



## CONSORTIUM OF FORENSIC SCIENCE ORGANIZATIONS (CFSO)

# FLASH BRIEF

JUNE 2025

The mission of the CFSO is to speak with a single forensic science voice on behalf of its member organizations on matters of mutual interest regarding forensic science, 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 and coroner offices. The primary focus of the CFSO is national, state, & local policymakers, as well as the United States Congress.

## FY26 PROPOSED FEDERAL FORENSICS BUDGET

### CFSO Board of Directors

Matthew Gamette, MS  
Chair  
Representing ASCLD  
[matthew.gamette@thecfso.org](mailto:matthew.gamette@thecfso.org)

James Gill, MD  
Vice-Chair  
Representing NAME  
[james.gill@thecfso.org](mailto:james.gill@thecfso.org)

Ken Melson, JD  
Secretary  
Representing AAFS  
[kenneth.melson@thecfso.org](mailto:kenneth.melson@thecfso.org)

Ken Martin, MS  
Treasurer  
Representing IAI  
[kenneth.martin@thecfso.org](mailto:kenneth.martin@thecfso.org)

Bobbi Jo O'Neal  
Representing IACME  
[bobbijooneal@thecfso.org](mailto:bobbijooneal@thecfso.org)

Marc Lebeau, Ph.D.  
Representing SOFT/ABFT  
[marc.lebeau@thecfso.org](mailto:marc.lebeau@thecfso.org)

Beth Lavach,  
Legislative Liaison  
[beth.lavach@thecfso.org](mailto:beth.lavach@thecfso.org)

The Proposed FY26 budget has been slow to come out this year but it is beginning to trickle in. Please see the information we have currently, a summary of the proposed budget numbers, and our **call to action** at the end of this memo and [linked here](#) on our website. We have also provided the [contacts](#) (.xls download) or [contacts](#) (PDF in HTML browser) for many Members of Congress on our website.

### DOJ

As you can see below that forensic science has mixed funding levels with the biggest decrease being that of the Coverdell grants. We have met with the White House and discussed the importance of this program to the community, and we will be meeting with the Department of Justice in the coming days. As always, this budget will be addressed and modified by Congress in the next few months. We meet with Congress on a regular basis and will alert them to our concerns.

### NIST

While we do not have the visibility on forensic programs in the NIST budget, we can see from the documents that NIST has taken a 28% cut in funding across the board. This is extremely troublesome and CFSO has already expressed concern to Congress.

### CDC

As with NIST, there is no specific detail regarding forensics in the current draft of the budget. However, it appears that programs related to forensic science continue to have support in this Administration (see language below).

DOJ	Final FY24/25*	FY26 Proposed
Program		
Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant	\$345.5m	\$446m
National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs)	\$3m	\$3m
Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains Act	\$5m	\$5m
Forensics Ballistics in Higher Education	\$2.5m	0
DNA Programs	\$153m	\$148m
DNA Analysis and Capacity Enhancement Program-Debbie Smith	\$120m	\$120m
Other Federal, State, and Local Forensic Activities (note includes Medical Examiner/Coroner programs)	\$15m	\$10m
Kirk Bloodsworth Post Conviction DNA Testing Program	\$14m	\$14m
Sexual Assault Forensic Exam Program Guide	\$ 4m	\$ 4m
Community Teams to Reduce the Sexual Assault Kit (SAK) Backlog	\$51.5m	\$51.5m
Regional Sexual Assault Investigative Training Academies/Access to Sexual Assault Nurse Exams	\$20m	0
Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Grants	\$34m	\$10m
CARA (Comprehensive Opioid Use Reduction Activities)	0	\$418m
FBI 2 <sup>nd</sup> DNA Laboratory	N/A	N/A
Research and Development		\$22m
Commerce: NIST	Final FY24/25 *	FY26 Proposed
Forensic Science Research	\$22m	N/A
OSAC	\$3.5m	N/A
Technical Merit Evaluations	\$1.5m	N/A
SDO Grant	\$1.5m	N/A
HHS: CDC	Final FY24/25*	FY26 Proposed
Opioid Overdose Prevention and Surveillance	\$505.579m	N/A (see note)
National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS)	\$24.5m	N/A (see note)
Public Health Data Modernization	\$175m	N/A (see note)
Public Health Data Modernization (PPHF)	0	

N/A=not available

## CDC

Disease Surveillance CDC's public health surveillance systems serve as the foundation for the nation's ability to identify and respond to health threats and provide vital insights into the nation's health and responses to infectious disease outbreaks. National and state-based surveillance systems for risk factors and disease tracking are critical to proactively address public health challenges. Early detection of these risk factors enables timely interventions and prevents diseases from spreading or becoming more severe. The budget includes \$328 million to support these crucial surveillance activities within funding for Public Health and Scientific Services. The budget also maintains \$23 million for the Surveillance for Emerging Threats to Mothers and Babies (SET-NET) program within Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases.

Improving Public Health Data- The budget maintains investments in core capabilities to enhance the public health system at federal, state, and local levels. It includes several strategic investments to enhance the Nation's public health data, including CDC's Public Health Data Modernization efforts. CDC will support state, local, tribal, and territorial jurisdictions as they continue to build the infrastructure necessary for sharing standardized data across interoperable public and private health delivery systems. CDC will continue to support technical assistance and deploy CDC-developed tools that enable health departments to more effectively and efficiently collect, analyze and use public health data.

The Budget also includes \$550 million for the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, formerly in CDC. These resources will support a new consolidated block grant meant to support activities formerly supported by CDC's domestic violence, sexual violence, domestic violence community projects, and rape education and prevention programs. The budget also continues to support the National Violent Death Reporting System, suicide prevention, and opioid overdose prevention and surveillance activities.



American Academy of Forensic Sciences  
American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors  
International Association for Identification  
National Association of Medical Examiners  
Society of Forensic Toxicologists / American Board of Forensic Toxicology

## CONTACT YOUR SENATOR AND URGE THEM TO FUND THE PAUL COVERDELL GRANT

**The DOJ reduced Coverdell grants by 70% in FY26**

We urge you to call your Members of Congress (House and Senate), and ask to speak with the staff handling law enforcement/judiciary matters. (Enter your zip code <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/map>)

### IF YOU CANNOT SPEAK TO A PERSON, REQUEST AN EMAIL

- → Ask them to fund the Paul Coverdell Grant in the FY26 budget!
- → Tell them:
  - → Why Coverdell is important to you.
  - → What you use Coverdell for in your state or in your agency.
  - → Why you could use even more money in Coverdell (specifics) - \$10m for 50 states
  - → How losing Coverdell funding will negatively affect your lab/office
- → Invite them to your lab for a tour when they are in their home district.

### BACKGROUND FOR CALLS

The National Institute of Justice's 2019 *Needs Assessment of Forensic Laboratories and Medical Examiner/Coroner Offices* Report to Congress was the first attempt to determine the approximate cost of meeting the current demand for services and the related costs of testimony by forensic service providers from public laboratories and medical examiners/coroner offices while ensuring valid and reliable results. The report concludes that there is insufficient funding to process the ever-increasing amounts of forensic evidence in a timely manner. **It states that the state, county, local and tribal crime laboratories, including medical examiner/coroner offices, have a \$640 million annual deficit for normal operations, and the increase in current opioid expenditures adds another \$270 million to that cost.**

West Virginia University data from Project Foresight lists growth in national forensic backlogs from 2017-2023 of up to 13%. Turnaround times in the United States forensic service providers from 2017-2023 have increased by up to 40%, including 10% in DNA casework, 19% in drug chemistry, 18% in toxicology, and 18% in firearms analysis. Specifically, the backlog in blood alcohol over the period from 2017-2023 was up 100%, crime scene was up 270%, controlled substances was up 23%, DNA was up 42%, forensic pathology was up 139%, and post-mortem toxicology was up 38%. In addition, States recently surveyed by our organization provided data to support that firearms case submissions increased between 18% and 154% in the last few years. During the same timeframe, the turnaround times (time from intake into the lab to forensic report issued) increased 954% in blood alcohol, 25% in crime scene, 232% in controlled substances, 88% in DNA, and 246% in post-mortem toxicology. However, funding has not increased to address these issues.

### ACTION WE NEED FROM CONGRESS

**FUND the Paul Coverdell National Forensic Science Improvement Act** at \$50m, not \$10. The Paul Coverdell National Forensic Science grants stand alone as the nation's most crucial funding source for forensic science. These grants are the only dedicated funds available to state, county, local, and tribal forensic communities, supporting over 90% of all disciplines within the forensic science community. Without them, the ability of these vital agencies to solve crimes and bring about justice would be severely hampered.