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

February 6, 2017: State Single Point of Contact information link has changed. An applicant may now find the names and addresses of State Single Points of Contact (SPOCs) at the following website: https://ojp.gov/funding/Apply/Resources/eo12372spoc.pdf

January 25, 2017: A recorded webinar has been posted. To assist applicants in completing their proposals, NIJ held a webinar related to this solicitation. The recording of the webinar has been posted at https://nij.gov/multimedia/Pages/video-fy17-funding-opportunities-for-publicly-funded-crime-labs-webinar.aspx.

The original solicitation document begins on the next page.

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs
National Institute of Justice

OMB No. 1121-0329
Approval Expires 12/31/2018

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 2017 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: March 10, 2017

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 additional eligibility information, see Section C. Eligibility Information.

Deadline

Applicants must register with Grants.gov prior to submitting an application. All applications are due by 11:59 p.m. eastern time on March 10, 2017.

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, 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 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 or 606-545-5035, or via email to 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** in order 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.

Grants.gov number assigned to this solicitation: NIJ-2017-11612

Release date: January 10, 2017

Contents

A. Program Description 4
Overview 4
Program-Specific Information 4
Goals, Objectives, and Deliverables 5
B. Federal Award Information 6
Type of Award 7
Financial Management and System of Internal Controls 7
Budget Information 8
Cost Sharing or Match Requirement 10
Pre-Agreement Costs (also known as Pre-award Costs) 10
Prior Approval, Planning, and Reporting of Conference/Meeting/Training Costs 11
Costs Associated with Language Assistance (if applicable) 11
C. Eligibility Information 11
D. Application and Submission Information 16
What an Application Should Include 16
How to Apply 27
E. Application Review Information 31
Review Criteria 31
Review Process 33
F. Federal Award Administration Information 34
Federal Award Notices 34
Administrative, National Policy, and other Legal Requirements 35
General Information About Post-Federal Award Reporting Requirements 35
G. Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s) 36
H. Other Information 37
Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552 and 5 U.S.C. 552a) 37
Provide Feedback to OJP 37
Application Checklist 38
Appendix 1. Templates for Coverdell Statutory Certifications 40
Appendix 2. Template for “External Investigations” Attachment 47

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 mediocolegal death investigators, as needed, to eliminate such a backlog. Under the Coverdell program, State Administering Agencies (SAAs) may apply for both "base" (formula) and competitive funds. Units of local government may apply for competitive funds. This solicitation is **ONLY** for the competitive funds.[1]

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

IMPORTANT NOTE

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

As of the writing of this solicitation, no full-year appropriation for the Department of Justice or for the Coverdell program for FY 2017 has been enacted. No final decision as to the amount of funds, if any, to be provided under this FY 2017 program should be expected until after a full-year appropriation is enacted.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to check for updates to this solicitation prior to submitting applications.

Please refer to "Available Funding" under "Program-Specific Information," below.

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

[1] An applicant that seeks to apply for Coverdell "base" (formula) funds (consistent with 42 U.S.C. 3797l(a)(1)) available for grants to eligible States would need to apply under NIJ's FY 2017 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program (Formula) solicitation.

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.

Goals, Objectives, and Deliverables

Available Funding

As of the writing of this solicitation, no full-year appropriation has been enacted for the Department of Justice for FY 2017, and thus the amount (if any) that will be made available for the Coverdell program is not known. The figures and calculations reflected in this solicitation (for example, the estimated minimum award to States and the estimated amount of "base" funds, by State) are based on an estimated total amount available of $11,500,000, although the amount ultimately made available could be higher or lower (or even zero). Applicants are strongly advised to check for updates to the solicitation prior to submitting applications.

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

1. 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 2013, 2014, and 2015; existing resources; and current needs of the potential grant recipient will be considerations in award decisions. For FY 2017, 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 base 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 $11,500,000 were to become available for FY 2017, the minimum Coverdell grant to an eligible State would be not less than $115,000.[2] In that case, if the amount a State would otherwise receive as its total Coverdell grant (including both base funds and any competitive funds) is less than $115,000, NIJ will increase that State's total grant to $115,000.

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:

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

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, 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,[3] 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.

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.

The Goals, Objectives and Deliverables are directly related to the performance measures set out in the table in Section D. Application and Submission Information, under "Program Narrative."

B. Federal Award Information

NIJ expects to make awards of up to $250,000, with an estimated total amount awarded of up to $2,875,000. NIJ expects to make awards for a 12-month period of performance, to begin on January 1, 2018. Applicants should be aware that the total period of an award, including one that receives a period of performance extension, ordinarily will not exceed three years.

[3] 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.

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

Type of Award

NIJ expects that any award under this solicitation will be 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 entities[4]) must, as described in the Part 200 Uniform Requirements[5] 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.

To help ensure that applicants understand administrative requirements and cost principles, OJP encourages prospective applicants to enroll, at no charge, in the DOJ Grants Financial Management Online Training, available here.

[4] For purposes of this solicitation, the phrase "pass-through entity" includes any recipient or subrecipient that provides a subaward ("subgrant") 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.

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. An applicant that proposes to use any portion of the grant amount to fund a forensic science laboratory system 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 2017 Coverdell grant-funded unaccredited forensic laboratory system not more than two (2) years after the FY 2017 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 (see 42 U.S.C. § 3797m(c)). Maximum amounts are determined by the total amount of the Coverdell grants received (including both base and competitive funds) and the total amount of funds available for Coverdell grants nationwide. The maximum amounts that may be used for costs of new facilities are as follows. (Estimates and calculations are based on the assumption that the total available funds for Coverdell awards in FY 2017 will be $11,500,000. 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 $69,000), the amount of the grant that can be used for the costs of any new facility cannot exceed the sum of 80 percent of 0.6 percent of the total available funds (such 80 percent estimated here at $55,200) plus 40 percent of the amount of the grant in excess of 0.6 percent of the total available funds.

   For example, if $11,500,000 were to become available for Coverdell awards in FY 2017 and a State were to receive a total Coverdell grant of $200,000, no more than $113,120 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: $69,000 x .80 = $55,200.

   Amount in excess of $55,200: $200,000 - $55,200 = $144,800.

   Forty percent of amount in excess of $55,200: $144,800 x .40 = $57,920.

   Sum of $55,200+ $57,920= $113,120.

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 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 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.

Expenses That Are Not Permitted

1. Expenses other than those listed above (including expenses for general law enforcement functions or non-forensic investigatory functions).

2. Costs for any new facility that exceed the limits described above.

3. Recipient administrative expenses (direct or indirect) that exceed 10 percent of the total grant amount.

4. The use of funds for the purchase and/or lease of vehicles, such as crime scene vans.

Cost Sharing or Match Requirement

This program 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 grant 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 page two 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, for more information.

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 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 2017 Awards" in the OJP Funding Resource Center.

C. Eligibility Information

States[6] and units of local government may apply for FY 2017 competitive Coverdell funds. States may be eligible for both "base" (formula) and competitive funds. Units of local government within States may be eligible for competitive funds and may apply directly to NIJ. 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.)

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

1. **A certification and description regarding a plan for forensic science laboratories**. Each applicant must submit a certification that the State or unit of local government has developed a plan for forensic science laboratories under a program intended to improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services in the State, 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

[6] 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.

examiner's office, or coroner's office in the State, including any laboratory operated by a unit of local government within the State, that will receive any portion of the grant amount (whether directly or through a subgrant) uses generally accepted laboratory practices and procedures established by accrediting organizations or appropriate certifying bodies.

3. **A certification regarding forensic science laboratory accreditation**. Each applicant must submit a certification that any forensic science laboratory system in the State, including any laboratory operated by a unit of local government within the State, that will receive any portion of the grant amount (whether directly or through a subgrant) either is accredited, **or**, is not so accredited, but will (or will be required in a legally binding and enforceable writing to) use a portion of the grant amount to prepare and apply for such accreditation not more than two (2) years after the date on which a grant is awarded under the FY 2017 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 42 U.S.C. § 3797m(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 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. 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.

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 42 U.S.C. § 3795a; and

(2) Office of Justice Programs grants, including certifications provided in connection with such grants, are subject to review by the Office of Justice Programs and/or by the Department of Justice's Office of the Inspector General.

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

Because it is not possible for NIJ to provide examples relating to every type of government entity with an appropriate process in place to conduct independent, external investigations into allegations of serious negligence or misconduct substantially affecting the integrity of the forensic results committed by employees or contractors, this guidance should not be viewed as all inclusive. In addition, this guidance is not intended to constitute legal advice from NIJ on the question of whether the required certification properly may be made on behalf of the applicant. Such a determination must be made by an appropriate official based on the statutory requirements of the certification after review of this guidance.

Illustrative Examples:

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

   Guidance: Execution of the certification might be appropriate under these facts. Nevertheless, the official authorized to make the certification on behalf of the applicant agency must be satisfied that the IAD at issue has the requisite authority to conduct independent investigations (for example, whether the IAD is completely free from

influence or supervision by laboratory management officials) into allegations relating to employees or contractors of the laboratory.

2. A State intends to distribute Coverdell award funds to State and local forensic laboratories and medical examiners' offices. There is an Office of the Inspector General (OIG) in the State with authority to conduct investigations into allegations of serious negligence or misconduct by employees and contractors of forensic laboratories and medical 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 and Budget Narrative, and **all five** certifications required by the Coverdell law. An applicant may combine the Budget Narrative and the Budget Detail Worksheet in one document. However, if an applicant submits only one document, it must contain **both** narrative and detail information. Please review the "Note on File Names and File Types" under How to Apply (below) to be sure applications are submitted in permitted formats.

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

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

The SF-424 is a required standard form used as a cover sheet for submission of pre-applications, applications, and related information. 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. Current OJP award recipients, when completing the field for "Legal Name" 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. On the SF-424, enter the Legal Name in box 5 and Employer Identification Number (EIN) in box 6 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 the Official Legal Name and address of the applicant entity in box 5 and the EIN in box 6 of the SF-424. An applicant must attach official legal documents to its application (e.g., articles of incorporation, 501C3, etc.) to confirm the legal name, address, and EIN entered into the SF-424.

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: www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc/. 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 250-400 words. Project abstracts should be —

- Written for a general public audience.
- Submitted as a separate attachment with "Project Abstract" as part of its file name.
- Single-spaced, using a standard 12-point font (Times New Roman) with 1-inch margins.

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

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 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 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 two (2) years after the date of the Coverdell grant award.

- 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 base funds.[7] **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.

[7] See Appendix 1 of the Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program (Formula) solicitation for the estimated amount of FY 2017 base funds, by State.

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.

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[8]:

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 specific performance measures data as part of its reporting under the award (see "General Information about Post-Federal Award Reporting Requirements" in Section F. Federal Award Administration Information). The performance measures correlate to the goals, objectives, and deliverables identified under "Goals, Objectives, and Deliverables" in Section A. Program Description.

[8] 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.

The application should describe the applicant's plan for collection of all of the performance measures data listed in the table below under "Data Recipient Provides," should it receive funding.

Objective	Performance Measure(s)	Data Recipient Provides
To improve the quality and timeliness of forensic services and to reduce the number of backlogged cases in forensic laboratories	**Outcome Measure** 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. **Output Measure** 1. The number of forensic science or medical examiner/coroner's office personnel who completed appropriate training or educational opportunities with FY 2017 Coverdell funds (if applicable to the grant).	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.
To implement recommendations as adopted by the National Commission on Forensic Sciences (NCFS) to strengthen the forensic science communities		
	Percent of agencies/organizations that are accredited with FY 2017 Coverdell funding	Number of agencies/organizations seeking initial accreditation with FY 2017 Coverdell funding. Number of agencies/organizations obtaining initial accreditation with FY 2017 Coverdell funding. Number of agencies/organizations using FY 2017 Coverdell funding for fees to maintain accreditation. Number of agencies/organizations receiving funding.
	Percent of certified individuals	Number of analysts. Number of analysts certified. Number of analysts seeking certification with FY 2017 Coverdell funding.

e. Other/Part 1 violent crimes data (see page 33).

4. Budget and Associated Documentation

a. Budget Detail Worksheet

A sample Budget Detail Worksheet can be found at www.ojp.gov/funding/Apply/Resources/BudgetDetailWorksheet.pdf. An applicant that submits its budget in a different format should use the budget categories listed in the sample budget worksheet. The Budget Detail Worksheet should break out costs by year.

For questions pertaining to budget and examples of allowable and unallowable costs, see the DOJ Grants Financial Guide.

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 narratives 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 indicate 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 — for purposes of federal grants administrative requirements — a particular agreement between a recipient and a third party will be considered a "subaward" or instead considered a procurement "contract" under the award is determined by federal rules and applicable OJP guidance. It is an important distinction, in part because the federal administrative rules and requirements that apply to "subawards" and procurement "contracts" under awards differ markedly.

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 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.

Additional guidance on the circumstances under which (for purposes of federal grants administrative requirements) an agreement constitutes a subaward as opposed to a procurement contract under an award, is available (along with other resources) on the OJP Part 200 Uniform Requirements web page.

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 application as approved by OJP. If, however, a particular subaward is not authorized by federal statute or regulation, and is not sufficiently described and justified in the application as 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, and those subawards are not specifically authorized (or required) by statute or regulation, 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. 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. Various considerations that may be pertinent to the justification are outlined in the DOJ Grants Financial Guide.

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 (that is, 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 (that is, 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 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 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.)

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

Every applicant (other than an individual applying in his/her personal capacity) is to download, complete, and submit the OJP Financial Management and System of Internal Controls Questionnaire, as part of its application.

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). 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** (5) 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 2017 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.

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 all identical cost items outlined in the 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 any inappropriate duplication of funding. Leveraging multiple funding sources in a complementary manner to implement comprehensive programs or projects is encouraged and is not seen as inappropriate duplication.

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.

Federal or State Funding Agency	Solicitation Name/Project Name	Name/Phone/E-mail 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 & Mental Health Services Administration	Drug-Free Communities Mentoring Program/North County Youth Mentoring Program	John Doe, 202/000-0000; john.doe@hhs.gov

SAMPLE

Each applicant should include the table as a separate attachment to its application. The file should be named "Disclosure of Pending Applications." The applicant 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 all 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 www.Grants.gov. 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.

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. 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. Please ensure that all required documents are attached in either Grants.gov category.

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	Special Characters		
Upper case (A – Z)	Parenthesis ( )	Curly braces { }	Square brackets [ ]
Lower case (a – z)	Ampersand (&)	Tilde (~)	Exclamation point (!)
Underscore (__)	Comma (,)	Semicolon (;)	Apostrophe (')
Hyphen (-)	At sign (@)	Number sign (#)	Dollar sign ($)
Space	Percent sign (%)	Plus sign (+)	Equal sign (=)
Period (.)	**Applicants must use the "&" format in place of the ampersand (&) when using XML format for documents.**		

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:

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. If an applicant entity has not fully complied with 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.

An individual who wishes to apply in his/her personal capacity should search Grants.gov for funding opportunities for which individuals are eligible to apply. Use the Funding Opportunity Number (FON) to register. (An applicant applying as an individual must comply with all applicable Grants.gov individual registration requirements.)

Complete the registration form at https://apply07.grants.gov/apply/IndCPRegister to create a username and password for Grants.gov. (An applicant applying as an individual should complete all steps except 1, 2, and 4.)

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.

A DUNS number is a unique nine-digit identification number provided by the commercial company Dun and Bradstreet. 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 www.dnb.com. A DUNS number is usually received within 1-2 business days.

2. **Acquire registration with the System for Award Management (SAM).** SAM is the repository for certain standard information about federal financial assistance applicants, recipients, and subrecipients. All applicants for OJP awards (other than individuals) must maintain current registrations in the SAM database. 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.

   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://apply07.grants.gov/apply/OrcRegister. Individuals registering with Grants.gov should go to http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/individual-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-2017-11612.

6. **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 March 10, 2017.

Click here 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 or the SAM Help Desk (Federal Service Desk) 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 web page.

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/Program 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.[9]

[9] 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.

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. Impact/Outcomes and Evaluation/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.

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 2013, 2014, and 2015 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 OJP include underserved populations, 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 applicants. 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. 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; "FAPIIS").

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

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 management systems of the applicant, 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.

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.

F. Federal Award Administration Information

Federal Award Notices

Award notifications will be made by September 30, 2017. 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 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, regulations, and executive orders (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 2017 Awards," available in the OJP Funding Resource Center. 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.

- Certifications Regarding Lobbying; Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements.

- Standard Assurances.

Applicants may view these documents in the Apply section of the OJP Funding Resource Center.

The web pages accessible through the "Overview of Legal Requirements Generally Applicable to OJP Grants and Cooperative Agreements - FY 2017 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 2017. 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 2017 grant funds, (2) identify the number and type of cases accepted during the FY 2017 award period by the forensic laboratory or laboratories that received FY 2017 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 2017 grant award, and (4) detail the progress of any unaccredited forensic science service provider that received FY 2017 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 web site at http://ojp.gov/funding/FAPIIS.htm

Data on performance measures. In addition to required reports, each recipient of an award under this solicitation 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 with fulfilling its responsibilities under the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA), Public Law 103-62, and the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010, Public Law 111–352,

OJP will require any recipient, post award, to provide the data listed as "Data Recipient Provides" in the performance measures table in Section D. Application and Submission Information, under "Program Narrative," so that OJP can calculate values for this solicitation's performance measures.

G. Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s)

For questions directed to the Federal Awarding Agency (OJP), see NCJRS contact information on 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 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 resume to ojppeerreview@lmsolas.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.

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 28)
_____ Acquire or renew registration with SAM (see page 29)
To Register with Grants.gov:
_____ Acquire AOR and Grants.gov username/password (see page 29)
_____ Acquire AOR confirmation from the E-Biz POC (see page 29)
To Find Funding Opportunity:
_____ Search for the Funding Opportunity on Grants.gov (see page 29)
_____ Download Funding Opportunity and Application Package (see page 29)
_____ Sign up for Grants.gov email notifications (optional) (see page 27)
_____ 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 11)
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 29)
If No Grants.gov Receipt, and Validation or Error Notifications are Received:
_____ See NCJRS contact information on the title page

Overview of Post-Award Legal Requirements:

_____ Review the "Overview of Legal Requirements Generally Applicable to OJP Grants and Cooperative Agreements - FY 2017 Awards" in the OJP Funding Resource Center.

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.

What an Application Should Include:

_____ Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) (see page 17)
_____ Intergovernmental Review (see page 17)
_____ Project Abstract (see page 18)
_____ Program Narrative (see page 18)
_____ Budget Detail Worksheet (see page 21)
_____ Budget Narrative (see page 21)
_____ Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable) (see page 23)
_____ Financial Management and System of Internal Controls Questionnaire (see page 24)
_____ Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL) (if applicable) (see page 24)

_____ Additional Attachments

_____ Coverdell Statutory Certifications (see page 25)
(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 25)

_____ Forensic Laboratory Accreditation Documentation (if applicable) (see page 26)

_____ Applicant Disclosure of Pending Applications (see page 26)

Appendix 1. Templates for Coverdell Statutory Certifications

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

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

FY 2017 Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program

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

On behalf of the applicant agency named below, I certify the following to the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice:

> The State has developed a plan for forensic science laboratories under a program intended to improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services in the State, including such services provided by the laboratories operated by the State and those operated by units of local government within the State.

I acknowledge that a false statement in this certification or in the grant application that it supports may be the subject of criminal prosecution, including under 18 U.S.C. § 1001 and 42 U.S.C. § 3795a. I also acknowledge that Office of Justice Programs grants, including certifications provided in connection with such grants, are subject to review by the Office of Justice Programs and/or by the Department of Justice's Office of the Inspector General.

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

_____
Signature of Certifying Official

_____
Printed Name of Certifying Official

_____
Title of Certifying Official

_____
Name of Applicant Agency (Including Name of State)

_____
Date

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

FY 2017 Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program

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

On behalf of the applicant agency named below, I certify the following to the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice:

> This unit of local government has developed a plan for forensic science laboratories under a program intended to improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services provided by the laboratories operated by the applicant unit of local government and any other government-operated laboratories within the State that will receive a portion of the grant amount.

I acknowledge that a false statement in this certification or in the grant application that it supports may be the subject of criminal prosecution, including under 18 U.S.C. § 1001 and 42 U.S.C. § 3795a. I also acknowledge that Office of Justice Programs grants, including certifications provided in connection with such grants, are subject to review by the Office of Justice Programs and/or by the Department of Justice's Office of the Inspector General.

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

_____
Signature of Certifying Official

_____
Printed Name of Certifying Official

_____
Title of Certifying Official

_____
Name of Applicant Agency
(Including Name of Unit of Local Government)

_____
Date

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

FY 2017 Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program

Certification as to Generally Accepted Laboratory Practices and Procedures

On behalf of the applicant agency named below, I certify the following to the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice:

> Any forensic science laboratory system, medical examiner's office, or coroner's office in the State, including any laboratory operated by a unit of local government within the State, that will receive any portion of the grant amount uses generally accepted laboratory practices and procedures, established by accrediting organizations or appropriate certifying bodies.

I acknowledge that a false statement in this certification or in the grant application that it supports may be the subject of criminal prosecution, including under 18 U.S.C. § 1001 and 42 U.S.C. § 3795a. I also acknowledge that Office of Justice Programs grants, including certifications provided in connection with such grants, are subject to review by the Office of Justice Programs and/or by the Department of Justice's Office of the Inspector General.

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

_____
Signature of Certifying Official

_____
Printed Name of Certifying Official

_____
Title of Certifying Official

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

_____
Date

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

FY 2017 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 2017 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 42 U.S.C. § 3795a. I also acknowledge that Office of Justice Programs grants, including certifications provided in connection with such grants, are subject to review by the Office of Justice Programs and/or by the Department of Justice's Office of the Inspector General.

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

_____
Signature of Certifying Official

_____
Printed Name of Certifying Official

_____
Title of Certifying Official

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

_____
Date

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

FY 2017 Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program

Certification as to Use of Funds for New Facilities

On behalf of the applicant agency named below, I certify the following to the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice:

> The amount of the grant (if any) used for the costs of any new facility or facilities to be constructed as part of a program to improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science and medical examiner services will not exceed the limitations set forth at 42 U.S.C. § 3797m(c) and summarized in the FY 2017 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 42 U.S.C. § 3795a. I also acknowledge that Office of Justice Programs grants, including certifications provided in connection with such grants, are subject to review by the Office of Justice Programs and/or by the Department of Justice's Office of the Inspector General.

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

_____
Signature of Certifying Official

_____
Printed Name of Certifying Official

_____
Title of Certifying Official

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

_____
Date

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

FY 2017 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 2017 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 42 U.S.C. § 3795a. I also acknowledge that Office of Justice Programs grants, including certifications provided in connection with such grants, are subject to review by the Office of Justice Programs and/or by the Department of Justice’s Office of the Inspector General.

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

_____
Signature of Certifying Official

_____
Printed Name of Certifying Official

_____
Title of Certifying Official

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

_____
Date

Appendix 2. Template for “External Investigations” Attachment

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

FY 2017 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 2017 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 2017 External Investigations Attachment (continued)

Name of Applicant Agency: _____

3. _____ _____

_____

4. _____ _____

_____

5. _____ _____

_____

6. _____ _____

_____

7. _____ _____

_____