



COLORADO

Division of Criminal Justice

Department of Public Safety

Office of Adult and Juvenile Justice Assistance
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State of Colorado Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grant Plan for Publically Funded Forensic Laboratories 2019-2024

The Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement grant, provided by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), requires States or Local Units of Government have a plan for forensic science laboratories. As a requirement of the grant application the applicants are required to sign a certification of compliancy, and the language from that certification reads,

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 acknowledge that a false statement in this certification or in the grant application that it supports may be the subject of criminal prosecution, including under 18 U.S.C. § 1001 and 34 U.S.C. § 10272. I also acknowledge that 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.

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).

This 2019-2024 Plan for Publically Funded Forensic Laboratories document has been created to establish the plan for the Colorado Department of Public Safety, Division of Criminal Justice (DCJ), the state administering agency, and the Colorado Bureau of Investigation, a subgrantee, for its Coverdell Grant Program.

Coverdell grants are intended to either improve current operations in the quality and/or timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner/coroner's offices at the state or within units of local government. To that end, Colorado is prioritizing Coverdell funds for assisting applicants in achieving or maintaining accreditation* (quality) as well as reduction of forensic analysis backlogs (timeliness). If an applicant is not accredited but is working on achieving accreditation, funds must be used for that purpose before addressing backlogs or timeliness. In addition, because NIJ is also asking that states and localities use these funds to specifically target the challenges which the opioid abuse crisis has brought to the forensic community, activities related to forensic services related to opioids are also a priority.

*Funds may be used to prepare for laboratory accreditation by the ASCLD/LAB, FQS, NAME, the American

Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA), International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners (IAC&ME) or other, Paul Coverdell appropriate, accrediting bodies. Funds also may be used for application and maintenance fees charged by appropriate accrediting bodies. Again, if an applicant is not currently accredited, that must be the focus of these funds before use for other areas.

The goal for the Division of Criminal Justice is to administer the Paul Coverdell grant funded program in a method that is equitable to all potential subgrantees. To accomplish this goal, the following formula will be used to determine equitable funding levels for agencies wishing to apply for a portion of the state's Paul Coverdell Formula Grant funds. Adjustments based on other factors, such as an unanticipated critical need or loss of other funds, could be made by the Division of Criminal Justice.

- Annually the Division of Criminal Justice, as the designated State Administering Agency, will send an email to each known publically-funded crime laboratory, medical examiner's office, coroner's office and any other government entity that might be identified as being eligible for participation.
 - This email will invite the agencies to first submit an Intent to Apply followed by an Subgrant Application for Coverdell funds and will specify deadlines for submission for both.
- Subgrant applicants for these funds must be a forensic laboratory, medical examiner's office or coroner's office which has an internal forensic lab and which is either fully accredited or seeking accreditation. For the purpose of Colorado's Coverdell state grant application, the definition of "forensic laboratory" is: "A dedicated lab space/facility that forensically tests physical evidence submitted to investigate criminal cases."
- For all subgrant applicants, the funding formula will be based on:
 - The most recently published Federal Bureau of Investigation; Uniform Crime Report (UCR).
 - Each applicant will establish the number of violent crimes reported from the UCR Report for their jurisdiction and the percentage that number represents of the statewide number of violent crimes as reported in the UCR.
 - If there are multiple jurisdictions which a lab or office covers, the number of violent crimes reported for those areas can be included.
 - The balance of funds will be awarded to the CO Bureau of Investigations to provide balance of state coverage.
- The DCJ Director has final decision making authority over which subgrant applications will be funded and the amount of funding to be awarded.

Each applicant for funds will be required to provide a signed certification for each of the areas below:

1. A certification and description regarding a plan for forensic science laboratories. Each applicant must submit a certification that 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. 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 science 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 subgrant) uses generally accepted laboratory practices and procedures established by accrediting organizations or appropriate certifying bodies.
3. 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 2018 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program.

**Applicants, other than medical examiner's and coroner's offices which are exempt from the Coverdell law, must demonstrate that their forensic science laboratory system, is accredited or will prepare and apply for accreditation consistent with the Coverdell law.

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 office, coroner's office, law enforcement storage facility, or medical facility in the State that will receive a portion of the grant amount." Further, applicants must provide, the name(s) of the existing "government entity" (or government entities).

This plan can be modified at any time as necessary for addressing critical needs within the publically-funded forensic services provider system within the state but will be reviewed and updated no later than December 31, 2024.

Questions regarding this Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grant's 2019-2024 Plan for Publically Funded Forensic Laboratories Plan can be directed to Meg Williams, Manager, Office of Adult and Juvenile Justice Assistance (OAJJA) at the Division of Criminal Justice at 303-239-5717 or meg.williams@state.co.us.