



CITY OF OAKLAND

AGENDA REPORT

TO: Jestin D. Johnson
City Administrator

FROM: Floyd Mitchell
Chief of Police

SUBJECT: FY 2024-25 OPD Crime Lab
Coverdell Grant

DATE: June 10, 2024

City Administrator Approval 
Jestin Johnson (Jun 25, 2024 10:27 PDT)

Date: Jun 25, 2024

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution Authorizing The City Administrator To Accept And Appropriate Grant Funds In An Amount Not To Exceed Sixty-Eight Thousand Three Hundred Forty-Four Dollars (\$68,344) From The California Governor's Office Of Emergency Services (CALOES), For The 2023 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Program, During The Grant Period Of April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025, To Support The Oakland Police Department (OPD) Crime Laboratory Operations.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Oakland Police Department (OPD) was awarded a one-year grant of sixty-eight thousand three hundred forty-four dollars (\$68,344) 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 April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025. Funding will be invested in a range of comprehensive conferences, training, and training-related travel expenses for OPD Criminalistics 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. Additionally, grant funds will be used to purchase crime scene supplies and tools and a variety of Crime Lab supplies and equipment (e.g., crime scene response materials and crime scene storage materials, quality assurance balance and thermometer calibration services, computer and drug analysis instrumentation and standards, ammunition for firearms test fires, DNA¹ testing kits, latent print supplies, software and computers for databases including CODIS². Funds will allow up to eighteen (18) staff in multiple forensic science areas to attend fourteen training events.

¹ DNA = Deoxyribonucleic Acid, the hereditary material in humans and almost all other organisms. Nearly every cell in a person's body has the same DNA.

² CODIS is the acronym for the Combined DNA Index System and is the generic term used to describe the FBI's program of support for criminal justice DNA databases as well as the software used to run these databases
<https://www.fbi.gov/services/laboratory/biometric-analysis/codis/codis-and-ndis-fact-sheet>

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.

3

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 Coverdell grants since 2008. This 2024-25 Fiscal year grant would represent OPD's eighteenth grant since program inception.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

This policy advances the Citywide priority of responsive, trustworthy government as better Crime Lab services will benefit Oakland residents and visitors through robust investigations that support crime victims and public safety.

The OPD Criminalistics Laboratory (Crime Lab) does not have an independent budget for staff training. The Crime Lab 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 of eligible staff). Crime Lab staff are either certified by the American Board of Criminalistics (ABC), the Association of Firearms and Toolmarks Examiners (AFTE), or the International Association for Identification (IAI) or are seeking relevant external certifications in their specialty area.

Certification maintenance requires each certificate holder to demonstrate ongoing professional development through training. OPD's laboratory ANSI² 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

³ <https://bja.ojp.gov/program/coverdell/about-program>

training is critical for maintaining the quality standards of Crime Lab forensic work. **Table 1** below details the expected Crime Lab staff training, which will be completed with 2023 Coverdell Grant funding.

Table 1: Crime Lab Proposed Trainings in 2024-25

Individual	Title of Course	Purpose	Cost
Drug Analysis Unit-Related Training			
1 Drug Unit Analyst	CA Association of Criminalists meeting registration local	Semi-annual meeting of California Forensic Professionals	\$1,666
Latent Print Training			
2 Analysts	International Association of Identification	Webinar, 1-day seminar, rolling dates with latent print relevance	\$300
2 Analysts	International Association of Identification	Webinar, 3-day seminar, rolling dates with latent print relevance	\$800
2 Analysts	International Association of Identification	Webinar, 5-day seminar, rolling dates with latent print relevance	\$1,000
Firearms Unit Training			
1 Supervisor, 1 Analyst	Association of Firearms and Toolmarks Examiners (AFTE)	Annual conference of firearms and toolmarks examiners	\$5,458
Quality Assurance, Accreditation, Crime Scene, Laboratory Management and Lab-wide Training			
1 Drug Unit Analyst	California Criminalistics Institute	Crime Scene Processing I	\$1,069
2 Analysts	California Criminalistics Institute	Crime Scene Processing II	\$2,138
1 Analyst	California Criminalistics Institute	Crime Scene Processing III	\$1,069
1 Analyst	California Criminalistics Institute	Forensic Photography	\$1,069
Quality Assurance Supervisor	Association of Forensic Quality Assurance Managers (AFQAM)	Training for quality managers in issues related to accreditation and risk management	\$2,045
Crime Lab Manager	American Society of Crime Lab Directors (ASCLD)	Training for crime laboratory managers on current leadership topics	\$2,744
1 Analyst	American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS)	Annual conference on a wide range of forensic topics	\$2,494
1 Analyst	CA Association of Criminalists meeting registration local	Semi-annual meeting of California Forensic Professionals	\$1,665
TOTAL			\$23,517

The budget for the 2023 Coverdell Grant affords the laboratory the opportunity to fund critical

projects besides training. There are numerous important projects that cannot be tackled for lack of equipment or funds. This grant allows these important projects to move forward, including augmenting crime scene response capability, purchasing drug analysis standards and equipment, procuring ammunition for firearms test fires and software upgrades, funding calibration services, DNA testing kits, and computer hardware. In addition, a moratorium on training spending was placed on general funds by the City Administrator, which raises the importance of having training opportunities funded through grants.

FISCAL IMPACT

CalOES will grant \$68,344, funds will be spent on the following:

Use of Funds	Amount
Forensic Science Training Events and Related Travel	\$23,517
Supplies, Tools, and Equipment for Crime Scene Response, Quality Assurance and Management, Drug Analysis Unit, Firearms Unit, Forensic Biology Unit, and Latent Print Unit	\$44,827
TOTAL	\$68,344

Funds will be allocated to the Criminalistics fund (2112) and 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.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: There are no economic opportunities associated with this report.

Environmental: There are no environmental opportunities associated with 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 through robust investigations that support crime victims and public safety.

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-eight thousand three hundred forty-four dollars (\$68,344) From The California Governor's Office Of Emergency Services (CALOES), For The 2023 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Program, During The Grant Period Of April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025, To Support The Oakland Police Department (OPD) Crime Laboratory Operations.

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

Respectfully submitted,



Floyd Mitchell
Chief of Police
Oakland Police Department

Reviewed by:
Frederick Shavies, Deputy Chief
OPD, Bureau of Investigations

Sandra Sachs, Crime Laboratory Manager
OPD Criminalistics Laboratory

LaRajja Marshall, Fiscal Services Manager
OPD, Fiscal Services Division

Tracey Jones, Police Services Manager
OPD, Research, Planning, and Technology Unit

Prepared by:
Patrick Paton, Crime Laboratory Quality Supervisor
OPD Criminalistics Laboratory