

Certification Form Quick Tips: Forensic Science Laboratory System Accreditation

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 certify that any forensic science laboratory system receiving Coverdell Program funds is either accredited or, if not accredited, will designate a portion of the funds to prepare and apply for accreditation within 2 years of receiving the Coverdell Program funds. **Applications requesting funds solely for ME/C offices within the state are not required to submit this certification.** 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.

Identifying Accreditation Status and Scope – Key Considerations

Identify the laboratory systems the funds will support. Applicants should identify the laboratory systems, including ME/C offices, that will receive Coverdell Program funds and identify a point of contact (POC) for each. The POC should be an individual who is able to assist with the additional actions described below.

Catalog the accreditation status of all laboratory systems within the state. Applicants are required to prepare a list of all forensic science laboratories in the state, detailing their accreditation status and, if applicable, the name of the accrediting body and the scope of each accreditation.

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Confirm each laboratory system's accreditation status and scope. For each laboratory system identified, the POC should be able to provide the status and scope of the accreditation. This documentation is required for all disciplines supported by Coverdell Program funds.

- **Accredited Entities: Provide proof of current accreditation.** Applicants should provide documentation of current accreditation status. Acceptable types of documentation include an electronic/scanned copy of the current accreditation certificate(s), a digital photograph of the current accreditation certificate(s), or a letter from the accrediting body that includes the accreditation certificate number. If a certificate references another document that contains key information on the type or scope of the accreditation, the applicant should provide a copy of that supplemental documentation as well.
- **Non-Accredited Entities: Develop a plan for allocating funds to achieve accreditation.** Applicants must allocate funds in their budget to support state forensic science laboratory systems or disciplines that currently lack accreditation. These funds should help these entities prepare and apply for accreditation within 2 years of receiving the Coverdell Program funds. Applicants must prepare a strategic plan for each applicable entity detailing how the funds will be used to support this purpose. This plan should be included as part of the proposal narrative and should include the projected schedule for preparation and application for accreditation.

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.

Formula Coverdell Program Fast Fact



Preparing for laboratory accreditation and covering application and maintenance fees charged by appropriate accrediting bodies are permissible uses of funds.

Appropriate accrediting bodies include the following:

- [ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board](#)  (ANAB)
- [National Association of Medical Examiners](#)  (NAME)
- [American Association for Laboratory Accreditation](#)  (A2LA)
- [International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners](#)  (IACME)