

# BUREAU OF JUSTICE ASSISTANCE FACT SHEET

## PAUL COVERDELL FORENSIC SCIENCE IMPROVEMENT GRANTS PROGRAM

The Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program (the Coverdell program) awards grants to states and units of local government to help improve the quality and timeliness of 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, as needed, to eliminate such a backlog.

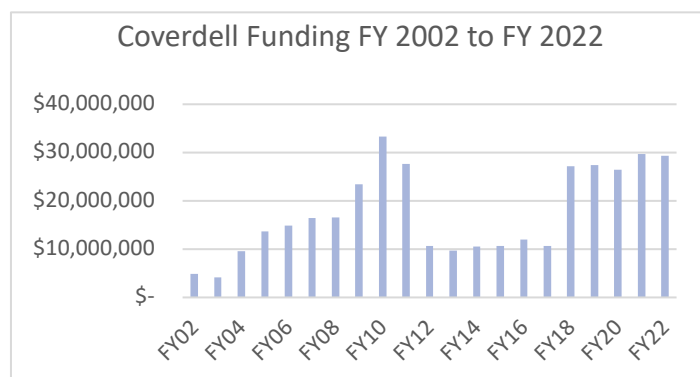
State Administering Agencies (SAAs) may apply for both “base” (formula) and competitive funds. Units of local government may apply for competitive funds.

### Program Goals

Coverdell grants must be used for one or more of these six purposes:

1. To improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner/coroner services in the state, including services provided by laboratories operated by the state and units of local government.
2. To eliminate a backlog in the analysis of forensic science evidence.
3. To train, assist, and employ forensic laboratory personnel and medicolegal death investigators.
4. To address emerging forensic science issues (such as statistics, contextual bias, and uncertainty of measurement) and emerging forensic science technology.
5. To educate and train forensic pathologists.
6. To fund medicolegal death investigation systems to facilitate the accreditation of medical examiner and coroner offices and the certification of medicolegal death investigators.

### Program Funding and Awards



### Program Accomplishments

Funded awards from FY 2002 to FY 2022:

- More than 1,600 Coverdell awards funded since FY02.
- More than 1,000 formula awards to states.
- More than 100 states and 500 units of local government received competitive awards.



**From 2011 to 2020:**

- More than 1.5 million backlog cases analyzed with Coverdell funds.
- More than 15,000 forensic science personnel attended training.
- More than 1,900 medical examiner personnel attended training.
- More than 300 agencies decreased their backlog cases.
- More than 300 agencies decreased the time between sample submission to a forensic lab and delivery of test results to a requesting office/agency.

**From 2017 to 2020:**

- More than 8,000 certified forensic personnel from Coverdell-funded forensic labs received funding from this grant.
- More than 10 agencies obtained initial accreditation.
- More than 170 funded Coverdell agencies/ organizations used fees to maintain accreditation.

FY 2021 awardees reported the presence of controlled substances in more than 80 percent of the cases sent for testing.

## Additional Information

- BJA Program Web Page: <https://bja.ojp.gov/program/coverdell/overview>
- Subscribe: <https://bja.ojp.gov/subscribe>

## ABOUT BJA

BJA helps America's state, local, and tribal jurisdictions reduce and prevent crime, lower recidivism, and promote a fair and safe criminal justice system. BJA provides a wide range of resources—including grants, funding, and training and technical assistance—to law enforcement, courts and corrections agencies, treatment providers, reentry practitioners, justice information sharing professionals, and community-based partners to address chronic and emerging criminal justice challenges nationwide. To learn more about BJA, visit [bja.ojp.gov](https://bja.ojp.gov) or follow us on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/DOJBJA](https://www.facebook.com/DOJBJA)) and Twitter (@DOJBJA). BJA is a component of the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs.