

Notice regarding the solicitation “Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program – Competitive”

April 19, 2018: Each applicant is to submit an NIJ Programmatic Coversheet and Checklist with its application to assist NIJ in assessing the potential environmental impacts of the activities proposed for funding by the applicant. Specifically, the applicant is expected to:

- Carefully read the [Programmatic Environmental Assessment](#);
- Complete the [Cover Sheet and the attached the Programmatic Checklist](#); and
- Attach the completed documents to the grant application.

The applicant should also submit a Cover Sheet and NIJ Programmatic Checklist for any organization identified in the Budget Detail Worksheet that will receive grant funds through a sub-award or procurement contract to perform any of the following activities: new construction or renovations that change the basic prior use of a facility or significantly change the size; research and/or technology development that could be expected to have an effect on the environment; or implementation of programs involving the use of chemicals.

April 9, 2018: The “IMPORTANT NOTE” regarding the availability of funds under Section A. Program Description has been removed.

An “IMPORTANT NOTE” regarding the allocation of funds available for targeting the challenges the opioid abuse crisis has brought to the forensic science community has been added to “Goals, Objectives, and Deliverables” under Section A. Program Description.

Figures listed under “Available Funding” under Section B. Federal Award Information were revised. A note directing applicants to a note on the use of grant funds for projects to address the challenges posed by the opioid abuse crisis was added to this section.

Figures listed under item 2. “Minimum Awards to States” in “Available Funding” under Section B. Federal Award Information were revised.

Figures listed under item 7. “Facilities” in “Permissible Expenses” under Section B. Federal Award Information were revised.

A “Note on the use of funds to address issues related to the opioid abuse crisis” was added to “Permissible Expenses” under Section B. Federal Award Information.

A note directing applicants to the note on the use of grant funds for projects to address the challenges posed by the opioid abuse crisis was added to “What an Application Should Include” under Section D. Application and Submission Information.

A note regarding the use of grant funds requesting for projects to address the challenges posed by the opioid abuse crisis was added to item 3. "Program Narrative" under Section D. Application and Submission Information.

A note regarding the use of grant funds requesting for projects to address the challenges posed by the opioid abuse crisis was added to item 4. "Budget and Associated Documentation" under Section D. Application and Submission Information.

The statement "As mentioned earlier in the solicitation, applications requesting Coverdell funds to specifically target the challenges the opioid abuse crisis has brought to the forensic science community will be given priority consideration in award decisions over applications that do not include such requests." was added under Section E. Application Review Information.

The item "(Budget should be annotated to delineate opioid-related and non-opioid items)" was added to Appendix 5: Application Checklist.

March 21, 2018: The following statement was added under Section C. Eligibility Information:

Note: A prospective recipient of grant funds that is found to have an "unresolved audit finding" from a DOJ Office of the Inspector General audit, as described at 34 U.S.C. § 10263, will be ineligible to receive grant funds during the period specified in that statute. See 34 U.S.C. § 10263(2).

The following statement was added under "Review Process" within Section E. Application Review Information:

OJP will give priority in award decisions to eligible applicants that, during the three fiscal years (FY 2015 – 2017) prior to the submission of an application under this solicitation, did not have an "unresolved audit finding" indicating noncompliance with the award terms or conditions of a DOJ grant program. See 34 U.S.C. § 10263(3). In other words, an applicant without such an "unresolved audit finding" will be given priority consideration over any applicant *with* such an "unresolved audit finding."

The following statement was appended to "Eligibility Requirement" under Appendix 5: Application Checklist:

Applicant must not have an "unresolved audit finding," as described at 34 U.S.C. § 10263(2).

March 12, 2018: Links directing to "Overview of Legal Requirements Generally Applicable to OJP Grants and Cooperative Agreements - FY 2017 Awards" have been updated to the FY 2018 link throughout this funding opportunity document.

The original solicitation document begins on the next page.



The [U.S. Department of Justice](#) (DOJ), [Office of Justice Programs](#) (OJP), [National Institute of Justice](#) (NIJ) is seeking applications for competitive funding under the FY 2018 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/coroner's office services, including services provided by laboratories operated by States and/or units of local government.

Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program – Competitive

Applications Due: April 30, 2018

Eligibility

Eligible applicants are limited to States (including territories) and units of local government. State Administering Agencies (SAAs) apply on behalf of States, including any State government entity. For information on eligibility, see [Section C. Eligibility Information](#).

All recipients and subrecipients (including any for-profit organization) must forgo any profit or management fee.

Deadline

Applicants must register with Grants.gov at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html> prior to submitting an application. All applications are due by 11:59 p.m. eastern time on April 30, 2018.

To be considered timely, an application must be submitted by the application deadline using Grants.gov, and the applicant must have received a validation message from Grants.gov that indicates successful and timely submission. OJP urges applicants to submit applications at least 72 hours prior to the application due date, to allow time for the applicant to receive validation messages or rejection notifications from Grants.gov, and to correct in a timely fashion any problems that may have caused a rejection notification.

OJP encourages all applicants to read this [Important Notice: Applying for Grants in Grants.gov](#).

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.gov Customer Support Hotline at 800-518-4726, 606-545-5035, at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support.html>, or at support@grants.gov. The Grants.gov Support Hotline operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, except on federal holidays.

An applicant that experiences unforeseen Grants.gov technical issues beyond its control that prevent it from submitting its application by the deadline must email the NIJ contact identified below **within 24 hours after the application deadline** to request approval to submit its application after the deadline. Additional information on reporting technical issues appears under “Experiencing Unforeseen Grants.gov Technical Issues” in the [How To Apply](#) section.

For assistance with any other requirements of this solicitation, contact the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS) Response Center: toll-free at 1-800-851-3420; via TTY at 301-240-6310 (hearing impaired only); email grants@ncjrs.gov; fax to 301-240-5830; or web chat at <https://webcontact.ncjrs.gov/ncjchat/chat.jsp>. The NCJRS Response Center operates from 10:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. eastern time, Monday through Friday, and from 10:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. eastern time on the solicitation close date. General information on applying for NIJ awards can be found at www.nij.gov/funding/Pages/welcome.aspx. Answers to frequently asked questions that may assist applicants are posted at www.nij.gov/funding/Pages/faqs.aspx; some are included in the appendices of this solicitation.

Grants.gov number assigned to this solicitation: NIJ-2018-13740

Release date: March 7, 2018

Contents

A. Program Description	4
Overview	4
Program-Specific Information	4
Goals, Objectives, and Deliverables	4
Information Regarding Potential Evaluation of Programs and Activities.....	6
B. Federal Award Information.....	6
Type of Award.....	7
Financial Management and System of Internal Controls.....	7
Budget Information.....	8
Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement.....	11
Pre-agreement Costs (also known as Pre-award Costs)	11
Limitation on Use of Award Funds for Employee Compensation; Waiver	11
Prior Approval, Planning, and Reporting of Conference/Meeting/Training Costs	12
Costs Associated with Language Assistance (if applicable)	12
C. Eligibility Information.....	12
D. Application and Submission Information	18
What an Application Should Include	18
How To Apply.....	30
E. Application Review Information.....	34
Review Criteria.....	34
Review Process	36
F. Federal Award Administration Information	38
Federal Award Notices	38
Administrative, National Policy, and Other Legal Requirements	38
General Information about Post-Federal Award Reporting Requirements	39
G. Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s)	40
H. Other Information.....	40
Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552 and 5 U.S.C. 552a)	40
Provide Feedback to OJP	41
Appendix 1: Templates for Coverdell Statutory Certifications	42
Appendix 2: Template for “External Investigations” Attachment.....	49
Appendix 3: Frequently Asked Questions.....	52
Appendix 4: Performance Measures Table.....	53
Appendix 5: Application Checklist	54

Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program – Competitive

CFDA no. 16.742

A. Program Description

Overview

With this solicitation, NIJ seeks proposals for competitive funding under 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/coroner's office services. Among other things, funds may be used to eliminate a backlog in the analysis of forensic evidence and to train and employ forensic laboratory personnel and medicolegal death investigators, as needed, to eliminate such a backlog. Under the Coverdell program, State Administering Agencies (SAAs) may apply for both formula and competitive funds. Units of local government may apply for competitive funds. This solicitation is **ONLY** for the competitive funds.¹ For purposes of this solicitation, any State/local government entity performing forensic science services is considered a "forensic science laboratory."

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

Program-Specific Information

This solicitation seeks applications for funding to improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science and medical examiner/coroner's office 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 and medicolegal death investigators to eliminate such backlogs. The Coverdell program may **not** be used for research; however, applicants may address emerging forensic science issues and technology through implementation of new technologies and processes into public laboratories.

Goals, Objectives, and Deliverables

Grant Purposes

A State or unit of local government that receives a Coverdell grant must use the grant for one or more of these six purposes:

1. To carry out all or a substantial part of a program intended to improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner/coroner's office services in the State,

¹ An applicant that seeks to apply for Coverdell formula funds (consistent with 34 U.S.C. § 10563(a)(1)) available for grants to eligible States would need to apply under NIJ's FY 2018 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program (Formula) solicitation.

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,² including, among other things, a backlog with respect to firearms examination, latent prints, impression evidence, toxicology, digital evidence, fire evidence, controlled substances, forensic pathology, questioned documents, and trace evidence.
3. To train, assist, and employ forensic laboratory personnel and medicolegal death investigators, as needed to eliminate such a backlog.
4. To address emerging forensic science issues (such as statistics, contextual bias, and uncertainty of measurement) and emerging forensic science technology (such as high throughput automation, statistical software, and new types of instrumentation).
5. To educate and train forensic pathologists.
6. To fund medicolegal death investigation systems to facilitate accreditation of medical examiner and coroner offices and certification of medicolegal death investigators.

IMPORTANT NOTE

The alarming proliferation of heroin and synthetic opioids like fentanyl have had a crushing effect on many crime laboratories. Synthetic opioids in particular may be more difficult to analyze than traditional opiates, and validating methods for new drugs as they emerge may significantly slow processing of these samples. Medical examiners and forensic pathologists have also been overwhelmed with the volume of autopsies as a result of heroin and synthetic drug-related overdose deaths. To address these issues, NIJ plans to allocate approximately 57% of available funds to specifically target the challenges the opioid abuse crisis has brought to the forensic science community.

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/coroner's office 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/coroner's office services provided by the local jurisdiction.

See "[Performance Measures](#)" for additional information.

² 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.

The Goals, Objectives and Deliverables are directly related to the performance measures that demonstrate the results of the work completed, as discussed in [Section D. Application and Submission Information](#), under Program Narrative.

Information Regarding Potential Evaluation of Programs and Activities

The Department of Justice has prioritized the use of evidence-based programming and deems it critical to continue to build and expand the evidence informing criminal and juvenile justice programs to reach the highest level of rigor possible. Therefore, applicants should note that the Office of Justice Programs may conduct or support an evaluation of the programs and activities funded under this solicitation. Recipients and sub-recipients will be expected to cooperate with program-related assessments or evaluation efforts, including through the collection and provision of information or data requested by OJP (or its designee) for the assessment or evaluation of any activities and/or outcomes of those activities funded under this solicitation. The information or data requested may be in addition to any other financial or performance data already required under this program.

B. Federal Award Information

NIJ expects to make awards of up to \$250,000, with an estimated total amount awarded of up to \$4,050,000. NIJ expects to make awards for a 12-month period of performance, to begin on January 1, 2019. Applicants should be aware that the total period of an award, including one that receives a project period extension, ordinarily will not exceed three years.

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

Available Funding

The figures and calculations reflected in this solicitation are based on an estimated total amount available of \$27,000,000, although the amount ultimately available could be higher or lower.

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

1. Competitive Funds for States and Units of Local Government

Fifteen (15) 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 years 2014, 2015, and 2016; existing resources; and current needs of the potential grant recipient will be considerations in award decisions. For FY 2018, the maximum amount a State or unit of local government may receive in competitive funds is **\$250,000**.

Units of local government that provide forensic science or medical examiner/coroner's office services (whether through a forensic science laboratory, medical examiner 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 formula funds.

2. 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 \$27,000,000 were available for FY 2018, the minimum Coverdell grant to an eligible State would be not less than \$270,000.³ In that case, if the amount a State would otherwise receive as its total Coverdell grant (including both formula funds and any competitive funds) is less than \$270,000, NIJ will increase that State's total grant funding to \$270,000.

Type of Award

NIJ expects to make any award under this solicitation in the form of a grant. See [Administrative, National Policy, and Other Legal Requirements](#), under [Section F. Federal Award Administration Information](#), for a brief discussion of important statutes, regulations, and award conditions that apply to many (or in some cases, all) OJP grants.

Financial Management and System of Internal Controls

Award recipients and subrecipients (including recipients or subrecipients that are pass-through entities⁴) must, as described in the Part 200 Uniform Requirements⁵ as set out at 2 C.F.R. 200.303:

- (a) Establish and maintain effective internal control over the Federal award that provides reasonable assurance that [the recipient (and any subrecipient)] 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 recipient's (and any subrecipient's)] compliance with statutes, 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 recipient (or any subrecipient)] considers sensitive consistent with applicable Federal, state, local, and tribal laws regarding privacy and obligations of confidentiality.

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

⁴ For purposes of this solicitation, the phrase "pass-through entity" includes any recipient or subrecipient that provides a subaward ("subgrant") to a subrecipient (subgrantee) to carry out part of the funded award or program.

⁵ The "Part 200 Uniform Requirements" means the DOJ regulation at 2 C.F.R Part 2800, which adopts (with certain modifications) the provisions of 2 C.F.R. Part 200.

To help ensure that applicants understand the applicable administrative requirements and cost principles, OJP encourages prospective applicants to enroll, at no charge, in the DOJ Grants Financial Management Online Training, available at <https://ojpfgm.webfirst.com/>. (This training is required for all OJP award recipients.)

Also, applicants should be aware that OJP collects information from applicants on their financial management and systems of internal controls (among other information) which is used to make award decisions. Under [Section D. Application and Submission Information](#), applicants may access and review a questionnaire – the [OJP Financial Management and System of Internal Controls Questionnaire](#) – that OJP requires **all** applicants (other than an individual applying in his/her personal capacity) to download, complete, and submit as part of the application.

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/coroner’s office personnel, overtime, fellowships, visiting scientists, interns, consultants, or temporary 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/coroner’s office equipment and instrumentation.
- 4. Supplies.** Funds may be used to acquire forensic laboratory or medical examiner/coroner’s office supplies.

Note: To help ensure compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Department of Justice regulations, Coverdell awardees that intend to use funds for activities involving the use or purchase of chemicals will be required to submit additional information. See Section [F. Federal Award Administration Information](#), later in this solicitation, for a link to OJP webpages containing information about NEPA and other legal requirements.

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

- 5. Accreditation.** Funds may be used to prepare for laboratory accreditation by the ASCLD/LAB, FQS, NAME, the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA), International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners (IAC&ME) or other, appropriate, accrediting bodies. Funds also may be used for application and

maintenance fees charged by appropriate accrediting bodies.⁶ An applicant that proposes to use any portion of the grant amount to fund a forensic science laboratory system, including any laboratory operated by a unit of local government within the State, that is not accredited (as set out in the Coverdell law) will be required to use (or, as applicable, must require any unaccredited subrecipient forensic science laboratory system to use) a portion of the grant amount for accreditation purposes. Coverdell awardees must use grant funds to prepare and apply for accreditation of any FY 2018 Coverdell grant-funded unaccredited forensic laboratory system, including any laboratory operated by a unit of local government within the State, not more than two (2) years after the FY 2018 Coverdell award date.

- 6. Education, training, and certification.** Funds may be used for appropriate internal and external training of staff that are involved directly and substantially in providing forensic science or medical examiner/coroner's office 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/coroner's office 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.

OJP recognizes the benefit of attending discipline-related conferences to receive training and/or education; however, it is recommended that the applicant consider the cost-effectiveness of this option compared to other viable modes of training. For example, hosting on-site training or attending a local program may be more suitable for the applicant's personnel and organization.

- 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/coroner's office 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/coroner's office 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 (34 U.S.C. § 10564(c)). Maximum amounts are determined by the total amount of the Coverdell grants received (including both formula 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 2018 will be \$27,000,000. Please refer to the discussion under "[Available Funding](#).")

Grants that exceed 0.6 percent of the total available funds. If an applicant State receives total grants that exceed 0.6 percent of the total available funds (estimated here at \$162,000), the amount of the grant that can be used for the costs of any new facility

⁶ Per 34 U.S.C. § 10562(2), such an accrediting body would be "an accrediting body that is a signatory to an internationally recognized arrangement and that offers accreditation to forensic science conformity assessment bodies using an accreditation standard that is recognized by that internationally recognized arrangement[.]"

cannot exceed the sum of 80 percent of 0.6 percent of the total available funds (such 80 percent estimated here at \$129,600) plus 40 percent of the amount of the grant in excess of 0.6 percent of the total available funds.

For example, if \$27,000,000 were to become available for Coverdell awards in FY 2018 and a State were to receive a total Coverdell grant of \$200,000, no more than \$157,760 may be used for the costs of any new facility.

A sample calculation for a \$200,000 grant would be as follows:

Eighty percent of 0.6 percent of the total available funds: $\$162,000 \times .80 = \$129,600$.

Amount in excess of \$129,600: $\$200,000 - \$129,600 = \$70,400$

Forty percent of amount in excess of \$129,600: $\$70,400 \times .40 = \$28,160$.

Sum of $\$129,600 + \$28,160 = \$157,760$.

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 Section [E. Federal Award Administration Information](#), later in this solicitation, for a link to OJP webpages containing information about NEPA and other legal requirements.

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

- 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.

Note on the use of funds to address issues related to the opioid abuse crisis: The application should demonstrate, wherever applicable, how any proposed use of funds would address challenges the opioid abuse crisis has brought to the forensic science community, as described in the "Important Note" under "Grant Purposes" in [Section A. Program Description](#). To facilitate this, an applicant should annotate each line item in the budget as "opioid-related" (addressing the opioid abuse crisis) or "non-opioid related." Coverdell funds are available for permissible uses that would not address the opioid abuse crisis; however, applications requesting Coverdell funds for projects that address specified opioid abuse crisis-related challenges to the forensic science community will be given priority consideration in award decisions over applications not requesting funds for such projects.

Expenses That Are Not Permitted

1. Funds to conduct research. Applicants may address emerging forensic science issues and technology through implementation of new technologies and processes into public laboratories.
2. Expenses other than those listed above (including expenses for general law enforcement functions or non-forensic investigatory functions).
3. Costs for any new facility that exceed the limits described above.

4. Recipient administrative expenses (direct or indirect) that exceed 10 percent of the total grant amount.
5. The use of funds for the purchase and/or lease of vehicles, such as crime scene vans.

Cost Sharing or Matching 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 Costs (also known as Pre-award Costs)

Pre-agreement costs are costs incurred by the applicant prior to the start date of the period of performance of the federal award.

OJP does **not** typically approve pre-agreement costs; an applicant must request and obtain the prior written approval of OJP for all such costs. All such costs incurred prior to award and prior to approval of the costs are incurred at the sole risk of the applicant. (Generally, no applicant should incur project costs *before* submitting an application requesting federal funding for those costs.) Should there be extenuating circumstances that make it appropriate for OJP to consider approving pre-agreement costs, the applicant may contact the point of contact listed on the title page of this solicitation for the requirements concerning written requests for approval. If approved in advance by OJP, award funds may be used for pre-agreement costs, consistent with the recipient's approved budget and applicable cost principles. See the section on Costs Requiring Prior Approval in the DOJ Grants Financial Guide at <https://ojp.gov/financialguide/DOJ/index.htm> 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, a recipient may not use federal funds to pay total cash compensation (salary plus cash bonuses) to any employee of the recipient at a rate that exceeds 110 percent 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.⁷ The 2018 salary table for SES employees is available on the Office of Personnel Management website at <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/salary-tables/18Tables/exec/html/ES.aspx>. 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. (Non-federal funds used for any such additional compensation will not be considered matching funds, where match requirements apply.) If only a portion of an employee's time is charged to an OJP award, the maximum allowable compensation is equal to the percentage of time worked times the maximum salary limitation.

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

⁷ OJP does not apply this limitation on the use of award funds to the nonprofit organizations listed in Appendix VIII to 2 C.F.R. Part 200.

An applicant that does not submit a waiver request and justification with its application should anticipate that OJP will require the applicant to adjust and resubmit the budget.

The justification should address, in the context of the work the individual would do under the award, the particular qualifications and expertise of the individual, the uniqueness of a service the individual will provide, the individual's specific knowledge of the proposed program or project, and a statement that explains whether and how the individual's salary under the award would be commensurate with the regular and customary rate for an individual with his/her qualifications and expertise, and for the work he/she would do under the award.

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

OJP strongly encourages every applicant that proposes to use award funds for any conference-, meeting-, or training-related activity (or similar event) to review carefully—before submitting an application—the OJP and DOJ policy and guidance on approval, planning, and reporting of such events, available at

<https://www.ojp.gov/financialguide/DOJ/PostawardRequirements/chapter3.10a.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 conference, meeting, and training costs for cooperative agreement recipients, as well as some conference, meeting, and training costs for grant recipients; and (3) set cost limits, which include 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 "[Overview of Legal Requirements Generally Applicable to OJP Grants and Cooperative Agreements - FY 2018 Awards](#)" in the OJP Funding Resource Center at <https://ojp.gov/funding/index.htm>.

C. Eligibility Information

States⁸ and units of local government may apply for FY 2018 competitive Coverdell funds. States may be eligible for both formula and competitive funds. Units of local government within States may be eligible for competitive funds and may apply directly to NIJ. This solicitation is ONLY for the competitive funds. 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). (Other interested State agencies or departments must coordinate with their respective SAAs.)

Note: A prospective recipient of grant funds that is found to have an "unresolved audit finding" from a DOJ Office of the Inspector General audit, as described at 34 U.S.C. § 10263, will be

⁸ 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.

ineligible to receive grant funds during the period specified in that statute. See 34 U.S.C. § 10263(2).

For purposes of this solicitation, any State/local government entity performing forensic science services is considered a “forensic science laboratory”.

The Coverdell law (at 34 U.S.C. § 10562) 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, 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 regarding forensic science laboratory accreditation.** Each applicant must submit a certification that any forensic science laboratory system in the State, including any laboratory operated by a unit of local government within the State, that will receive any portion of the grant amount (whether directly or through a subgrant) either is accredited, or, is not so accredited, but will (or will be required in a legally binding and enforceable writing to) use a portion of the grant amount to prepare and apply for such accreditation not more than 2 years after the date on which a grant is awarded under the FY 2018 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program.
- 4. A certification and description regarding costs of new facilities.** Each applicant must submit a certification that the amount of the grant used for the costs of any new facility constructed as part of a program to improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services will not exceed certain limitations set forth in the Coverdell law at 34 U.S.C. § 10564(c). (See information on “permissible expenses” in the next section of this solicitation.) Applicants must also specifically describe any new facility to be constructed as well as the estimated costs of the facility.
- 5. A certification regarding external investigations into allegations of serious negligence or misconduct.** Each applicant must submit a certification that “a government entity exists and an appropriate process is in place to conduct independent external investigations into allegations of serious negligence or misconduct substantially affecting the integrity of the forensic results committed by employees or contractors of any forensic laboratory system, medical examiner office, coroner’s office, law enforcement storage facility, or medical facility in the State that will receive a portion of the grant amount.”

Applicants are expected to carefully review the requirements of each certification 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 1](#).**

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 and should not be submitted.

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](#)” and [Appendix 2](#), which includes a template for the attachment.

In connection with the certification regarding forensic science laboratory accreditation (described above), applicants **must** demonstrate, prior to receiving award funds, that any forensic science laboratory system, including any laboratory operated by a unit of local government within the State, that will receive any portion of the grant amount either is accredited or will (or will be required to) prepare and apply for accreditation consistent with the Coverdell law. Medical examiner’s and coroner’s officers are excluded from coverage (by the Coverdell law) with respect to this requirement for a certification regarding forensic science laboratory system accreditation; therefore, an applicant, in determining whether it may make the “Certification as to Forensic Science Laboratory System Accreditation,” is not called upon to certify as to the accreditation status of, or any requirement to use award funds to prepare and apply for accreditation for, medical examiner’s or coroner’s offices in the State. See “[What an Application Should Include](#),” which describes the documentation and information an applicant is to provide regarding its accreditation or its plans to prepare and apply for accreditation.

The accrediting body must be a signatory to an internationally recognized arrangement and must offer accreditation to forensic science conformity assessment bodies using an accreditation standard that is recognized by that internationally recognized arrangement. The scope of the accreditation must include all discipline(s) for which funds are requested. If the current scope of accreditation does not include the discipline(s) for which funds are requested, the applicant must include funds in its budget and plans in its program narrative to prepare and apply for accreditation in those disciplines.

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. NIJ assumes 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 carefully review each of the statutory elements and this guidance 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 34 U.S.C. § 10272; 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 examiner/coroner's 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; 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 the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA), the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors / Laboratory Accreditation Board (ASCLD/LAB), the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME), Forensic Quality Services (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.

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

D. Application and Submission Information

What an Application Should Include

This section describes in detail what an application should include. An applicant should anticipate that if it fails to submit an application that contains all of the specified elements, it may negatively affect the review of its application; and, should a decision be made to make an award, it may result in the inclusion of award conditions that preclude the recipient from accessing or using award funds until the recipient satisfies the conditions and OJP makes the funds available.

Moreover, an applicant should anticipate that an application that OJP determines is nonresponsive to the scope of the solicitation, or that OJP determines does not include the application elements that NIJ has designated to be critical, will neither proceed to peer review, nor receive further consideration. For this solicitation, NIJ has designated the following application elements as critical: Program Narrative, Budget Detail Worksheet, Budget Narrative, and **all five** certifications required by the Coverdell law.

NOTE: OJP has combined the Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative in a single document collectively referred to as the Budget Detail Worksheet. See “Budget Information and Associated Documentation” below for more information about the Budget Detail Worksheet and where it can be accessed.

See the “**Note on the use of funds to address issues related to the opioid abuse crisis**,” in the “[Budget Information](#)” section above, under Section B. Federal Award Information, for an important discussion relevant to applicants requesting funds to address forensic science challenges relating to the opioid abuse crisis.

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

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

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. Grants.gov and the OJP Grants Management System (GMS) take 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).

To avoid processing delays, an applicant must include an accurate legal name on its SF-424. On the SF-424, current OJP award recipients, when completing the field for “Legal Name” (box 8a), should use the same legal name that appears on the prior year award document (which is also the legal name stored in OJP’s financial system.) Also, these recipients should enter the Employer Identification Number (EIN) in box 8c exactly as it appears on the prior year award document. An applicant with a current, active award(s) must ensure that its GMS profile is current. If the profile is not current, the applicant should submit a Grant Adjustment Notice updating the information on its GMS profile prior to applying under this solicitation.

A new applicant entity should enter its official legal name in box 8a, its address in box 8d, its EIN in box 8b, and its Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number in box 8c of the SF-424. A new applicant entity should attach official legal documents to its application (e.g., articles of incorporation, 501(c)(3) status documentation, organizational letterhead, etc.) to confirm the legal name, address, and EIN entered into the SF-424. OJP will use the System for Award Management (SAM) to confirm the legal name and DUNS number entered in the SF-424; therefore, an applicant should ensure that the information entered in the SF-424 matches its current registration in SAM. See the [How to Apply](#) section for more information on SAM and DUNS numbers.

Applicants should ensure that the legal name is correct and matches on the SF-424, the five required certifications, and the external investigations attachment.

Intergovernmental Review: This solicitation (“funding opportunity”) is subject to [Executive Order 12372](#). An applicant may find the names and addresses of State Single Points of Contact (SPOCs) at the following website: https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Intergovernmental_-Review-_SPOC_01_2018_OFFM.pdf. If the State appears on the SPOC list, the applicant must contact the State SPOC to find out about, and comply with, the State’s process under E.O. 12372. In completing the SF-424, an applicant whose State appears on the SPOC list is to make the appropriate selection in

response to question 19 once the applicant has complied with its State E.O. 12372 process. (An applicant whose State does not appear on the SPOC list should answer question 19 by selecting the response 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 400 words or less. 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 (such as Times New Roman) with 1-inch margins.
- The project abstract should provide an outline limited to the scope of the FY 2018 Coverdell program.
- Example format:
 - One to two sentences for statement of the problem.
 - Three to four sentences outlining how this year’s award will be utilized.
 - One to two sentences describing the outcome.

As a separate attachment, the project abstract will **not** count against the page limit for the program narrative.

3. Program Narrative

The program narrative must specifically describe the manner in which Coverdell grant funds will be used to carry out the applicant’s plan to improve the quality and/or timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner/coroner’s office services over current operations. (Reduction of forensic analysis backlogs is considered an improvement in timeliness of services.)

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.

If grant funds are requested for projects to address the challenges to the State’s forensic science laboratories posed by the opioid abuse crisis, the program narrative should describe the challenges posed and how the requested funds would help to address them.

Accreditation

If grant funds are requested for accreditation, the program narrative must describe accreditation activities and plans and, as applicable, the projected schedule for preparation for and application for accreditation. Under the Coverdell program, any forensic science laboratory system, including any laboratory operated by a unit of local government within the State, that is not accredited (as set out in the Coverdell law) and that will receive a portion of the grant amount must use a portion of the grant amount to prepare and apply for accreditation not more than 2 years after the date of the Coverdell grant award. For purposes of this solicitation, any State/local government entity performing forensic science services is considered a “forensic science laboratory”.

- **State applicants.** A State that seeks competitive funds should describe how competitive funds will be used to support improvements in forensic science or medical examiner/coroner’s office services above and beyond the improvements it will accomplish with its estimated amount of formula funds.⁹ **States are expected to consider the needs of laboratories operated by units of local government as well as those operated by the State.** 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 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.

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). 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. If more than one request for competitive funds is made by the State, each should be submitted as a separate application in Grants.gov.

- **Unit of local government applicants.** A unit of local government should consult all interested components before preparing an application for competitive funds. No more than one application for competitive funds per unit of local government will be funded. If more than one request for competitive funds is made by the unit of local government, each should be submitted as a separate application in Grants.gov. 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 part 1 violent crime data (State data and any data reported by the applicant).

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.

⁹ See Appendix 1 of the [Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program \(Formula\) solicitation](#) for the estimated amount of FY 2018 formula funds, by State.

The program narrative should be attached as a separate file with an appropriately descriptive file name.

The following sections should be included as part of the program narrative:¹⁰

- a. Description of the Issue.
- b. Project Design and Implementation.
- c. Capabilities and Competencies.
- d. Plan for Collecting the Data Required for this Solicitation's Performance Measures.

OJP will require each successful applicant to submit regular performance data that demonstrate the results of the work carried out under the award (see "[General Information about Post-Federal Award Reporting Requirements](#)" in [Section F. Federal Award Administration Information](#)). The performance data directly relate to the goals, objectives, and deliverables identified under "Goals, Objectives, and Deliverables" in [Section A. Program Description](#).

Applicants should visit OJP's performance measurement page at www.ojp.gov/performance to view the specific reporting requirements for this grant program.

Performance measures for this solicitation are listed in [Appendix 4: Performance Measures Table](#).

The application should demonstrate the applicant's understanding of the performance data reporting requirements for this grant program and detail how the applicant will gather the required data should it receive funding.

Please note that applicants are **not** required to submit performance data with the application. Performance measures information is included as an alert that successful applicants will be required to submit performance data as part of the reporting requirements under an award

- e. Other/Part 1 violent crimes data (see page 6).

4. Budget and Associated Documentation

The Budget Detail Worksheet and the Budget Narrative are now combined in a single document collectively referred to as the Budget Detail Worksheet. The Budget Detail Worksheet is a user-friendly, fillable, Microsoft Excel-based document designed to calculate totals. Additionally, the Excel workbook contains worksheets for multiple budget years that can be completed as necessary. **All applicants should use the Excel version when completing the proposed budget in an application, except in cases where the applicant does not have access to Microsoft Excel or experiences technical difficulties.** If an applicant does not have access to Microsoft Excel or experiences

¹⁰ For information on subawards (including the details on proposed subawards that should be included in the application), see "Budget and Associated Documentation" under [Section D. Application and Submission Information](#).

technical difficulties with the Excel version, then the applicant should use the 508-compliant accessible Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) version.

Both versions of the Budget Detail Worksheet can be accessed at <https://ojp.gov/funding/Apply/Forms/BudgetDetailWorksheet.htm>.

See the “**Note on the use of funds to address issues related to the opioid abuse crisis**,” in the “[Budget Information](#)” section above, under Section B. Federal Award Information, for an important discussion relevant to applicants requesting funds to address forensic science challenges relating to the opioid abuse crisis. The applicant is to annotate its budget so as to indicate clearly any “opioid-related” versus “non-opioid related” items, as detailed above in the “**Note on the use of funds to address issues related to the opioid abuse crisis**.”

a. Budget Detail Worksheet

The Budget Detail Worksheet should provide the detailed computation for each budget line item, listing the total cost of each and showing how it was calculated by the applicant. For example, costs for personnel should show the annual salary rate and the percentage of time devoted to the project for each employee paid with grant funds. The Budget Detail Worksheet should present a complete itemization of all proposed costs.

For questions pertaining to budget and examples of allowable and unallowable costs, see the DOJ Grants Financial Guide at <https://ojp.gov/financialguide/DOJ/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).

An applicant should demonstrate in its budget narrative how it will maximize cost effectiveness of award 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 budget narrative should be mathematically sound and correspond clearly 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 those costs are necessary 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 describe costs by year.

Accreditation

The budget detail worksheet and budget narrative should clearly identify the cost for any proposed accreditation activities, within the appropriate cost category (e.g., personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, and (procurement) contracts) of the budget documents.

Budget document(s) should be attached as a separate file with an appropriately descriptive file name.

c. Information on Proposed Subawards (if any), as well as on Proposed Procurement Contracts (if any)

Applicants for OJP awards typically may propose to make *subawards*. Applicants also may propose to enter into procurement *contracts* under the award.

Whether an action – for federal grants administrative purposes – is a subaward or procurement contract is a critical distinction as significantly different rules apply to subawards and procurement contracts. If a recipient enters into an agreement that is a subaward of an OJP award, specific rules apply – many of which are set by federal statutes and DOJ regulations; others by award conditions. These rules place particular responsibilities on an OJP recipient for any subawards the OJP recipient may make. The rules determine much of what the written subaward agreement itself must require or provide. The rules also determine much of what an OJP recipient must do both before and after it makes a subaward. If a recipient enters into an agreement that is a procurement contract under an OJP award, a substantially different set of federal rules applies.

OJP has developed the following guidance documents to help clarify the differences between subawards and procurement contracts under an OJP award and outline the compliance and reporting requirements for each. This information can be accessed online at <https://ojp.gov/training/training.htm>.

- [Subawards under OJP Awards and Procurement Contracts under Awards: A Toolkit for OJP Recipients.](#)
- [Checklist to Determine Subrecipient or Contractor Classification.](#)
- [Sole Source Justification Fact Sheet and Sole Source Review Checklist.](#)

In general, the central question is the relationship between what the third-party will do under its agreement with the recipient and what the recipient has committed (to OJP) to do under its award to further a public purpose (e.g., services the recipient will provide, products it will develop or modify, research or evaluation it will conduct). If a third party will provide some of the services the recipient has committed (to OJP) to provide, will develop or modify all or part of a product the recipient has committed (to OJP) to develop or modify, or will conduct part of the research or evaluation the recipient has committed (to OJP) to conduct, OJP will consider the agreement with the third party a *subaward* for purposes of federal grants administrative requirements.

This will be true **even if** the recipient, for internal or other non-federal purposes, labels or treats its agreement as a procurement, a contract, or a procurement contract. Neither the title nor the structure of an agreement determines whether the agreement -- for purposes of federal grants administrative requirements -- is a *subaward* or is instead a procurement *contract* under an award. The substance of the relationship should be given greater consideration than the form of agreement between the recipient and the outside entity.

1. Information on proposed subawards

A recipient of an OJP award may not make subawards ("subgrants") unless the recipient has specific federal authorization to do so. Unless an applicable statute or DOJ regulation specifically authorizes (or requires) subawards, a recipient must have authorization from OJP before it may make a subaward.

A particular subaward may be authorized by OJP because the recipient included a sufficiently-detailed description and justification of the proposed subaward in the Program Narrative, Budget Detail Worksheet, and Budget Narrative as approved by OJP. If, however, a particular subaward is not authorized by federal statute or regulation, and is not approved by OJP, the recipient will be required, post-award, to request and obtain written authorization from OJP before it may make the subaward.

If an applicant proposes to make one or more subawards to carry out the federal award and program, the applicant should-- (1) identify (if known) the proposed subrecipient(s), (2) describe in detail what each subrecipient will do to carry out the federal award and federal program, and (3) provide a justification for the subaward(s), with details on pertinent matters such as special qualifications and areas of expertise. Pertinent information on subawards should appear not only in the Program Narrative, but also in the Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative.

2. Information on proposed procurement contracts (with specific justification for proposed noncompetitive contracts over \$150,000)

Unlike a recipient contemplating a subaward, a recipient of an OJP award generally does not need specific prior federal authorization to enter into an agreement that -- for purposes of federal grants administrative requirements -- is considered a procurement contract, **provided that** (1) the recipient uses its own documented procurement procedures and (2) those procedures conform to applicable federal law, including the Procurement Standards of the (DOJ) Part 200 Uniform Requirements (as set out at 2 C.F.R. 200.317 - 200.326). The Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative should identify proposed procurement contracts. (As discussed above, subawards must be identified and described separately from procurement contracts.)

The Procurement Standards in the Part 200 Uniform Requirements, however, reflect a general expectation that agreements that (for purposes of federal grants administrative requirements) constitute procurement "contracts" under awards will be entered into on the basis of full and open competition. All noncompetitive (sole source) procurement contracts must meet the OJP requirements outlined at <https://ojp.gov/training/subawards-procurement.htm>. If a proposed procurement contract would exceed the simplified acquisition threshold — currently, \$150,000 — a recipient of an OJP award may not proceed without competition unless and until the recipient receives specific advance authorization from OJP to use a non-competitive approach for the procurement. An applicant that (at the time of its application) intends – without competition – to enter into a procurement contract that would exceed \$150,000 should include a detailed justification that explains to OJP why in the particular circumstances, it is appropriate to proceed without competition.

If the applicant receives an award, sole source procurements that do not exceed the Simplified Acquisition Threshold (currently \$150,000) must have written justification for the noncompetitive procurement action maintained in the procurement file. If a procurement file does not have the documentation that meets the criteria outlined in 2 C.F.R. 200, the procurement expenditures may not be allowable. Sole source procurement over the \$150,000 Simplified Acquisition Threshold must have prior approval from OJP using a Sole Source Grant Adjustment Notice (GAN). Written documentation justifying the noncompetitive procurement must be submitted with the GAN and maintained in the procurement file.

d. Pre-Agreement Costs

For information on pre-agreement costs, see [Section B. Federal Award Information](#).

5. Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)

Indirect costs may be charged to an award only if:

- (a) The recipient has a current (unexpired), federally-approved indirect cost rate; or
- (b) The recipient is eligible to use, and elects to use, the “de minimis” indirect cost rate described in the Part 200 Uniform Requirements, as set out at 2 C.F.R. 200.414(f).

An applicant with a current (unexpired) federally-approved indirect cost rate is to attach a copy of the indirect cost rate agreement to the application. An applicant that does not have a current federally-approved rate may request one through its cognizant federal agency, which will review all documentation and approve a rate for the applicant entity, or, if the applicant’s accounting system permits, applicants may propose to allocate costs in the direct cost categories.

For assistance with identifying the appropriate cognizant federal agency for indirect costs, please contact the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) Customer Service Center at 1-800-458-0786 or at ask.ocfo@usdoj.gov. If DOJ is the cognizant federal agency, applicants may obtain information needed to submit an indirect cost rate proposal at <https://www.ojp.gov/funding/Apply/Resources/IndirectCosts.pdf>.

Certain OJP recipients have the option of electing to use the “de minimis” indirect cost rate. An applicant that is eligible to use the “de minimis” rate that wishes to use the “de minimis” rate should attach written documentation to the application that advises OJP of both-- (1) the applicant’s eligibility to use the “de minimis” rate, and (2) its election to do so. If an eligible applicant elects the “de minimis” rate, costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs, but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. The “de minimis” rate may no longer be used once an approved federally-negotiated indirect cost rate is in place. (No entity that ever has had a federally-approved negotiated indirect cost rate is eligible to use the “de minimis” rate.) For additional eligibility requirements please see Part 200 Uniform Requirements, as set out at https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?node=se2.1.200_1414&rqn=div8.

6. Financial Management and System of Internal Controls Questionnaire (including applicant disclosure of high-risk status)

Every OJP applicant (other than an individual applying in his or her personal capacity) is required to download, complete, and submit the OJP Financial Management and System of Internal Controls Questionnaire (Questionnaire) at <https://ojp.gov/funding/Apply/Resources/FinancialCapability.pdf> as part of its application. The Questionnaire helps OJP assess the financial management and internal control systems, and the associated potential risks of an applicant as part of the pre-award risk assessment process.

The Questionnaire should only be completed by financial staff most familiar with the applicant's systems, policies, and procedures in order to ensure that the correct responses are recorded and submitted to OJP. The responses on the Questionnaire directly impact the pre-award risk assessment and should accurately reflect the applicant's financial management and internal control system at the time of the application. The pre-award risk assessment is only one of multiple factors and criteria used in determining funding. However, a pre-award risk assessment that indicates that an applicant poses a higher risk to OJP may affect the funding decision and/or result in additional reporting requirements, monitoring, special conditions, withholding of award funds, or other additional award requirements.

Among other things, the form requires each applicant to disclose whether it currently is designated "high risk" by a federal grant-making agency outside of DOJ. For purposes of this disclosure, high risk includes any status under which a federal awarding agency provides additional oversight due to the applicant's past performance, or other programmatic or financial concerns with the applicant. If an applicant is designated high risk by another federal awarding agency, the applicant must provide the following information:

- The federal awarding agency that currently designates the applicant high-risk.
- The date the applicant was designated high-risk.
- The high-risk point of contact at that federal awarding agency (name, phone number, and email address).
- The reasons for the high-risk status, as set out by the federal awarding agency.

OJP seeks this information to help ensure appropriate federal oversight of OJP awards. An applicant that is considered "high-risk" by another federal awarding agency is not automatically disqualified from receiving an OJP award. OJP may, however, consider the information in award decisions, and may impose additional OJP oversight of any award under this solicitation (including through the conditions that accompany the award document).

7. Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

Each applicant must complete and submit this information. An applicant that expends any funds for lobbying activities is to provide all of the information requested on the form Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL) posted at <https://ojp.gov/funding/Apply/Resources/Disclosure.pdf>. An applicant that does not expend any funds for lobbying activities is to enter "N/A" in the text boxes for item 10 ("a. Name and Address of Lobbying Registrant" and "b. Individuals Performing Services").

8. 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 **five** 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 1](#). **All five** 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 five 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 Forensic Science Laboratory System Accreditation.
4. Certification as to Use of Funds for New Facilities.
5. 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. External Investigations Attachment

All applicants are to provide the name(s) of the existing “government entity” (or entities) that is the subject of the certification (see [Appendix 1](#)) that—

A government entity exists and an appropriate process is in place to conduct independent external investigations into allegations of serious negligence or misconduct substantially affecting the integrity of the forensic results committed by employees or contractors of any forensic laboratory system, medical examiner office, coroner's office, law enforcement storage facility, or medical facility in the State that will receive a portion of the grant amount.

[Appendix 2](#) includes a template for this attachment. Note that funds **will not be made available** to applicant agencies that fail to provide the necessary information.

The five certifications and the external investigations attachment should be attached as a separate file with an appropriately descriptive file name.

c. Forensic Laboratory Accreditation Documentation (if applicable)

Applicants should provide documentation of current accreditation with the application for any accredited laboratory (including a subrecipient laboratory) that is to receive funds under the 2018 Coverdell award. Acceptable types of documentation of current accreditation include: an electronic (scanned) copy of the current accreditation certificate(s), a digital photograph of the current accreditation certificate(s), or a letter from the accrediting body that includes the certificate number. Additionally, if a certificate references another document that contains key information on the type or scope of the accreditation, provide a copy of that supplemental documentation. Independent accrediting or certifying organizations may include the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors/Laboratory Accreditation Board (ASCLD-LAB), Forensic Quality Services (FQS), the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA), or other appropriate accrediting bodies.¹¹

Accreditation document(s) should be attached as a separate file with an appropriately descriptive file name.

d. Applicant Disclosure of Pending Applications

Each applicant is to disclose whether it has (or is proposed as a subrecipient under) any pending applications for federally-funded grants or cooperative agreements that (1) include requests for funding to support the same project being proposed in the application under this solicitation, and (2) would cover any identical cost items outlined in the budget submitted to OJP as part of the application under this solicitation. The applicant is to disclose applications made directly to federal awarding agencies, and also applications for subawards of federal funds (e.g., applications to State agencies that will subaward (“subgrant”) federal funds).

OJP seeks this information to help avoid 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.

Each applicant that has one or more pending applications as described above is 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 federal or State funding agency.

¹¹ Per 34 U.S.C. § 10562(2), such an accrediting body would be “an accrediting body that is a signatory to an internationally recognized arrangement and that offers accreditation to forensic science conformity assessment bodies using an accreditation standard that is recognized by that internationally recognized arrangement[.]”

Federal or State Funding Agency	Solicitation Name/Project Name	Name/Phone/Email for Point of Contact at Federal or State Funding Agency
DOJ/Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS)	COPS Hiring Program	Jane Doe, 202/000-0000; jane.doe@usdoj.gov
Health and Human Services/Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration	Drug-Free Communities Mentoring Program/ North County Youth Mentoring Program	John Doe, 202/000-0000; john.doe@hhs.gov

Each applicant should include the table as a separate attachment to its application. The file should be named “Disclosure of Pending Applications.” The applicant’s Legal Name on the application must match the entity named on the disclosure of pending applications statement.

Any applicant that does not have any pending applications as described above is to submit, as a separate attachment, a statement to this effect: “[Applicant Name on SF-424] does not have (and is not proposed as a subrecipient under) any pending applications submitted within the last 12 months for federally-funded grants or cooperative agreements (or for subawards under federal grants or cooperative agreements) that request funding to support the same project being proposed in this application to OJP and that would cover any identical cost items outlined in the budget submitted as part of this application.”

How To Apply

Applicants must register in and submit applications through Grants.gov, a primary source to find federal funding opportunities and apply for funding. Find complete instructions on how to register and submit an application at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support.html>. Applicants that experience technical difficulties during this process should call the Grants.gov Customer Support Hotline at **800-518-4726** or **606-545-5035**, which operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, except on federal holidays.

Important Grants.gov update. Grants.gov has updated its application tool. The legacy PDF application package has been phased out and was retired as of December 31, 2017. Grants.gov Workspace is now the standard application method for applying for grants. OJP applicants should familiarize themselves with the Workspace option now. For complete information and instructions on using Workspace (and other changes), go to the Workspace Overview page at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html>.

Registering with Grants.gov is a one-time process; however, **processing delays may occur, and it can take several weeks** for first-time registrants to receive confirmation of registration and a user password. OJP encourages applicants to **register several weeks before** the application submission deadline. In addition, OJP urges applicants to submit applications at least 72 hours prior to the application due date, in order to allow time for the applicant to receive

validation messages or rejection notifications from Grants.gov, and to correct in a timely fashion any problems that may have caused a rejection notification.

OJP strongly encourages all prospective applicants to sign up for Grants.gov email notifications regarding this solicitation at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/manage-subscriptions.html>. If this solicitation is cancelled or modified, individuals who sign up with Grants.gov for updates will be automatically notified.

Browser Information: Grants.gov was built to be compatible with Internet Explorer. For technical assistance with Google Chrome, or another browser, contact Grants.gov Customer Support.

Note on Attachments: Grants.gov has two categories of files for attachments: “mandatory” and “optional.” OJP receives all files attached in both categories. Attachments are also labeled to describe the file being attached (e.g., Project Narrative, Budget Narrative, Other, etc.) Please ensure that all required documents are attached in the correct Grants.gov category and are labeled correctly. Do not embed “mandatory” attachments within another file.

Note on File Names and File Types: Grants.gov only permits the use of certain specific characters in the file names of attachments. Valid file names may include only the characters shown in the table below. Grants.gov rejects any application that includes an attachment(s) with a file name that contains any characters not shown in the table below. Grants.gov forwards successfully-submitted applications to the OJP Grants Management System (GMS).

Characters
Upper case (A – Z)
Lower case (a – z)
Underscore (_)
Hyphen (-)
Space
Period (.)

Special Characters		
Parenthesis ()	Curly braces { }	Square brackets []
Ampersand (&)*	Tilde (~)	Exclamation point (!)
Comma (,)	Semicolon (;)	Apostrophe (‘)
At sign (@)	Number sign (#)	Dollar sign (\$)
Percent sign (%)	Plus sign (+)	Equal sign (=)

***When using the ampersand (&) in XML, applicants must use the “&” format.**

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.” GMS may reject applications with files that use these extensions. It is important to allow time to change the type of file(s) if the application is rejected.

All applicants are required to complete the following steps:

Unique Entity Identifier (DUNS Number) and System for Award Management (SAM)

Every applicant entity must comply with all applicable System for Award Management (SAM) and unique entity identifier (currently, a Data Universal Numbering System [DUNS] number) requirements. SAM is the repository for certain standard information about federal financial assistance applicants, recipients, and subrecipients. A DUNS number is a unique nine-digit identification number provided by the commercial company Dun and Bradstreet. More detailed information about SAM and the DUNS number is in the numbered sections below.

If an applicant entity has not fully complied with the applicable SAM and unique identifier requirements by the time OJP makes award decisions, OJP may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and may use that determination as a basis for making the award to a different applicant.

Registration and Submission Steps

1. **Acquire a unique entity identifier (currently, a DUNS number).** In general, the Office of Management and Budget requires every applicant for a federal award (other than an individual) to include a "unique entity identifier" in each application, including an application for a supplemental award. Currently, a DUNS number is the required unique entity identifier.

This unique entity identifier is used for tracking purposes, and to validate address and point of contact information for applicants, recipients, and subrecipients. It will be used throughout the life cycle of an OJP award. 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 <https://www.dnb.com/>. A DUNS number is usually received within 1-2 business days.

2. **Acquire or maintain registration with SAM.** All applicants for OJP awards (other than individuals) must maintain current registrations in the SAM database. Applicants will need the authorizing official of the organization and an Employer Identification Number (EIN). An applicant must be registered in SAM to successfully register in Grants.gov. Each applicant must **update or renew its SAM registration at least annually** to maintain an active status. SAM registration and renewal can take as long as 10 business days to complete (2 more weeks to acquire an EIN).

An application cannot be successfully submitted in Grants.gov until Grants.gov receives the SAM registration information. Once the SAM registration/renewal is complete, **the information transfer from SAM to Grants.gov can take as long as 48 hours.** OJP recommends that the applicant register or renew registration with SAM as early as possible.

Information about SAM registration procedures can be accessed at www.SAM.gov.

3. **Acquire an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and a Grants.gov username and password.** Complete the AOR profile on Grants.gov and create a username and password. An applicant entity's "unique entity identifier" (DUNS number) must be used to complete this step. For more information about the registration process for organizations and other entities, go to <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>.
4. **Acquire confirmation for the AOR from the E-Business Point of Contact (E-Biz POC).** The E-Biz POC at the applicant organization must log into Grants.gov to confirm the applicant organization's AOR. The E-Biz POC will need the Marketing Partner Identification Number (MPIN) password obtained when registering with SAM to complete this step. Note that an organization can have more than one AOR.
5. **Search for the funding opportunity on Grants.gov.** Use the following identifying information when searching for the funding opportunity on Grants.gov. The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number for this solicitation is 16.742, titled "Paul

Coverdell Forensic Sciences Improvement Grant Program,” and the funding opportunity number is NIJ-2018-13740.

6. **Access Funding Opportunity and Application Package from Grants.gov.** Select “Apply for Grants” under the “Applicants” column. Enter your email address to be notified of any changes to the opportunity package before the closing date. Click the Workspace icon to use Grants.gov Workspace.
7. **Submit a valid application consistent with this solicitation by following the directions in Grants.gov.** Within 24-48 hours after submitting the electronic application, the applicant should receive two notifications from Grants.gov. The first will confirm the receipt of the application. The second will state whether the application has been validated and successfully submitted, or whether it has been rejected due to errors, with an explanation. It is possible to first receive a message indicating that the application is received, and then receive a rejection notice a few minutes or hours later. Submitting an application well ahead of the deadline provides time to correct the problem(s) that caused the rejection. **Important:** OJP urges each applicant to submit its application **at least 72 hours prior** to the application due date, to allow time to receive validation messages or rejection notifications from Grants.gov, and to correct in a timely fashion any problems that may have caused a rejection notification. Applications must be successfully submitted through Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. eastern time on April 30, 2018.

Go to <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html> for further details on DUNS numbers, SAM, and Grants.gov registration steps and timeframes.

Note: Application Versions

If an applicant submits multiple versions of the same application, OJP will review only the most recent system-validated version submitted.

Experiencing Unforeseen Grants.gov Technical Issues

An applicant that experiences unforeseen Grants.gov technical issues beyond its control that prevent it from submitting its application by the deadline must contact the Grants.gov Customer Support Hotline at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support.html> or the SAM Help Desk (Federal Service Desk) at <https://www.fsd.gov/fsd-gov/home.do> to report the technical issue and receive a tracking number. The applicant must email the NIJ contact identified in the Contact Information section on the title page **within 24 hours after the application deadline** to request approval to submit its application after the deadline. The applicant's email must describe the technical difficulties, and must include a timeline of the applicant's submission efforts, the complete grant application, the applicant's DUNS number, and any Grants.gov Help Desk or SAM tracking number(s).

Note: OJP does not automatically approve requests to submit a late application. After OJP reviews the applicant's request, and contacts the Grants.gov or SAM Help Desks to verify 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 untimely application submission was due to the applicant's failure to follow all required procedures, OJP will deny the applicant's request to submit its application.

The following conditions generally are insufficient to justify late submissions:

- Failure to register in SAM or Grants.gov in sufficient time (SAM registration and renewal can take as long as 10 business days to complete. The information transfer from SAM to Grants.gov can take up to 48 hours.).
- Failure to follow Grants.gov instructions on how to register and apply as posted on its website.
- Failure to follow each instruction in the OJP solicitation.
- Technical issues with the applicant's computer or information technology environment, such as issues with firewalls or browser incompatibility.

Notifications regarding known technical problems with Grants.gov, if any, are posted at the top of the OJP Funding Resource Center at <https://ojp.gov/funding/index.htm>.

E. Application Review Information

Review Criteria

Applications that meet basic minimum requirements will be evaluated by peer reviewers using the following review criteria.

- 1. Description of the Issue** (Understanding of the issue and its importance)—15%
- 2. Project Design and Implementation** (Quality and technical merit)—15%
 - a. Soundness of the approach to reduce and/or eliminate a backlog.
 - b. Soundness of the approach to improve the quality of forensic services.
 - c. Soundness of the approach to train and employ forensic personnel and medicolegal death investigators to eliminate a backlog and increase capacity.
 - d. Innovation and creativity in the approach to reducing and/or eliminating a backlog and increasing capacity.
 - e. Feasibility of the proposed project and awareness of pitfalls.
- 3. Capabilities/Competencies** (Capabilities, demonstrated productivity, and experience of the applicant organization and proposed project staff)—10%
 - a. 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).
 - b. Demonstrated ability of the applicant organization to manage the effort.

- c. Relationship between the capabilities/competencies of the proposed project staff (including the applicant organization) and the scope of the proposed project.

4. Budget—25%

NOTE: The budget should be complete, cost-effective, and allowable (e.g., reasonable, allocable, and necessary for project activities.) Budget narratives should demonstrate generally 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.¹²

- a. Total cost of the project relative to the perceived benefit.
- b. Use of existing resources to conserve costs.
- c. Cost-effectiveness of proposed activities applicable to backlog reduction and/or timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner/coroner's office services.
- d. Cost-effectiveness of proposed activities applicable to improvement in the quality of forensic science or medical examiner/coroner's office services.
- e. Cost-effectiveness of education and training as related to quality and/or timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner/coroner's office services.

5. Plan for Collecting the Data Required for this Solicitation's Performance Measures (Relevance to policy and practice)—30%

- a. Improvement in Quality and Timeliness.
 - i. Anticipated reduction in backlog.
 - ii. Anticipated improvement in quality and timeliness of forensic results.
 - iii. Anticipated benefit of education and training to reduce backlog and improve timeliness of results.
 - iv. Planned steps to achieve accreditation to positively impact quality and/or timeliness of forensic results.
- b. Anticipated Impact of Eligible Project Activities.
 - i. 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/coroner's office services.

¹² 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.

- ii. Equipment/Supplies: If applicable, anticipated impact of requested equipment and supplies on improvement in quality and/or timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner/coroner's office services.
 - iii. Computerization: If applicable, anticipated impact of requested computerization on improvement in quality and/or timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner/coroner's office services.
 - iv. Renovation/Construction of Facilities: If applicable, anticipated impact of proposed action on improvement in quality and/or timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner/coroner's office services.
- c. Demonstrated plan for collection of the performance measure data as described in the solicitation.

6. 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 2014, 2015, and 2016 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 making awards. NIJ reviews the application to make sure that the information presented is reasonable, understandable, measurable, and achievable, as well as consistent with the solicitation.

Peer reviewers will review the applications submitted under this solicitation that meet basic minimum requirements. For purposes of assessing whether an application meets basic minimum requirements and should proceed to further consideration, OJP screens applications for compliance with those requirements. Although specific requirements may vary, the following are common requirements applicable to all solicitations for funding under OJP programs:

- The application must be submitted by an eligible type of applicant.
- The application must request funding within programmatic funding constraints (if applicable).
- The application must be responsive to the scope of the solicitation.
- The application must include all items designated as "critical elements."
- The applicant must not be identified in SAM as excluded from receiving federal awards.

For a list of the critical elements for this solicitation, see "What an Application Should Include" under [Section D. Application and Submission Information](#).

Peer review panels will evaluate, score, and rate applications that meet basic minimum requirements. NIJ may use internal peer reviewers, external peer reviewers, or a combination, to assess applications on technical merit using the solicitation's review criteria. 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. Peer reviewers' ratings and any resulting recommendations are advisory only, although reviewer views are considered carefully. Other important considerations for NIJ include geographic diversity, strategic priorities, and available funding, as well as the extent to which the budget detail worksheet and budget narrative accurately explain project costs that are reasonable, necessary, and otherwise allowable under federal law and applicable federal cost principles.

Pursuant to the Part 200 Uniform Requirements, before award decisions are made, OJP also reviews information related to the degree of risk posed by the applicant. Among other things to help assess whether an applicant that has one or more prior federal awards has a satisfactory record with respect to performance, integrity, and business ethics, OJP checks whether the applicant is listed in SAM as excluded from receiving a federal award.

In addition, if OJP anticipates that an award will exceed \$150,000 in federal funds, OJP also must review and consider any information about the applicant that appears in the non-public segment of the integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently, the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System, (FAPIS)).

Important note on FAPIS: An applicant, at its option, may review and comment on any information about itself that currently appears in FAPIS and was entered by a federal awarding agency. OJP will consider any such comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in FAPIS, in its assessment of the risk posed by the applicant.

The evaluation of risks goes beyond information in SAM, however. OJP itself has in place a framework for evaluating risks posed by applicants for competitive awards. OJP takes into account information pertinent to matters such as —

1. Applicant financial stability and fiscal integrity.
2. Quality of the applicant's management systems, and the applicant's ability to meet prescribed management standards, including those outlined in the DOJ Grants Financial Guide.
3. Applicant's history of performance under OJP and other DOJ awards (including compliance with reporting requirements and award conditions), as well as awards from other federal agencies.
4. Reports and findings from audits of the applicant, including audits under the Part 200 Uniform Requirements.
5. Applicant's ability to comply with statutory and regulatory requirements, and to effectively implement other award requirements.

OJP will give priority in award decisions to eligible applicants that, during the three fiscal years (FY 2015 – 2017) prior to the submission of an application under this solicitation, did not have an “unresolved audit finding” indicating noncompliance with the award terms or conditions of a

DOJ grant program. See 34 U.S.C. § 10263(3). In other words, an applicant without such an “unresolved audit finding” will be given priority consideration over any applicant *with* such an “unresolved audit finding.”

Absent explicit statutory authorization or written delegation of authority to the contrary, all final award decisions will be made by the Assistant Attorney General, who may take into account not only peer review ratings and NIJ recommendations, but also other factors as indicated in this section. As mentioned earlier in the solicitation, applications requesting Coverdell funds to specifically target the challenges the opioid abuse crisis has brought to the forensic science community will be given priority consideration in award decisions over applications that do not include such requests.

F. Federal Award Administration Information

Federal Award Notices

Award notifications will be made by September 30, 2018. OJP sends award notifications by email through GMS to the individuals listed in the application as the point of contact and the authorizing official (E-Biz POC and AOR). The email notification includes detailed instructions on how to access and view the award documents, and steps to take in GMS to start the award acceptance process. GMS automatically issues the notifications at 9:00 p.m. eastern time on the award date.

For each successful applicant, an individual with the necessary authority to bind the applicant will be required to log in; execute a set of legal certifications and a set of legal assurances; designate a financial point of contact; thoroughly review the award, including all award conditions; and sign and accept the award. The award acceptance process requires physical signature of the award document by the authorized representative and the scanning and submission 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 OJP-approved application, the recipient must comply with all award conditions, as well as all applicable requirements of federal statutes and regulations (including applicable requirements referred to in the assurances and certifications executed in connection with award acceptance). OJP strongly encourages prospective applicants to review information on post-award legal requirements and common OJP award conditions **prior** to submitting an application.

Applicants should consult the “[Overview of Legal Requirements Generally Applicable to OJP Grants and Cooperative Agreements - FY 2018 Awards](#),” available in the OJP Funding Resource Center at <https://ojp.gov/funding/index.htm>. In addition, applicants should examine the following two legal documents, as each successful applicant must execute both documents before it may receive any award funds. (An applicant is not required to submit these documents as part of an application.)

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

The webpages accessible through the “[Overview of Legal Requirements Generally Applicable to OJP Grants and Cooperative Agreements - FY 2018 Awards](#)” are intended to give applicants for OJP awards a general overview of important statutes, regulations, and award conditions that apply to many (or in some cases, all) OJP grants and cooperative agreements awarded in FY 2018. Individual OJP awards typically also will include additional award conditions. Those additional conditions may relate to the particular statute, or program, or solicitation under which the award is made; to the substance of the funded application; to the recipient’s performance under other federal awards; to the recipient’s legal status (e.g., as a for-profit entity); or to other pertinent considerations.

General Information about Post-Federal Award Reporting Requirements

In addition to the deliverables described in [Section A. Program Description](#), any recipient of an award under this solicitation will be required to submit the following reports and data.

Required reports. Recipients typically must submit quarterly financial reports, semi-annual progress reports, final financial and progress reports, and, if applicable, an annual audit report in accordance with the Part 200 Uniform Requirements or specific award conditions.

In addition, Coverdell grantees are required to submit a final report that must, among other things: (1) include a summary and assessment of the program carried out with FY 2018 grant funds, (2) identify the number and type of cases accepted during the FY 2018 award period by the forensic laboratory or laboratories that received FY 2018 grant funds, (3) cite the specific improvements in the quality and/or timeliness of forensic science and medical examiner/coroner’s office services (including any reduction in forensic analysis backlog) that occurred as a direct result of the FY 2018 grant award, and (4) detail the progress of any unaccredited forensic science service provider that received FY 2018 grant funds toward obtaining accreditation. 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.

Future awards and fund drawdowns may be withheld if reports are delinquent. (In appropriate cases, OJP may require additional reports.)

Awards that exceed \$500,000 will include an additional condition that, under specific circumstances, will require the recipient to report (to FAPIIS) information on civil, criminal, and administrative proceedings connected with (or connected to the performance of) either the OJP award or any other grant, cooperative agreement, or procurement contract from the federal

government. Additional information on this reporting requirement appears in the text of the award condition posted on the OJP webpage at <https://ojp.gov/funding/FAPIIS.htm>.

Data on performance measures. In addition to required reports, each award recipient also must provide data that measure the results of the work done under the award. To demonstrate program progress and success, as well as to assist DOJ in 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, OJP will require any award recipient, post award, to provide performance data as part of regular progress reporting. Successful applicants will be required to access OJP's performance measurement page at www.ojp.gov/performance to view the specific reporting requirements for this grant program.

Performance measures are also listed as an [appendix](#).

G. Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s)

For OJP contact(s), see the title page.

For contact information for Grants.gov, see the title page.

H. Other Information

Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552 and 5 U.S.C. 552a)

All applications submitted to OJP (including all attachments to applications) are subject to the federal Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and to the Privacy Act. By law, DOJ may withhold information that is responsive to a request pursuant to FOIA if DOJ determines that the responsive information either is protected under the Privacy Act or falls within the scope of one of nine statutory exemptions under FOIA. DOJ cannot agree in advance of a request pursuant to FOIA not to release some or all portions of an application.

In its review of records that are responsive to a FOIA request, OJP will withhold information in those records that plainly falls within the scope of the Privacy Act or one of the statutory exemptions under FOIA. (Some examples include certain types of information in budgets, and names and contact information for project staff other than certain key personnel.) In appropriate circumstances, OJP will request the views of the applicant/recipient that submitted a responsive document.

For example, if OJP receives a request pursuant to FOIA for an application submitted by a nonprofit or for-profit organization or an institution of higher education, or for an application that involves research, OJP typically will contact the applicant/recipient that submitted the application and ask it to identify -- quite precisely -- any particular information in the application that the applicant/recipient believes falls under a FOIA exemption, the specific exemption it believes applies, and why. After considering the submission by the applicant/recipient, OJP makes an independent assessment regarding withholding information. OJP generally follows a similar process for requests pursuant to FOIA for applications that may contain law-enforcement sensitive information.

Provide Feedback to OJP

To assist OJP in improving its application and award processes, OJP encourages applicants to provide feedback on this solicitation, the application submission process, and/or the application review process. Provide feedback to OJPSolicitationFeedback@usdoj.gov.

IMPORTANT: This email is for feedback and suggestions only. OJP does **not** reply from this mailbox to messages it receives in this mailbox. Any prospective applicant that has specific questions on any program or technical aspect of the solicitation **must** use the appropriate telephone number or email listed on the front of this document to obtain information. These contacts are provided to help ensure that prospective applicants can directly reach an individual who can address specific questions in a timely manner.

If you are interested in being a reviewer for other OJP grant applications, please email your résumé to ojppeerreview@l-secb.com. (Do not send your résumé to the OJP Solicitation Feedback email account.) **Note:** Neither you nor anyone else from your organization or entity can be a peer reviewer in a competition in which you or your organization/entity has submitted an application.

Appendix 1: Templates for Coverdell Statutory Certifications

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

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

**FY 2018 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 34 U.S.C. § 10272. I also acknowledge that Office of Justice Programs grants, including certifications provided in connection with such grants, are subject to review by the Office of Justice Programs and/or by the Department of Justice's Office of the Inspector General.

I have authority to make this certification on behalf of the applicant agency (that is, the agency applying directly to the National Institute of Justice).

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 2018 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 34 U.S.C. § 10272. I also acknowledge that Office of Justice Programs grants, including certifications provided in connection with such grants, are subject to review by the Office of Justice Programs and/or by the Department of Justice’s Office of the Inspector General.

I have authority to make this certification on behalf of the applicant agency (that is, the agency applying directly to the National Institute of Justice).

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 2018 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 34 U.S.C. § 10272. I also acknowledge that Office of Justice Programs grants, including certifications provided in connection with such grants, are subject to review by the Office of Justice Programs and/or by the Department of Justice's Office of the Inspector General.

I have authority to make this certification on behalf of the applicant agency (that is, the agency applying directly to the National Institute of Justice).

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 2018 Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement
Grants Program**

Certification as to Forensic Science Laboratory System Accreditation

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:

Before receiving any funds under this grant, any forensic science laboratory system in the State, including any laboratory operated by a unit of local government within the State, that will receive any portion of the grant amount either

- a) is accredited by an accrediting body that is a signatory to an internationally recognized arrangement and that offers accreditation to forensic science conformity assessment bodies using an accreditation standard that is recognized by that internationally recognized arrangement, or,
- b) is not so accredited, but will (or will be required in a legally binding and enforceable writing to) use a portion of the grant amount to prepare and apply for such accreditation not more than 2 years after the date on which a grant is awarded under the FY 2018 Paul 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 34 U.S.C. § 10272. I also acknowledge that Office of Justice Programs grants, including certifications provided in connection with such grants, are subject to review by the Office of Justice Programs and/or by the Department of Justice's Office of the Inspector General.

I have authority to make this certification on behalf of the applicant agency (that is, the agency applying directly to the National Institute of Justice).

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 2018 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 34 U.S.C. § 10564(c) and summarized in the FY 2018 Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program solicitation.

I acknowledge that a false statement in this certification or in the grant application that it supports may be the subject of criminal prosecution, including under 18 U.S.C. § 1001 and 34 U.S.C. § 10272. I also acknowledge that Office of Justice Programs grants, including certifications provided in connection with such grants, are subject to review by the Office of Justice Programs and/or by the Department of Justice's Office of the Inspector General.

I have authority to make this certification on behalf of the applicant agency (that is, the agency applying directly to the National Institute of Justice).

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 2018 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 2018 program solicitation 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 34 U.S.C. § 10272. I also acknowledge that Office of Justice Programs grants, including certifications provided in connection with such grants, are subject to review by the Office of Justice Programs and/or by the Department of Justice's Office of the Inspector General.

I have authority to make this certification on behalf of the applicant agency (that is, the agency applying directly to the National Institute of Justice).

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 2: Template for “External Investigations” Attachment

(Instructions: Scan the completed document and submit image file electronically through Grants.gov.)

FY 2018 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 for the FY 2018 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 2018 External Investigations Attachment (continued)

Name of Applicant Agency: _____

3. _____	_____

4. _____	_____

5. _____	_____

6. _____	_____

7. _____	_____

Appendix 3: Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently Asked Questions for the FY 18 Paul Coverdell Competitive Solicitation

- 1. Q: Is one single applicant permitted to submit multiple applications under the current Coverdell Competitive Program?**

A: Yes, however only one award will be made to each applicant under the Coverdell Competitive Program. That means if you submit multiple applications for different projects, you are in effect competing against yourself. (Please note that if an applicant submits multiple versions of the same application, OJP will review only the most recent system-validated version submitted.)

- 2. Q: If an applicant unit of local government gets a Coverdell Competitive Award, does that affect the maximum amount the state can apply for under the formula grant?**

A: No. If an applicant unit of local government is the entity that receives a competitive award that does not impact the maximum amount the state can apply for under this funding opportunity.

- 3. Q: I am a state agency. Do I have to apply through the SAA in order to be considered eligible?**

A: Yes, all state agencies must apply through the SAA.

- 4. Q: Can money be used for training if that training spans two years e.g., October to March?**

A: No. Coverdell Awards, as directed in the solicitation, are to begin on January 1st. That change was made last year and so awards are for one year from January 1st to December 31st.

- 5. Q: Do I have to be accredited in order to apply?**

A: Applicants do not have to be currently accredited to apply; however, Coverdell awardees must use grant funds to prepare and apply for accreditation of any FY 2018 Coverdell grant-funded unaccredited forensic laboratory system, including any laboratory operated by a unit of local government within the State, not more than two (2) years after the FY 2018 Coverdell award date. Medical examiner's and coroner's offices are exempt from this accreditation requirement. The accrediting body must be "a signatory to an internationally recognized arrangement" and one that "offers accreditation to forensic science conformity assessment bodies using an accreditation standard that is recognized by that internationally recognized arrangement[.]"

Appendix 4: Performance Measures Table

Objective	Performance Measure(s)	Data Recipient Provides
<p>To improve the quality and timeliness of forensic services and to reduce the number of backlogged cases in forensic laboratories.</p>	<p>Outcome Measure</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 2.Percent reduction in the number of backlogged forensic cases. <p>Output Measure</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.The number of forensic science or medical examiner/coroner's office personnel who completed appropriate training or educational opportunities with FY 2018 Coverdell funds (if applicable to the grant). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.Average number of days to process a sample at the beginning of the grant period. 2.Average number of days to process a sample at the end of the grant period. 3.Number of backlogged cases at the beginning of the grant period. 4.Number of backlogged cases at the end of the grant period. 5.Number of forensic science personnel attending training. 6.Number of medical examiner/coroner's office personnel attending training programs.
<p>To increase the number of agencies/organizations that are accredited with Coverdell funding.</p>	<p>Percent of agencies/organizations that are accredited with FY 2018 Coverdell funding.</p>	<p>Number of agencies/organizations seeking initial accreditation with FY 2018 Coverdell funding.</p> <p>Number of agencies/organizations obtaining initial accreditation with FY 2018 Coverdell funding.</p> <p>Number of agencies/organizations using FY 2018 Coverdell funding for fees to maintain accreditation.</p> <p>Number of agencies/organizations receiving funding.</p>
<p>To increase the number of individuals certified with Coverdell funding.</p>	<p>Percent of certified individuals.</p>	<p>Number of analysts.</p> <p>Number of analysts certified.</p> <p>Number of analysts seeking certification with FY 2018 Coverdell funding.</p>

Appendix 5: Application Checklist

Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program – Competitive

This application checklist has been created as an aid in developing an application.

What an Applicant Should Do:

Prior to Registering in Grants.gov:

- _____ Acquire a DUNS Number (see page 32)
- _____ Acquire or renew registration with SAM (see page 32)

To Register with Grants.gov:

- _____ Acquire AOR and Grants.gov username/password (see page 32)
- _____ Acquire AOR confirmation from the E-Biz POC (see page 32)

To Find Funding Opportunity:

- _____ Search for the Funding Opportunity on Grants.gov (see page 32)
- _____ Access Funding Opportunity and Application Package (see page 33)
- _____ Sign up for Grants.gov email [notifications](#) (optional) (see page 31)
- _____ Read [Important Notice: Applying for Grants in Grants.gov](#)
- _____ Read OJP policy and guidance on conference approval, planning, and reporting available at ojp.gov/financialguide/DOJ/PostawardRequirements/chapter3.10a.htm (see page 12)

After Application Submission, Receive Grants.gov Email Notifications That:

- _____ (1) application has been received,
- _____ (2) application has either been successfully validated or rejected with errors (see page 33)

If No Grants.gov Receipt, and Validation or Error Notifications are Received:

- _____ contact NIJ regarding experiencing technical difficulties (see page 33)

Overview of Post-Award Legal Requirements:

- _____ Review the "[Overview of Legal Requirements Generally Applicable to OJP Grants and Cooperative Agreements – FY 2018 Awards](#)" in the OJP Funding Resource Center at <https://ojp.gov/funding/index.htm>.

Eligibility Requirement: Eligible applicants are limited to States (including territories) and units of local government. State Administering Agencies (SAAs) apply on behalf of States, including any State government entity. Applicant must not have an “unresolved audit finding,” as described at 34 U.S.C. § 10263(2).

What an Application Should Include:

- _____ Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) (see page 19)
- _____ Intergovernmental Review (see page 19)
- _____ Project Abstract (see page 20)
- _____ Program Narrative (see page 20)
- _____ Budget Detail Worksheet (see page 23)
- _____ Budget Narrative (see page 23)

- (Budget should be annotated to delineate opioid-related and non-opioid items)
- _____ Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable) (see page 26)
 - _____ Financial Management and System of Internal Controls Questionnaire (see page 26)
 - _____ [Disclosure of Lobbying Activities \(SF-LLL\)](#) (see page 27)
 - _____ Additional Attachments
 - _____ Coverdell Statutory Certifications (see page 28)
 (The applicant is to submit only one version of the “Certification as to Plan for Forensic Science Laboratories. DO NOT submit both versions of this certification. Applicant States are to submit the “Application from a State” version only; applicant units of local government are to submit the “Application from a Unit of Local Government“ version only.)
 - _____ 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 Forensic Science Laboratory System Accreditation
 - _____ Certification as to Use of Funds for New Facilities
 - _____ Certification as to External Investigations
 - _____ External Investigations Attachment (see page 28)
 - _____ Forensic Laboratory Accreditation Documentation (if applicable) (see page 29)
 - _____ Applicant Disclosure of Pending Applications (see page 29)
 - _____ Request and Justification for Employee Compensation; Waiver (if applicable) (see page 11)
 - _____ NIJ Programmatic Coversheet and Checklist (see solicitation cover page)