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REPORT

Fiscal Year 2014 Report on the

Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program

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Section 2806(b) of Public L. 90-351, the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, as amended, mandates the submission of a report to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate concerning grants made under the Paul Coverdell National Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program in each fiscal year. This letter responds to that requirement.

The Paul Coverdell National Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program, managed by the Office of Justice Programs' National Institute of Justice (NIJ), provides funding to States and units of local government to improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science and medical examiner services, in accordance with the Coverdell Act. For the purposes of the Act, the District of Columbia and the five U.S. Territories are considered States. NIJ executes the Coverdell Grants Program through a grant solicitation that has both a formula and a competitive component. Only States are eligible to apply for the formula component.

The Coverdell Act requires that 75 percent of the total program funds be awarded to States through State Administering Agencies (SAAs). These "Base" awards are based on the State's population and made to all eligible SAAs that apply. The Coverdell Act requires that the remaining 25 percent of program funds be awarded competitively. These "Competitive" funds may be awarded to SAAs or dispersed directly to units of local government based on the merits of the respective applications. States and local governments that provide forensic science or medical examiner services may apply for the competitive funding.

Applications for competitive funding are reviewed by an independent panel made up of subject matter experts from the forensic science community. The panelists review and rate the applications individually based on specific evaluation criteria specified in the solicitation.

On February 14, 2014, NIJ released the solicitation seeking applications for funding under the Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program. NIJ received 194 applications; 30 States applied for base funding and 24 States applied for a combination of base and competitive funding. The remaining 139 applications were received from units of local government for competitive funding. Twenty-one applications were denied due to various circumstances such as duplicate applications, failure to meet basic minimum requirements, and non-responsiveness to solicitation criteria.

NIJ made 72 awards totaling $10,504,870; 50 States received base awards, 4 States received a combination of base and competitive awards, and 18 units of local government received competitive awards.

Since its inception, the Coverdell Program has resulted in 1073 grants to States and units of local government. In its administration of the Coverdell Program, NIJ monitors each award to ensure compliance with federal statutes, regulations, and policies to ensure that federal funds are used appropriately. This monitoring includes diligent review of Coverdell grantees' budgets to ensure they are in accord with the work promised in the grant application and consistent with Coverdell Program statutory and policy requirements.

NIJ is grateful for the opportunity to help improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science and medical examiner services throughout the nation's communities. We look forward to continuing these efforts through important programs such as the Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program.

View FY 2014 Coverdell funds awarded to State Administering Agencies and to units of local government within those states:
https://nij.gov/funding/awards/pages/awards-list.aspx?solicitationid=3984

The table includes funding amounts and a short program description for each award.