



Department of Justice

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OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS AWARDS OVER \$38 MILLION TO EXPAND SEXUAL ASSAULT KIT TESTING

WASHINGTON – The Office of Justice Programs’ Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) today announced awards totaling more than \$38 million to help state, tribal and local government agencies to process sexual assault kits in law enforcement custody that have not been submitted to forensic laboratories.

Funded under BJA’s *National Sexual Assault Kit Initiative*, this program provides funding to support a community-based comprehensive approach to inventory and test kits that were housed in law enforcement storage rooms or other facilities that have never been submitted to the lab for testing. The program also enables jurisdictions to assign personnel to pursue leads and criminal investigations based on evidence discovered through kit testing, as well as to develop evidence-based tracking systems and train law enforcement on sexual assault investigations. Further, grantees can use the funds to conduct research on outcomes in sexual assault cases and increase collection of DNA that may lead to identification of serial sex offenders.

“Reducing the backlog of untested sexual assault kits is a complex issue that requires a comprehensive, evidence-based and community-supported approach to resolve,” said Director Denise O’Donnell of the Bureau of Justice Assistance. “These grants provide resources and improve processes to test kits, provide training to law enforcement personnel and improve the justice system while providing justice and resolution to the victims of sexual assault.”

In FY 2016, BJA made 19 grant awards totaling \$25 million to state, local and tribal jurisdictions in support of new efforts to improve the processing of sexual assault kits and improve their capacity to act on evidence resulting from these efforts. BJA also made seven supplemental awards totaling over \$6 million to grantees that received National Sexual Assault Kit Initiative awards in previous years to help them continue their efforts to address the challenges surrounding the processing of untested sexual assault kits.

An additional \$5 million was awarded to Research Triangle Institute to provide training and technical assistance to the grantees in the development and implementation of sexual assault kit submission, tracking and investigation processes. BJA provided \$2 million to the National Institute of Justice to support evaluation of the programs funded by the National Sexual Assault Kit Initiative.

For a complete monetary and geographical breakdown of the grants awarded under this program, visit <http://go.usa.gov/xKFcx>.

The Office of Justice Programs (OJP), headed by Assistant Attorney General Karol V. Mason, provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice, and assist victims. OJP has six bureaus and offices: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; the Office for Victims of Crime, and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering and Tracking (SMART). More information about OJP and its components can be found at www.ojp.gov.

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