



Department of Justice



Office of Justice Programs

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JUSTICE DEPARTMENT AWARDS \$145 MILLION TO ADVANCE FORENSIC SCIENCE

WASHINGTON, DC – The Justice Department’s Office of Justice Programs today announced grants totaling more than \$145 million to fund crime laboratories, decrease DNA backlogs, support basic and applied forensic research, and help law enforcement identify missing persons.

“The Department is committed to improving and investing in forensic science because it plays a vital role in providing indisputable and scientifically based information that protects our communities,” said OJP Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Katharine T. Sullivan. “We will continue to fund forensic science advances that enable law enforcement and prosecutors to draw conclusions from physical evidence found at crime scenes.”

Through the *DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction Program*, NIJ is awarding more than \$78 million to state and local jurisdictions to process, record, screen and analyze DNA evidence and to enhance the ability of crime labs to process evidence. This ultimately helps reduce the number of forensic DNA database samples awaiting analysis, prevents additional DNA backlogs and helps solve crimes.

NIJ is also making 41 awards totaling \$18.7 million to the *Research and Development in Forensic Science for Criminal Justice Purposes* program, which directs the findings of scientific research toward the development of accurate, cost-effective and rapid methods for identifying, analyzing and interpreting physical evidence.

Nearly \$1.9 million will support the *Research and Evaluation for the Testing and Interpretation of Physical Evidence in Publicly Funded Forensic Laboratories*. These funds will impact laboratory efficiency by providing efficient, accurate, reliable and cost-effective methods for the identification, analysis and interpretation of physical evidence.

Complementing these efforts, the *Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program* is awarding a total of \$27.3 through the program’s formula (\$23.2 million) and competitive (\$4.1 million) solicitations. The awards help states and local governments improve the quality and timeliness of forensic services provided by crime laboratories and medical examiner and coroners’ offices. Funding will go toward eliminating backlogs and employing and training laboratory personnel and death investigators.

\$5.5 million will fund the *National Missing and Unidentified Persons System* (NamUs), a national centralized repository and resource center for missing persons and unidentified

decedents. The University of North Texas Health Science Center will use the grant to support daily operations of NamUs, along with enhancements and software upgrades to the system.

NIJ will fund the *Postconviction Testing of DNA Evidence* with more than \$5.4 million to help defray costs associated with identifying and reviewing post-conviction cases to help overturn wrongful convictions.

More than \$5 million was awarded to RTI International to support the *Forensic Technology Center of Excellence* to provide testing, evaluation and technology assistance to help crime laboratories, forensic service providers and law enforcement combat crime.

Nearly \$1 million in NIJ funding will be used for the *Prosecuting Cold Cases using DNA and other Forensic Technologies* grant. This program funds the prosecution and reduction of violent crime cold cases.

Under the *Strengthening the Medical Examiner-Coroner System Program*, 15 state and local agencies will share more than \$1.8 million to help medical examiners conduct forensic death investigations.

A fact sheet is available is here: <https://go.usa.gov/xdcnW>

A searchable list of the awards announced today is available here: <https://go.usa.gov/xVffT>

Information on NIJ's programs is located here: www.nij.ojp.gov, <https://www.namus.gov/> and <https://forensiccoe.org/>

The Office of Justice Programs, directed by Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Katharine T. Sullivan, provides federal leadership, grants, training and technical assistance, and other resources to improve the nation's capacity to prevent and reduce crime, assist victims and enhance the rule of law by strengthening the criminal and juvenile justice systems. More information about OJP and its components can be found at www.ojp.gov.

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