



*American Academy of Forensic Sciences
American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors
International Association for Identification International
Association of Forensic Nurses
National Association of Medical Examiners Society of
Forensic Toxicologists/
American Board of Forensic Toxicology*

Paul Coverdell National Forensic Science Grants Talking Points

ASKS:

Please add \$35m to the FY16 DOJ budget for the Paul Coverdell National Forensic Science Grant this year.

FACTS:

Coverdell is authorized for \$35m a year in the Justice For All Act (JFA), but the JFA authorization has expired, thus the Act needs to be reauthorized and reappropriated.

The United States Congress funded the Paul Coverdell National Forensic Science Grant at \$12m for FY15.

The FY16 Justice budget did **not** include funds for the Paul Coverdell National Forensic Science Grant.

Coverdell is the only federal forensic funding available to the forensic service provider community for disciplines other than DNA to include controlled substances, toxicology, latent prints, firearms, and trace evidence.

Coverdell is the only federal forensic funding available to the nation's medical examiners and coroners.

Coverdell funding should be appropriated to the authorized level to help support the needs and requirements of the entire forensic science community, including the 450 public crime laboratories and 2,000 medical examiner and coroner offices.

Immediate national concerns:

- States are cutting forensic training budgets for new and continuing education as they struggle with larger budget issues. New analyst training needs exist specifically in trace examination, firearms analysis, and fire debris analysis. Training is needed for individuals moving from technical roles into laboratory leadership and management.
- There is a critical need to recruit, educate, and train forensic pathologists in the country.
- Emerging issues (e.g. statistics, contextual bias, uncertainty of measurement) and emerging technology (high throughput automation, new instrumentation in many forensic disciplines, DNA mixture software, DNA next generation sequencing).
- Addressing timeliness of casework in many disciplines. For example, there is an influx of drug/chemistry cases (opioids, synthetic cannabinoid, cathinone “bath salts,” and other designer drugs) that have stretched the capacity of laboratories. Some of these chemicals take much longer to analyze than routine drugs and the backlog is growing.
- Identifying and quantitating synthetic cannabinoids, cathinone derivatives (bath salts) and the “fake LSD” (known as NBOMe) is a big challenge in toxicology labs. The cost to purchase and maintain LC/MSMS instrumentation is not affordable for most laboratories.
- Laboratory accreditation and practitioner certification.