



The [U.S. Department of Justice](#) (DOJ), [Office of Justice Programs](#) (OJP), [National Institute of Justice](#) (NIJ) is seeking applications for funding under the FY 2015 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program. This program furthers the Department's mission by providing States and units of local government with tools needed to meet the challenges of crime and justice. Specifically, this program seeks to improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science and medical examiner services, including services provided by laboratories operated by States and units of local government.

## Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program

### Eligibility

Eligible applicants are limited to States (including territories) and units of local government "(including federally recognized Indian tribal governments as determined by the Secretary of the Interior). State Administering Agencies (SAAs) apply on behalf of States, including any State government entity. (See "Eligibility" on page 3.)

For additional eligibility information, see section [C. Eligibility Information](#).

### Deadline

Applicants must register in the [OJP Grants Management System \(GMS\)](#) prior to submitting an application for this funding opportunity. Registration is required for all applicants, even those previously registered in GMS. Select the "Apply Online" button associated with the solicitation title. All registrations and applications are due by 11:59 p.m. eastern time on **April 6, 2015**.

For additional information, see "[How to Apply](#)" in Section D. Application and Submission Information.

### Contact Information

For technical assistance with submitting an application, contact the Grants Management System Support Hotline at 888-549-9901, option 3 or via e-mail at [GMS.HelpDesk@usdoj.gov](mailto:GMS.HelpDesk@usdoj.gov). The [GMS](#) Support Hotline hours of operation are Monday – Friday from 6:00 a.m. to midnight eastern time, except federal holidays.

Applicants that experience unforeseen GMS technical issues beyond their control that prevent them from submitting their application by the deadline must e-mail the NIJ contact identified below **within 24 hours after the application deadline** and request approval to submit their application. Additional information on reporting technical issues is found under "Experiencing Unforeseen GMS Technical Issues" in the [How to Apply](#) section.

For assistance with any other requirements of this solicitation contact [Forensic.Coverdell@usdoj.gov](mailto:Forensic.Coverdell@usdoj.gov).

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# Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program

CFDA No. 16.742

## A. Program Description

### Overview

With this solicitation, NIJ seeks proposals for the Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program (the Coverdell program), which awards grants to States and units of local government to help improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science and medical examiner 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, as needed, to eliminate such a backlog. State Administering Agencies (SAAs) may apply for both “base” (formula) and competitive funds. Units of local government may apply for competitive funds.

**Authorizing Legislation:** The Coverdell program is authorized by Title I of the Omnibus Safe Streets and Crime Control Act of 1968, Part BB, codified at 42 U.S.C. § 3797j-3797o (the Coverdell law).

### Program-Specific Information

This solicitation seeks applications for funding to improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science and medical examiner services, including services provided by laboratories operated by States and/or units of local government. Among other things, funds may be used to eliminate backlogs in the analysis of general forensic evidence or to train and employ forensic laboratory personnel to eliminate such backlogs.

### Eligibility

States<sup>1</sup> and units of local government may apply for FY 2015 Coverdell funds. States may be eligible for both “base” (formula) and competitive funds. Units of local government within States may be eligible for competitive funds and may apply directly to NIJ. Any State application for funding **MUST** be submitted by the Coverdell SAA (see list of SAAs on the OJP Web site at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/saa/index.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/saa/index.htm)). (Other interested State agencies or departments must coordinate with their respective SAAs.)

The Coverdell law (at 42 U.S.C. § 3797k) requires that, to request a grant, an applicant for Coverdell funds must submit:

- 1. A certification and description regarding a plan for forensic science laboratories.** Each applicant must submit a certification that the State or unit of local government 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,

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<sup>1</sup> For purposes of the Coverdell program, the term “State” means each of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the 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.

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 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 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 42 U.S.C. § 3797m(c). (See information on "permissible expenses" in the next section of this 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 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."

Applicants are expected to review the requirements of each certification carefully before determining whether the certification properly may be made. Any certification that is submitted must be executed by an official who is both familiar with the requirements of the certification and authorized to make the certification on behalf of the applicant agency (that is, the agency applying directly to NIJ). **Certifications must be submitted using the templates that appear in Appendix 2.**

Certifications made on behalf of subrecipients of award funds—rather than certifications made on behalf of the agency applying directly to NIJ—are **not** acceptable to satisfy the certification requirements.

In connection with the certification regarding external investigations (described above), applicants **must** provide, prior to receiving award funds, the name(s) of the existing "government entity" (or government entities). This information is to be provided as an attachment to the program narrative section of the application. See "What an Application Should Include," page 14, and [Appendix 3](#), which includes a template for the attachment.

Please note that funds will not be made available to applicant agencies that fail to provide the necessary information.

### **Important Note on Referrals in Connection With Allegations of Serious Negligence or Serious Misconduct**

The highest standards of integrity in the practice of forensic science are critical to the enhancement of the administration of justice. We assume that recipients (and subrecipients) of Coverdell funds will make use of the process referenced in their certification 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 grant application.

For each fiscal year of an award made under this solicitation, recipients will be required to report to NIJ on an annual basis—

1. The number and nature of any such allegations;
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.

Payments to recipients (including payments under future awards) may be withheld if the required information is not submitted on a timely basis.

#### **Special Guidance on Certification Regarding External Investigations Into Allegations of Serious Negligence or Misconduct.**

The certification regarding external investigations has a number of requirements, each of which must be satisfied before the certification may be made. The official authorized to make the certification on behalf of the applicant agency must review each of the statutory elements and this guidance carefully before determining whether a certification properly may be made. After reviewing the information and guidance provided here, the official, on behalf of the applicant agency, must determine whether:

- A government entity exists.
- With an appropriate process 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.

**Note:** In making this certification, the certifying official is certifying that these requirements are satisfied not only with respect to the applicant itself but also with respect to each entity that will receive a portion of the grant amount. Certifying officials are advised that: (1) a false statement in the certification or in the grant application that it supports may be the subject of criminal prosecution, including under 18 U.S.C. § 1001 and 42 U.S.C. § 3795a, and (2) 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.

The following guidance, provided by way of examples for applicants' review, is designed to illustrate elements of the external investigation certification that the official authorized to make the certification on behalf of the applicant agency must take into account in determining whether the certification properly may be made.

Because it is not possible for NIJ to provide examples relating to every type of government entity with an appropriate process 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, this guidance should not be viewed as all inclusive. In addition, this guidance is not intended to constitute legal advice from NIJ on the question of whether the required certification properly may be made on behalf of the applicant. Such a determination must be made by an appropriate official based on the statutory requirements of the certification after review of this guidance.

#### **Illustrative Examples:**

1. The only government entity that will receive Coverdell award funds is a forensic laboratory that is a unit of a local law enforcement agency (e.g., a police department). The law enforcement agency has an Internal Affairs Division (IAD) that reports directly to the head of the law enforcement agency (the Police Chief) and the head of the unit of local government (the Mayor/City Commissioner). The IAD has the authority to conduct investigations into allegations of serious negligence or misconduct by laboratory employees **and** contractors.

*Guidance:* Execution of the certification might be appropriate under these facts. Nevertheless, the official authorized to make the certification on behalf of the applicant agency must be satisfied that the IAD at issue has the requisite authority to conduct independent investigations (for example, whether the IAD is completely free from influence or supervision by laboratory management officials) into allegations relating to employees or contractors of the laboratory.

2. A State intends to distribute Coverdell award funds to State and local forensic laboratories and medical examiners' offices. There is an Office of the Inspector General (OIG) in the State with authority to conduct investigations into allegations of serious negligence or misconduct by employees and contractors of forensic laboratories and medical examiners' offices, both at the State and local levels.

*Guidance:* Execution of the certification might be appropriate under these facts. Nevertheless, the certifying official must be satisfied that the State IG's authority in this regard is not circumscribed in such a way that the IG's ability to conduct independent investigations is limited (for example, through a reporting hierarchy that does not provide

for the IG to report directly to the chief executive officer or another equally independent State official or office).

3. A city has applied for a Coverdell award and all funds will go to the city's forensic laboratory. There is a process in place whereby the city's District Attorney (DA) may appoint an independent investigator to conduct an investigation into allegations concerning the city's forensic laboratory. If the DA appoints an independent investigator, the investigator will have authority to investigate allegations of serious negligence or misconduct by both laboratory employees and contractors.

*Guidance:* Execution of the certification might be appropriate under these facts. In this regard however, the certifying official must be satisfied that the process at issue (appointment of an independent investigator by the city DA) includes procedures under which allegations involving the laboratory are submitted to or are made known to the DA, and that the DA's authority and responsibility to appoint an independent investigator to conduct investigations of such allegations is sufficiently delineated in city policies and/or regulations so that the "appropriate process" in place is clearly defined.

4. An applicant agency determines that the forensics laboratory director (or some other individual in the chain of command at the laboratory) has sole responsibility to conduct investigations into allegations of serious negligence or misconduct committed by laboratory employees.

*Guidance:* Under these circumstances, execution of the certification would not be appropriate because there is no process in place to conduct independent, external investigations into allegations of serious negligence or misconduct committed by laboratory employees and contractors.

5. A State applicant intends to distribute Coverdell award funds to forensic laboratories at both the State and local level. An independent commission established by the Governor has authority to investigate allegations of serious negligence or misconduct by employees, including employees of units of local government within the State.

*Guidance:* Under these circumstances, the existence of this commission is not itself a sufficient basis for execution of the certification. In this regard, the commission does not have authority to investigate allegations of serious negligence or misconduct by contractors of State and local government forensic laboratories that receive Coverdell funds. (If, however, some other government entity, distinct from the commission, has a process in place to conduct independent external investigations of allegations of serious negligence or misconduct by such contractors, execution of the certification might be appropriate depending on all the facts.)

6. A local forensic laboratory, which is intended to receive a portion of the funds from a Coverdell award to a State, notifies the State applicant that a quality assurance official is responsible for investigating allegations of serious negligence or misconduct by employees and contractors of the local forensic laboratory. The quality assurance official reports to the director of the forensic laboratory.

*Guidance:* Under these circumstances, execution of the certification would not be appropriate because the quality assurance official reports to the director of the forensic laboratory; and, therefore, there is no process in place to conduct independent, external

investigations of allegations against the forensics laboratory as required to make the certification.

7. An applicant agency (a forensics laboratory) intends to employ a contractor or a nongovernmental organization to conduct investigations into allegations of serious negligence or misconduct committed by laboratory employees.

*Guidance:* Under these circumstances, execution of the certification would not be appropriate, as there is neither a government entity nor an appropriate process in place to conduct independent, external investigations of allegations against the laboratory, whether alleged to be committed by laboratory employees and/or contractors, because the contractor or nongovernmental entity is employed by and responsible to the forensics laboratory.

8. An applicant agency is accredited by an independent accrediting or certifying organization such as CALEA, ASCLD-LAB, NAME, FQS, etc.

*Guidance:* In this situation, execution of the certification would not be appropriate. The fact of accreditation or certification by an outside entity on its own does not demonstrate that the agency has a process in place to investigate allegations of serious negligence or misconduct committed by employees or contractors. There is insufficient information to properly make the required certification in this situation.

## **Goals, Objectives, and Deliverables**

### **Available Funding**

The figures and calculations reflected in this solicitation (for example, the estimated minimum award to States and the estimated amount of “base” funds, by State) are based on an estimated total amount available of \$10,322,050, although the amount ultimately made available could be higher or lower). Applicants are strongly advised to check for updates to the solicitation prior to submitting applications.

***All awards are subject to the availability of appropriated funds and to any modifications or additional requirements that may be imposed by law.***

#### **1. “Base” Funds for States**

Approximately 75 percent of the funds available for Coverdell grants will be allocated among eligible States based on population (State “base” funds). The approximate amount each eligible State would receive if \$10,322,050 were made available for FY 2015 is listed in Appendix 1: “Estimated Amount of FY 2015 Base Funds, by State.”<sup>2</sup>

#### **2. 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. The average annual number of Part 1 violent crimes reported by each State to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for calendar

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<sup>2</sup> Under the provisions of the Coverdell law, several factors (including the number of eligible State applicants) affect “base” amounts.



years 2011, 2012, and 2013; existing resources; and current needs of the potential grant recipient will be considerations in award decisions. For FY 2015, the maximum amount a State or unit of local government may receive in competitive funds is **\$175,000**.

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. A State may apply through its SAA for competitive funds for forensic sciences improvements **above and beyond** those it can accomplish with its estimated amount of base funds.

### **3. Minimum Awards to States**

The Coverdell law sets a floor for the total amount an eligible applicant State will receive as its Coverdell grant. If \$10,322,050 were to become available for FY 2015, the minimum Coverdell grant to an eligible State would be not less than \$61,932.<sup>3</sup> In that case, if the amount a State would otherwise receive as its total Coverdell grant (including both base funds and any competitive funds) is less than \$61,932, NIJ will increase that State's total grant to \$61,932.

#### **Grant Purposes**

A State or unit of local government that receives a Coverdell grant must use the grant for one or more of these three 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 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,<sup>4</sup> including, among other things, a backlog with respect to firearms examination, latent prints, toxicology, controlled substances, forensic pathology, questioned documents, and trace evidence.
3. To train, assist, and employ forensic laboratory personnel as needed to eliminate such a backlog.

#### **Expected Results and Outcomes**

The result of Coverdell grants to applicant States should be a demonstrated improvement over current operations in the quality and/or 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. Reduction of forensic analysis backlogs is considered an improvement in timeliness of services. The result of Coverdell grants directly to units of local government should be a demonstrated improvement over current operations in the quality and/or timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services provided by the local jurisdiction.

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<sup>3</sup> Minimum awards for America Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands would be lower.

<sup>4</sup> A backlog in the analysis of forensic science evidence exists if forensic evidence has been stored in a laboratory, medical examiner's office, coroner's 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.

See “Performance Measures,” page 18, for additional information.

## **B. Federal Award Information**

Coverdell grants generally are limited to a 12-month period. Applicants are asked to establish a project period of October 1, 2015, to September 30, 2016. Applicants should be aware that the total period of an award, including one that receives a project period extension, ordinarily will not exceed 3 years.

All awards are subject to the availability of appropriated funds and to any modifications or additional requirements that may be imposed by law.

### **Type of Award<sup>5</sup>**

NIJ expects that it will make any award from this solicitation in the form of a grant.

### **Financial Management and System of Internal Controls**

If selected for funding, the award recipient must:

- a) Establish and maintain effective internal control over the Federal award that provides reasonable assurance that the non-Federal entity is managing the Federal award in compliance with Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the Federal award. These internal controls should be in compliance with guidance in “Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government” issued by the Comptroller General of the United States and the “Internal Control Integrated Framework”, issued by the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission (COSO).
- b) Comply with Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the Federal awards.
- c) Evaluate and monitor the non-Federal entity's compliance with statute, regulations and the terms and conditions of Federal awards.
- d) Take prompt action when instances of noncompliance are identified including noncompliance identified in audit findings.
- e) Take reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other information the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity designates as sensitive or the non-Federal entity considers sensitive consistent with applicable Federal, State and local laws regarding privacy and obligations of confidentiality.

In order to better understand administrative requirements and cost principles, award applicants are encouraged to enroll, at no charge, in the Department of Justice Grants Financial Management Online Training available [here](#).

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<sup>5</sup> See generally 31 U.S.C. §§ 6301-6305 (defines and describes various forms of federal assistance relationships, including grants and cooperative agreements (a type of grant)).

## Budget Information

### Permissible Expenses

The types of expenses listed below generally may be paid with Coverdell funds.

**Note:** The following list details the types of expenses allowed under the Coverdell program. These expenses should **NOT** be used as budget categories—instead they are to be incorporated into the appropriate standard OJP budget categories. For more information on OJP’s standard budget format, see the section titled “What an Application Should Include.”

1. **Personnel.** Funds may be used for forensic science or medical examiner personnel, overtime, fellowships, visiting scientists, 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 forensic laboratory or medical examiner equipment and instrumentation.
4. **Supplies.** Funds may be used to acquire forensic laboratory or medical examiner 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. See [F. Federal Award Administration Information](#), later in this announcement, for a link to OJP webpages containing information about NEPA and other legal requirements.

Applicants should note that award recipients whose proposals involve the use or purchase of chemicals may encounter delays in the release of their award funds pending satisfactory completion of the NEPA review process.

5. **Accreditation.** Funds may be used to prepare for laboratory accreditation by the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors/Laboratory Accreditation Board (ASCLD-LAB), Forensic Quality Services (FQS), the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME), the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA), 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 that 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 specific forensic discipline areas. 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/or timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services.

**Limitations on use of funds for costs of new facility.** The Coverdell law limits the amount of funds that may be used for the costs of a new facility or facilities (see 42 U.S.C. § 3797m(c)). 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. (Estimates and calculations are based on the assumption that the total available funds for Coverdell awards in FY 2015 will be \$10,322,050. Please refer to the discussion under "Available Funding" on page 8.)

- a. Grants that do not exceed 0.6 percent of the total available funds (estimated at \$61,932) for FY 2015. If the total Coverdell grant to an applicant State or unit of local government is less than or equal to 0.6 percent of the total available funds (estimated here at \$61,932), no more than 80 percent of the total grant may be used for the costs of 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 0.6 percent of the total available funds (estimated here at \$61,932), the amount of the grant that can be used for the costs of any new facility cannot exceed the sum of 80 percent of 0.6 percent of the total available funds (such 80 percent estimated here at \$49,546) plus 40 percent of the amount of the grant in excess of 0.6 percent of the total available funds.

For example, if \$10,322,050 were to become available for Coverdell awards in FY 2015 and a State were to receive a total Coverdell grant of \$100,000, no more than \$67,773 may be used for the costs of any new facility.

A sample calculation for a \$100,000 grant would be as follows:

Eighty percent of 0.6 percent of the total available funds:  $\$61,932 \times .80 = \$49,546$ .

Amount in excess of \$61,932:  $\$100,000 - \$61,932 = \$38,068$

Forty percent of amount in excess of \$61,932:  $\$38,068 \times .40 = \$15,227$ .

Sum of  $\$49,546 + \$15,227 = \$67,773$ .

**Note:** To help ensure compliance with NEPA and Department of Justice regulations, Coverdell awardees that intend to use funds for activities involving the renovation or construction of facilities will be required to submit additional information. See F. Federal Award Administration Information, later in this announcement, for a link to OJP webpages containing information about NEPA and other legal requirements.

Applicants should note that award recipients whose proposals involve construction or renovation may encounter delays in the release of their award funds pending satisfactory completion of the NEPA review process.

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

### **Expenses That Are Not Permitted**

1. Expenses other than those listed above (including expenses for general law enforcement functions or non-forensic investigatory functions).
2. Costs for any new facility that exceed the limits described above.
3. Recipient administrative expenses (direct or indirect) that exceed 10 percent of the total grant amount.
4. The use of funds for the purchase and/or lease of vehicles, such as crime scene vans.

### **Cost Sharing or Match Requirement**

This solicitation does not require a match. However, if a successful application proposes a voluntary match amount, and OJP approves the budget, the total match amount incorporated into the approved budget becomes mandatory and subject to audit.

### **Pre-Agreement Cost Approvals**

OJP does not typically approve pre-agreement costs; an applicant must request and obtain the prior written approval of OJP for all such costs. If approved, pre-agreement costs could be paid from grant funds consistent with a grantee's approved budget, and under applicable cost standards. However, all such costs prior to award and prior to approval of the costs are incurred at the sole risk of an applicant. Generally, no applicant should incur project costs *before* submitting an application requesting federal funding for those costs. Should there be extenuating circumstances that appear to be appropriate for OJP's consideration as pre-agreement costs, the applicant should contact the point of contact listed on the title page of this announcement for details on the requirements for submitting a written request for approval. See the section on Costs Requiring Prior Approval in the [Financial Guide](#), for more information.

### **Limitation on Use of Award Funds for Employee Compensation; Waiver**

With respect to any award of more than \$250,000 made under this solicitation, recipients may not use federal funds to pay total cash compensation (salary plus cash bonuses) to any employee of the award recipient at a rate that exceeds 110% of the maximum annual salary payable to a member of the Federal Government's Senior Executive Service (SES) at an agency with a Certified SES Performance Appraisal System for that year. The 2015 salary table for SES employees is available at the Office of Personnel Management [website](#). Note: A recipient may compensate an employee at a greater rate, provided the amount in excess of this compensation limitation is paid with non-federal funds. (Any such additional compensation will not be considered matching funds where match requirements apply.)

The Assistant Attorney General for OJP may exercise discretion to waive, on an individual basis, the limitation on compensation rates allowable under an award. An applicant requesting a waiver should include a detailed justification in the budget narrative of the application. Unless

the applicant submits a waiver request and justification with the application, the applicant should anticipate that OJP will request the applicant to adjust and resubmit the budget.

The justification should include the particular qualifications and expertise of the individual, the uniqueness of the service the individual will provide, the individual's specific knowledge of the program or project being undertaken with award funds, and a statement explaining that the individual's salary is commensurate with the regular and customary rate for an individual with his/her qualifications and expertise, and for the work to be done.

### **Prior Approval, Planning, and Reporting of Conference/Meeting/Training Costs**

OJP strongly encourages applicants that propose to use award funds for any conference-, meeting-, or training-related activity to review carefully – before submitting an application – the OJP policy and guidance on conference approval, planning, and reporting available at [www.ojp.gov/financialguide/PostawardRequirements/chapter15page1.htm](http://www.ojp.gov/financialguide/PostawardRequirements/chapter15page1.htm). OJP policy and guidance (1) encourage minimization of conference, meeting, and training costs; (2) require prior written approval (which may affect project timelines) of most such costs for cooperative agreement recipients and of some such costs for grant recipients; and (3) set cost limits, including a general prohibition of all food and beverage costs.

### **Costs Associated with Language Assistance (if applicable)**

If an applicant proposes a program or activity that would deliver services or benefits to individuals, the costs of taking reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to those services or benefits for individuals with limited English proficiency may be allowable. Reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to services or benefits may include interpretation or translation services where appropriate.

For additional information, see the "Civil Rights Compliance" section under "Solicitation Requirements" in the [OJP Funding Resource Center](#).

## **C. Eligibility Information**

For additional eligibility information, see Title page and page 3.

For additional information on cost sharing or match requirement, see [Section B. Federal Award Information](#).

### **Limit on Number of Application Submissions**

If an applicant submits multiple versions of the same application, NIJ will review only the most recent system-validated version submitted. For more information on system-validated versions, see [How to Apply](#).

## **D. Application and Submission Information**

### **What an Application Should Include**

Applicants should anticipate that if they fail to submit an application that contains all of the specified elements, it may negatively affect the review of their application; and, should a

decision be made to make an award, it may result in the inclusion of special conditions that preclude the recipient from accessing or using award funds pending satisfaction of the conditions.

Moreover, applicants that request competitive funds should anticipate that applications that are determined to be nonresponsive to the scope of the solicitation, or that do not include the application elements that NIJ has designated to be critical, will neither proceed to peer review nor receive further consideration. Under this solicitation, NIJ has designated, for requests for competitive funds, the following application elements as critical: Program Narrative, Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative, and **all four** certifications required by the Coverdell law. Applicants may combine the Budget Narrative and the Budget Detail Worksheet in one document. However, if an applicant submits only one document, it must contain **both** narrative and detail information. (Requests for competitive funds from States must clearly differentiate between the information on program narrative and budget provided for the request for competitive funds and the information provided for the request for “base” funds.)

Please review the “Note on File Names and File Types” under [How to Apply](#) to be sure applications are submitted in permitted formats.

OJP strongly recommends that applicants use appropriately descriptive file names (e.g., “Program Narrative,” “Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative,” “Timelines,” “Memoranda of Understanding,” “Resumes”) for all attachments. Also, OJP recommends that applicants include resumes in a single file.

## 1. Information to Complete the Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)

The SF-424 is a required standard form used as a cover sheet for submission of pre-applications, applications, and related information. GMS takes information from the applicant’s profile to populate the fields on this form. When selecting “type of applicant,” if the applicant is a for-profit entity, select “For-Profit Organization” or “Small Business” (as applicable).

**Intergovernmental Review:** This funding opportunity **is** subject to [Executive Order 12372](#). Applicants may find the names and addresses of their state’s Single Point of Contact (SPOC) at the following website: [www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants\\_spoc/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc/). Applicants whose state appears on the SPOC list must contact their state’s SPOC to find out about, and comply with, the state’s process under Executive Order 12372. In completing the SF-424, applicants whose state appears on the SPOC list are to make the appropriate selection in response to question 19 once the applicant has complied with their state’s E.O. 12372 process. (Applicants whose state does not appear on the SPOC list are to make the appropriate selection in response to question 19 to indicate that the “Program is subject to E.O. 12372 but has not been selected by the State for review.”)

## 2. Project Abstract

Applications should include a high-quality project abstract that summarizes the proposed project in 250-400 words. Project abstracts should be—

- Written for a general public audience.
- Submitted as a separate attachment with “Project Abstract” as part of its file name.

- Single-spaced, using a standard 12-point font (Times New Roman) with 1-inch margins.

As a separate attachment, the project abstract will **not** count against the page limit for the program narrative section of a request for competitive funds.

All project abstracts should follow the detailed template available at [ojp.gov/funding/Apply/Resources/ProjectAbstractTemplate.pdf](http://ojp.gov/funding/Apply/Resources/ProjectAbstractTemplate.pdf).

### 3. Program Narrative

#### Program Narrative Guidelines:

##### a. Main Body

The main body of the program narrative should address the project objectives, the expected results, and the implementation approach.

##### a. Formula (base) applications

- **State (base) applicants:** The program narrative must specifically describe the manner in which Coverdell grant funds will be used to carry out the State plan to improve the quality and/or timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services over current operations. (Reduction of forensic analysis backlogs is considered an improvement in timeliness of services.) States are expected to consider the needs of laboratories operated by units of local government as well as those operated by the State.

If grant funds are requested for costs of a new facility, the program narrative must specifically describe the new facility to be constructed and the estimated costs of that facility.

##### b. Requests for competitive funds

The main body of the program narrative for a request for competitive funds should describe the project in depth. The following sections should be included as part of the main body of a program narrative:

- Statement of the Problem.
- Project/Program Design and Implementation.
- Capabilities/Competencies.
- Impact/Outcomes and Evaluation/Plan for Collecting Data for Performance Measures.
- Other/Part 1 violent crimes data (see page 27).
- **State (base/competitive) applicants:** A State that seeks competitive funds in addition to base funds should include a separate program narrative (as well



as a separate proposed budget detail worksheet and budget narrative), which should describe 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 estimated amount of base funds. As noted earlier, existing resources and current needs will be considered in awarding competitive funds and should be addressed in any request for competitive funds. As part of the discussion of existing resources and current needs, applicants requesting competitive funds should include information in the program narrative that describes any known, specific impact(s) on resources and needs indicated by the applicant State's part 1 violent crime data. Requests for competitive funds should specify the dollar amount requested, which should not exceed \$175,000.

If grant funds are requested for costs of a new facility, the program narrative must specifically describe the new facility to be constructed and the estimated costs of that facility.

Any State application for funding **MUST** be submitted by the Coverdell SAA (see list of SAAs on the OJP Web site at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/saa/index.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/saa/index.htm)). When applying for competitive funds, an SAA should consult with all interested State agencies to prepare a request for competitive funds. No more than one request for competitive funds per State (SAA) will be funded.

- **Unit of local government:** The program narrative must specifically describe the manner in which Coverdell grant funds will be used to carry out the unit of local government plan to improve the quality and/or timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services over current operations. (Reduction of forensic analysis backlogs is considered an improvement in timeliness of services.) Existing resources and current needs will be considered in awarding competitive funds and should be addressed in any request for competitive funds. As part of the discussion of existing resources and current needs, applicants requesting competitive funds should include information in the program narrative that describes any known, specific impact(s) on resources and needs indicated by the applicant unit of local government's part 1 violent crime data (State data and any data reported by the unit of local government). Requests for competitive funds should specify the dollar amount requested, which should not exceed \$175,000.

If grant funds are requested for costs of a new facility, the program narrative must specifically describe the new facility to be constructed and the estimated costs of that facility.

All interested components of a unit of local government should be consulted before preparing an application for competitive funds. No more than one application for competitive funds per unit of local government will be funded.

The program narrative section for a request for competitive funds should not exceed 20 double-spaced pages in 12-point font with 1-inch margins. Abstract, table of contents, charts, figures, appendices, and government forms do not count toward the 20-page limit for the narrative section. If the program narrative for a request for competitive funds fails to comply with

these length-related restrictions, noncompliance may be considered in peer review and in final award decisions.

#### 4. External Investigations Attachment to the Program Narrative

- All applicants are to provide—as an attachment to the program narrative—the name(s) of the existing “government entity” (or entities) that is the subject of the certification (see Appendix 2) 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.

- Appendix 3 includes a template for this attachment. Note that funds **will not be made available** to applicant agencies that fail to provide the necessary information.

#### 5. Plan for Collecting the Data Required for this Solicitation's Performance Measures

NIJ does not require applicants to submit performance measures data with their application. Performance measures are included as an alert that NIJ will require successful applicants to submit specific data to NIJ as part of their reporting requirements. For the application (“base” and/or competitive), applicants should indicate an understanding of these requirements and discuss how they will gather the required data, should they receive funding.

### Performance Measures

To assist the Department with fulfilling its responsibilities under the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA), Public Law 103-62, and the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010, Public Law 111-352, applicants that receive funding under this solicitation must provide data that measure the results of their work done under this solicitation. OJP will require any award recipient, post award, to provide the data requested in the “Data Grantee Provides” column so that OJP can calculate values for the “Performance Measures” column. Performance measures for this solicitation are as follows:

Objective	Performance Measure(s)	Data Grantee Provides
To improve the quality and timeliness of forensic services and to reduce the number of backlogged cases in forensic laboratories	<p><b>Outcome Measure</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.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.</li> <li>2.Percent reduction in the number of backlogged forensic cases.</li> </ol> <p><b>Output Measure</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.The number of forensic science or medical examiner personnel who completed appropriate training or educational opportunities with FY 2015 Coverdell funds (if applicable to the grant).</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.Average number of days to process a sample at the beginning of the grant period.</li> <li>2.Average number of days to process a sample at the end of the grant period.</li> <li>3.Number of backlogged cases at the beginning of the grant period.</li> <li>4.Number of backlogged cases at the end of the grant period.</li> <li>5.Number of forensic science personnel attending training.</li> <li>6.Number of medical examiner personnel attending training programs.</li> </ol>

**Note on Project Evaluations**

Applicants that propose to use funds awarded through this solicitation to conduct project evaluations should be aware that certain project evaluations (such as systematic investigations designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge) may constitute “research” for purposes of applicable DOJ human subjects protection regulations. However, project evaluations that are intended only to generate internal improvements to a program or service, or are conducted only to meet OJP’s performance measure data reporting requirements likely do not constitute “research.” Applicants should provide sufficient information for OJP to determine whether the particular project they propose would either intentionally or unintentionally collect and/or use information in such a way that it meets the DOJ regulatory definition of research.

Research, for the purposes of human subjects protections for OJP-funded programs, is defined as, “a systematic investigation, including research development, testing, and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge” 28 C.F.R. § 46.102(d). For additional information on determining whether a proposed activity would constitute research, see the decision tree to assist applicants on the “Research and the Protection of Human Subjects” section of the [OJP Funding Resource Center](http://www.ojp.gov/funding/Explore/SolicitationRequirements/EvidenceResearchEvaluationRequirements.htm) Web page ([www.ojp.gov/funding/Explore/SolicitationRequirements/EvidenceResearchEvaluationRequirements.htm](http://www.ojp.gov/funding/Explore/SolicitationRequirements/EvidenceResearchEvaluationRequirements.htm)). Applicants whose proposals may involve a research or statistical component also should review the “Data Privacy and Confidentiality Requirements” section on that Web page.

**6. Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative**

**a. Budget Detail Worksheet**

A sample Budget Detail Worksheet can be found at [www.ojp.gov/funding/Apply/Resources/BudgetDetailWorksheet.pdf](http://www.ojp.gov/funding/Apply/Resources/BudgetDetailWorksheet.pdf). Applicants that

submit their budget in a different format should include the budget categories listed in the sample budget worksheet.

For questions pertaining to budget and examples of allowable and unallowable costs, see the Financial Guide at [www.ojp.gov/financialguide/index.htm](http://www.ojp.gov/financialguide/index.htm).

**b. Budget Narrative**

The budget narrative should thoroughly and clearly describe every category of expense listed in the Budget Detail Worksheet. OJP expects proposed budgets to be complete, cost effective, and allowable (e.g., reasonable, allocable, and necessary for project activities).

Applicants should demonstrate in their budget narratives how they will maximize cost effectiveness of grant expenditures. Budget narratives should generally describe cost effectiveness in relation to potential alternatives and the goals of the project. For example, a budget narrative should detail why planned in-person meetings are necessary, or how technology and collaboration with outside organizations could be used to reduce costs, without compromising quality.

The narrative should be mathematically sound and correspond with the information and figures provided in the Budget Detail Worksheet. The narrative should explain how the applicant estimated and calculated all costs, and how they are relevant to the completion of the proposed project. The narrative may include tables for clarification purposes but need not be in a spreadsheet format. As with the Budget Detail Worksheet, the Budget Narrative should be broken down by year.

**c. Non-Competitive Procurement Contracts In Excess of Simplified Acquisition Threshold**

If an applicant proposes to make one or more non-competitive procurements of products or services, where the non-competitive procurement will exceed the simplified acquisition threshold (also known as the small purchase threshold), which is currently set at \$150,000, the application should address the considerations outlined in the [Financial Guide](#).

**d. Pre-Agreement Costs**

For information on pre-agreement costs, see “Pre-Agreement Cost Approvals” under Section [B. Federal Award Information](#).

**7. Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)**

Indirect costs are allowed only if the applicant has a current federally approved indirect cost rate. (This requirement does not apply to units of local government.) Attach a copy of the federally approved indirect cost rate agreement to the application. Applicants that do not have an approved rate may request one through their cognizant federal agency, which will review all documentation and approve a rate for the applicant organization, or, if the applicant’s accounting system permits, costs may be allocated in the direct cost categories. For the definition of Cognizant Federal Agency, see the “Glossary of Terms” in the [Financial Guide](#). For assistance with identifying your cognizant agency, please contact the Customer

Service Center at 1-800-458-0786 or at [ask.ocfo@usdoj.gov](mailto:ask.ocfo@usdoj.gov). If DOJ is the cognizant federal agency, applicants may obtain information needed to submit an indirect cost rate proposal at [www.ojp.gov/funding/Apply/Resources/IndirectCosts.pdf](http://www.ojp.gov/funding/Apply/Resources/IndirectCosts.pdf).

## 8. Applicant Disclosure of High-Risk Status

Applicants are to disclose whether they are currently designated high risk by another federal grant making agency. This includes any status requiring additional oversight by the federal agency due to past programmatic or financial concerns. If an applicant is designated high risk by another federal grant making agency, you must email the following information to [OJPComplianceReporting@usdoj.gov](mailto:OJPComplianceReporting@usdoj.gov) at the time of application submission:

- The federal agency that currently designated the applicant as high risk;
- Date the applicant was designated high-risk;
- The high-risk point of contact name, phone number, and email address, from that federal agency; and
- Reasons for the high-risk status;

OJP seeks this information to ensure appropriate federal oversight of any grant award. Unlike the Excluded Parties List, this high risk information does not disqualify any organization from receiving an OJP award. However, additional grant oversight may be included, if necessary, in award documentation.

## 9. Additional Attachments

### a. Coverdell Statutory Certifications

As described above in the “Eligibility” section, the Coverdell law provides that, to request a grant, each applicant **must** submit **four** certifications specific to the Coverdell Program. A certification may only be completed by an official familiar with its requirements and authorized to certify on behalf of the applicant agency (i.e., the agency applying directly to NIJ). Templates for the statutory certifications appear in Appendix 2. (Note that there are two versions of the first template—one for State applicants, the other for applicant units of local government.) **All four** certifications **must** be completed using these templates. Certifications made on behalf of subrecipients of award funds—rather than certifications made on behalf of the agency applying directly to NIJ—are **not** acceptable to satisfy the certification requirements.

The four required Coverdell statutory certifications are as follows—

1. Certification as to Plan for Forensic Science Laboratories—Application from a State **or** Certification as to Plan for Forensic Science Laboratories—Application from a Unit of Local Government.
2. Certification as to Generally Accepted Laboratory Practices and Procedures.
3. Certification as to Use of Funds for New Facilities.
4. Certification as to External Investigations.

**Please note:** Specific information and guidance with respect to the “Certification as to External Investigations” are provided above, under “Eligibility.” Certifying officials must read and review this information and guidance prior to executing the certification.

**b. Applicant Disclosure of Pending Applications**

Applicants are to disclose whether they have pending applications for federally funded grants or subgrants (including cooperative agreements) that include requests for funding to support the same project being proposed under this solicitation and will cover the identical cost items outlined in the budget narrative and worksheet in the application under this solicitation. The disclosure should include both direct applications for federal funding (e.g., applications to federal agencies) and indirect applications for such funding (e.g., applications to State agencies that will subaward federal funds).

OJP seeks this information to help avoid any inappropriate duplication of funding. Leveraging multiple funding sources in a complementary manner to implement comprehensive programs or projects is encouraged and is not seen as inappropriate duplication.

Applicants that have pending applications as described above are to provide the following information about pending applications submitted within the last 12 months:

- The federal or State funding agency.
- The solicitation name/project name.
- The point of contact information at the applicable funding agency.

Federal or State Funding Agency	Solicitation Name/Project Name	Name/Phone/E-mail for Point of Contact at Funding Agency
DOJ/COPS	COPS Hiring Program	Jane Doe, 202/000-0000; jane.doe@usdoj.gov
HHS/ Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration	Drug Free Communities Mentoring Program/ North County Youth Mentoring Program	John Doe, 202/000-0000; john.doe@hhs.gov

Applicants should include the table as a separate attachment, with the file name “Disclosure of Pending Applications,” to their application. Applicants that do not have pending applications as described above are to include a statement to this effect in the separate attachment page (e.g., “[Applicant Name on SF-424] does not have pending applications submitted within the last 12 months for federally funded grants or subgrants (including cooperative agreements) that include requests for funding to support the same

project being proposed under this solicitation and will cover the identical cost items outlined in the budget narrative and worksheet in the application under this solicitation.”).

## 9. Financial Management and System of Internal Controls Questionnaire

In accordance with [2 CFR 200.205](#), Federal agencies must have in place a framework for evaluating the risks posed by applicants before they receive a Federal award. To facilitate part of this risk evaluation, **all** applicants (other than an individual) are to download, complete, and submit this [form](#).

## 10. Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

All applicants are to complete this information. Applicants that expend any funds for lobbying activities are to provide the detailed information requested on the form Disclosure of Lobbying Activities ([SF-LLL](#)). Applicants that do not expend any funds for lobbying activities are to enter “N/A” in the text boxes for item 10 (“a. Name and Address of Lobbying Registrant” and “b. Individuals Performing Services”).

### How to Apply

Applicants must submit applications through the [Grants Management System \(GMS\)](#), which provides cradle to grave support for the application, award, and management of awards at OJP. Applicants **must register in GMS for each specific funding opportunity**. Although the registration and submission deadlines are the same, OJP urges applicants to **register promptly**, especially if this is their first time using the system. Find complete instructions on how to register and submit an application in GMS at [www.ojp.gov/gmscbt/](#). Applicants that experience technical difficulties during this process should e-mail [GMS.HelpDesk@usdoj.gov](#) or call 888-549-9901 (option 3), Monday – Friday from 6:00 a.m. to midnight, Eastern Time, except federal holidays. OJP recommends that applicants **register promptly** to prevent delays in submitting an application package by the deadline.

**Note on File Types: GMS does not accept executable file types as application attachments.** These disallowed file types include, but are not limited to, the following extensions: “.com,” “.bat,” “.exe,” “.vbs,” “.cfg,” “.dat,” “.db,” “.dbf,” “.dll,” “.ini,” “.log,” “.ora,” “.sys,” and “.zip.”

OJP may not make a federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the federal awarding agency is ready to make a federal award, the federal awarding agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a federal award to another applicant.

All applicants should complete the following steps:

1. **Acquire a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number.** In general, the Office of Management and Budget requires that all applicants (other than individuals) for federal funds include a DUNS number in their application for a new award or a supplement to an existing award. A DUNS number is a unique nine-digit sequence recognized as the universal standard for identifying and differentiating entities receiving federal funds. The identifier is used for tracking purposes and to validate address and point of contact information for federal assistance applicants, recipients, and subrecipients. The DUNS



number will be used throughout the grant life cycle. Obtaining a DUNS number is a free, one-time activity. Call Dun and Bradstreet at 866-705-5711 to obtain a DUNS number or apply online at [www.dnb.com](http://www.dnb.com). A DUNS number is usually received within 1-2 business days.

- 2. Acquire registration with the System for Award Management (SAM).** SAM is the repository for standard information about federal financial assistance applicants, recipients, and subrecipients. OJP 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](http://www.sam.gov).

- 3. Acquire a GMS username and password.** New users must create a GMS profile by selecting the “First Time User” link under the sign-in box of the [GMS](#) home page. For more information on how to register in GMS, go to [www.ojp.gov/gmscbt](http://www.ojp.gov/gmscbt).
- 4. Verify the SAM (formerly CCR) registration in GMS.** OJP requests that all applicants verify their SAM registration in GMS. Once logged into GMS, click the “CCR Claim” link on the left side of the default screen. Click the submit button to verify the SAM (formerly CCR) registration.
- 5. Search for the funding opportunity on GMS.** After logging into GMS or completing the GMS profile for username and password, go to the “Funding Opportunities” link on the left side of the page. Select National Institute of Justice and the Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program.
- 6. Register by selecting the “Apply Online” button associated with the funding opportunity title.** The search results from step 5 will display the funding opportunity title along with the registration and application deadlines for this funding opportunity. Select the “Apply Online” button in the “Action” column to register for this funding opportunity and create an application in the system.
- 7. Follow the directions in GMS to submit an application consistent with this solicitation.** Once submitted, GMS will display a confirmation screen stating the submission was successful. **Important:** In some instances, applicants must wait for GMS approval before submitting an application. OJP urges applicants to submit the application **at least 72 hours prior** to the application due date.

### **Note: Duplicate Applications**

If an applicant submits multiple versions of the same application, NIJ will review only the most recent system-validated version submitted. See Note on “File Names and File Types” under [How to Apply](#).

### **Experiencing Unforeseen GMS Technical Issues**

Applicants that experience unforeseen GMS technical issues beyond their control that prevent them from submitting their application by the deadline must contact the [GMS Help Desk](#) or the [SAM Help Desk](#) to report the technical issue and receive a tracking number. Then the applicant must e-mail the NIJ contact identified in the Contact Information section on page 1 **within 24 hours after the application deadline** and request approval to submit their



application. The e-mail must describe the technical difficulties and include a timeline of the applicant's submission efforts, the complete grant application, the applicant's DUNS number, and any GMS Help Desk or SAM tracking number(s). **Note: NIJ does not approve requests automatically.** After the program office reviews the submission, and contacts the GMS Help Desk to validate the reported technical issues, OJP will inform the applicant whether the request to submit a late application has been approved or denied. If OJP determines that the applicant failed to follow all required procedures, which resulted in an untimely application submission, OJP will deny the applicant's request to submit their application.

The following conditions are generally insufficient to justify late submissions:

- Failure to register in SAM or GMS in sufficient time.
- Failure to follow GMS instructions on how to register and apply as posted on the GMS Web site.
- Failure to follow each instruction in the OJP solicitation.
- Technical issues with the applicant's computer or information technology environment, including firewalls.

**Notifications regarding known technical problems with GMS, if any, are posted at the top of the OJP funding Web page at [www.ojp.gov/funding/Explore/CurrentFundingOpportunities.htm](http://www.ojp.gov/funding/Explore/CurrentFundingOpportunities.htm).**

## **E. Application Review Information**

### **Selection Criteria**

#### Base funds and minimum awards

Subject to the availability of appropriated funds, States that satisfy the specific requirements (including eligibility requirements) outlined in this announcement, the general requirements for NIJ and OJP grants, and all other applicable legal requirements, may expect to be awarded "base" funds or minimum awards determined in accordance with the Coverdell law.

#### Requests for competitive funds

Each criterion is weighted according to the percentage listed below.

**Statement of the Problem** (Understanding of the problem and its importance)—15%

**Project/Program Design and Implementation** (Quality and technical merit)—15%

1. Soundness of the approach to reduce and/or eliminate a backlog.
2. Soundness of the approach to improve the quality of forensic services.
3. Soundness of the approach to train and employ forensic personnel to eliminate a backlog and increase capacity.

4. Innovation and creativity in the approach to reducing and/or eliminating a backlog and increasing capacity.
5. Feasibility of the proposed project and awareness of pitfalls.

**Capabilities/Competencies** (Capabilities, demonstrated productivity, and experience of the applicant organization and proposed project staff)—10%

1. Qualifications and experience of proposed project staff (including any and all individuals (and organizations) identified in the application who will be significantly involved in substantive aspects of the proposal).
2. Demonstrated ability of the applicant organization to manage the effort.
3. Relationship between the capabilities/competencies of the proposed project staff (including the applicant organization) and the scope of the proposed project.

**Budget**—25%

**NOTE:** The budget should be complete, cost effective, and allowable (e.g., reasonable, allocable, and necessary for project activities.) Budget narratives should generally demonstrate how applicants will maximize cost effectiveness of grant expenditures. Budget narratives should demonstrate cost effectiveness in relation to potential alternatives and the goals of the project.<sup>6</sup>

1. Total cost of the project relative to the perceived benefit.
2. Use of existing resources to conserve costs.
3. Cost effectiveness of proposed activities applicable to backlog reduction and/or timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services.
4. Cost effectiveness of proposed activities applicable to improvement in the quality of forensic science or medical examiner services.
5. Cost effectiveness of education and training as related to quality and/or timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services.

**Impact/Outcomes and Evaluation/Plan for Collecting Data for Performance Measures** (Relevance to policy and practice)—30%

1. Improvement in Quality and Timeliness
  - a. Anticipated reduction in backlog.
  - b. Anticipated improvement in quality and timeliness of forensic results.

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<sup>6</sup> Generally speaking, a reasonable cost is a cost that, in its nature or amount, does not exceed that which would be incurred by a prudent person under the circumstances prevailing at the time the decision was made to incur the costs.

- c. Anticipated benefit of education and training to reduce backlog and improve timeliness of results.
  - d. Planned steps to achieve accreditation to positively impact quality and/or timeliness of forensic results.
2. Anticipated Impact of Eligible Project Activities
- a. *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.
  - b. *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.
  - c. *Computerization*: If applicable, anticipated impact of requested computerization on improvement in quality and/or timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services.
  - d. *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.
3. Demonstrated plan for collection of the performance measure data as described in the solicitation.

**Other—5%**

Discussion of impact on resources and needs based on the average annual number of Part I violent crimes reported to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for calendar years 2011, 2012, and 2013 by the State (and, for applicant units of local government, the local data, if available).

**Review Process**

OJP is committed to ensuring a fair and open process for awarding grants. NIJ reviews the application to make sure that the information presented is reasonable, understandable, measurable, and achievable, as well as consistent with the solicitation. NIJ will also review applications to ensure statutory requirements have been met.

Peer reviewers will review the requests for competitive funds submitted under this solicitation that meet basic minimum requirements. For purposes of assessing whether applications have met basic minimum requirements, OJP screens applications for compliance with specified program requirements to help determine which should proceed to further consideration for award. Although program requirements may vary, the following are common requirements applicable to all solicitations for funding under OJP grant programs:

- Applications must be submitted by an eligible type of applicant.

- Applications must request funding within programmatic funding constraints (if applicable).
- Applications must be responsive to the scope of the solicitation.
- Applications must include all items designated as “critical elements.”
- Applicants will be checked against the General Services Administration’s Excluded Parties List.

For a list of critical elements applicable to requests for competitive funds submitted under this solicitation, see “What an Application Should Include” under [Section D. Application and Submission Information](#).

NIJ may use either internal peer reviewers, external peer reviewers, or a combination, to review competitive requests under this solicitation. An external peer reviewer is an expert in the subject matter of a given solicitation who is NOT a current DOJ employee. An internal reviewer is a current DOJ employee who is well-versed or has expertise in the subject matter of this solicitation. A peer review panel will evaluate, score, and rate eligible requests for competitive funds that meet basic minimum requirements. Peer reviewers’ ratings and any resulting recommendations are advisory only, although their views are considered carefully. In addition to peer review ratings, considerations for award recommendations and decisions may include, but are not limited to, underserved populations, geographic diversity, strategic priorities, past performance, and available funding.

OJP reviews applications for potential awards to evaluate the risks posed by applicants before they receive an award. This review may include but is not limited to the following:

1. Financial stability and fiscal integrity.
2. Quality of management systems and ability to meet the management standards prescribed in the Financial Guide.
3. History of performance.
4. Reports and findings from audits.
5. The applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-Federal entities.
6. Proposed costs to determine if the Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative accurately explain project costs, and whether those costs are reasonable, necessary, and allowable under applicable federal cost principles and agency regulations.

Absent explicit statutory authorization or written delegation of authority to the contrary, the Assistant Attorney General will make all final award decisions. With respect to requests for competitive funds, the AAG may also give consideration to factors including, but not limited to, peer review ratings, underserved populations, geographic diversity, strategic priorities, past performance, and available funding when making awards.

## F. Federal Award Administration Information

### Federal Award Notices

OJP award notification will be sent from GMS. Recipients will be required to login; accept any outstanding assurances and certifications on the award; designate a financial point of contact; and review, sign, and accept the award. The award acceptance process involves physical signature of the award document by the authorized representative and the scanning of the fully-executed award document to OJP.

### Administrative, National Policy, and other Legal Requirements

If selected for funding, in addition to implementing the funded project consistent with the agency-approved project proposal and budget, the recipient must comply with award terms and conditions, and other legal requirements, including but not limited to OMB, DOJ or other federal regulations which will be included in the award, incorporated into the award by reference, or are otherwise applicable to the award. OJP strongly encourages prospective applicants to review the information pertaining to these requirements **prior** to submitting an application. To assist applicants and recipients in accessing and reviewing this information, OJP has placed pertinent information on its [Solicitation Requirements](#) page of the [OJP Funding Resource Center](#) webpages.

Please note in particular the following two forms, which applicants must accept in GMS prior to the receipt of any award funds, as each details legal requirements with which applicants must provide specific assurances and certifications of compliance. Applicants may view these forms in the Apply section of the [OJP Funding Resource Center](#) and are strongly encouraged to review and consider them carefully prior to making an application for OJP grant funds.

- [Certifications Regarding Lobbying; Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements](#)
- [Standard Assurances](#)

Upon grant approval, OJP electronically transmits (via GMS) the award document to the prospective award recipient. In addition to other award information, the award document contains award terms and conditions that specify national policy requirements<sup>7</sup> with which recipients of federal funding must comply; uniform administrative requirements, cost principles, and audit requirements; and program-specific terms and conditions required based on applicable program (statutory) authority or requirements set forth in OJP solicitations and program announcements, and other requirements which may be attached to appropriated funding. For example, certain efforts may call for special requirements, terms, or conditions relating to intellectual property, data/information-sharing or -access, or information security; or audit requirements, expenditures and milestones, or publications and/or press releases. OJP also may place additional terms and conditions on an award based on its risk assessment of the applicant, or for other reasons it determines necessary to fulfill the goals and objectives of the program.

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<sup>7</sup> See generally 2 C.F.R. 200.300 (provides a general description of national policy requirements typically applicable to recipients of Federal awards, including the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (FFATA)).

Prospective applicants may access and review the text of mandatory conditions OJP includes in all OJP awards, as well as the text of certain other conditions, such as administrative conditions, via OJP's [Mandatory Award Terms and Conditions](#) page of the [OJP Funding Resource Center](#).

### **General Information About Post-Federal Award Reporting Requirements**

Recipients must submit quarterly financial reports, semi-annual progress reports, final financial and progress reports, and, if applicable, an annual audit report in accordance with 2 CFR Part 200. Future awards and fund drawdowns may be withheld if reports are delinquent.

In addition, Coverdell grantees must submit a final report that must, among other things: (1) include a summary and assessment of the program carried out with FY 2015 grant funds, (2) identify the number and type of cases accepted during the FY 2015 award period by the forensic laboratory or laboratories that received FY 2015 grant funds, and (3) cite the specific improvements in the quality and/or timeliness of forensic science and medical examiner services (including any reduction in forensic analysis backlog) that occurred as a direct result of the FY 2015 grant award. Future awards and fund drawdowns may be withheld if reports are delinquent.

Further, as noted earlier under "Eligibility," for each fiscal year of an award, recipients will be required to report to NIJ on an annual basis—

- 1) The number and nature of any allegations of serious negligence or misconduct substantially affecting the integrity of forensic results;
- 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.

Payments to recipients (including payments under future awards) may be withheld if the required information is not submitted on a timely basis.

Special Reporting requirements may be required by OJP depending on the statutory, legislative or administrative requirements of the recipient or the program.

### **G. Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s)**

For additional Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s), see Title page.

For additional contact information for GMS, see the Title page.

## H. Other Information

### Provide Feedback to OJP

To assist OJP in improving its application and award processes, we encourage applicants to provide feedback on this solicitation, the application submission process, and/or the application review process. Provide feedback to [OJPSolicitationFeedback@usdoj.gov](mailto:OJPSolicitationFeedback@usdoj.gov).

**IMPORTANT:** This e-mail is for feedback and suggestions only. Replies are **not** sent from this mailbox. If you have specific questions on any program or technical aspect of the solicitation, **you must** directly contact the appropriate number or e-mail listed on the front of this solicitation document. These contacts are provided to help ensure that you can directly reach an individual who can address your specific questions in a timely manner.

If you are interested in being a reviewer for other OJP grant applications, please e-mail your resume to [ojppeerreview@lmbps.com](mailto:ojppeerreview@lmbps.com). The OJP Solicitation Feedback email account will not forward your resume. **Note:** Neither you nor anyone else from your organization can be a peer reviewer in a competition in which you or your organization have submitted an application.

# Application Checklist

## Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program

This application checklist has been created to assist in developing an application.

### What an Applicant Should Do:

#### *Prior to Registering in GMS:*

- \_\_\_\_\_ Acquire a DUNS Number (see page 23)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Acquire or renew registration with SAM (see page 24)

#### *To Register with GMS:*

- \_\_\_\_\_ For new users, acquire a GMS username and password\* (see page 24)
- \_\_\_\_\_ For existing users, check GMS username and password\*  
to ensure account access (see page 24)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Verify SAM registration in GMS (see page 24)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Search for correct funding opportunity in GMS (see page 24)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Register by selecting the “Apply Online” button associated with the  
funding opportunity title (see page 24)
- \_\_\_\_\_ If experiencing technical difficulties in GMS, contact NIJ (see page 24)

\*Password Reset Notice – GMS users are reminded that while password reset capabilities exist, this function is only associated with points of contacts designated within GMS at the time the account was established. Neither OJP nor the GMS Help Desk will initiate a password reset unless requested by the authorized official or a designated point of contact associated with an award or application.

### General Requirements:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Review [Solicitation Requirements](#) webpage in the OJP Funding Resource Center.

### Eligibility Requirement:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Coverdell Statutory Certifications (see page 3)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Certification as to Plan for Forensic Science Laboratories
  - Application from a State or Certification as to Plan for Forensic Science Laboratories
  - Application from a Unit of Local Government
- \_\_\_\_\_ Certification as to Generally Accepted Laboratory Practices and Procedures
- \_\_\_\_\_ Certification as to Use of Funds for New Facilities
- \_\_\_\_\_ Certification as to External Investigations

### What an Application Should Include:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) (see page 15)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Project Abstract (see page 15)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Program Narrative (see page 16)
- \_\_\_\_\_ External Investigations Attachment to the Program Narrative (see page 18)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Plan for Collecting the Data Required for this Solicitation’s Performance Measures (see page 18)



- \_\_\_\_\_ Budget Detail Worksheet (see page 19)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Budget Narrative (see page 20)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Employee Compensation Waiver request and justification (if applicable)  
(see page 13)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Read OJP policy and guidance on conference approval, planning, and reporting  
available  
at [www.ojp.gov/financialguide/PostawardRequirements/chapter15page1.htm](http://www.ojp.gov/financialguide/PostawardRequirements/chapter15page1.htm)  
(see page 14)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL) (if applicable) (see page 23)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable) (see page 20)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Applicant Disclosure of High Risk Status (see page 21)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Additional Attachments
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Applicant Disclosure of Pending Applications (see page 22)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Coverdell Statutory Certifications (see page 21)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Financial Management and System of Internal Controls Questionnaire (if applicable)  
(see page 23)

## Appendix 1. Estimated Amount of FY 2015 Base Funds, by State.<sup>8</sup>

<p><b>*Note: If the amount a State would otherwise receive as its total Coverdell grant award, including both base funds and any competitive funds, is less than the minimum grant amount set by the Coverdell law, the total Coverdell grant award will be increased to the minimum grant amount, which is estimated to be not less than \$61,932. See “Available Funding” under “Goals, Objectives, and Deliverables” for additional details.</b></p>			
Alabama	\$105,972	Nevada*	\$61,170
Alaska*	\$17,778	New Hampshire*	\$32,006
Arizona	\$145,279	New Jersey	\$195,105
Arkansas	\$64,880	New Mexico*	\$50,430
California	\$840,385	New York	\$430,822
Colorado	\$115,501	North Carolina	\$215,904
Connecticut	\$78,839	North Dakota*	\$17,494
Delaware*	\$22,388	Ohio	\$253,673
District of Columbia*	\$15,633	Oklahoma	\$84,418
Florida	\$428,668	Oregon	\$86,161
Georgia	\$219,064	Pennsylvania	\$280,047
Hawaii*	\$33,955	Rhode Island*	\$25,429
Idaho*	\$38,987	South Carolina	\$104,681
Illinois	\$282,422	South Dakota*	\$20,432
Indiana	\$144,057	Tennessee	\$142,415
Iowa	\$67,753	Texas	\$579,838
Kansas	\$63,448	Utah	\$63,597
Kentucky	\$96,360	Vermont*	\$15,154
Louisiana	\$101,407	Virginia	\$181,097
Maine*	\$32,123	Washington	\$152,838
Maryland	\$129,981	West Virginia*	\$44,844
Massachusetts	\$146,730	Wisconsin	\$125,901
Michigan	\$216,947	Wyoming*	\$14,091
Minnesota	\$118,834	American Samoa/ Northern Mariana Islands <sup>9*</sup>	\$2,561
Mississippi	\$65,578	Guam*	\$3,879
Missouri	\$132,510	Puerto Rico	\$79,256
Montana*	\$24,550	Virgin Islands*	\$2,533
Nebraska*	\$45,187		

<sup>8</sup> Under the provisions of the Coverdell law, several factors (including the number of eligible State applicants) affect “base” amounts. **All awards are subject to the availability of appropriated funds.**

<sup>9</sup> The Coverdell law includes specific provisions with respect to allocations to American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Please contact NIJ for additional information on this allocation.

## **Appendix 2. Templates for Coverdell Statutory Certifications**

**(Instructions:** Scan signed certifications and submit image files electronically through GMS.)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS  
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE

**FY 2015 Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement  
Grants Program**

Certification as to Plan for Forensic Science Laboratories—  
Application from a **State**

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 42 U.S.C. § 3795a. 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).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Certifying Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Certifying Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title of Certifying Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Applicant Agency (Including Name of State)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS  
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE

**FY 2015 Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement  
Grants Program**

Certification as to Plan for Forensic Science Laboratories—  
Application from a **Unit of Local Government**

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:

This unit of local government 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 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 amount.

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 42 U.S.C. § 3795a. 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).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Certifying Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Certifying Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title of Certifying Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Applicant Agency  
(Including Name of Unit of Local Government)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS  
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE

**FY 2015 Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement  
Grants Program**

Certification as to Generally Accepted Laboratory  
Practices and Procedures

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:

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 uses generally accepted laboratory practices and procedures, established by accrediting organizations or appropriate certifying bodies.

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 42 U.S.C. § 3795a. 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).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Certifying Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Certifying Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title of Certifying Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Applicant Agency  
(Including Name of State or Unit of Local Government)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS  
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE

**FY 2015 Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement  
Grants Program**

Certification as to Use of Funds for New Facilities

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 amount of the grant (if any) used for the costs of any new facility or facilities to be constructed as part of a program to improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science and medical examiner services will not exceed the limitations set forth at 42 U.S.C. § 3797m(c) and summarized in the FY 2015 Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program Announcement.

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 42 U.S.C. § 3795a. 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).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Certifying Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Certifying Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title of Certifying Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Applicant Agency  
(Including Name of State or Unit of Local Government)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS  
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE

**FY 2015 Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement  
Grants Program**

Certification as to External Investigations

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:

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.

I personally read and reviewed the section entitled "Eligibility" in the Fiscal Year 2015 program announcement for the Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program. 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 42 U.S.C. § 3795a. 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).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Certifying Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Certifying Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title of Certifying Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Applicant Agency  
(Including Name of State or Unit of Local Government)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## **Appendix 3. Template for “External Investigations” Attachment**

**(Instructions:** Scan the completed document and submit image file electronically through GMS.)

# FY 2015 Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program

## Attachment: External Investigations

The “Certification as to External Investigations” that is submitted on behalf of the applicant agency as part of this application certifies 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.

Prior to receiving funds, the applicant agency (that is, the agency applying directing to the National Institute of Justice) must provide—for each forensic laboratory system, medical examiner's office, coroner's office, law enforcement storage facility, or medical facility that will receive a portion of the grant amount—the name of the “government entity” (or entities) that forms the basis for the certification. Please use the template below to provide this information. (Applicants may adapt this template if necessary, but should ensure that the adapted document provides all required information.)

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** If necessary for accuracy, list more than one entity with respect to each intended recipient of a portion of the grant amount. For example, if no single entity has an appropriate process in place with respect to allegations of serious negligence as well as serious misconduct, it will be necessary to list more than one entity. Similarly, if no single entity has an appropriate process in place with respect to allegations concerning contractors as well as employees, it will be necessary to list more than one entity.

Additional guidance regarding the “Certification as to External Investigations” appears in the “Eligibility” section of the program announcement for the FY 2015 Coverdell program.

-----  
**Name of Applicant Agency (including Name of State or Unit of Local Government):**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of any forensic laboratory system, medical examiner's office, coroner's office, law enforcement storage facility, or medical facility that will receive a portion of the grant amount**

**Existing government entity (entities) with an appropriate process in place to conduct independent external investigations**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## FY 2015 External Investigations Attachment (continued)

Name of Applicant Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

3.	_____	_____
		_____
4.	_____	_____
		_____
5.	_____	_____
		_____
6.	_____	_____
		_____
7.	_____	_____
		_____