



Department of Justice



Office of Justice Programs

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FACT SHEET

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT AWARDS \$145 MILLION TO ADVANCE FORENSIC SCIENCE

Since 2004, the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) has received an annual appropriation for DNA and other forensic science activities. This supports DNA analysis and laboratory capacity enhancement and forensic science research, development and evaluation that provides knowledge and tools to improve the quality and practice of forensic science in order to reduce crime and improve public safety.

DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction Program

The program has been a source of funding to states and local jurisdictions since 2011. The funding is awarded to states, then divided among eligible crime labs within the state. The awards assist with increasing the capacity for DNA analysis and the number of DNA samples, while decreasing the backlog and turnaround time for DNA analysis. Recipients may use funding to upgrade laboratories and purchase equipment and supplies, such as DNA sample collection kits. For a list of the award recipients, visit <https://go.usa.gov/xVHhv>.

Research and Development in Forensic Science for Criminal Justice Purposes

The program funds basic and applied R&D that leads toward more accurate, reliable, and cost-effective and rapid methods of analyzing physical evidence. The recipients will address the current needs of the forensic science community while adding to the existing body of knowledge. For a list of the award recipients, visit <https://go.usa.gov/xVHhw>.

Research and Evaluation for the Testing and Interpretation of Physical Evidence in Publicly Funded Forensic Laboratories

The program funds projects that will identify and inform the forensic community of best practices through evaluating existing laboratory protocols and practices. Grantees will pursue projects that have a direct and immediate impact on laboratory efficiency and help scientists make laboratory policy decisions. More information about the awards is available here: <https://go.usa.gov/xpnus>

Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program

The program helps improve forensic science and medical examiner/coroner services, including services provided by laboratories operated by states and units of local government. Funds may be used to eliminate a backlog in the analysis of forensic evidence and to train and employ forensic laboratory personnel. The Coverdell Act requires that 15 percent of program funds be awarded competitively and remaining funds be awarded to states based on the state population and made to all applicants that apply. The 2019 formula awards are available here:

<https://go.usa.gov/xV63x>. The 2019 competitive awards are available here:
<https://go.usa.gov/xV63a>

National Missing and Unidentified Person's System (NamUS)

The program provides funding and support for the management of the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs), a centralized repository for missing persons and unidentified persons' information for law enforcement, medical examiners, coroners and the public. In addition, the grantee provides stakeholders with a number of forensic services, such as forensic odontology, fingerprint examination, mitochondrial and nuclear DNA analyses, and connects them with artists who can perform facial reconstructions of unidentified decedents. More information is available here: <https://go.usa.gov/xVM9j>

Postconviction Testing of DNA Evidence

In response to wrongful convictions overturned through forensic DNA analysis, the program provides funding to defray costs associated with postconviction DNA testing, such as additional personnel, overtime, testing supplies and services. More than 50 exonerations can be credited to the work of NIJ grantees and funding through the program. The list of exonerations is available here <https://go.usa.gov/xVM5F>. More information about the awards is available here: <https://go.usa.gov/xV63b>

Forensic Technology Center of Excellence

The Forensic Technology Center of Excellence serves as NIJ's forensic science research and development program. Through a number of activities, the center implements forensic technology and best practices, evaluates research and technology, and builds relationships with the forensics community. This award is a continuation of funding since 2016. More information about this award is available at: <https://go.usa.gov/xV6q6>

Prosecuting Cold Cases using DNA and other Forensic Technologies

The program focuses resources toward decreasing the number of unresolved violent crime cold cases and prosecuting violent crime cold cases with known suspects. Advances in forensic technologies are increasing successful analysis of evidence once thought to be unsuitable for testing. In some cases, successful analysis leads to providing probative information for the resolution of cold cases. More information about the awards is available here: <https://go.usa.gov/xV6qs>

Strengthening the Medical Examiner-Coroner System Program

The program is strengthening the medical examiner-coroner system through increasing the number of and quality of board-certified forensic pathologists in addition to helping medical examiner-coroner offices achieve accreditation through a recognized accreditation body. More information about the awards is available here: <https://go.usa.gov/xV6qM>

A searchable list of all 2019 NIJ awards is available here: <https://go.usa.gov/xVfFt>

Information on NIJ is located here: www.nij.ojp.gov