated “Base Funds” Available to Applicant States.”

B. 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. For fiscal year 2004, the maximum amount a State or unit of local government may receive in competitive funds is \$80,000.

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. States may apply for competitive funds only for forensic sciences improvements above and beyond those it can accomplish with its base funds. Requests for competitive funding will be reviewed by an independent peer-review panel. Existing resources and current needs will be considered, as well as violent crime statistics. NIJ expects to award up to 50 percent of the competitive funds to efforts that focus on improving medical examiner services.

C. 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 fiscal year 2004, the minimum Coverdell grant to a State is based on population.² If the amount a State would otherwise receive as its total Coverdell grant (including both base funds and any competitive award) is less than \$42,789, NIJ will increase that State's total grant to \$42,789.

III. Expected Results and Outcomes

The result of Coverdell grants to applicant States should be a demonstrated improvement **over current operations** in the quality and 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.

The result of Coverdell grants directly to units of local government should be a demonstrated improvement **over current operations** in the quality and timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services provided by the local jurisdiction.

The output measures for recipients of funding under this program are:

- 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.
- The number of samples used for criminal justice purposes.
- The number of samples used in forensic science and medical examiner services.

IV. Use of Coverdell Funds

A. Permissible Uses of Funds

1. Personnel. Funds may be used for personnel, overtime, fellowships, visiting scientists,

² Minimum awards for American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands are lower.

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 laboratory or medical examiner equipment and instrumentation.

4. Supplies. Funds may be used to acquire laboratory or medical examiner supplies.

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 who 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 areas of forensic service. 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 timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services.

The Coverdell law limits the amount of funds that can be used for the costs of constructing a new facility or facilities. 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:

- a. Grants that do not exceed 0.6 percent of the total available funds (\$42,789 for fiscal year 2004).** If the total Coverdell grant to an applicant State or unit of local government is less than or equal to \$42,789, no more than 80 percent of the total grant may be used for the costs of constructing 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 \$42,789, the amount of the grant that can be used for construction of any new facility cannot exceed the sum of \$34,231 (80 percent of \$42,789) **plus** 40 percent of the amount of the grant in excess of \$42,789.

For example, if a State receives a total Coverdell grant of \$100,000, no more than \$57,115 may be used for construction. The calculation for a \$100,000 grant is as follows:

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|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Amount in excess of \$42,789: | $\$100,000 - \$42,789 = \$57,211$ |
| 40% of amount in excess of \$42,789: | $\$57,211 \times .40 = \$22,884$ |
| Sum of \$34,231 + \$22,884: | $\$57,115$ |

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

B. Uses of Funds That Are Not Permitted

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

V. Fiscal Year 2004 Application Process

A. Due Date for Applications; Use of GMS

Complete applications must be submitted through the OJP's online Grants Management System (GMS) by **8:00 p.m. eastern time on July 6, 2004**. Extensions to this deadline are not permitted. **NIJ will not accept faxed or mailed proposals.** NIJ reserves the right to reject incomplete applications, those not responsive to the scope of this announcement, or those not complying with format requirements.

Eligible applicants who do not submit an application for a Coverdell grant by the **July 6, 2004**, deadline will **not** receive funds under the fiscal year 2004 program.

B. How to Apply

All applications for Coverdell grants **must** be submitted through GMS at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/fundopps.htm>. Begin the application process early.

GMS is intended to expedite and streamline the receipt, review, and processing of applications. We will accept your application **only** through the online GMS applications system. Applicants may call the toll-free GMS Hotline at 1-888-549-9901 to receive technical assistance with the online application process. The GMS Hotline is open Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. eastern time.

All applicants must possess a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number in order to apply for funding using GMS. Please call 1-800-333-0505 to obtain a DUNS number if your agency does not already have one assigned. Please note: A DUNS number may be requested online at <https://eupdate.dnb.com/requestoptions.html>, but the online process can take up to 30 days.

VI. Required Forms and Documents

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, 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. Additional guidance for submitting proposals is in NIJ's "Guidelines: How to Submit Applications" at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/funding.htm>.

Proposal Abstract. The proposal abstract is a very 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.

Program Narrative. The program narrative addresses the project objectives, the expected results, and the implementation approach. The program narrative must specifically describe how Coverdell grant funds will be used to carry out all or a substantial part of the applicant's overall

program to improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services over current operations. (Refer to Section II, Program Description and Eligibility).

States that seek competitive funds in addition to base funds should include a **separate** section in the program narrative (as well as the 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 base funds.

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 \$80,000.

The program 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.)

Applicants **must** attach the following appendixes to their application:

1. A certification by an appropriate official of the applicant agency that the applicant has developed a program for improving the quality and timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services, and that funds received as a Coverdell grant will be used to carry out all or a substantial part of that program.
2. A certification by an appropriate official of the applicant agency that any forensic science laboratory system, medical examiner's office, or coroner's office that will receive any portion of a Coverdell grant (whether directly or through a subgrant) uses generally accepted laboratory practices and procedures established by accrediting organizations or appropriate certifying bodies.
3. If an applicant will use Coverdell grant funds for the costs of a new facility or facilities (see Section IV, above):
 - (a) a certification by an appropriate official of the applicant agency that the amount of the Coverdell grant used for the costs of the facility or facilities will not exceed the statutory limits described in Section IV of this announcement, and

- (b) a specific description of any facility the applicant proposes to construct with Coverdell grant funds, and the estimated costs of the facility.

VII. Additional Requirements and Information

The following four requirements supplement the general OJP grant administration and reporting requirements. For details, see OJP's Office of the Comptroller's "Post Award Instructions" at: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/oc/postaward/> and the OJP *Financial Guide* at: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/FinGuide>.

- 1. National Environmental Policy Act.** All award recipients must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (Pub. L. No. 91-190, 42 U.S.C. § 4321 *et seq.*). To ensure NEPA compliance, NIJ may require some award recipients to submit additional information. An environmental assessment may be required.
- 2. Record maintenance and access.** Each State or local unit of government within the State that receives funding under this program must maintain adequate records relating to the receipt and use of the total grant amount. The Attorney General and the Comptroller General of the United States (or designees thereof) will have access to these records for audit and examination purposes.
- 3. Reporting.** Each State and unit of local government that receives funding under this program must submit semiannual progress reports for the life of the award, as well as a final report within 120 days of the end of the award period. The final report must include a summary and assessment of the program carried out with the fiscal year 2004 grant, and must cite the specific improvements in the quality and timeliness of forensic science and medical examiner services that were implemented as a direct result of the FY2004 grant award.
- 4. Confidentiality of information and human subjects protection.** If activities conducted with Coverdell grants fall within the purview of privacy and human subjects rules and regulations, grant recipients will be required to comply with NIJ's new policies and procedures regarding the confidentiality of information and protection of human subjects.

Award period. In general, NIJ will limit grants under this program to a maximum of 12 months.

Performance measures. To ensure compliance with the Government Performance and Results Act (Pub. L. No. 103-62), this announcement notifies applicants that program performance under this project is measured by the following:

- 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.
- The number of samples used for criminal justice purposes.
- The number of samples used in forensic science and medical examiner services. Award recipients will be required to collect and report data relevant to this measure.

Funds may not be used to lobby. Award recipients may not use any Federal funds, either directly or indirectly, in support of the enactment, repeal, modification, or adoption of any law, regulation, or policy, at any level of government, without the express prior written approval of OJP. For more information, see NIJ's "Guidelines: How to Submit Applications" available at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/funding.htm> and the OJP *Financial Guide* available at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/FinGuide>.

Financial audits. Applicant agencies that expend \$500,000 or more in Federal funds (from all sources including pass-through awards) during a fiscal year will be required to submit organization-wide audit reports. Audits must be performed in accordance with Office of Management and Budget Circular A-133. For more information, see chapter 19 of the OJP *Financial Guide*.

Guidance and information. Applicants who want additional guidance and information may contact the U.S. Department of Justice Response Center at 1-800-421-6770. Center staff can provide assistance or refer applicants to an appropriate NIJ professional. Applicants who have questions about GMS or need technical assistance with applying online can contact the GMS Hotline at 1-888-549-9901, Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. eastern time (except Federal holidays).

If you would like to speak with someone at NIJ about this announcement, please call Nick Viggiani (NIJ Contractor) at 1-202-307-5847 or Stacia Jackson (NIJ Contractor) at 1-202-305-9076.

VIII. Estimated “Base Funds” Available to Applicant States

Exhibit 1 lists the **approximate** amount each eligible State may expect to receive as base funds. (See Section II, Program Description and Eligibility.)

| Exhibit 1. Estimated Base Funds Available to Applicant States for Coverdell National Forensic Sciences Improvement Grants | |
|---|------------------|
| * Note: If the amount a State would otherwise receive as its total Coverdell grant—including both base funds and any competitive award—is less than \$42,789, the total Coverdell grant will be increased to the minimum award amount of \$42,789. | |
| Alabama | \$102,477 |
| Alaska* | \$15,680 |
| Arizona | \$127,068 |
| Arkansas | \$62,061 |
| California | \$807,937 |
| Colorado | \$103,613 |
| Connecticut | \$79,312 |
| Delaware* | \$19,756 |
| District of Columbia* | \$13,615 |
| Florida | \$389,504 |
| Georgia | \$197,740 |
| Hawaii* | \$30,392 |
| Idaho* | \$33,019 |
| Illinois | \$288,106 |

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| Indiana | \$141,067 |
| Iowa | \$67,032 |
| Kansas | \$62,011 |
| Kentucky | \$93,758 |
| Louisiana | \$102,376 |
| Maine* | \$31,555 |
| Maryland | \$125,430 |
| Massachusetts | \$146,482 |
| Michigan | \$229,509 |
| Minnesota | \$115,196 |
| Mississippi | \$65,604 |
| Missouri | \$129,884 |
| Montana* | \$22,176 |
| Nebraska* | \$42,033 |
| Nevada | \$51,029 |
| New Hampshire* | \$31,119 |
| New Jersey | \$196,686 |
| New Mexico | \$42,789 |
| New York | \$436,935 |
| North Carolina | \$191,422 |
| North Dakota* | \$15,318 |
| Ohio | \$260,379 |
| Oklahoma | \$79,953 |
| Oregon | \$81,048 |
| Pennsylvania | \$281,546 |
| Rhode Island* | \$26,007 |

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| South Carolina | \$94,425 |
| South Dakota* | \$18,471 |
| Tennessee | \$133,009 |
| Texas | \$503,611 |
| Utah | \$53,540 |
| Vermont* | \$14,962 |
| Virginia | \$168,177 |
| Washington | \$139,605 |
| West Virginia | \$42,789 |
| Wisconsin | \$124,597 |
| Wyoming* | \$12,113 |
| American Samoa*³ | |
| Northern Mariana Islands | \$3,238 |
| Guam* | \$3,953 |
| Puerto Rico | \$88,320 |
| Virgin Islands* | \$2,630 |

3 The Coverdell law includes specific provisions with respect to American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.