

# Funding Opportunities through NIJ for Publicly Funded Forensic Laboratories in FY 2017

January 12, 2017  
Frances Scott  
Luther Schaeffer



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# Funding Opportunities through NIJ for Publicly Funded Forensic Laboratories in FY 2017

## Today's Presenters:

Frances Scott, Physical Scientist, NIJ

Luther Schaeffer, Physical Scientist, NIJ



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# Solicitations to be discussed

- Research and Evaluation for the Testing and Interpretation of Physical Evidence in Publicly Funded Forensic Laboratories
- Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program: Formula and Competitive
- DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction (CEBR) Program
- Forensic DNA Laboratory Efficiency Improvement and Capacity Enhancement (EI&CE) program

# Research and Evaluation for the Testing and Interpretation of Physical Evidence in Publicly Funded Forensic Laboratories

January 12, 2017

Frances Scott

Luther Schaeffer

Solicitation Post Date: December 29, 2016

Solicitation Close Date: February 27, 2017



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# Webinar Overview

- Background and Purpose
- Goals of the solicitation
- Application expectations and requirements
- Review process
- Application checklist



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# Background and Purpose

- This solicitation is intended to improve the testing and processing of physical evidence.
- Applications should address an issue in the operation of a forensic science laboratory.
  - Forensic science operational needs located at [NIJ.gov](http://NIJ.gov)

# Goals of the Solicitation

- Assessing Existing Laboratory Protocols
  - Improve understanding of the rationale underpinning existing laboratory processes
- Evaluating Emerging Methods
  - Assess the value of emerging laboratory processes



# Challenges to R and D in Public Labs

- Primary mission is processing case work.
- Few labs have dedicated research divisions.
- Lab personnel generally must perform research work in overtime.
- BUT forensic lab practitioners know best the problems facing them in their processes.

# Public Labs Solicitation Highlights

- Post Doc
  - Recommended, **but any scientist with a strong research background, who does not have a casework requirement**, would be appropriate.
- Case Samples
  - Every effort should be made to use actual casework samples.
  - If not possible, proposals should include a detailed description of how realistic samples will be generated.

# A note on what will not be funded

- “Proposals primarily to purchase equipment, materials, software, or supplies, or to contract or purchase training, validation...”
  - However: “A budget may include these items if they are necessary to conduct research, development, demonstration, evaluation, or analysis.”



# Expected deliverables

- NIJ expects that scholarly products will result from awards under this solicitation.
  - Peer-reviewed journal articles
  - Presentations at appropriate scientific conferences
- The strength of this research lies in disseminating the results.

# Basic Minimum Requirements

- Program narrative
- Budget detail worksheet
- Budget narrative
- Proof of Forensic Laboratory Accreditation
- CVs of key personnel

Other Attachments as applicable (please review under  
*“What an Application Should Include”*)

# External and Internal Review

- BMR/responsiveness review
  - Submitted by an eligible type applicant
  - Responsive to the scope of the solicitation
  - Basic Minimum Requirements included
- External review by appropriate peer reviewers
  - Three reviewers per application- both practitioners and researchers
- Internal review by NIJ scientific staff and leadership
- All funding decisions are at the discretion of the NIJ Director

# Selection Criteria

- Statement of the Problem (10%)
- Project Design and Implementation (50%)
- Potential Impact (20%)
- Capabilities/Competencies (20%)
- Budget
- Plan for Dissemination to Broader Audiences



# Application Checklist – See pages 36- 37 of the solicitation

## Application Checklist

### Research and Evaluation for the Testing and Interpretation of Physical Evidence in Publicly Funded Forensic Laboratories

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 27)

\_\_\_ Acquire or renew registration with SAM (see page 27)

##### *To Register with Grants.gov:*

\_\_\_ Acquire AOR and Grants.gov username/password (see page 28)

\_\_\_ Acquire AOR confirmation from the E-Biz POC (see page 28)

##### *To Find Funding Opportunity:*

\_\_\_ Search for the funding opportunity on Grants.gov (see page 28)

\_\_\_ Download Funding Opportunity and Application Package (see page 28)

\_\_\_ Sign up for Grants.gov [email](#) notifications (optional) (see page 28)

\_\_\_ 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 28)

##### *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 " in the OJP Funding Resource Center.

#### Scope Requirement:

\_\_\_ The federal amount requested is within the allowable limit(s) of \$3,000,000.

#### Eligibility Requirement:

##### What an Application Should Include:

\_\_\_ Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) (see page 12)

\_\_\_ Project Abstract (see page 12)

\_\_\_ Program Narrative (critical element) (see page 13)

\_\_\_ Appendices (see page 16)

\_\_\_ Bibliography/references

\_\_\_ Any tools/instruments, questionnaires, tables/charts/graphs, or maps pertaining to the proposed study that supplement those in the narrative



# DNA Programs- CEBR and EI&CE

January 12, 2017  
Luther Schaeffer  
Chuck Heurich



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# Overview of DNA Programs

- CEBR Program
  - Background and goals
  - FY 2017 Changes and Notes
  - Application Requirements
- EI&CE
  - Background and goals
  - Overview of purpose areas
  - Applications Requirements
  - Review process
- Recommendations for FY 2017 DNA Program Applications



# DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction (CEBR) Program

Solicitation Post Date: January 11, 2017

Solicitation Close Date: March 13, 2017



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# Background

- Solicitation running in its current form since FY 2011
  - Similar solicitations between FY2004 and FY2010
- Solicitation is a “formula” program
  - Funds given out to States by a set formula
  - Total awarded to a State is then divided amongst the eligible crime labs (State, city, county, etc.)



# Goals of the Solicitation

- Assists State and local government with existing DNA crime laboratories:
  - Increasing capacity of forensic and database labs
  - Direct analysis of forensic DNA or DNA database samples
- Increase sample throughput
- Decrease sample turnaround time
- Reduce the number of forensic DNA and DNA database samples awaiting analysis

# Allowable Expenses – Changes and Notes

- Allowable Expense Change:
  - Training and Travel (8% cap)
- Expenses that are not permitted:
  - Purchase of equipment of unapproved technologies
  - Work funded under another federal award.



# Application Requirements

## Grants Management System

- SF-424
- Project abstract (250-400 words)
- Program narrative
  - Eligibility statements
  - Baseline Backlog Data
- Budget detail worksheet and narrative
- Attachments
  - Applicant disclosure of high-risk status
  - Proof of Forensic Laboratory Accreditation
  - Certification of Non-supplanting
  - Declaration that the Laboratory Charges a Fee for DNA Testing Services
  - Applicant disclosure of pending applications



# Forensic DNA Laboratory Efficiency Improvement and Capacity Enhancement (EI&CE) program

Solicitation Post Date: January 11, 2017

Solicitation Close Date: March 13, 2017



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# Background

- NEW!
- Funds awarded through competitive process
- Created to address a community need



# Background

- Eligibility:
  - Same as CEBR:
    - Accredited
    - Participate in NDIS – Directly or through agreement
    - External audits as per QAS established by the FBI
- Joint applications accepted, one eligible entity may be applicant
- Purpose Area 2 requires 25% match

# Goals of the Solicitation

- Main objectives
  - Enhance capacity and increase efficiency of crime laboratories to process, record, screen, and analyze DNA and other forensic evidence. ← Not a Typo!
  - Decrease the turnaround time to process and analyze DNA evidence



# EI&CE Solicitation Overview

- Projects must align with one of four purpose areas:
  - Multidisciplinary Analysis of Evidence
  - Building and Improving Laboratory Infrastructure
  - Implementation and Validation of Process Efficiency Projects
  - Special Projects
- **Applicants may submit multiple applications, but only one per purpose area.**

# Purpose Area 1 - Multidisciplinary Analysis of Evidence

- Objective is to assist labs with completing entire cases that involve requests for analysis in DNA and at least one other forensic section

# Purpose Area 2 - Building and Improving Laboratory Infrastructure <sup>EI&CE</sup>

- Objective to allow agencies to incorporate new technologies or expand their operations by providing assistance to build or improve infrastructure
- **A minimum 25% CASH MATCH REQUIRED**

# Purpose Area 3 - Implementation and Validation of Process Efficiency Projects

- Objective to allow agencies to implement process improvements
- NOT designed to research potential improvements



# Purpose Area 4 - Special Projects

- Projects that don't fit squarely into other purpose areas. Projects designed to enhance capacity, improve efficiency, improve the quality of DNA results, or improve the services provided by the DNA lab





# What will not be funded

- Applications...
  - that do not clearly identify with one of the four (4) purpose areas.
  - that request assistance in non-DNA disciplines that do not demonstrate how the project will positively impact DNA analysis
  - with the sole purpose of analyzing casework samples in non-DNA disciplines without DNA analysis requests



# What will not be funded

- Work that is funded under another federal award.
- Program not a supplement to awards made under the DNA CEBR Formula Program in the current or previous fiscal years; for standalone projects.



# A Note on Performance Measures

- DNA-specific performance measures in solicitation
- Applicants must propose their own project-specific measures for projects with activity outside of the forensic biology/DNA section.



# Application Requirements - BMR

- Program narrative
  - Eligibility statements
- Budget detail worksheet
- Budget narrative
- Appendices and Attachments
  - Proof of Forensic Laboratory Accreditation
  - CVs of key personnel



# Application Requirements - Other

- SF-424
- Project abstract (250-400 words)
- Appendices and Attachments
  - Disclosure of high-risk status
  - Certification of Non-supplanting
  - Disclosure of pending applications
  - List of key personnel



## Internal and External Review

- Internal scan for BMR
- External review by appropriate peer reviewers
  - Three reviewers per application
- Internal review by NIJ
- All funding decisions made at the discretion of NIJ Director

## Selection Criteria

- Statement of the Problem/Description of the Issue (10%)
- Project Design and Implementation (40%)
- Expected Outcomes/Potential Impact (25%)
- Capabilities/Competencies (15%)
- Plan for Collecting the Data Required for this Solicitation's Performance Measures (10%)
- Budget (unscored)



# Recommendations for General DNA

- READ!!!
  - FY2017 CEBR program solicitation
  - FY2017 Forensic DNA Laboratory EI & CE program solicitation
- If applying to both solicitations, they MUST be distinct projects!
  - Ex. - EI&CE project cannot simply be an extension of your CEBR/Coverdell award



# Recommendations for the CEBR

- How can your lab increase your DNA lab's efficiency and capacity while reducing the backlog?
- Use the CEBR program funds for the specific goal of capacity enhancement



# Recommendations for the EI&CE

- Read the solicitation in entirety before drafting any application(s)
- Think about a project that:
  - Will increase the overall efficiency and capacity of your laboratory
  - Will positively impact your DNA analyses
- How is this project different from your CEBR/Coverdell project?

# Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program: Formula and Competitive

January 12, 2017

Frances Scott

Luther Schaeffer

Solicitation Post Date: January 10, 2017

Solicitation Close Date: March 10, 2017



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# Webinar Overview

- Purpose of the solicitations
- New changes
- Application expectations and requirements
- Review process
- Application checklist

# Purposes of the Solicitation

1. Improve quality and timeliness
2. Eliminate backlog
3. Train, assist, and employ personnel
4. Address emerging issues
5. Educate and train pathologists
6. Fund medicolegal death investigation system for accreditation



# Changes in the Solicitation

- Per the newly enacted Justice For All Act reauthorization:
  - Three new purpose areas as noted previously.
  - New split of available funds between formula and competitive
    - Now **85%** for formula, **15%** for competitive



# Changes in the Solicitation (continued)

- Per the newly enacted Justice For All Act reauthorization:
  - New minimum award amount
    - Now **1%** of available funds as minimum award
  - New certification (total of **5** required now)
    - Forensic science laboratory accreditation
    - Must certify that each entity receiving funds either is accredited or will use funds to seek certification within 2 years



# Changes in the Solicitation (continued)

- The FY 2017 solicitation is divided into two separate solicitations:
  - Formula
    - Apply as usual in the **Grants Management System (GMS)**
  - Competitive
    - Apply through **Grants.gov**





# Basic Minimum Requirements

- Program narrative
- Budget detail worksheet
- Budget narrative
- Coverdell Statutory (5) Certifications

Other Attachments as applicable (please review under “*What an Application Should Include*”)

# Requirements (cont.) - Coverdell Statutory Certifications

1. Certification as to Plan for Forensic Science Laboratories—Application from a State (for Formula) OR 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.

**All five** certifications **must** be completed using the templates included in the solicitation.

- **External Investigations Attachment**

# Allowable Expenses

- Personnel
- Computer equipment
- Laboratory equipment
- Supplies/Consumables
- Accreditation
- Education, training, and certification
- Facilities
- Administrative expenses



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# A Note On What Will Not Be Funded

- Expenses other than those listed previously.
- New facility costs exceeding limits described in the solicitation.
- Administrative expenses **>10%** of the total grant amount
- **The use of funds for the purchase and/or lease of vehicles, such as crime scene vans.**

## Formula/Base Applications

- States that satisfy the specific requirements outlined in the *Formula* solicitation may expect to be awarded "base" funds determined in accordance with the Coverdell law.



# Competitive Applications Internal Review and Peer Review Process

- BMR/responsiveness review
  - Submitted by an eligible type applicant
  - Responsive to the scope of the solicitation
  - Basic Minimum Requirements included
- External review by Standing Review Panel (SRP)
  - Two reviewers per application
- Internal review by NIJ scientific staff and leadership
- All funding decisions are at the discretion of the Assistant Attorney General for OJP

# Selection Criteria

- Description of the Issue (15%)
- Project Design and Implementation (15%)
- Capabilities/Competencies (10%)
- Budget (25%)
- Impact/Outcomes and Evaluation (30%)
- Other (Discussion of Part I Violent Crime data) (5%)



# Application Checklist – See pages 38- 39 of the competitive solicitation

## 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 GMS:*

- \_\_\_\_\_ Acquire a DUNS Number (see page XX)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Acquire or renew registration with SAM (see page XX)

##### *To Register with GMS:*

- \_\_\_\_\_ For new users, acquire a GMS username and password\* (see page XX)
- \_\_\_\_\_ For existing users, check GMS username and password\* to ensure account access (see page XX)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Verify SAM registration in GMS (see page XX)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Search for correct funding opportunity in GMS (see page XX)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Register by selecting the "Apply Online" button associated with the funding opportunity title (see page XX)
- \_\_\_\_\_ If experiencing technical difficulties in GMS, contact NIJ (see page XX)

\*Password Reset Notice – GMS users are reminded that while password reset capabilities exist, this function is only associated with points of contacts designated within GMS at the time the account was established. Neither OJP nor the GMS Help Desk will initiate a password reset unless requested by the authorized official or a designated point of contact associated with an award or application.

#### 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.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Coverdell Statutory Certifications (see page XX)  
(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



# Q&A



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# Contact Information

National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS)

1-800-851-3420 (TTY: 301-240-6310 for hearing impaired only)

Email: [Grants@ncjrs.gov](mailto:Grants@ncjrs.gov)

Fax: 301-240-5830

Web chat: <https://webcontact.ncjrs.gov/ncjchat/chat.jsp>