



CONSORTIUM OF FORENSIC SCIENCE ORGANIZATIONS (CFSO)

FLASH BRIEF

FEBRUARY 2020

The mission of the CFSO is to speak with a single forensic science voice in matters of mutual interest to its member organizations, to influence public policy at the national level, and to make a compelling case for greater federal funding for public crime laboratories and medical examiner offices. The primary focus of the CFSO is local, state, and national policymakers, as well as the United States Congress.

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A New Year

CFSO delivered our annual report to the AAFS meeting on Wednesday, February 17, 2021. This presentation has been posted on the CFSO website. The presentation highlights the accomplishments of CFSO in 2020 and offers a look forward to 2021. CFSO also published a year summary that is published on the CFSO [website](#). The CFSO Board met this month and voted to maintain the same officers of the organization for the next year. The CFSO Board and CFSO organization presidents met with the Biden Administration DOJ Transition Team and had a very successful interaction with them. They asked CFSO to provide a briefing document to the incoming Attorney General. This document of forensic science priorities was written and provided in a timely manner to the transition team for inclusion in the DOJ briefing document.

NamUs

CFSO recognizes the importance of the NamUs program and is fighting hard for sustainable funding for the program. While NamUs has had consistent funding, it has not been authorized by Congress as a grant program. Further, the need for NamUs has grown but the funding has not. At the request of our membership, CFSO worked with DOJ and the Congress to raise the level of visibility of this program as it ran into difficulty in the 116th Congress. This included highlighting its importance in briefing documents to the incoming Attorney General and publishing an [open letter](#) to the previous Attorney General. In the 117th Congress, the CFSO will work with lawmakers to codify the program and ensure funding. More information is available on the CFSO website. OIFS Director Lucas Zarwell recently published a blog article on NamUs <https://www.ojp.gov/blog/justice-department-fights-missing>

Department of Justice Grant Information

To provide assistance to applicants applying for DOJ funding opportunities, the JustGrants team is offering 10 webinar sessions on the application submission process. Applicants should consider attending one of these sessions, the last one being on March 22, 2021. The webinars will explain the following:

- Steps to take prior to applying for funding
- How to find open DOJ funding opportunities in Grants.gov
- How to apply for funding using JustGrants
- The JustGrants roles, responsibilities, and required actions
- How to navigate and use JustGrants to submit your application
- Where to find training materials, job aids, and other resources.

Each session will last about 90 minutes and the same content will be covered in each session, with time set aside for questions. Additional session information and application submission training materials are posted on the [Justice Grants Training - Application Submission page](#).

Where to Find DOJ Funding Opportunities

If you are interested in applying for funding, you can find open opportunities on these pages:

- [Office of Community Oriented Policing Services](#)
- [Office of Justice Programs](#)
- [Office on Violence Against Women](#)

CURRENT GRANT SOLICITATIONS FROM NIJ

Application Date Extension: “Research and Evaluation on Crime Laboratory Systems and Processes, Fiscal Year 2021”, noting that deadlines are extended:

Grants.gov Deadline: April 05, 2021

Application JustGrants Deadline: April 19, 2021

<https://nij.ojp.gov/funding/opportunities/o-nij-2021-45003>

FORTHCOMING GRANT SOLICITATIONS FROM NIJ

The following grant opportunities will be available soon. <https://nij.ojp.gov/funding/forthcoming>

Forensic Technology Center of Excellence, Fiscal Year 2021

NIJ plans to seek proposals from qualified applicants to establish and operate a Forensic Technology Center of Excellence to support NIJ’s research, development, testing, and evaluation process and technology transition activities in all areas of forensic science.

Research and Development in Forensic Science for Criminal Justice Purposes, Fiscal Year 2021

With this solicitation, NIJ seeks proposals for rigorous basic or applied research and development projects. An NIJ forensic science research and development grant supports a discrete, specified, circumscribed project that will 1) Increase the body of knowledge to guide and inform forensic science policy and practice;

or 2) Lead to the production of useful material(s), device(s), system(s), or method(s) that have the potential for forensic application.

Research and Evaluation for the Testing and Interpretation of Physical Evidence in Publicly Funded Forensic Laboratories, Fiscal Year 2021

This solicitation seeks applications for research and evaluation studies to produce practical knowledge that has the potential to improve the examination and interpretation of physical evidence in forensic science laboratories. Proposals are expected to identify the forensic science discipline(s) intended to benefit from the project.

BJA/OJP JustGrants Issues

CFSO recently completed a survey of forensic grant practitioners in an effort to provide more feedback to BJA regarding general issues with the JustGrants system and specific problems that grantees are still encountering with their grants. Our appreciation to those that submitted information. The survey results have been provided to BJA for appropriate follow-up and action. In response to some of these issues, CFSO requested, and BJA obliged, in presenting an informational webinar. The links to watch the [recorded sessions](#) and [PowerPoint slides](#) are posted on the CFSO website. Our appreciation to BJA for their collaboration to solve these issues quickly for forensic science practitioners.

The following webinars have already been held, but we have been provided cordially with the presentations and transcript in order to help prospective applicants through the process.

The Federal Funding Process: The First Steps to Applying, How to Prepare Now, and Other Considerations

Webinar held: January 21, 2021, 1 p.m. ET

In this webinar, attendees will learn what registrations are necessary to apply, how to navigate Grants.gov and JustGrants, and what resources are available for applicants, such as the Office of Justice Programs' Funding Resource Center.

[Access the Presentation](#) | [Read the Transcript](#)

Funding Opportunities for Your Community in 2021: An Overview of What's Ahead

Webinar held: January 14, 2021

In this webinar, attendees will learn the primary initiatives BJA plans to fund in 2021, eligibility requirements, and estimated funding amounts.

[Watch the Recording](#) | [Access the Presentation](#) | [Read the Transcript](#)

NIST Announcements

NIST Study to Distinguish Hemp from Marijuana

Hemp and marijuana both derive from the cannabis plant, but legally speaking they are very different. If the cannabis plant has less than 0.3% THC- the chemical that produces the high- it is considered hemp and is legal in the United States. The study, part of NIST's Cannabis Quality Assurance Program (CannaQAP), will help ensure that labs can accurately measure THC levels that are especially important when dealing with such low quantities of the chemical.

In addition to THC, the NIST study will help cannabis industry labs accurately measure CBD (the non-intoxicating compound) to help hemp growers and cannabis companies know the legal status of their products and properly label them for consumers.

NIST DART-MS Forensics Database 2020

With increasing backlogs and more complex samples, forensic chemistry laboratories need new technologies that rapidly provide accurate analytical results. Many laboratories are adopting Direct Analysis in Real Time Mass Spectrometry (DART-MS) to meet this need. DART-MS enables laboratories to obtain mass spectra, or molecular “fingerprints,” from samples in seconds instead of tens of minutes. Because this technique is highly sensitive, very little of the sample is handled or consumed during analysis. This reduces the risk of accidental exposure when analyzing highly toxic compounds such as fentanyl. We are developing a suite of methods, software tools, and resources to help forensic laboratories adopt and implement DART-MS and other ambient ionization mass spectrometry (AI-MS) techniques. These include databases, mass spectral search tools, analytical methods, and example validation documents. **The NIST DART-MS Forensics Database 2020 is now available for [download from the NIST website](#). This is an evaluated collection of mass spectra of seized drugs, cutting agents, and related compounds.** This project is part of [NIST’s ongoing effort](#) to help labs detect and identify synthetic opioids and other drugs efficiently, reliably, and safely. If you have any questions, please contact DARTdata@nist.gov.

THE NEW 117th CONGRESS

With a new Administration and a new Congress priorities are expected to change. We do, however, expect forensic science to remain a priority based on discussions with the transition team and many of the new staff for Members of Congress. The CFSO is working with its Membership to identify pro-active legislation, such as that to help the medical examiner community with its workforce issues, as well as work on existing programs that need to be addressed on a regular basis, such as the Justice for All Act which authorizes the Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program and other grant programs. As these pieces of legislation are developed, we will provide detailed memoranda and updates. Please find below the new roster of Members on Congressional Committees of importance to our community. Note the Senate Judiciary Committee Chairperson has changed, as well as, the Ranking Member.

Committee Member Assignments 117th Congress

House Judiciary Committee

Majority (Democrat)	Minority (Republican)
Jerrod Nadler (Chair) - NY-10	Jim Jordan (Ranking Member) – OH-04
Mary Scanlon (Vice Chair) - PA-05	Steve Chabot – OH-01
Zoe Lofgren - CA-19	Louie Gohmert – TX-01
Sheila Jackson Lee – TX-18	Ken Buck – CO-04
Steve Cohen – TN-09	Matt Gaetz - FL-01
Hank Johnson – GA-04	Mike Johnson – LA-04
Theodore Deutch – FL-22	Andy Biggs – AZ-05
Karen Bass – CA-37	Tom McClintock – CA-04
Hakeem Jeffries – NY-08	Gregory Steube – FL-17
David Cicilline – RI-01	Tom Tiffany – WI-07
Eric Swalwell – CA-15	Darrell Issa – CA-50
Ted Lieu – CA-33	Thomas Massie – KY-04

Jamie Raskin – MD-08	Chip Roy – TX-21
Pramila Jayapal – WA-07	Dan Bishop – NC-09
Val Demings – FL-10	Michelle Fischbach – MN-07
Luis Correa – CA-46	Victoria Spartz – IN-05
Sylvia Garcia – TX-29	Scott Fitzgerald – WI-05
Joe Neguse – CO-02	Cliff Bentz – OR-02
Lucy McBath – GA-06	Burgess Owens – UT-04
Greg Stanton – AZ-09	
Madeleine Dean – PA-04	
Veronica Escobar – TX-16	
Mondaire Jones – NY-17	
Deborah Ross – NC-02	
Cori Bush – MO-01	

Senate Judiciary Committee

Majority (Democrat)	Minority (Republican)
Dick Durbin (Chair) -IL	Chuck Grassley (Ranking Member) -IA
Dianne Feinstein -CA	Lindsey Graham -SC
Patrick Leahy -VT	John Cornyn -TX
Sheldon Whitehouse -RI	Michael Lee -UT
Amy Klobuchar -MN	Ted Cruz -TX
Chris Coons -DE	Ben Sasse -NE
Richard Blumenthal -CT	Joshua Hawley -MO
Mazie Hirono -HI	Tom Cotton -AR
Cory Booker -NJ	John Kennedy -LA
Alex Padilla -CA	Thom Tillis -NC
Jon Ossof -GA	Marsha Blackburn -TN

House Science Committee

Eddie Johnson (Chairwoman) - TX- 30	Frank Lucas (Ranking Member) – OK-03
Zoe Lofgren – CA-19	Mo Brooks – AL-05
Suzanne Bonamici – OR-01	Bill Posey – FL-08
Ami Bera – CA-07	Randy Weber – TX-14
Haley Stevens – MI-11	Brian Babin – TX-36
Mikie Sherril – NJ-11	Anthony Gonzalez – OH-16
Jamaal Bowman – NY-16	Michael Waltz – FL-06
Brad Sherman – CA-30	Jim Baird – IN-04
Ed Perlmutter – CO-07	Pete Sessions – TX-17
Jerry McNerney – CA-09	Dan Webster – FL-11
Paul Tonko – NY-20	Mike Garcia – CA-25
Bill Foster – IL-11	Stephanie Bice – OK-05
Donald Norcross – NJ-01	Young Kim – CA-39
Don Beyer – VA-08	Randy Feenstra – IA-04
Charlie Crist – FL-13	Jake Laturner – KS-02
Sean Casten – IL-06	Carlos Gimenez – FL-26
Conor Lamb – PA-17	Jay Obernolte – CA-08

Deborah Ross – NC-02	Peter Meijer – MI-03
Gwen Moore – WI-04	
Dan Kildee – MI-05	
Susan Wild – PA-07	
Lizzie Fletcher – TX-07	

Senate Science Committee

Majority (Democrat)	Minority (Republican)
Maria Cantwell (Chair) -WA	Roger Wicker (Ranking Member) -MS
Amy Klobuchar -MN	John Thune -SD
Richard Blumenthal -CT	Roy Blunt -MO
Brian Schatz -HI	Ted Cruz -TX
Ed Markey -MA	Deb Fischer -NE
Gary Peters -MI	Jerry Moran -KS
Tammy Baldwin -WI	Dan Sullivan -AK
Tammy Duckworth -IL	Marsha Blackburn -TN
Jon Tester -MT	Todd Young -IN
Kyrsten Sinema -AZ	Mike Lee -UT
Jacky Rosen -NV	Ron Johnson -WI
Ben Ray Lujan -NM	Shelley Moore Capito -WV
John Hickenlooper -CO	Rick Scott -FL
Raphael Warnock -GA	Cynthia Lummis -WY

House Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Subcommittee

Majority (Democrat)	Minority (Republican)
Matt Cartwright (Chair) – PA-08	Robert Aderhold (Ranking) – AL-04
Grace Meng – NY-06	Steven Palazzo – MS-04
Charlie Crist – FL-13	Ben Cline – VA-06
Ed Case – HI-01	Mike Garcia – CA-25
C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger – MD-02	
Brenda Lawrence – MI-14	
David Trone – MD-06	
Rosa DeLauro – CT-03	

Senate Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Subcommittee

Majority (Democrat)	Minority (Republican)
Jeanne Shaheen (Ranking Member) -NH	Jerry Moran (Chairman) -KS
Patrick Leahy -VT	Lisa Murkowski -AK
Dianne Feinstein -CA	Susan Collins -ME
Jack Reed -RI	Linsdey Graham -SC
Chris Coons -DE	John Boozman -AR
Brian Schatz -HI	Shelley Moore Capito -WV
Joe Manchin -WV	John Kennedy -LA
Chris Van Hollen -MD	Bill Hagerty -TN
Jeff Merkley -OR	Mike Braun -IN