



Department of Justice



Office of Justice Programs

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DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE INVESTS \$63 MILLION IN NATION'S CRIME LABS

Funding will expand capacity and reduce backlogs

WASHINGTON, DC- The Office of Justice Programs' (OJP) National Institute of Justice (NIJ) today announced awards of more than \$63 million to 132 states and local jurisdictions to increase laboratory capacity and reduce the number of DNA samples awaiting analysis.

“The DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction Program continues to be a vital source of funding to state and local Crime Laboratories. This funding not only allows these labs to get the additional resources they need to keep up with increasing demand, it also allows them to implement new technologies and protocols that help increase the speed and efficiency of DNA testing, thus getting investigative leads to law enforcement faster,” said Nancy Rodriguez, NIJ Director.

Today's awards were announced at Looking Ahead: The National Sexual Assault Policy Symposium hosted by NIJ and taking place yesterday and today in Washington, DC. A breakdown of today's awards is available at: <http://grants.ojp.usdoj.gov:85/selector/solicitations> (click on “National Institute of Justice”).

Made available through NIJ's DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction program, the funds may be used to process, record, screen, and analyze DNA evidence. Under this program, eligible applicants are given the opportunity, based on their individual needs, to utilize funding for capacity-building purposes and analysis of DNA samples. All recipients have the option to use the funding to conduct DNA testing on evidence that is submitted to the laboratories – including evidence related to sexual assaults and other violent crimes.

This year, NIJ launched a new program complementing NIJ's DNA Backlog Reduction program and the Bureau of Justice Assistance's Sexual Assault Kit program. The new Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence – Inventory, Tracking, and Reporting program (SAFE-ITR) will award \$3.3 million in the next few weeks to States, units of local government, and federally recognized Native American and Alaska Native governments for tracking and reporting the status of sexual assault kits.

NIJ, the research and development arm of the U.S. Department of Justice, is dedicated to improving knowledge and understanding of crime and justice issues through science. NIJ provides objective and independent knowledge and tools to reduce crime and promote justice, particularly at the state and local levels. More information about NIJ programs and initiatives is available at: www.nij.gov

About the Office of Justice Programs

OJP, headed by Assistant Attorney General Karol V. Mason, provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice and assist victims. OJP has six components: 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 can be found at www.ojp.gov.

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