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# NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE REPORT

## Fiscal Year 2002 Report on the Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program

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The Paul Coverdell National Forensic Science Improvement Act (NFSIA) became Public Law 106-561 on December 21, 2000. This Act authorized grants to states to improve the quality, timeliness, and credibility of forensic science services for criminal justice purposes.

In general, the NFSIA program provides funding to crime laboratories and medical examiner's offices through the State Administering Agency (SAA) based on population and crime statistics. The program provides funding for expenses related to facilities, personnel, equipment, computerization, supplies, accreditation, certification, and education and training.

The Act authorized the following amounts: \$35,000,000 for Fiscal Year (FY) 2001; \$85,400,000 for FY 2002; \$134,733,000 for FY 2003; \$128,067,000 for FY 2004; \$56,733,000 for FY 2005; and \$42,067,000 for FY 2006.

There were no funds appropriated for this program in FY 2001. In FY 2002, \$5,000,000 from funding appropriated for DNA Backlog Elimination programs was directed to the Paul Coverdell National Forensic Sciences Improvement Act grants.

After a reduction of \$137,000 for Office of Justice Programs management and administrative expenses, a total of \$4,863,000 was available for the NFSIA program for FY 2002. Seventy-five percent (\$3,647,250) of the total amount made available to carry out the program was allocated to each State that met the required elements of the program, so that each State received an amount based upon its population.

Twenty-five percent (\$1,215,750) of the total amount made available to carry out the program will be allocated pursuant to the Attorney General's discretion to States with above average rates for part 1 violent crimes. This rate is based on the average number of Part 1 Violent Crimes reported by such States to the FBI for the 3 most recent calendar years for which such data is available.

Under the Act, every State, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands are eligible for a population formula award — for a total of 56 eligible applicants.

In addition, 22 States and one Territory were eligible for discretionary awards based on part 1 violent crime rates in that particular State or Territory. The following were discretionary eligible: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and the United States Virgin Islands.

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) received a total of 49 applications for formula funding in response to the FY 2002 NFSIA program announcement, which closed September 30, 2002. Seven of these applications were submitted to NIJ early enough to be processed and awarded in FY 2002. Thus, the following States received formula funding awards in FY 2002 for a total of \$437,340: Alabama (\$50,676), Colorado (\$50,146), Iowa (\$33,182), New York (\$215,802), North Dakota (\$29,178), Utah (\$29,178), and Vermont (\$29,178).

Because many of the 42 remaining applications were received just prior to the application deadline of September 30, 2002, there was insufficient time to process these applications and make awards in FY 2002. At the time of this report, 39 of the 42 states have since been

awarded FY 2002 funds in FY 2003. The three remaining State applications are currently being processed, and will be funded in the very near future.

Thus, the total amount awarded to states in FY 2002 for the National Forensic Sciences Improvement Act was \$437,340. The remaining \$4,425,660 in FY 2002 funds has been, or will soon be, awarded to states in FY 2003 and will include formula and discretionary awards.