



Department of Justice



Office of Justice Programs

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JUSTICE DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES \$145 MILLION TO SUPPORT SEXUAL ASSAULT KIT TESTING, DNA AND FORENSIC TESTING

WASHINGTON – The Justice Department’s Office of Justice Programs (OJP) today announced \$145 million in awards to help law enforcement agencies and crime labs process sexual assault evidence, increase the number of sexual assault kits submitted to crime labs, determine faster and more accurate ways to process DNA and forensic evidence, and connect perpetrators to sexual assault crimes.

The Bureau of Justice Assistance awarded almost \$43 million via 32 grants to support the National Sexual Assault Kit Initiative, an effort to strengthen jurisdictions’ capacity to act on evidence resulting from sexual assault kits. A listing of the awards is available at <https://go.usa.gov/xPQPu>.

“Far too many people endure the physical and emotional trauma of a sexual assault only to have evidence of the crime sit on a shelf and gather dust,” said Matt M. Dummermuth, OJP’s Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General. “These grants will help investigators get these kits to labs, where they can be analyzed and used to solve crimes and bring justice on behalf of victims.”

Since SAKI was launched in 2015, 32 jurisdictions in 26 states have inventoried more than 46,000 sexual assault kits. More than 38,000 kits have been sent for testing and there have been nearly 4,000 DNA hits to the national Combined DNA Index System, or CODIS, database.

“We are committed to supporting the SAKI program that empowers law enforcement to work together to identify and remove serial rapists from our streets,” said Jon Adler, Director of BJA.

This year, the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), OJP’s research and evaluation component, provided \$77 million to forensic laboratories to help improve efficiency and reduce the backlogs of existing DNA evidence. This included, through NIJ’s DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction Program, almost \$68 million to 127 state and local jurisdictions to increase the capacity of public forensic DNA laboratories. More information about the 2018 DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction Program awards is available here: <https://go.usa.gov/xPQE3>.

“In spite of the best efforts of investigators, crucial evidence that can help solve sex crimes often fails to make it to crime labs for analysis,” said NIJ Director David Muhlhausen. “These grants will help state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies reduce the number of unsubmitted sexual assault kits, expand their capacity for handling forensic evidence in the future and bring resolution to sexual assault cases and a measure of justice to victims.”

Also included was more than \$9 million awarded through NIJ's Forensic DNA Laboratory Efficiency Improvement and Capacity Enhancement Program to 19 states and local jurisdictions to support projects that enhance capacity and improve efficiency of laboratories that perform forensic testing, including DNA analysis. More information about the 2018 Forensic DNA Laboratory Efficiency Improvement and Capacity Enhancement Program awards is available here: <https://go.usa.gov/xPQEc>.

NIJ's Research and Development in Forensic Science for Criminal Justice Purposes program is making 50 awards totaling almost \$24 million to support the development of accurate, reliable, cost-effective, and rapid methods for the identification, analysis, and interpretation of physical evidence. More information about the 2018 Research and Development in Forensic Science for Criminal Justice Purposes Program awards is available here: <https://go.usa.gov/xPQEr>.

Three jurisdictions have received \$1.4 million through the NIJ's Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence-Inventory, Tracking, and Reporting Program. They are the Texas Department of Public Safety (\$187,092), New Hampshire Department of Justice (\$333,558), and New Orleans Police Department (\$906,660). The funding is helping the agencies inventory, track, and report all untested and unsubmitted sexual assault kits to ensure accountability and transparency for the collection, processing and testing of sexual assault evidence.

The Office of Justice Programs, led by Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Matt M. Dummermuth, provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice and assist victims. OJP has six bureaus and offices: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; the Office for Victims of Crime; and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering and Tracking. More information about OJP and its components can be found at www.ojp.gov.

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