



CITY OF OAKLAND

# AGENDA REPORT

**TO:** Edward D. Reiskin  
City Administrator

**FROM:** Susan Manheimer  
Interim Chief of Police

**SUBJECT:** 2019 OPD Crime Lab Coverdell Grant

**DATE:** June 9, 2020

City Administrator Approval

Date: July 8, 2020

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution Authorizing The City Administrator Or Designee To Accept And Appropriate Grant Funds In An Amount Not To Exceed Sixty-Three Thousand Nine Hundred Fifty-Nine Dollars (\$63,959) From The California Governor's Office Of Emergency Services (CalOES), For The Fiscal Year 2019-20 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Program During The Grant Period Of January 1 – December 31, 2020, To Support The Oakland Police Department (OPD) Crime Laboratory Improve The Quality, Timeliness, And Credibility Of Forensic Science Services, By Investing In Staff Training, Operational Expenses, And Equipment.**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Oakland Police Department (OPD) was awarded a one-year grant of sixty-three thousand nine hundred fifty-nine dollars (\$63,959) from the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) for Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Program (the Coverdell program). The grant period is from January 1 to December 31, 2020. Funding will be invested in a range of comprehensive conference, training, and training-related travel expenses for OPD Crime Laboratory (Crime Lab) staff; many of the trainings are not only required for staff, but critical for OPD's Crime Lab to maintain its accreditation.

Approval of the proposed resolution will allow for grant funds to be used for purchasing crime scene supplies and tools and a variety of Crime Lab supplies and equipment (e.g. crime scene response materials and crime scene vehicle upgrades, calibration services of equipment, drug analysis instrumentation and standards, ammunition for firearms test fires, software and computers for databases including CODIS). Funds will allow up to fourteen (14) staff in at least six forensic science areas to attend nine training events.

City Council  
July 14, 2020

## **BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY**

The Coverdell program awards grants to states and units of local government to help improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science and medical examiner and coroner services. The funding amount of this award is formula-based. The grant rules allow for funds to be used to train and employ forensic laboratory personnel, as needed, to help eliminate forensic analysis case backlogs, and fund related crime lab miscellaneous expenses.<sup>1</sup> In particular, a state or unit of local government that receives a Coverdell Grant must use the grant for the following purposes:

1. Carry out all or a substantial part of a program intended to improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner and coroner 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;
2. 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;
3. Train, assist, and employ forensic laboratory personnel as needed to eliminate such a backlog;
4. 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); and
5. Educate and train forensic pathologists.

OPD has received thirteen (13) Coverdell grants since 2008.

## **ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES**

The OPD Criminalistics Laboratory (Crime Lab) does not have an independent budget for staff training. OPD therefore needs additional funds to provide training to maintain staff with critical forensic certifications. OPD's Crime Lab has a goal of achieving 100 percent certification for Crime Lab scientific staff (the current level is approximately 80 percent). Crime Lab staff are either certified by the American Board of Criminalistics (ABC), the Association of Firearms and Toolmarks Examiners (AFTE), the International Association for Identification (IAI), or are seeking relevant external certifications in their specialty area.

Certification maintenance requires each certificate holder to demonstrate on-going professional development through training. OPD's laboratory ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board (ANAB) accreditation requires demonstrated continuing education for all scientific staff. In addition to these requirements, OPD expects this training to improve skills, knowledge, and overall capability. This training is critical for maintaining the quality standards of Crime Lab forensic work. **Table 1** below details the expected Crime Lab staff trainings which will be completed with 2019 Coverdell Grant funding.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nij.gov/topics/forensics/lab-operations/capacity/nfsia/pages/welcome.aspx>

**Table 1: Crime Lab Proposed Trainings in 2020**

Individual	Title of Course	Purpose	Cost
<b>Drug Analysis Unit Related Training</b>			
1 Drug Unit Analyst	American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS)	Annual conference on a wide range of forensic topics	\$2,453
<b>Forensic Biology Unit Related Training</b>			
1 Analyst	CAC meeting registration local	Semi-annual meeting of California Forensic Professionals	\$300
<b>Latent Print Unit Related Training</b>			
2 Latent Print Examiner II	International Association for Identification National Conference	Keep up with developments in the field of latent prints. Learning about technical improvements and efficient methodology will help reduce backlog	\$4,806
<b>Firearms Unit Related Training</b>			
1 Firearms Examiner and IBIS Technician	Shot Show	Annual tradeshow to see new firearms and trends in the field	\$1,622
1 Firearms Examiner	CAC meeting registration (local)	Semi-annual meeting of California Forensic Professionals	\$300
1 Firearms Examiner	AFTE Conference	National meeting of Association of Firearms and Toolmarks Examiners covering topics in forensic firearms.	\$2,565
<b>Quality Assurance, Accreditation, Crime Scene, Laboratory Management and Lab-wide Training</b>			
1 Supervisor	American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS)	Annual conference on a wide range of forensic topics	\$2,453
1 Supervisor	American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors (ASCLD)	Annual conference on a wide range of forensic, quality and management topics	\$2429
Quality Assurance Program Supervisor	Association of Forensic Quality Assurance Managers (AFQAM)	Training for quality managers in issues related to accreditation and risk management	\$1522
Quality Assurance Program Supervisor	CQE Examination	Certification for Quality Engineer	\$350
Criminalist or Latent Print Examiner	ANAB Assessor Tuition	Coursework to become an assessor for ANAB. Assist with laboratory internal audits and assessing external labs to aid in adoption of best practices.	\$2,020
Criminalist or Latent Print Examiner	ANAB Auditor Tuition	Course to become an auditor for ISO standards. Assist lab internal audits to aid in upkeep of lab accreditation.	\$1,664
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$22,484</b>

Other projects besides training can be taken on this year if the monies in this grant proposal are approved. The budget for the 2019 Coverdell Grant affords the laboratory the opportunity to

fund critical projects that have not been upgraded in recent years due to lack of funds. These include crime scene response, drug analysis standards and equipment, ammunition for firearms test fires and database upgrades to include desktop computers, and calibration services.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

CalOES will grant \$63,959 to OPD's Crime Lab over a one-year period to accomplish grant objectives. Specifically, funds will be spent on the following:

<b>Use of Funds</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Forensic Science Training Events and Related Travel	\$22,484
Supplies, Tools and Equipment for Crime Scene Response, Quality Assurance and Management, Drug Analysis Unit, Firearms Unit, Forensic Biology Unit and Latent Print Unit	\$30,975
Desktop Computers and Workstations for Forensic Biology Unit	\$10,500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$63,959</b>

Funds will be allocated in the Criminalistics fund (2112), Crime Lab (102610), in the Project to be determined.

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST**

No public outreach was required in the development of this report and resolution beyond standard City Council meeting noticing requirements.

### **COORDINATION**

This report and legislation have been reviewed by the Office of the City Attorney and the Budget Bureau.

### **SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES**

**Economic:** There are no economic opportunities identified in this report.

**Environmental:** There are no environmental opportunities identified in this report.

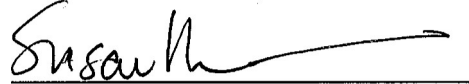
**Race and Social Equity:** The activities completed under this grant will better position OPD's Crime Lab to maintain high quality services and training for staff; better Crime Lab services will benefit Oakland residents and visitors.

**ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution Authorizing The City Administrator Or Designee To Accept And Appropriate Grant Funds In An Amount Not To Exceed Sixty-Three Thousand Nine Hundred Fifty-Nine Dollars (\$63,959) From The California Governor's Office Of Emergency Services (CalOES), For The Fiscal Year 2019-20 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Program During The Grant Period Of January 1 – December 31, 2020, To Support The Oakland Police Department (OPD) Crime Laboratory Improve The Quality, Timeliness, And Credibility Of Forensic Science Services, By Investing In Staff Training, Operational Expenses, And Equipment.

For questions concerning this report, please contact Sandra Sachs, OPD Criminalistics Laboratory Manager, at 510-238-2108.

Respectfully submitted,



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Oakland Police Department

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