

Certification Form Quick Tips: Plan for Forensic Science Laboratories

Bureau of Justice Assistance, Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program – Formula

The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) seeks to fund improvements to forensic science and medical examiner/coroner (ME/C) services through the Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program (Coverdell Program). Under the Formula Coverdell Program, [State Administering Agencies](#) (SAAs) may apply for funds to improve forensic science and ME/C services provided by laboratories operated by the state or units of local government. The Coverdell law requires state applicants to create a plan for forensic science laboratories supported by the Coverdell Program, and then certify the plan. The plan must outline a strategy for how Coverdell Program funds will improve the quality and timeliness of the forensic services provided. The certification form submitted to BJA 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. Certifications made on behalf of subrecipients of award funds—rather than those made on behalf of the applicant agency—are not acceptable to satisfy the requirement.



Refer to the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for details on certification requirements and the link to the certification template. Additional questions regarding certification and authorization requirements should be directed to your assigned BJA Policy and Programs Office representatives.

Developing a Successful Laboratory Plan – Key Considerations

Create a written strategic plan. The plan should define how the applicant state intends to improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science or ME/C services using funds from the Coverdell Program. The plan should be created in collaboration with local agencies, be aligned to one or more award objectives, and create a proactive approach for long-term goals.

Define how the quality and timeliness of services will be improved. Currently collected metrics may be used to demonstrate improvement. Examples may include reducing forensic analysis backlogs, reducing the time to obtain results, or increasing the number of cases completed during a specified period.

Describe accreditation goals. Funds may be used to obtain or maintain accreditation status to ensure ongoing compliance with industry and applicable national standards.

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List relevant validation studies. Funds may be used to complete validation studies of established or emerging technologies and instruments for implementation into the laboratory.

Describe staffing strategies, including training opportunities. Explain increases in staffing or modifications to staffing structure and how they will improve overall forensic processes. Describe how training opportunities will assist staff in meeting specific goals.

Formula Coverdell Program Fast Fact



Activities supporting accreditation and validation studies are a permissible use of funds (e.g., method validation, software validation, instrument validation, validation data summation).

Preparing to Submit the Certification Form – Key Considerations

Ensure that the certification template is used. BJA provides a template certification form that must be signed by the individual authorized to complete the certification.

Review the certification requirements. Applicants must review the requirements of the certification before determining whether the certification can be properly completed.

Verify qualifications prior to submission. The form should be executed and signed by someone familiar with the requirements of the certification and authorized to sign the certification.

Important Reminder: 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/or 1621 and 34 U.S.C. §§ 10271–10273. Office of Justice Programs grants, including certification 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.