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NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE REPORT

Fiscal Year 2003 Report on the Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program

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In general, the Paul Coverdell National Forensic Science Improvement Act (NFSIA) program provides funding to crime laboratories and medical examiner offices through State Administering Agencies (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 became Public Law 106-561 on December 21, 2000, and authorized grants to states and units of local government to improve the quality, timeliness, and credibility of forensic science services for criminal justice purposes. 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 grant program.

On February 20, 2003, President Bush signed the Consolidated Appropriations Resolution of 2003 which funded programs at the U.S. Department of Justice for FY 2003. This measure provided \$5,000,000 for the Coverdell NFSIA grant program. After a Congressional rescission of \$32,500, a total of \$4,967,500 was available for the NFSIA program for FY 2003.

As you know, the Coverdell program provides funding to states, territories, and units of local government through a two-part grant program. Awards are made based on a population formula and, at the Attorney General's discretion, based on above average violent crime rates.

Fiscal Year 2003 Population Allocation Funding

In accordance with P.L. 106-561, 75 percent (\$3,725,625) of the total amount was allocated to each State and Territory that met the required elements of the program, so each State and Territory received an amount based upon its population. In addition, \$189,122 in FY 2002 funds that were not applied for were added to the FY 2003 formula amount. This brought the total amount available under the FY 2003 population formula portion of the program to \$3,914,747.

Under the program, 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.

The National Institute of Justice received a total of 48 applications for population allocation funding in response to the FY 2003 NFSIA program announcement, which closed on June 30, 2003. The District of Columbia, Idaho, Nevada, and the five territories did not apply for FY 2003 funding. Because all 48 applicants received their allotted population formula award, NIJ awarded \$3,691,728 in NFSIA formula funds in FY 2003.

Fiscal Year 2003 Discretionary Funding

Twenty-five percent (\$1,241,875) of the total program amount was allocated pursuant to the Attorney General's discretion to states, territories, and units of local government 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. The following were eligible to apply for discretionary funding in FY 2003: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The National Institute of Justice received 57 applications for FY 2003 discretionary funding in response to the program solicitation, which closed on July 12, 2003. The National Institute of Justice required that each applicant limit their request to \$250,000. The 57 applications received at NIJ requested a total of \$10,572,495. After a competitive award process, in which the 57 applications were reviewed by peer panels, NIJ made six awards totaling \$1,241,875. The following States and units of local government received discretionary funding awards in FY2003 for a total of \$1,241,875.

- Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement & Administration of Justice: \$240,625
- Anne Arundel County Police Department, Maryland: \$44,874
- Baltimore County Police Department, Maryland: \$236,293
- Missouri Department of Public Safety: \$240,625
- Oklahoma District Attorney's Council: \$240,104
- City of Oakland Police Department, California: \$239,354

In a matter of just six months, NIJ was able to publicly announce the Coverdell program, receive and process 105 applications, conduct peer reviews, and make 54 awards totaling \$3,492,606.