

Subaward Program Guidance

FY 2023 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program

CFDA 16.742

Eligibility

Open to New Jersey state agencies and units of local government for the purpose of improving forensic science and medical examiner/coroner services, including services provided by laboratories operated by states and units of local government.

Deadline

All applications must be submitted via e-mail not later than **4:00 PM on 4/1/2024**

Contact Information

For assistance with the requirements of this solicitation, contact the Division of State Police, Grants Program Management Unit, Avis Byrd at 609-882-2000, Ext. 6197, e-mail Avis.Byrd@njsp.gov.

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Program Description

Grant Program: Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program

CFDA Number: 16.742

Funding Source: U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of Justice Programs (OJP), Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA)

Announcement Type: FY2023 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Subaward

Performance and Budget Period Dates: October 1, 2024 to September 30, 2025

Application Due Date: E-mailed no later than 4:00 PM, 4/1/2024

Anticipated Available funding: \$50,000

Match: No match requirement

Overview

The Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program (the Coverdell program) awards grants to states and units of local government to help improve forensic science and medical examiner/coroner 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 and medicolegal death investigators, as needed, to eliminate such a backlog. New Jersey state agencies and units of local government may apply for competitive funds.

The Coverdell program is authorized by Title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, Part BB, codified at 34 U.S.C. § 10561–10566 (the Coverdell law).

Eligible Applicants, Funding Availability and Application Deadline

Eligible Applicants

To be eligible to receive FY 2023 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grant funding, New Jersey State agencies and units of local government must seek to improve forensic science and medical examiner/coroner services, including services provided by local government laboratories. Each applicant must satisfy the specific application requirements outlined in this announcement, the general requirements for Bureau of Justice Assistance and Office of Justice Programs grants, and all other applicable laws and regulations.

The Coverdell law (see 34 U.S.C. § 10562) requires an applicant for Coverdell funds to submit:

1. *A certification and description regarding a plan for forensic science laboratories.* Each applicant must submit a certification that they have 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. Applicants must also specifically 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 a subaward) 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 34 U.S.C. § 10564(c) and summarized in the Federal FY 2023 Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program Announcement. Applicants must also specifically describe any new facility to be constructed as well as the estimated costs of the facility.
4. *A certification regarding external investigations into the 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."
5. *A certification regarding forensic science laboratory accreditation.* Each applicant must submit a certification that any forensic science laboratory system 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 a subgrant) either is accredited, **or**

is not so accredited, but will (or will be required in a legally binding and enforceable writing to) use a portion of the grant amount to prepare and apply for such accreditation not more than two (2) years after the date on which a grant is awarded under the FY 2023 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program.

Applicants requesting funds for ONLY medical examiner's offices or coroner's offices in the state are not required to submit this certification. See 34 U.S.C §10562(2).

Subrecipients must also comply with these Coverdell program requirements and they will be included as Special Conditions with all subawards.

Funding Availability

The total anticipated funding available for subawards is approximately \$50,000. Funding will be made available on a reimbursement basis only. No match is required. Applicants may be awarded a different amount than requested or an amount other than the maximum amount.

Application Deadline

Eligible applicants must apply for FY 2023 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grant subaward funding through the Division of State Police, Office of Forensic Sciences (OFS) and the Office of the Attorney General. **Completed applications must be e-mailed no later than 4:00 p.m. on 4/1/2024** Applications e-mailed after 4/1/2024 **will not** be considered for funding. All applicants will receive written notification of funding decisions. Division of State Police, OFS and the Office of the Attorney General will evaluate and act on applications within 60 days of the application deadline.

Original copies of the application must be maintained by the applicant for future review in the event of a site visit, audit, or other request.

COVERDELL PROGRAM GUIDANCE

Grant Purposes

A state agency or unit of local government that receives a Coverdell grant must use the grant for one or more of these six 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/coroner 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, including, among other things, a backlog with respect to firearms examination, latent prints, impression evidence, toxicology, digital evidence, fire evidence, controlled substances, forensic pathology, questioned documents, and trace evidence. A backlog in the analysis of forensic science evidence exists if forensic evidence has been stored in a laboratory, medical examiner office, coroner 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.

3. To train, assist, and employ forensic laboratory personnel and medicolegal death investigators, as needed to eliminate such a backlog.
4. To address emerging forensic science issues (such as statistics, contextual bias, and uncertainty of measurement) and emerging forensic science technology (such as high throughput automation, statistical software, and new types of instrumentation).
5. To educate and train forensic pathologist.
6. To fund medicolegal death investigation systems to facilitate accreditation of medical examiner and coroner offices and certification of medicolegal death investigators.

Important Note

The alarming proliferation of heroin and synthetic opioids like fentanyl have had a crushing effect on many crime laboratories. Medical examiners and forensic pathologists have also been overwhelmed with the volume of autopsies as a result of opioid and synthetic drug-related overdose deaths. To address these issues, Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) plans to allocate approximately 55 percent of available funds to specifically target the challenges the opioid and synthetic drugs have brought to the forensic science community.

Expected Results and Outcomes

The result of Coverdell subawards should be a demonstrated improvement over current operations in the forensic science or medical examiner/coroner 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.

Examples of 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 Allowable Costs.)

Allowable and Unallowable Costs Guidance

Allowable Costs

All costs must be reasonable, necessary, and adequately supported pursuant to Federal cost principles at 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart F (2 CFR 200.400 et seq.).

1. **Salary and benefits of laboratory employees.** Funds may be used for forensic science or medical examiner/coroner office personnel, fellowships, visiting scientists, interns, consultants, or temporary staff.
2. **Overtime for laboratory staff.** Funds may be used to pay overtime for laboratory scientists (excluding executive personnel) to directly examine, analyze, and interpret physical and/or digital evidence in criminal matters. Any payment for overtime must be in accordance with the DOJ Financial Guide.
3. **Computerization.** Funds may be used to upgrade, replace, lease, or purchase computer hardware and software for forensic analyses and data management.
4. **Laboratory equipment.** Funds may be used to upgrade, lease, or purchase forensic laboratory or medical examiner/coroner office equipment and instrumentation.
5. **Supplies.** Funds may be used to acquire forensic laboratory or medical examiner/coroner office supplies.

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

Recipients may encounter delays in the release of award funds pending satisfactory completion of the NEPA review process for applications involving the use or purchase of chemicals.

6. **Accreditation.** Funds may be used to prepare for laboratory accreditation by the ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board (ANAB), National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME), the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA), International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners (IAC&ME) or other appropriate accrediting bodies. Funds also may be used for application and maintenance fees charged by appropriate accrediting bodies. Per 34 U.S.C. §10562(2), such an accrediting body would be “an accrediting body that is a signatory to an internationally recognized arrangement and that offers accreditation to forensic science conformity assessment bodies using an accreditation standard that is recognized by that internationally recognized arrangement.” An applicant that proposes to use any portion of the grant amount to fund a forensic science laboratory system that is not accredited (as set out in the Coverdell law) will be required to use (or, as applicable, must require any unaccredited subrecipient forensic science laboratory system to use) a portion of the grant amount for accreditation purposes. Coverdell awardees must use grant funds to prepare and apply for accreditation of any FY 2023 Coverdell grant-funded unaccredited forensic laboratory system not more than two (2) years after the FY 2023 Coverdell award date.
7. **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/coroner 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 forensic science or medical examiner/coroner 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.

8. **Facilities.** Funds may be used for program expenses relating to facilities, provided the expenses are directly attributable to improving forensic science or medical examiner/coroner services. Funds also may be used for renovation and/or construction undertaken as part of the applicant's program to improve forensic science or medical examiner/coroner services.
9. **Indirect Costs.** Funds may be eligible to be used for indirect costs if the applicant has a current, federally approved indirect cost rate or the applicant is eligible to use and elects to use the "de minimis" indirect cost rate described in Part 200 Uniform Requirements as set out at 2 C.F.R. 200.414(f). Please see the "Indirect Cost Rate Fact Sheet" for additional information.

Note of use of funds for forensic genealogy searches

Grantees utilizing Coverdell funds for forensic genealogy testing must adhere to the United States Department of Justice Interim Policy Forensic Genealogical DNA Analysis and Searching (<https://www.justice.gov/olp/page/file/1204386/download>). In accordance with Section IX, Coverdell grantees must collect and report the following metrics to BJA:

1. The type of crime investigated.
2. Whether forensic genetic genealogical DNA analysis (FGG)/ forensic genetic genealogical DNA analysis and searching (FGGS) was conducted on a forensic sample or a reference sample.
3. The type of forensic sample subjected to FGG, and a description of the total amount, condition, and concentration of that sample (e.g., single source, mixed profile, degradation status, etc.).
4. Whether FGG analysis resulted in a searchable profile.
5. The identity of the vendor laboratory used to conduct FGG and the genetic genealogy service(s) used to search the FGG profile.
6. Whether the investigation resulted in an arrest that was based, in part, on the use of FGGS.
7. The total amount of federal funding used to conduct FGG/FGGS in each case.

Note on the use of funds to address issues related to the opioid abuse crisis

The application should demonstrate, wherever applicable, how many proposed use of funds would address challenges the opioid abuse crisis has brought to the forensic science community, as described in the "Important Note" under "Grant Purposes". To facilitate this, an applicant should annotate each line item in the budget as "opioid-related" (addressing the opioid abuse crisis) or "non-opioid related." Coverdell funds are available for permissible uses that would not address the opioid abuse crisis; however, each applicant should plan to allocate **at least** 55 percent of Coverdell grant funds (commensurate with each applicant's specifically identified need) to address the challenges to the forensic science community posed by the opioid abuse crisis. An applicant also may propose to dedicate more than 55 percent of its Coverdell allocation to opioid-related uses, in accordance with the applicant's needs.

An applicant that does not intend to include any opioid-related projects in its request for Coverdell funds, or that intends to request an amount for opioid-related projects that would amount to less

than 55 percent of its FY 2023 Coverdell award, is still eligible to receive funding. Any such applicant will be expected to affirm – in a separate writing (See Subaward Application and Required Forms – that, of its total allocation, it intends to use less than 55 percent (or, zero, as applicable) of the grant funds for opioid-related projects.

Unallowable Costs

1. Expenses other than those listed above (including expenses for general law enforcement functions or non-forensic investigatory functions).
2. Recipient administrative expenses (direct or indirect) that exceed 10 percent of the total grant amount.
3. The use of funds for the purchase and/or lease of vehicles, such as crime scene vans.
4. Costs for any new facility that exceed the limits contained within the grant conditions.
5. Funds to conduct research. Applicants may address emerging forensic science issues and technology through implementation of new technologies and processes into public laboratories.
6. The use of BJA grant funds for unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), including unmanned aircraft vehicles (UAV), and/or any accompanying accessories to support UAS or UAV devices/systems, is unallowable.

SUBAWARD PROGRAM and APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Below are selected application requirements that each applicant should be familiar with prior to submitting a subaward application. Please consult the subaward conditions and other certification documents for additional information on the FY2023 Coverdell subaward requirements. All forms must be completed and signed where indicated. Incomplete applications will not be considered and may result in the denial of your application.

Period of Performance

The period of performance for FY 2023 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Subaward Program is from **10/1/2024** through **9/30/2025**.

Cost Share Requirements

There is no local match required under the Coverdell program.

Application Process

Instructions for completing application forms are included as part of the application package. Applicants may request paper applications by calling the Grants Program Management Unit.

Your completed application package must be received in the DSP by 4/1/2024 at 4:00 PM EST.

The following forms or information must be submitted with the application. Please read these documents carefully as signatures on these documents are treated as a material representation of fact upon which reliance will be placed.

1. Application Authorization
2. Subaward Program Application Overview

3. Applicant Information
4. Project Narrative
5. Project Work Plan
6. Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative (Budget should be annotated to delineate opioid-related and non-opioid items)
7. Federally Approved Indirect Cost Rate (only if the applicant is taking indirect costs and has an approved rate)
8. Certification Regarding Lobbying; Debarment, Suspensions and Other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements
9. Federal Single Audit Certification with proof of compliance (proof of compliance only required if applicant is subject audit requirements)
10. New Jersey Single Audit Certification
11. Department of Law and Public Safety Debarment and Suspension Certification with proof of eligibility for federal funds
12. Certified Standard Assurances
13. Coverdell Statutory Certifications
 - a. Certification as to Generally Accepted Laboratory Practices and Procedures
 - b. Certification as to Forensic Science Laboratory System Accreditation
 - c. Certification as to Use of Fund for New Facilities
 - d. Certification as to External Investigations
14. External Investigations Attachment
15. Statement Regarding Proposed Use of Funds to Address Challenges Posed by the Opioid Abuse Crisis (if applicable)
16. Forensic Laboratory Accreditation Documentation (if applicable)
17. BJA Programmatic Coversheet and Checklist

Resolution

A governing body must adopt a resolution requiring approval of the Director of the Division of Local Government Services for the insertion of any special item of revenue from any public or private source which was unknown at the time of adoption of the annual budget. The resolution must include the statutory reference, title and amount of the revenue and appropriation, and the date of adoption. Applicants should refer to Chapter 159 Procedures (NJSA 40A:4-87) for specific resolution requirements. Additionally, each resolution should contain the period of performance dates, the award amount, and a list of officials authorized to execute the subaward materials. **A signed resolution must be submitted with the subaward** (not with this application). A resolution checklist will be provided to successful applicants in the subaward packet, and the information provided in the checklist must be contained in your resolution. Please also note that this checklist may not be sufficient for local units of government to satisfy their reporting requirements to the Local Finance Boards.

External Investigations Requirements

The highest standards of integrity in the practice of forensic science are critical to the enhancement of the administration of justice. It is required that Subrecipients of Coverdell funds will make use of the process referenced in the State's certification to the Department of Justice 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 State's grant application.

As part of the final report, Subrecipients will be required to report the following:

1. The number and nature of any allegations of serious misconduct substantially affecting the integrity of forensic results received during the 12-month period of the award;
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.

Forensic Laboratory Accreditation Documentation

Applicants should provide documentation of current accreditation with the application for any accredited laboratory (including a subrecipient laboratory) that is to receive funds under the 2023 Coverdell award. Acceptable types of documentation of current accreditation include: an electronic (scanned) copy of the current accreditation certificate(s), a digital photograph of the current accreditation certificate(s), or a letter from the accrediting body that includes the certificate number. Additionally, if a certificate references another document that contains key information on the type or scope of the accreditation, provide a copy of that supplemental documentation. Independent accrediting or certifying organizations may include the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors/Laboratory Accreditation Board (ASCLD-LAB), Forensic Quality Services (FQS), the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA), or other appropriate accrediting bodies. Note that funds **will not be made available** to applicant agencies that fail to provide the necessary information.

Statement Regarding Proposed Use of Funds to Address Challenges Posed by the Opioid Abuse Crisis

See the “**Note on the use of funds to address issues related to the opioid abuse crisis,**” for an important information relevant to applicants requesting funds to address forensic science challenges relating to the opioid abuse crisis.

An applicant that does not intend to include any opioid-related projects in its request for Coverdell funds, or that intends to request an amount for opioid-related projects that would amount to less than 55 percent of its FY 2023 Coverdell allocation, is to prepare and submit a statement (signed by the authorized representative of the applicant) affirming that, of the total FY 2023 allocation for which it is awarded under the FY 2023 Coverdell grant program, the applicant intends to use none of the funds for opioid-related projects or, if applicable, that it intends to use less than 55 percent (the statement should specify the approximate percentage) of its grant funds for opioid-related projects.

This document should be attached as a separate file with an appropriately descriptive file name (for example, “Opioid Abuse Crisis Use of Funds Statement”)

Federal Financial Accountability and Transparency Act

Subrecipients receiving \$30,000 or more in federal grant funds must comply with the Federal Financial Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) which provides for a single website at which the public may access and search data on federal financial assistance awards including subrecipients. **If required, a completed FFATA form must be submitted with the subaward** (not with this application).

Employment Eligibility Form

Organizations funded under this federal grant program must agree to complete and keep on file, as appropriate, the Immigration and Naturalization Service Employment Eligibility form (I-9). This form is to be used by the recipient of Federal Funds to verify that persons employed by the recipient are eligible to work in the United States.

Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) Number

The Federal Government requires that all applicants for federal grants and cooperative agreements with the exception of individuals, other than sole proprietors, have a UEI number. The federal government will use the UEI number to better identify related organizations that are receiving funding under grants and cooperative agreements, and to provide consistent name and address data for electronic grant application systems.

The UEI number is site-specific. Therefore, each distinct physical location of an entity (such as branches, divisions, and headquarters) may be assigned a UEI number. Organizations should try to keep UEI numbers to a minimum. In many instances, a central UEI number with a UEI number for each major division/department/agency that applies for a grant may be sufficient. The requestor may obtain an on-the-spot UEI number assignment by telephone at **866.705.5711**.

Obtaining a UEI number is absolutely free for all entities doing business with the Federal Government. This includes grant and cooperative agreement applicants or prospective applicants and federal contractors. Be certain that you identify yourself as a federal grant applicant or prospective applicant.

All applicants must provide proof of their active UEI number status from the System for Award Management (SAM). This proof can be found at <http://www.sam.gov> and submitted with the application package.

System for Award Management (SAM)

SAM is the repository for standard information about federal financial assistance applicants, recipients, and subrecipients. The Federal Government requires that all applicants (other than individuals) for federal financial assistance maintain current registrations in the SAM database. Applicants must update or renew their SAM registration annually to maintain an active status. Information about SAM registration procedures can be accessed at www.sam.gov.

NOTE: Please check with your central governmental office to determine whether or not there is a UEI Number and SAM registration that currently covers your agency.

Civil Rights

All recipients of federal grant funds are required to comply with nondiscrimination requirements contained in various federal laws. All Subrecipients should consult the State and Federal conditions to understand the applicable legal and administrative requirements connected with the FY23 Paul Coverdell grant. The Subrecipient must agree to and comply with the Civil Rights attachments also contained within the application materials. Please be advised that a hold may be placed on this application if it is deemed that the applicant agency is not in compliance with federal civil rights laws and/or is not cooperating with an ongoing federal civil rights investigation.

Successful applicants will be required to have an authorized official, project director, or designee complete the Department of Law and Public Safety's Subrecipient Civil Rights Compliance Training, available via the Internet at <http://www.nj.gov/lps/grants/lps-subrecipient-civil-rights-compliance.pdf>, and included an original copy of the Training's Certificate of Completion as part of their subaward package.

Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

This disclosure form shall be completed by the reporting entity, whether subrecipient or prime federal recipient, at the initiation or receipt of a covered federal action, or a material change to a previous filing, pursuant to Title 31 U.S.C. Section 1352. Subrecipients must comply with 28 CFR Part 69. The filing of a form is required for each payment or agreement to make payment to any lobbying entity for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with a covered federal action. Refer to the implementing guidance published by the Office of Management and Budget for additional information. If this applies to your agency, you are required to submit the Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SFLLL) as an attachment to your application. Complete all items that apply for both the initial filing and material change report.

Nonsupplanting Requirement

Grant funds may not be used to replace state or local funds that would, in the absence of federal aid, be made available. Instead, grant funds must be used to increase the total amount of funds that would otherwise be made available for law enforcement purposes. A grant recipient may not use federal grant funds to pay for any item or costs associated with this request that the recipient is already obligated to pay. All funding awarded cannot be obligated until after the grant award start date. This means that funds cannot be applied to any agency cost prior to the award start date. In addition, all awardees will be expected to take active and timely steps pursuant to their standard purchasing procedures to fully fund costs already budgeted. The possibility of supplanting will be the subject of careful application review, possible pre-award review, and post-award monitoring and audit. Any supplanting of nonfederal funds by grant funds may be grounds for potential suspension or termination of grant funding, recovery of misused funds, and applicable legal sanctions.

Procurement

Non-state entities must conduct procurements pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.318 *et seq.*

Certification of a Drug-Free Workplace

The Subrecipient must complete the Certification Regarding a Drug-Free Workplace as required by the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, and implemented at, 28 CFR Part 83.

Single Audit Requirements

Applicants must comply with the audit requirements found at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, Subpart F, Audit Requirements (2 C.F.R. § 200.500, et seq.), the Government Accountability Office's Government Auditing Standards (Yellow Book), and the State Circular, Single Audit Policy for Recipients of Federal Grants, State Grants and State Aid, 15-08-OMB. Applicants must complete and submit the Federal Single Audit Requirement Certification and, if subject to the federal single or program-specific audit requirements, submit proof of compliance from the Federal Audit Clearinghouse ("FAC") website.

Debarment and Suspension

Applicants must complete and submit a certification that it is not excluded or disqualified from participation in federal contracts or grants.

Certified Standard Assurances

Applicant must complete and submit a certification regarding important statutes, regulations, and award conditions that may apply to OJP grants.

Generally Accepted Laboratory Practices

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

Use of Funds; No Research

Funds provided under this award shall be used only for the purposes and types of expenses set forth in the fiscal year 2023 Federal program solicitation. Funds shall not be used for general law enforcement functions or non-forensic investigatory functions and shall not be used for research or statistical projects or activities. Use of award funds for construction of new facilities is restricted by statute. Any questions concerning this provision should be directed to the NIJ Program Manager prior to incurring the expense or commencing the activity in question.

Performance Measures

To ensure compliance with the Government Performance and Results Act (Pub. L. No.103-62) and the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 (Pub. L. No. 111-352), program performance under this fiscal year 2023 award is measured by the following:

- 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 (calculated by reporting the average number of days to process a sample at the beginning of the grant period versus the average number of days to process a sample at the end of the grant period);
- Percent reduction in the number of backlogged forensic cases (calculated by reporting the number of backlogged forensic cases at the beginning of the grant period versus the number of backlogged forensic cases at the end of grant period), if applicable to the award; and

- The number of forensic science or medical examiner/coroner's office personnel who completed appropriate training or educational opportunities with fiscal year 2023 Coverdell funds, if applicable to the award. Subrecipients are required to collect and report data relevant to these measures.

SELECTION CRITERIA

This is a competitive subaward solicitation and funding is limited. All requested forms must be included and filled out completely to be evaluated.

The review of applications will include an initial review to ensure the proposal meets minimum standards, and, as applicable, a substantive review of the application proposal, including an evaluation of how the state agency or unit of local government plans to improve the quality and/or timeliness of forensic science, medical examiner or laboratory services over current operations, the anticipated impact of project activities and budget considerations. Depending on project scope, not all criteria may apply to each proposal.

- Improvement in Quality and Timeliness
 - Anticipated reduction in backlog.
 - Anticipated improvement in timeliness of forensic results.
 - Anticipated benefit of education and training to reduce backlog and improve timeliness of results.
 - Planned steps to achieve accreditation to positively impact quality and/or timeliness of forensic results.
- Anticipated Impact of Eligible Project Activities
 - *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.
 - *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.
 - *Computerization*: If applicable, anticipated impact of requested computerization on improvement in quality and/or timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services.
 - *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.
- Budget Considerations
 - Total cost of project relative to the perceived benefit to forensic services.
 - Use of existing resources to conserve cost.
 - Cost effectiveness of proposed activities applicable to backlog reduction and/or timeliness of forensic results.
 - Cost effectiveness of education and training as related to quality and/or timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services.

Applications will be reviewed by a committee.

- Applications will be scored independently; scores totaled and averaged.
- Projects will be evaluated and preliminary scores and resulting ranking through consensus.

- These recommended rankings will then be submitted to the Chief Forensic Scientist and the Office of the Attorney General for review and approval.
- Once approved by the Chief Forensic Scientist, subawards will be awarded to the applicants in the order of ranking until all funds have been offered or eligible applications funded.

1. Problem Statement/Needs Assessment – 30 points maximum

Clearly state the problem/need that will be addressed with grant funds and show how it meets the need/solves the identified problem. If applicable, clearly link the project to a priority issue area contained in the Notice of Availability of Funding (NOAF).

2. Adaptability – 20 points maximum

Describe the project’s consistency with the FY 2023 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program.

3. Goals, Objectives, Action Strategy – 15 points maximum

State the goal(s) of the program. List clear and measurable objectives to achieve each goal, describing specific approaches that will be taken to resolve the problem and expected outcomes. Fully describe long and short term benefits of the project along with availability of resources to continue the project; identify the personnel whose needs will be directly benefitted by the project.

4. Planning, Management Structure and Background – 5 points maximum

Provide information regarding the implementation process for your project. Outline the management structure; identify the Project Director and other key individuals who will be directly involved in the operation of the project.

5. Performance Measures/Evaluation – 10 points maximum

Describe the methods that will be used to measure the progress and assess the impact of the project. Describe why this particular method to solve the problem was chosen over other alternatives.

6. Program Budget – 20 points

Using the Budget Detail Worksheet, list funds requested for program implementation. Provide a detailed narrative for use of federal funds requested in each budget category and/or line item to describe why it is necessary and appropriate to the project scope.

AWARD and REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Grant Award

Upon approval of the application, the subaward will be executed and a copy returned to the Subrecipient.

Monitoring, Reporting, and Evaluation Requirements

Federal regulations require that any financial assistance from the Federal Government be monitored to ensure that those funds are spent properly. A final financial status report and performance report are required at the end of the performance period.

In addition, the OFS is interested in tracking the progress of its programs. Therefore, the OFS staff may take a number of monitoring approaches, such as site visits, office-based grant reviews, and periodic surveys to gather information.

Detailed Cost Statement (DCS)

Each agency that receives funding under the Coverdell program must submit quarterly financial status reports for the subaward period. Obligations and expenditures must be reported on a quarterly basis through the DCS, which is due within 10 days of the end of each calendar quarter (e.g., for the quarter ending March 31, DCS is due on April 10). A report must be submitted for every quarter the award is active, including partial calendar quarters, as well as for periods where no grant activity occurs.

Required submission: Detailed Cost Statement (DCS) (due quarterly).

Biannual Performance Report (BPR)

Each agency that receives funding under the Coverdell program must submit biannual progress reports for the life of the award. The BPR is due within 10 days after the end of the reporting period (July 10 with a reporting period of January 1 through June 30, and on January 10 with a reporting period of July 1 through December 31). Updated obligation and expenditure information must be provided with the BPR to show progress made toward meeting goals and objectives.

Required submission: BPR (due biannually).

Final Performance Report

Coverdell subrecipients must submit a final report that will: (1) include a summary and assessment of the program carried out with the FY 2023 grant, which shall include a comparison of pre-grant and post-grant forensic science capabilities (and shall cite the specific improvements in quality and/or timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner/coroner's office services); (2) the average number of days between submission of a sample to a forensic science laboratory or forensic science laboratory system in that State operated by the State or by a unit of local government and the delivery of test results to the requesting office or agency; and (3) an identification of the number and type of cases currently accepted by the forensic science laboratory or forensic science laboratory system. The Subrecipient is required to collect data necessary for this report.

Required submission: Summary assessment at the end of the FY 2023 program.

Future awards and fund drawdowns may be withheld if any or all reports are delinquent.

Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program Subaward Application Checklist

What an Application Should Include:

- Application Authorization
- Subaward Program Application Overview
- Applicant Information
- Project Narrative
- Project Work Plan
- Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative (Budget should be annotated to delineate opioid-related and non-opioid items)
- Federally Approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)
- Certification Regarding Lobbying; Debarment, Suspensions and Other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements
- Federal Single Audit Requirements & Certification with proof of compliance if applicant is subject to audit requirements
- New Jersey Single Audit Requirements & Certification
- Department of Law and Public Safety Debarment and Suspension Certification with proof of eligibility for federal funds
- Certified Standard Assurances
- Coverdell Statutory Certifications
 - a. Certification as to Forensic Science Laboratory System Accreditation
 - b. Certification as to Use of Funds for New Facilities
 - c. Certification as to External Investigations
 - d. Certification as to Generally Accepted Laboratory Practices and Procedures
- External Investigations Attachment
- Statement Regarding Proposed Use of Funds to Address Challenges Posed by the Opioid Abuse Crisis (if applicable)
- Forensic Laboratory Accreditation Documentation (if applicable)
- BJA-Grant-Program-Checklist-NEPA