

# PAUL COVERDELL CONSOLIDATED STATE PLAN FOR FORENSIC SCIENCE LABORATORIES

2015-2019



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### Attachments

- o **Attachment A:** Coverdell Funding Chart
- o **Attachment B:** Statewide Forensic Science Strategic Plan for 2015 – 2019

## I. Paul Coverdell Grant Funding

The Department of the Attorney General, Crime Prevention and Justice Assistance Division, is the State Administrating Agency (SAA) for the Coverdell grant funds in Hawaii. Since 2003, the State of Hawaii has received Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program funding to support the State of Hawaii and Units of Local Government in the improvement of forensic science services.

The Paul Coverdell National Forensic Sciences Improvement Act provides federal funding to crime laboratories and medical examiner's offices to improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science and medical examiner services. In addition, these funds are intended to eliminate backlogs in the analysis of forensic evidence, including controlled substances, firearms examination, forensic pathology, latent prints, questioned documents, toxicology, and trace evidence. The program permits funding for expenses related to facilities, personnel, computerization, equipment, supplies, accreditation, certification, education, and training. Any forensic laboratory, forensic laboratory system, medical examiner's office, or coroner's office that will receive any portion of a Coverdell grant must use generally accepted laboratory practices and procedures as established by accrediting organizations or appropriate certifying bodies.

The Coverdell law (at 42 U.S.C. § 3797k) requires that, to request a grant, an applicant for Coverdell funds must submit a certification and description regarding a plan for forensic science laboratories. Each applicant must submit a certification that the State or unit of local government has developed a plan for forensic science laboratories under a program intended to improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services in the State, including such services provided by the laboratories operated by the State and those operated by units of local government within the State. Applicants must also specifically describe the manner in which the grant will be used to carry out that plan. The Paul Coverdell Consolidated State Plan for Forensic Science has been developed and implemented for this certification.

### Expected Results and Outcomes of Coverdell Grants

The result of Coverdell grants to applicant States should be a demonstrated improvement over current operations in the quality and/or timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services provided in the State, including services provided by laboratories operated by the State and services provided by laboratories operated by units of local government within the State. Reduction of forensic analysis backlogs is considered an improvement in timeliness of services. The result of Coverdell grants directly to units of local government should be a demonstrated improvement over current operations in the quality and/or timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services provided by the local jurisdiction.

### Coverdell Purpose Areas:

- To carry out all or substantial part of a program intended to improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services in the State, including those

services provided by laboratories operated by the State and those operated by units of local government within the State.

- To eliminate a backlog in the analysis of forensic science evidence, including, among other things, a backlog with respect to firearms examination, latent prints, toxicology, controlled substances, forensic pathology, questioned documents, and trace evidence.
- To train, assist, and employ forensic laboratory personnel as needed to eliminate such a backlog.

## **Coverdell Funds**

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### **“Base” Funds for States**

Approximately 75 percent of the funds available for Coverdell grants will be allocated among eligible States based on population (State “base” funds).

### **Competitive Funds for States and Units of Local Government**

Twenty-five percent of the available funds will be allocated among States and units of local government through a competitive process. The average annual number of Part 1 violent crimes reported by each State to the Federal Bureau of Investigation; existing resources; and current needs of the potential grant recipient will be considerations in award decisions.

Units of local government that provide forensic science or medical examiner services (whether through a forensic science laboratory, medical examiner’s office, or coroner’s office) may apply directly to NIJ for competitive funds. A State may apply through its SAA for competitive funds for forensic sciences improvements above and beyond those it can accomplish with its estimated amount of base funds.

### **Minimum Awards to States**

The Coverdell law sets a floor for the total amount an eligible applicant State will receive as its Coverdell grant.

## **Coverdell Grant Accomplishments**

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### **FY 2011 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program**

#### **Closed Project Period: October 1, 2011 – May 31, 2014**

The Department of the Attorney General was able to support three (3) projects under the FY 2011 Coverdell Grant funds of \$166,108.

The Hawaii Police Department received a total of \$13,300 for their Working Towards Crime Lab Accreditation to Ensure Quality Forensic Services project. There were a total of 4,135 assigned cases to HiPD throughout the project period. The types of cases they accepted were: Drug analysis, latent print processing, firearms and ‘other’ (which may include firearm serial numbers or biological fluid testing). The following objectives and activities were accomplished using the FY 11 Coverdell grant funds:

- The HiPD Crime Lab completed 1,394 cases assigned in FY 2011.
- Multiple test firings were conducted with a noticeable improvement over the old cotton fill.

- 4 Crime Lab personnel were able to attend ASCLD-LAB accreditation and Internal Auditor trainings.
- Thousands of dollars worth of hazardous and expired chemicals were properly disposed of.

The Honolulu Police Department SIS Unit received a total of \$106,542 for their Forensic Science Lab and Crime Scene Services Improvement project. HPD-SIS had a total of 12,911 work requests. The types of cases they accepted were: Criminal offenses - process work requests for both violent (murder, sex assault, assault, robbery) and non-violent crimes (burglary, auto theft, drug possession, etc.) and Forensic services provided - crime scene response, latent print processing, firearms, questioned documents, drug analysis, DNA, trace evidence. Forensic Biology, Drug Analysis, and Firearms. The following objectives and activities were accomplished using the FY 11 Coverdell grant funds:

- The section underwent an assessment in April 2012 and successfully extended its scope of accreditation to include the Questioned Documents and Trace Evidence units for a total of five accredited disciplines.
- SIS subject matter experts provided training on topics in drug analysis, DNA databasing, forensic biology, trace evidence, firearms, and questioned documents. Training was held at the Kauai, Maui, and the Big Island police departments. A total of 125 police officers and prosecutors received training.
- Much needed equipment was also purchased under this grant to include two centrifuges replacements, one digital camera suitable for crime scene work, and software updates were purchased to keep the database current with shoeprint/shoe styles.
- In total, 35 SIS staff members received training and continuing education points to obtain and maintain professional certification. In addition, since training was provided on-site, an additional 35 law enforcement and forensic practitioners from the Maui Police Department, Hawaii County Police Department, Kauai Police Department, State Attorney General's Office, and Naval Criminal Investigative Service received training.
- Eleven staff members successfully completed the certification process and obtained forensic certification. One individual successfully passed his renewal examination to maintain certification. At the end of the award period the SIS had a total of twenty-six certified, forensic staff members.

The Department of Public Safety Narcotics Enforcement Division received a total of \$33,925 for their Forensic Science Improvement project. NEDFL had a total of 8 latent print cases and 390 drug analysis cases. In the beginning the database did not reflect the type of case as most were drug analysis cases, therefore there may have been more latent print cases not reflected in the latent print case total number. The following objectives and activities were accomplished using the FY 11 Coverdell grant funds:

- ASCLD/LAB yearly assessment of the laboratory was completed in July 2012.
- Staff were able to attend the ASCLD/LAB-International Internal Auditor Training Course and the CLIC Technical Training Seminar.
- A "Spice" and "Bath Salts" Training Course was held. Personnel from each of the criminal forensic drug laboratories in the State of Hawaii attended the class.

- An internal audit was completed in 2013 and the ASCLD/LAB yearly assessment of the laboratory was scheduled for February 2014. An onsite accreditation surveillance visit was performed and all requirements for continued accreditation were met.

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### **FY 2012 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program**

#### **Closed Project Period: October 1, 2012 – December 31, 2014**

The Department of the Attorney General was able to support two (2) projects under the FY 2012 Coverdell Grant funds of \$63,517.

The Hawaii Police Department (HiPD) received a total of \$26,048 for their Basic Needs to Improve Forensic Services in Hawaii County project. The following objectives and activities were accomplished using the FY 12 Coverdell grant funds:

- HiPD was able to purchase supplies and equipment needed to improve their forensic services capabilities and assist in expediting crime scene processing.
- Two (2) staff members were able to attend the Clandestine Laboratory Investigating Chemists (CLIC) Annual Technical Training Seminal in September 2013.
- Five (5) staff members attended the Honolulu Police Department Scientific Investigations Section Basic Bloodstain Pattern Analysis training.
- The HiPD Crime Lab completed 1,630 cases assigned in FY 2013, compared to 1,583 in FY2013, 1,488 in FY 2012, and 1,394 in FY 2011.
- Crime Lab casework requests consisted of:
  - 935 drug related [scheduled drug analysis]
  - 619 latent print development
  - 51 firearm related [test fire for operability, serial number restoration]
  - 25 biological evidence processing [biological fluid screening – blood, semen]
  - 1 forensic computer analysis

The Department of Public Safety Narcotics Enforcement Division (NEDFL) received a total of \$31,118 for their Enhancement of the Narcotics Enforcement Division Forensic Laboratory Services. The following objectives and activities were accomplished using the FY 12 Coverdell grant funds:

- Purchase of many synthetic cannabinoid drug standards and supplies needed for “spice” detection and ability to develop a method for the analysis of these types of drugs.
- The creation and modification of laboratory case worksheets, bar-coding and update of the Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) program.
- Six (6) laboratory personnel were able to attend trainings such as the ASLD/LAB International Measurement Confidence Level 200 Measurement Uncertainty Course, The Corrective Action Process: Root Cause Analysis Basics webinar, IAI International Educational Conference, and the CLIC Annual Technical Training Seminar.
- NEDFL had 153 cases submitted for which 150 were completed by Dec. 31, 2014 (two were canceled before completion and one was completed in 2015) for the year 2014. These cases consisted of latent print processing and drug analysis cases.

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## **FY 2013 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program**

**Active Project Period: October 1, 2013 – June 30, 2015**

The Department of the Attorney General was able to support two (2) projects under the FY 2013 Coverdell Grant funds of \$58,186.

The Hawaii Police Department Crime Lab received a grant of \$26,830 for their HPD Crime Lab Improved Forensic Services project. With the grant funds, the project's goal is to improve and maintain forensic science services. The two project objectives are: (1) to provide training to five (5) HiPD laboratory personnel to effectively apply and defend the work that they do, and that is required by professional certification providers and laboratory accrediting bodies; (2) to provide a minimum of two (2) in-house service training events for HiPD laboratory staff and detectives; and (3) purchase an updated mid-range mass measurement balance with printer and warranty for Crime Lab drug analysis casework. The following objectives and activities were accomplished using the FY 13 Coverdell grant funds:

- A total of 4 criminalists were able to attend mainland trainings: 66<sup>th</sup> Annual American Academy of Forensic Sciences Scientific Meeting (2), IAI Annual Educational Conference (1), and Clandestine Laboratory Investigating chemists Annual Technical Training Seminar (1).
- A variety of webinar and interagency trainings was completed that covered topics such as Corrective Action Process Analysis Basics, Chemical Latent Print Development, 3D Scanning Technology, Advanced Forensic Investigations for Hazardous Environments and others.
- 1 week Photography class with Hugh Okubo, HPD-SIS, where 20 people were trained
- 3 day basic Crime Scene class where 20 people were trained
- 2 day training on Tire Marks and Footwear Impressions where 20 people were trained

The Honolulu Police Department received a grant of \$25,538 for their Scientific Investigation Section Continuing Education Project. With grant funds, The Honolulu Police Department Scientific Investigation Section (SIS) plans to use grant funds to improve the quality of its work product by providing continuing education opportunities to the scientific personnel. To achieve this goal, the project's objectives are to: (1) provide continuing education to twenty Scientific Investigation Section members and (2) extend seven training opportunities to forensic scientists from other law enforcement agencies in the state. With these funds, HPD hosted on-site training on the subjects of Latent Print processing and Balance Best Measurement Practices which had a total of 26 attendees, six (6) from other law enforcement agencies in the state. The following objectives and activities were accomplished using the FY 13 Coverdell grant funds:

- The crime scene unit held an on-site training course entitled "Finding Latent Print Evidence with Chemistry and Light" where 11 crime scene responders from HPD attended the course and 3 from HiPD, MPD and KPD were able to attend and all travel costs were covered.



## Coverdell Opportunity

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Since 2003, funding through the Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program has been cut by a little under half of the average funding. The average funding level from 2003 – 2011 was \$110,004 and from 2012 – 2014 the average funding level dropped to \$59,166. See attached funding chart for a snapshot of all funding Hawaii has received since 2003, as well as a list of agencies supported by Coverdell funding (Attachment A).

In response to the limited funding resources through Coverdell funding, a Statewide Forensic Science Strategic Plan for 2015 – 2019 (Attachment B) was developed to address the needs, gaps and goals of Hawaii's forensic science agencies. Since 2008, the Department of the Attorney General has facilitated a Statewide Forensic Science Meeting for agencies that implement forensic science services in Hawaii. This group developed a mission statement: To provide quality forensic services through a managed approach in support of the criminal justice system in the state of Hawaii.

The following Departments have forensic services through a forensic lab or other services: the Honolulu Police Department (HPD) Scientific Investigations Section (SIS), Department of Public Safety, Narcotics Enforcement Division Forensic Laboratory (NEDFL), the Hawaii Police Department (HiPD), the Maui Police Department (MPD), Kauai Police Department (KPF) Crime Scene Unit, the Department of the Medical Examiner (MED) – City & County of Honolulu, and the Department of the Attorney General Investigations Division. Currently, there is not a state forensic science laboratory or state medical examiners office. The counties of Hawaii, Kauai, and Maui have coroner systems rather than a medical examiner system.

Since the Coverdell funding is limited, the Statewide Forensic Science Group has decided to focus their funding opportunities to projects which will benefit Hawaii as a State (see the Statewide Forensic Science Strategic Plan). This will be done through a collaboration of agencies bringing trainings to the state, holding on-site interagency training, and developing project ideas that involve all forensic science agencies. Applications for Paul Coverdell funding will focus on projects that aim to help improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science and medical examiner services throughout Hawaii.