

National Institute of

Justice



NIJ

Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program FY09 Update

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Coverdell Purpose

ALWAYS Keep in mind:

To improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science and medical examiner services.

- When preparing your application
- When preparing your reports



Funding

- FY 2008, the maximum amount for competitive funds was **\$99,000**
- FY 2009, the maximum amount for competitive funds is **\$125,000**



Solicitation

- Posted on NIJ Web Site
- <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/topics/forensics/nfsia/welcome.htm>
- If possible, the program staff try to notify SAAs when solicitation is posted
 - Work load dependent
 - Unable to contact any possible competitive applicants
 - SAAs should reach out to their local agencies including medical examiner and coroner offices



Grant Period

- 12-month period
- October 1 → September 30
- Make sure that your SF424 grant application lists these dates for the grant period!
- If justifiable, a grant may be extended through a No Cost Extension Grant Adjustment Notification (GAN) for 6 months at a time up to 1 year
- Total period will not exceed 3 years including ALL No Cost Extension GANs



Grant Period

- No Cost Extension GANs are submitted through GMS at least 30 days prior to the end of the grant
- No Cost Extension GANs are coordinated through the Program Manager who can deny unreasonable requests
- Provide a detailed justification as to why the grant project cannot be completed prior to the project period end date



Grant Period

- Provide a timeline if possible as to when the grant funds will be used and the progress of the grant until its completion
- No Cost Extension GANs should not be submitted prior to 90 days before the end of the grant
- All effort must be made to use funding during the grant period



Registrations – All Required

- **GMS**
 - Grants Management System
 - Provided by Office of Justice Programs (OJP)
- **DUNS**
 - Data Universal Numbering System
 - Provided by Dun & Bradstreet (D&B)
- **CCR = NEW in 09**
 - Central Contractor Registration
 - Provided by Business Partner Network



CCR

- **All** applicants for federal financial assistance
- Maintain **current** registration
- **Update** or renew CCR registration at least **once per year**
- Registration procedures:

www.ccr.gov



Additional Requirements

Review the list below pertaining to these additional requirements prior to submitting your application. Additional information for each can be found at :

http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/other_requirements.htm

- Civil Rights Compliance
- Funding to Faith-Based Organizations
- Confidentiality and Human Subjects Protection
- Anti-Lobbying Act
- Financial and Government Audit Requirements
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Compliance
- DOJ Information Technology Standards
- Single Point of Contact Review
- Nonsupplanting of State and Local Funds
- Criminal Penalty for False Statements
- Compliance with Office of Justice Programs **Financial Guide**
- <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/financialguide/>
- Suspension or Termination of Funding
- Nonprofit Organizations
- For-Profit Organizations
- Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA)
- Rights in Intellectual Property
- Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA)



State Competitive Applications

- All State agencies must coordinate & apply through their SAA
(State Authorizing Agency)
- SAA Listed on OJP Web site
 - Notify OJP of contact information changes
 - Periodically visit the web site and confirm that the information for your SAA is listed on the web site
- Only **ONE** application per SAA can be accepted
- Forensic sciences improvements **above and beyond** those it can accomplish with its estimated amount of base funds



Base/Competitive Applicants

- Submit each funding request under the **same application number** in GMS
 - Each funding request (Base and Competitive) must be uploaded as **separate attachments** in GMS – the requests cannot be combined as one attachment
 - Each attachment file should be clearly named, indicating if the file is part of the base or competitive funding request
 - i.e Competitive prog narrative.doc



Base/Competitive Applicants

- **Separate** program narrative
- List forensic science improvements above and beyond those it can accomplish with its estimated amount of base funds in competitive application portions
- Existing resources & current needs will be considered & should be addressed
- Specify the dollar amount requested and make sure that the amount requested is consistent throughout ALL documents



Base/Competitive Applicants

- Use the estimated amount of base funds as the requested amount on the SF 424 application even if applying for competitive funding
- Do not exceed maximum amount allowable for competitive funding requests
- No matches



Program Narrative

- Specifically describe the manner in which Coverdell grant funds will be used
- Address:
 - “to carry out the State or unit of local government plan to improve the quality and/or timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services over current operations”*
- Reduction of forensic analysis backlogs is improvement in timeliness



Program Narrative

- States are expected to consider the needs of local & state laboratories as well medical examiner and coroner services
- Include Plan for Collecting Data Required for Performance Measures



Budget Narrative

- **Plain-language description**
- **Each** item listed in the **Budget Detail Worksheet**
- **Clearly explain:**
 - Purpose
 - Reason
- **No ambiguities about any budget item**
- **Include details** for calculated rates or other figures



Permissible Expenses

- Administrative Expenses: Not to exceed 10% of the total award
- Accreditation and Certification



Permissible Expenses

- Personnel: Overtime, Salary
 - If you hire personnel using competitive grant funds, consider and address how the salaries will be funded should competitive grant funds not be available or awarded the next grant year
 - Training, Education, and Associated Travel Expenses
 - Registration, Course Fees, and books are recorded in the “**Other**” category when creating the budget
 - Computerization: Hardware, Software
 - Accreditation and Certification
 - Facilities: Renovations and Construction
- * Permissible expenses are detailed in the annual Coverdell Solicitation



Permissible Expenses

- Laboratory Equipment: Analytical Instrumentation
 - Items exceeding \$5k or a lifespan greater than 2 years
 - OJP Policy
 - Items under \$5k can be considered “equipment” if defined by grantees’ own policy
 - Supplies: Pipettes, Glassware, Other Expendable Items
 - Administrative Expenses: Not to exceed **10%** of the total award
- * Permissible expenses are detailed in the annual Coverdell Solicitation



Budget Hints

- It is **HIGHLY** encouraged to use OJP's Budget Detail Worksheet
- If applying for both Base and Competitive funds, **TWO** separate budgets must be submitted with the file names clearly identifying the respective funding request:
 - Two Budget Detail Worksheets
 - Two Budget Summaries
 - Two Budget Narratives



Budget Hints

- SAAs need to create a budget encompassing ALL of their subgrantee information in ONE budget
 - You can submit detailed budgets for each grantee on separate budget documents, but there needs to be main budget documents
 - If using Excel, use one Excel worksheet with the main budget information
 - If using Excel, subgrantee budget information can be placed on additional worksheets, but the first sheet should detail the overall combined budget



Certifications

- Use the certification EXACTLY as they are provided in the solicitation – Do NOT alter the forms in any way. The forms were devised with much consideration as to the program's statutory requirements.
- Legal name is the name EXACTLY as it is listed on the SF424 form of your application
- All grant documents MUST match the legal name EXACTLY as listed on the SF424



Certifications

- Formatting and punctuation must match
- You will be required to provide ALL grant documents with your exact legal name before you will access to any grant funds
- Can be handwritten – it is not necessary to complete the forms with typed answers; typing often alters the form which can impede the grant funding process



External Investigations

- Use the template EXACTLY as it is provided in the solicitation – Do NOT alter the template in any way. The template was devised with much consideration as to the program's statutory requirements.
- Legal name is the name EXACTLY as it is listed on the SF424 form of your application
- All grant documents MUST match the legal name EXACTLY as listed on the SF424



External Investigations

- Formatting and punctuation must match
- You will be required to provide ALL grant documents with your exact legal name before you will access to any grant funds
- ALL subgrantees or units receiving funds are required to be listed on the External Investigations Narrative Attachment Template



External Investigations

- Each subgrantee or unit receiving funding must have the investigating entity listed in the investigating entity column listed on the template.
- The investigating entity listed for each subgrantee or unit receiving funding must be listed so that it corresponds with the appropriate subgrantee or unit receiving funding
- If and investigating entity is responsible for more than one subgrantee or unit of funding, the appropriate entity needs to be relisted next to each appropriate subgrantee and/or unit receiving funding



External Investigations

- If a subgrantee or unit receiving funding has more than one investigating entity, list the subgrantee or unit of funding separate lines so that each line corresponds with each investigating entity
- Do not list more than one item of data on the same line and do not use parenthesis or grouping “{ }” marks or arrows.



External Investigations

- If more than one page is required to list subgrantees and/or units receiving funding, the EXACT legal name of the applicant agency (exactly as listed on the SF424) must be listed at the top of EACH additional page
- The bottom line: do not allow any ambiguity



External Investigations

**Legal Name
EXACTLY as listed
on SF424
Application Form!!!**

**Every Subgrantee
or unit receiving
funding!**

**Investigating Entity
for every Subgrantee
or unit receiving
funding!**

allegations concerning contractors as well as employees, it will be necessary to include a certification regarding the "Certification as to External Investigations" for the FY 2009 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, or other entity that receives a portion of the grant amount

Existing government entity (entities) with an appropriate process in place to investigate

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



- _____
- _____
- _____



Signature Significance

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.

The certifying official acknowledges:

“I **personally read** and reviewed the section entitled “Eligibility” in the FY2009 program announcement for the Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program,” and “I acknowledge that a false statement in the certification or in the grant application that it supports may be subject to **criminal prosecution**, including under 18 U.S.C. § 1001.”



OJP Review Process

- **Reasonable**
- **Understandable**
- **Measurable**
- **Achievable**
- **Program requirements as stated in the solicitation.**
- **Legislative requirements as stated in the solicitation**



Peer Review Overview

- **External peer reviewers**
 - Expert in the field of the subject matter
 - NOT a current U.S. Department of Justice employee.
- **Eligible applicants that meet all requirements are reviewed**
 - Timeliness
 - Proper format
 - Responsiveness to the scope of the solicitation



Peer Review Overview

- **Review Process**
 - **Evaluated, scored, rated by a peer review panel**
 - **Panel = 3 reviewers for each application**
 - **Review criteria is listed in the solicitation including Plan for Collecting Data Required for Performance Measures**



Peer Review Ratings

- **Peer reviewers' ratings and any resulting recommendations are advisory only**
- **In addition to peer review ratings, considerations may include, but are not limited to:**
 - **Underserved populations**
 - **Strategic priorities**
 - **Available funding**



AG Considerations

- Average annual number of part 1 violent crimes
- Existing resources
- Current needs of the potential grant recipient



Notification

- All applicants will be notified whether they will receive funding or not
 - Review and approval process = about 4-6 months
 - Do not propose to begin work until after the project period start date
- After **OCTOBER 1** of the grant year!
- Do not expect to receive notification of a decision prior to **October 1**
 - Award lists updated regularly on NIJ's Web site:
<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/funding/welcome.htm>
 - Assistant Attorney General (AAG) makes final decision



Reporting Requirements

- Annual
 - Progress reports
 - **Allegations** of serious negligence or misconduct
- Semi-annual
 - Progress Report
- Quarterly
 - Financial reports – **NEW FFR 425 Form for FY09!**
- Closeout
 - Final report
- Future awards and fund drawdowns may be withheld if reports are delinquent.



Coverdell Performance Measures

1. At the beginning of the grant period – the average number of days between submission of a sample to a forensic lab and delivery of test results to requesting office
2. At the end of the grant period - the average number of days between submission of a sample to a forensic lab and delivery of test results to requesting office
3. At the end of the grant period - the change in the number of days between submission of a sample to a forensic lab and delivery of test results to requesting office



Coverdell Performance Measures

4. Number of backlogged cases at the beginning of the grant period
5. Number of backlogged cases at the end of the grant period
6. Number of backlogged forensic cases analyzed with Coverdell funds in the reporting period
7. Number of medical examiner personnel attending training programs in this reporting period
8. Number of forensic science personnel attending training programs in this reporting period



Top 10 Errors on Reports

1. Reporting percentages instead of whole numbers.
2. Math calculation errors.
3. Reporting incorrect responses.
 - Report number of backlogged cases, when measure refers to number of days
4. Reporting N/A for all responses.
 - Even if no grant activity occurred, the number of days and number of backlogged cases can still be reported



Top 10 Errors on Reports

5. Reporting data only in attachments to the progress report, and not in the GMS form.
7. Reporting measures over the lifetime of the grant period, not the reporting period.
8. Inconsistent reporting among subrecipients across all measures.
 - Data listed by subrecipient, yet not all subrecipients included for all measures



Top 10 Errors on Reports

8. Reporting the “average” number of days as a range.
9. Incomplete data for some measures.
 - Report backlog at end of the reporting period, but did not report backlog at the beginning of the reporting period
10. Reporting as a narrative response with no data
 - i.e. Grantee reduced backlog with Coverdell funds.



Allegations

The highest standards of integrity in the practice of forensic science are critical to the enhancement of the administration of justice.

We assume that recipients (**and subrecipients**) of Coverdell funds will make use of the process referenced in their **certification** as to **external investigations** and will refer allegations of serious negligence or misconduct substantially affecting the integrity of forensic results to government entities with an appropriate process in place to conduct independent external investigations, such as the government entities identified in the grant application.



Report to NIJ Annually

- Number and nature of any allegations
- Information on the referrals
 - e.g., the government entity or entities to which referred, the date of referral
- Outcome of referrals
 - if known as of the end date of the report
- Reasons for any allegations that were not referred
- Payments to recipients may be withheld if the required information is not submitted on a timely basis
 - including payments under future awards



Important Links

- NIJ Web Site:
 - www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/welcome.html
- OJP Web Site:
 - <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov>
- List of State Administering Agencies:
 - <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/saa/>



Contact Information

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