

Analysis

Department of State Police

Forensic Science Improvement (Competitive)

Analyst: Julie Neburka

Request: Approve a request from the Department of State Police to apply for a one-year formula grant of \$250,000 from the US Department of Justice's 2019 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program.

Analysis: The Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement program awards both formula and competitive grants to States and units of local government to improve forensic science and medical examiner/coroner services. Among other things, funds may be used to eliminate a backlog in the analysis of forensic evidence, and to train and employ forensic laboratory personnel and medicolegal death investigators, as needed, to eliminate such a backlog. Notably, the 2019 Coverdell grant program seeks to allocate approximately 57 percent of available funds to specifically target the challenges the opioid abuse crisis has brought to the forensic science community.

If successful, the Oregon State Police plans to use the competitive grant funds for a software upgrade to the Forensic Division's Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) to include an automated electronic note-taking and report-writing process to be used by the Latent Print Unit, and for overtime expense for forensic scientists to work additional cases to reduce the latent print backlog.

Grant applications are due by June 4, 2019, with awards expected to be announced by October 2019. There is no match requirement. If successful, the agency may need to return to the Legislature for additional Federal Funds expenditure limitation.

Legislative Fiscal Office Recommendation: Approve the request.

Department of State Police Lisper

Request: Authorization to apply for a Federal Fiscal Year 2019 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Competitive grant of \$250,000 from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice.

Recommendation: Approve the request.

Discussion: The Department of State Police (OSP) is requesting authorization to apply for a \$250,000 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Competitive grant, which has no state match requirements. There are two related grants, a formula grant and this new competitive grant. This request is for the competitive grant. The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) expects to make competitive grant awards up to \$250,000 with a total estimated awards of \$4.0 million. The grant award is for 12 months with a January 1, 2020 start date. The deadline to submit the grant application is June 4, 2019.

The NIJ will award grants to eligible states and units of local government. The OSP grant application includes funding for a software upgrade to the Forensic Division's Laboratory Information Management Systems. The upgrade would include automated electronic note-taking and report writing process to be used by the Latent Print Unit, overtime costs for forensic scientists to work additional cases to assist in reducing the latent print backlog and to cover some of the indirect costs. The Department will be reaching out to the Office of State Chief Information Officer for guidance and assistance toward the software upgrades needs.

If awarded, the Department may need to return to the Legislature to request Federal Funds expenditure limitation.



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of State Police

General Headquarters
3565 Trelstad Avenue SE
Salem, OR 97317
(503) 378-3720

General FAX (503) 363-5475
Supt's Office FAX (503) 378-8282
Personnel / Payroll FAX (503) 378-2360
V / TTY (503) 585-1452

May 20, 2019

The Honorable Senator Betsy Johnson, Co-Chair
The Honorable Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, Co-Chair
The Honorable Representative Dan Rayfield, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Ways and Means
900 Court Street NE
H-178 State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301-4048

Dear Co-Chairpersons:

Nature of the Request

The Oregon State Police (OSP) respectfully requests permission to submit an application to the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of Justice Programs (OJP), National Institute of Justice (NIJ) for the FY 2019 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Competitive Grant in the amount of \$250,000.

NIJ expects to make award notifications by September 30, 2019 with an estimated total amount awarded of up to \$4 million. The award period is for 12-months, beginning on January 1, 2020. This grant does not require a match. The deadline to submit the application is June 4, 2019.

Background/Purpose

The goal of NIJ's FY 2019 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Competitive Grant Program is to assist eligible States and units of local government with tools needed to meet the challenges of crime and justice. Specifically, this program seeks to improve forensic science and medical examiner/coroner services, including services provided by laboratories operated by States and units of local government.

NIJ will award grant funding to States and units of local government to help improve forensic science and medical examiner/coroner services. Among other things, funds may be used to eliminate a backlog in the analysis of forensic evidence and to train and employ forensic laboratory personnel and medicolegal death investigators, as needed, to eliminate such a backlog.

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

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

Agency Action

OSP intends to submit a proposal for this grant opportunity to include funding for a software upgrade to the Forensic Division's Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) to include an automated electronic note-taking and report-writing process to be used by the Latent Print Unit; overtime costs for forensic scientists to work additional cases to reduce the latent print backlog; and indirect costs.

OSP will engage the Office of State Chief Information Officer (OSCIO), the Senior IT Portfolio Manager at the Department of Administrative Services Procurement Services, and Department of Justice to ensure the software upgrade follows all OSCIO oversight and other state procurement requirements.

The grant does not require a match. If this grant is awarded, OSP may need to request an increase in its federal fund limitation for the 2019-21 biennium in a future meeting of the Legislative Assembly.

Action Requested

Approve OSP's request to apply for the FY 2019 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Competitive Grant through the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice.

Legislation Affected

None.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Travis Hampton
Superintendent
Oregon State Police

cc: Constantin Severe, Governor's Office
Michelle Lisper, Department of Administrative Services – Chief Financial Office
Julie Neburka, Legislative Fiscal Office