

## Analysis

### Department of State Police

#### Forensic Science Improvement (Formula)

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**Analyst:** Julie Neburka

**Request:** Approve a request from the Department of State Police to apply for a one-year formula grant of \$285,933 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 may use the formula grant funds for instrument supplies for the toxicology and chemistry departments and for overtime expense for forensic scientists to work additional cases to reduce the toxicology and chemistry backlog. Alternatively, the agency may use the grant award to purchase one or two Gas Chromatograph Mass Spectrometer instruments, to replace aging units in the lab with newer, more sensitive, higher through-put technology.

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

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**Request:** Authorization to apply for a Federal Fiscal Year 2019 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Formula grant of \$285,933 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 \$285,933 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Formula grant, which has no federal match requirements. There are two related grants, this formula grant and a competitive grant. This request is to apply for the formula grant. The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) is expected to distribute \$26.7 million in formula grants across the nation. The grant award is for 12 months with a start date of January 1, 2020. 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 will include funding for instrument supplies for the toxicology and chemistry units within the Department, overtime costs for forensic scientists to work on additional cases to reduce the toxicology and chemistry backlog, as well as indirect costs. The Department has received this formula grant for the past 10 years.

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

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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 Formula Grant in the amount of \$285,933.

NIJ expects to make award notifications by September 30, 2019 with an estimated total amount of approximately \$26.7 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 Formula 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 instrument supplies for the toxicology and chemistry departments; overtime costs for forensic scientists to work additional cases to reduce the toxicology and chemistry backlog; and indirect costs.

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 Formula 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