



REQUEST FOR APPLICATION

The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), Victim Services (VS) Branch, is soliciting applications for the following program:

PAUL COVERDELL FORENSIC SCIENCE IMPROVEMENT (CQ) PROGRAM

Release Date: December 13, 2021

This Request for Application (RFA) provides detailed information and forms necessary to prepare an application for Cal OES grant funds. The terms and conditions of this RFA supersede previous RFAs and conflicting provisions stated in the [Subrecipient Handbook \(SRH\)](#).

PROGRAM SYNOPSIS

Program Description:

The CQ Program provides funding to acquire and maintain accreditation for crime labs, reduce backlogs, and improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science services.

Eligibility:

The only eligible Applicants are California forensic science crime laboratories, medical examiners' offices, and coroners' offices.

Grant Subaward Performance Period:

April 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

Submission Deadline:

February 22, 2022



PAUL COVERDELL FORENSIC SCIENCE IMPROVEMENT (CQ) PROGRAM

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PAUL COVERDELL FORENSIC SCIENCE IMPROVEMENT (CQ) PROGRAM

PART I – OVERVIEW

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A. PUBLIC RECORDS ACT NOTICE

Grant applications are subject to the California Public Records Act, Government Code Section 6250, *et seq.* Do not put any personally identifiable information or private information on this application. If you believe that any of the information you are putting on this application is exempt from the Public Records Act, please indicate what portions of the application and the basis for the exemption. Your statement that the information is not subject to the Public Records Act will not guarantee that the information will not be disclosed.

B. CONTACT INFORMATION

Questions concerning this RFA, the application process, or programmatic issues should be submitted to your assigned Program Specialist.

C. SUBMISSION DEADLINE AND OPTIONS

Applications must be delivered to Cal OES by 5:00 pm on Tuesday, February 22, 2022 via email to: VSapplications@caloes.ca.gov.

D. ELIGIBILITY

The only eligible Applicants are California forensic science crime laboratories, medical examiners' offices, and coroners' offices.

Applicants applying for federal funds must be registered in the federal System for Award Management (SAM) and have an expiration date that is at least eight weeks after the Application due date. [Check SAM status.](#)

For purposes of the CQ Program, Applicants must be one of the following:

- A state/local government entity performing forensic science that employs one or more full-time scientists:
 - With a minimum of a bachelor's degree in a natural or formal science (e.g., chemistry, physics, biology, computer science, or a closely related field), and
 - Whose principal function is to examine, analyze, and interpret physical and/or digital evidence in criminal matters and provide reports and testimony to courts of law regarding such evidence.
- A law enforcement unit operating outside of the crime laboratory function, such as crime scene units and other entities that engage exclusively in evidence collection and documentation, are not forensic science laboratories for these purposes.
- A medical examiner and coroner office.

E. GRANT SUBAWARD PERFORMANCE PERIOD

The Grant Subaward performance period is April 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023.

F. FUNDS

There is \$2,138,330 available for the CQ Program for the Grant Subaward performance period.

1. Source of Funds

Detailed information on all VS Branch federal fund sources can be found in the [VS Branch Federal Fund Information Guide](#). Applicants are **strongly encouraged** to review this document to familiarize themselves with the requirements for all fund sources that support this Program.

The Program is supported through the 2021 Paul Coverdell National Forensic Science Improvement Act (FSIA).

Cal OES's four-digit code for this fund is FSIA. This code will be in the drop-down on the Grant Subaward Face Sheet (Cal OES 2-101).

2. Funding Amount

Applicants may apply for up to the amount identified in the following chart for the 15-month Grant Subaward performance period.

Due to a substantial increase in funding in 2018, Cal OES consulted with the California Association of Crime Laboratory Directors (CACLD), to determine funding allocations using a baseline allotment of \$50,000, with the remainder of the funds allocated based upon the number of qualified, full-time forensic scientists reported from each crime laboratory.

CRIME LABORATORY	2021 FSIA FUNDS
Alameda County Sheriff's Office	\$58,130
California Department of Justice	\$201,934
Chula Vista Police Department	\$55,590
Contra Costa County Sheriff's Department	\$70,834
El Cajon Police Department	\$52,033
Escondido Police Department	\$52,033
Fresno County Sheriff's Crime Lab	\$54,065
Glendale Police Department	\$57,622
Kern County District Attorney	\$61,179
Long Beach Police Department	\$56,606
Los Angeles County Coroner's Office	\$59,655
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department	\$150,612
Los Angeles Police Department	\$133,335
Oakland Police Department	\$64,736
Orange County Sheriff's Department	\$118,091
Regents of the University of CA, Davis	\$52,033
Sacramento County District Attorney's Office	\$70,326
San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department	\$74,899
San Diego County Sheriff's Department	\$84,554
San Diego Police Department	\$77,948
San Francisco City and County Medical Examiner	\$67,785
San Francisco City and County Police Department	\$69,818
San Mateo County Sheriff's Department	\$64,228
Santa Clara County Office of the District Attorney	\$83,029

Solano County District Attorney	\$53,557
Ventura County Medical Examiner's Office	\$57,622
Ventura County Sheriff's Department	\$85,062
Yolo County District Attorney's Office	\$51,016
TOTAL	\$2,138,330

G. PROGRAM INFORMATION

1. Program Description

The CQ Program provides funding to acquire and maintain accreditation for crime labs, reduce backlogs, and improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science services.

2. Program Objectives

Subrecipients must use the funds for at least one of the following six Program objectives:

- a. Implement a program intended to improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner/coroner's office services in the State.
- b. Eliminate backlogs in the analysis of forensic science evidence, including, but not limited to, a backlog with respect to firearms examination, latent prints, impression evidence, toxicology, digital evidence, fire evidence, controlled substances, forensic pathology, questioned documents, and trace evidence.
- c. Train, assist, and employ forensic laboratory personnel and medicolegal death investigators, as needed, to eliminate backlogs.
- d. Address emerging forensic science issues (such as statistics, contextual bias, and uncertainty of measurement) and emerging forensic science technology (such as high throughput automation, statistical software, and new types of instrumentation).
- e. Educate and train forensic pathologists on appropriate protocols.

- f. Provide funds to facilitate accreditation of medical examiners' and coroners' offices and certification of medicolegal death investigators.

3. Reporting Requirements

Progress Reports serve as a record for the implementation of the Grant Subaward. Statistics for Progress Reports must be collected on a semi-annual basis.

There are two Progress Reports required for the Program. See the chart for report periods and due dates.

Report	Report Period	Due Date
1 st Report	April 1, 2022 – September 30, 2022	October 15, 2022
2 nd Report	October 1, 2022 – March 31, 2023	April 15, 2023
3 rd Report	April 1, 2023 – June 30, 2023	July 15, 2023

Data collected throughout the life of the Grant Subaward performance period will be compared to the pre-data specified in the application to indicate the impact of funding on the established Program purposes. At the end of each reporting period, Subrecipients will be required to report the following for each of their established accredited disciplines:

- a. Number of days between the submission of a sample to a forensic science laboratory and delivery of test results to a requesting office or agency (turn-around time).
- b. Number of backlogged cases.
- c. Number of backlogged forensic cases analyzed with Program funds.
- d. Number of forensic science personnel attending training.
- e. Number of medical examiner personnel attending training (medical examiners' offices only).
- f. Whether the forensic laboratory was seeking initial accreditation with FSIA funding.

- g. Whether the forensic laboratory obtained initial accreditation with FSIA funding.
- h. Whether FSIA funds were used for fees to maintain the agency accreditation.
- i. The number of analysts in the forensic lab, even if they are not funded by FSIA funds.
- j. The number of currently certified analysts in the forensic lab, even if they are not funded by FSIA funds.
- k. Number of analysts seeking certification utilizing FSIA funds.

PAUL COVERDELL FORENSIC SCIENCE IMPROVEMENT (CQ) PROGRAM

PART II – RFA INSTRUCTIONS

- A. SUBRECIPIENT HANDBOOK
 - B. FORMS
 - C. APPLICATION COMPONENTS
 - D. BUDGET POLICIES
 - E. ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS
-

A. SUBRECIPIENT HANDBOOK

Applicants are strongly encouraged to review the [Subrecipient Handbook \(SRH\)](#). The SRH outlines the terms and conditions that apply to the Cal OES, VS Branch grants and provides helpful information for developing an application, including a Glossary of Terms.

B. FORMS

The Applicant must use the forms provided on our website. The forms must be printed on plain white 8½" x 11" paper and single sided. **Applicants may not alter the formatting of any forms, including the Project and Budget Narratives. No tables, charts, or changes to the margins are allowed.**

C. APPLICATION COMPONENTS

Applicants must complete and submit all required components. Specific information for each component is included next. The Checklist in Part III is included to ensure Applicants submit all required components.

1. Grant Subaward Face Sheet (Cal OES 2-101)

The Grant Subaward Face Sheet is the title page of the Grant Subaward that is signed by the Subrecipient and the Cal OES Director (or designee). Instructions are included on the form.

2. Project Contact Information (Cal OES 2-102)

The Project Contact Information form provides Cal OES with all relevant Subrecipient personnel. Information for each individual should be direct contact information. Instructions are included on the form.

3. Signature Authorization (Cal OES 2-103)

The Signature Authorization form provides Cal OES with signatures of authorized signers and who they authorize to sign on their behalf for all grant-related matters. Instructions are included on the form.

4. Certification of Assurance of Compliance (Cal OES 2-104 e)

Cal OES is required by law to obtain written certifications of compliance. The Certification of Assurance of Compliance form is a binding affirmation that the Subrecipient will comply with the following regulations and restrictions:

- State and federal civil rights laws
- Drug Free Workplace
- California Environmental Quality Act
- Federal grant fund requirements
- Lobbying restrictions
- Debarment and Suspension requirements
- Proof of Authority documentation from the city council/governing board

5. Budget Pages (Cal OES 2-106b)

The Budget demonstrates how the Applicant will implement the proposed plan with the funds available through this Program. The budget is the basis for management, fiscal review, and audit. **Budgets are subject to Cal OES modifications and approval.** Failure of the Applicant to include required budget items does not eliminate responsibility to comply with those requirements during the implementation of the project.

The Budget Pages automatically calculate the subtotal at the end of each budget category and provide the total of the three spreadsheets at the bottom of the Equipment page. Applicants may add additional columns to the Budget Pages when necessary.

Cal OES requires the Applicant to develop a line-item budget that includes a **calculation and justification in the left column for all expenses.**

The Budget Pages should:

- Cover the entire Grant Subaward performance period
- Include costs related to the objectives and activities of the project
- Strictly adhere to required and prohibited expenses
- Include expenses in the correct category (i.e., Personnel Services, Operating Expenses, and Equipment – see below)
- Notate line items as opioid or non-opioid related

Include **only** those items covered by grant funds, including match funds, when applicable. Applicants may supplement grant funds with funds from other sources. However, since approved line items are subject to audit, Applicants should not include in the Project Budget matching funds (if applicable) in excess of the required match.

a. Personnel Services – Salaries/Employee Benefits

1) Salaries

Personal services include services performed by project staff **directly employed by the Applicant** (not a contract or participating agency) and must be identified by position and percentage of salaries. They may be salaried or hourly, full-time or part-time positions. Sick leave, vacation, holidays, overtime, and shift differentials must also be budgeted as a part of salaries. If the Applicant's personnel have accrued sick leave or vacation time prior to the approval of grant funding, they may not take time off using project funds.

2) Benefits

Employee benefits must be identified by type and percentage of salaries. The Applicant may use fixed percentages of salaries to calculate benefits. Budgeted benefits cannot exceed those already established by the Applicant.

Employer contributions or expenses for social security, employee life and health insurance plans, unemployment insurance, and/or pension plans are allowable budget items. Benefits, such as uniforms or California Bar Association dues are allowable budget items if negotiated as a part of an employee benefit package.

A line item is required for each different position/classification, but not for each individual employee. If several people will be employed full-time or part-time in the same position/classification, provide the number of full-time equivalents (e.g., three half-time clerical personnel should be itemized as 1.5 clerical positions).

b. Operating Expenses

Operating expenses are defined as necessary expenditures other than personnel salaries, benefits, and equipment. The expenses must be grant-related (i.e., to further the Program objectives as defined in the Grant Subaward) and be encumbered during the Grant Subaward performance period.

Examples of an Operating Expense line item include, but are not limited to:

- Consultant services such as subcontractors
- Indirect cost allowance
- Salaries of participating staff who are not employed by the Applicant
- Travel
- Office supplies
- Training materials
- Equipment maintenance
- Software equipment rental/lease
- Telephone, postage
- Printing
- Facility rental
- Vehicle maintenance
- Furniture and office equipment with a cost of less than \$5,000 (excluding tax) and/or with a useful life of less than one year
- Ammunition purchases only for forensic testing purposes
- Agency membership dues to professional forensic organizations
- Annual professional dues or fees to forensic organizations for forensic staff

Salaries for staff not directly employed by the Applicant must be shown as consultant and/or participating staff costs and must be supported by an Operational Agreement (OA), which must be

kept on file and made available for review during audits or at the request of Cal OES (SRH 3710 and 4500).

c. Equipment

Equipment is defined as nonexpendable tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and a cost of \$5,000 or more per unit (excluding tax).

A line item is required for different types of equipment, but not for each specific piece of equipment (e.g., three laser jet printers must be one line item, not three).

6. Budget Narrative (Cal OES 2-107)

The Budget Narrative should describe the following:

- a. How the project's proposed budget supports the objectives and activities.
- b. How funds are allocated to minimize administrative costs and support direct services.
- c. How shared costs are allocated.
- d. How project-funded staff duties and time commitments support the proposed objectives and activities.
- e. The necessity for subcontracts and unusual expenditures.
- f. Need for mid-year salary range adjustments.

7. Project Narrative (Cal OES 2-108)

The Project Narrative is the main body of information describing the problem to be addressed, the plan to address the identified problem through appropriate and achievable objectives and activities, and the ability of the Applicant to implement the proposed plan.

a. Problem Statement

A problem statement is not required.

b. Plan

In narrative form, address the following:

- 1) Plan for improving the quality and timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services.
- 2) How the Program will be used to benefit the community.
- 3) Plan for obtaining or maintaining accreditation.
- 4) Plan for training forensic staff.
- 5) How the objectives of the Program will be met.
- 6) How the turnaround time and backlog of cases will improve for the disciplines identified in the Program.

8. Subrecipient Grants Management Assessment

Per title 2 CFR § 200.331, Cal OES is required to evaluate the risk of noncompliance with federal statutes, regulations, and grant terms and conditions posed by each Subrecipient of pass-through funding. The assessment is made in order to determine and provide an appropriate level of technical assistance, training, and grant oversight to Subrecipients. Instructions are included on the form.

9. Project Service Area Information (Cal OES 2-154)

The Project Service Area Information form identifies the counties, cities, and congressional districts served by the project. Instructions are included on the form.

10. Organizational Chart

The Organizational Chart should clearly depict the structure of the Applicant organization and the specific unit within the organization responsible for the implementation of the project. This chart should also depict supporting units within the organization (e.g., the Accounting Unit) and the lines of authority within the organization. Job titles on the Organizational Chart must match those in the Budget Pages and Budget Narrative.

11. Additional Forms/Documents

- Non-Competitive Bid Request Checklist (Cal OES 2-156)

This form is required only if the Applicant proposes a line item in their Budget that meets the criteria for a Non-Competitive Bid Request per *SRH 3510*. Instructions are included on the form.

- Contractor/Consultant Rate Exemption Request (Cal OES 2-164)

This form is required only if the Applicant is requesting an exemption to the maximum rate for an independent contractor/consultant of \$650 per eight-hour day or \$81.25 per hour per *SRH 3710.1*. Instructions are included on the form.

- Out-of-State Travel Request (Cal OES 2-158)

This form is required only if the Applicant proposes a line item for out-of-state travel per *SRH 2236.11*. Instructions are included on the form.

- Certification as to External Investigations (Pages 16-17 of this RFA)

This form is required for all Applicants. It identifies the External Investigative Agency which will conduct investigations into all complaints and/or allegations of serious negligence and/or misconduct substantially affecting the integrity of forensic results.

- Baseline Data Sheet (Pages 18-19 of this RFA)

This form is required for all Applicants. It identifies the forensic disciplines to be selected by Applicants and the baseline data for those disciplines.

D. BUDGET POLICIES

The following sections of the [SRH](#) may be helpful in developing the Budget Pages and Budget Narrative.

- Contracting and/or Procurement (*SRH 3400*)
- Audit Costs (*SRH 8150*)
- Automobiles (*SRH 2331*)
- Equipment (*SRH 2300*)

- Expert Witness Fees (SRH 3710.2)
- Facility Rental (SRH 2232)
- Independent Contractor/Consultant (SRH 3710)
- Indirect Cost Rate Proposal (ICRP) (SRH 2180 & SRH 2188)
- Participating Staff (SRH 4500)
- Prohibited Expense Items (SRH 2240)
- Project Income (SRH 6610)
- Rented or Leased Equipment (SRH 2233)
- Supplanting Prohibited (SRH 1330)
- Travel and Per Diem (SRH 2236)

E. ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Subrecipients must administer their grants in accordance with all [SRH](#) requirements. Failure to comply with these requirements can result in the withholding or termination of the Grant Subaward. The following section may be helpful for developing an application and for planning purposes:

- Audit Requirements (SRH 8100)
- Communications (SRH 11500)
- Copyrights, Rights in Data, and Patents (SRH 5300-5400)
- Fidelity Bond (SRH 2160)
- Monthly Report of Expenditures and Request for Funds (SRH 6310)
- Monitoring (SRH 10400)
- Programmatic Technical Assistance and Site Visit Performance Assessment (SRH 10200-10300)
- Source Documentation (SRH 10111)

PAUL COVERDELL FORENSIC SCIENCE IMPROVEMENT (CQ) PROGRAM

PART III – CHECKLIST

This checklist is provided to ensure that a complete application is submitted to Cal OES.

- GRANT SUBAWARD FACE SHEET ([Cal OES 2-101](#)) – Signed by the official authorized to enter into the Grant Subaward.
- PROJECT CONTACT INFORMATION ([Cal OES 2-102](#))
- SIGNATURE AUTHORIZATION ([Cal OES 2-103](#))
- CERTIFICATION OF ASSURANCE OF COMPLIANCE Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Act (FSIA) Fund ([Cal OES 2-104e](#)) – Signed by the official who signed the Grant Subaward Face Sheet and by the official delegating that authority.
- BUDGET PAGES (EXCEL SPREADSHEET FORMAT) ([Cal OES 2-106b](#))
- BUDGET NARRATIVE ([Cal OES 2-107](#))
- PROJECT NARRATIVE ([Cal OES 2-108](#))
 - PLAN
- [SUBRECIPIENT GRANTS MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT](#)
- PROJECT SERVICE AREA INFORMATION ([Cal OES 2-154](#))
- ORGANIZATIONAL CHART
- CERTIFICATION AS TO EXTERNAL INVESTIGATIONS
- BASELINE DATA SHEET
- ADDITIONAL FORMS, IF APPLICABLE
 - NON-COMPETITIVE BID REQUEST CHECKLIST ([Cal OES 2-156](#))
 - CONTRACTOR/CONSULTANT RATE EXEMPTION REQUEST ([Cal OES 2-164](#))
 - OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL REQUEST ([Cal OES 2-158](#))

2021 CALIFORNIA COVERDELL PROGRAM

Certification as to External Investigations

On behalf of the applicant agency named below, I certify the following to the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice and to the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES):

A government entity exists and an appropriate process is in place to conduct independent external investigations into allegations of serious negligence or misconduct substantially affecting the integrity of the forensic results committed by employees or contractors of any forensic laboratory system, medical examiner's office, coroner's office, law enforcement storage facility, or medical facility in the State that will receive a portion of the Grant Subaward.

I agree to notify Cal OES Coverdell Program Staff regarding any, and all, complaints and/or allegations of serious negligence and/or misconduct substantially affecting the integrity of forensic results committed by employees or contractors of the forensic laboratory system.

At the *initiation, duration of, and at the conclusion* of the investigative review process and all appropriate action has been fulfilled, I will notify Cal OES Coverdell Program Staff as to the resolution and that the matter has been resolved.

I have personally read and reviewed the section entitled "Eligibility" in the FY 2021 program announcement for the California Coverdell Program. I acknowledge that a false statement in this certification or in the application that it supports may be subject to criminal prosecution, under 18 U.S.C. §1001. I also acknowledge that the Office of Justice Programs and/or Cal OES Grant Subawards, including certifications provided in connection with such Grants Subawards, are subject to review by the Office of Justice Programs, Department of Justice, Office of the Inspector General, and Cal OES.

I have authority to make this certification on behalf of the applicant agency (that is, the agency applying directly to Cal OES).

Signature of Certifying Official

Name of External Investigative Agency

Title of Certifying Official

Contact at External Investigative Agency

Name of Applicant Agency

Title

Date

Phone #

2021 CALIFORNIA COVERDELL PROGRAM

BASELINE DATA SHEET

The data presented on this document will establish the baseline for the 2021 Grant Subaward progress reporting. Please complete and submit the information requested below with your application.

PLEASE NOTE: ONCE A DISCIPLINE(S) IS SELECTED, YOU MUST REPORT STATISTICS ON THAT DISCIPLINE(S) THROUGHOUT THE LIFE OF THE CQ21 GRANT SUBAWARD PERFORMANCE PERIOD. PLEASE DO NOT SWITCH THE DISCIPLINE(S) MID-GRANT SUBAWARD PERFORMANCE PERIOD.

1. Identify the number of qualifying staff related to CQ21 FSIA funds. _____
2. What are the project disciplines for the CQ21 Grant Subaward program?

PLEASE NOTE: Toxicology and Forensic Alcohol are now ONE discipline

Please check the box(es) that are applicable for your program Grant Subaward funds.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Controlled Substances/Drug Chemistry | <input type="checkbox"/> Crime Scene |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Toxicology/Forensic Alcohol | <input type="checkbox"/> Latent Prints |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trace | <input type="checkbox"/> Digital Media |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Firearms | <input type="checkbox"/> Pathology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Questioned Documents | <input type="checkbox"/> NIBIN |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biology/DNA | <input type="checkbox"/> Impression Evidence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fire Evidence | |

3. Based on the selected disciplines above, please show the number of cases pending in the following chart.

Discipline	Turn-Around-Time	Back Log
Controlled Substances/Drug Chemistry		
Toxicology/Forensic Alcohol		
Trace		
Firearms		
Questioned Documents		
Biology/DNA		
Fire Evidence		
Crime Scene		
Latent Prints		
Digital Media		
Pathology		
NIBIN		
Impression Evidence		

4. Grant Subaward funding will **only** be used for training: Yes___ No ____

Signature: _____

Date: _____