



**CONSORTIUM OF FORENSIC SCIENCE
ORGANIZATIONS (CFSO)**

FLASH BRIEF

APRIL 2020

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

CFSO Board of Directors

Matthew Gamette, MS
Chair Representing ASCLD
matthew.gamette@gmail.com

Ken Martin, MS
Vice Chair Representing IAI
kenneth.martin@thecfso.org

Jonathan Arden, MD
Secretary Representing NAME
jlardenmd@ardenforensics.com

Timothy P. Rohrig, PhD
Representing SOFT/ABFT
DrTRohrig@aol.com

Ken Melson, JD
Representing AAFS
kmelson01@aol.com

Yale Caplan, PhD
Representing ABFT
fortox@aol.com

Christopher "Kip" Thompson, MD
Representing AAPL
CHThompson@mednet.ucla.edu

Beth Lavach,
Legislative Liaison
bethlavach@elsandassociates.com

IMPORTANT NOTIFICATIONS

COVID-19 Update:

First and foremost, the Consortium of Forensic Science Organizations hopes that you and yours are healthy during the very difficult times our country is facing. We are appreciative of those, especially from our membership, on the front lines of this battle. We are doing our best to support you and get you the resources you need.

Although most Congressional staff are under a "stay at home order," business has simply been modified in Congress and programs are moving and being created to help us. To that end, we wanted to provide you with some quick resources and updates.

COVID FUNDING

CDC

Funding is available through CDC for the Medical Examiner and Coroner Offices. It will be awarded through the state-based public health preparedness programs (PHEP). This program received \$2.2b in the Coronavirus bill. If you are not participating in this program in your state already you should reach out to your local state preparedness contact and advise them of your COVID-19 response needs. The application can be found here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/cpr/readiness/funding-covid.htm>

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Funding is available under the Byrne Jag grant program for all forensic science service providers. \$850m additional funds were provided in the Coronavirus bill. This funding (called Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Fund--CESF)

will allow state and local police departments and jails to meet local needs.

<https://bja.ojp.gov/funding/opportunities/bja-2020-18553> BJA has confirmed to CFSO that all public Forensic Science Service Providers (FSSPs), including Medical Examiners/Coroner Offices, are eligible for this funding through their State Administering Agency. This funding has been allocated to the states in the amounts identified at <https://bja.ojp.gov/program/fy20-cesf-allocations> The funding is to be used for the purchase of personal protective equipment and other needed medical items.

The Consortium of Forensic Science Organizations (CFSO) has been asked to provide the Department of Justice a list of priority equipment needed by the forensic science community. We thank all of you for answering the call to help us produce this document. The final document can be found on the CFSO website <http://www.thecfso.org/COVID Critical List Final.pdf> We are currently working with Congress and the Department of Justice to ensure that the forensic science community is included in all Congressional bills in support of the COVID crisis.

OTHER CFSO LEGISLATIVE WORK

The budget for FY21 continues to move forward and we have provided Congress our needs.

We have begun to work with Congress on an update to the Justice for All Act and Coverdell as they expire in FY21.

The House and Senate have provided the CFSO a draft of their bill regarding the codification of the OSAC and we are in negotiations.

The Senate has begun to review the Migrant bill with the intent of taking it up again.

PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION ON LAW ENFORCEMENT

The Presidential Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice is having telephonic hearings on a number of topics in order to make recommendations to the President this year on needs of the law enforcement community. CFSO Chair Matthew Gamette will be addressing the Commission on April 14th to discuss sexual assault and domestic violence related evidence and processing at the forensic laboratory.

<https://www.justice.gov/ag/presidential-commission-law-enforcement-and-administration-justice>

OPEN SOLICITATIONS

New Solicitation: NIJ National Center on Forensics, Fiscal Year 2020

With this solicitation, NIJ seeks proposals from qualified applicants to establish and operate the NIJ National Center on Forensics to:

Facilitate a partnership amongst:

1. A full-service State department of forensic science with a medical examiner function;
2. An accredited university of higher education with affiliate medical and law schools; and

3. A statewide district attorneys association.

For the purpose of:

1. Providing medico-legal learning opportunities for medical students to train as deputy medical examiners/coroners in underserved rural areas;
2. Providing forensic science and legal training to district attorneys, judges, and law enforcement; and
3. Developing opportunities, as appropriate, amongst the designated partners to benefit current and future practitioners in the field.

All applications are due by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on June 5, 2020.

Academic-based Drug Field Testing & Training Initiative

BJA will select an applicant to establish a pilot project to develop a national training model on current rapid identification technology and scientifically sound field collection and testing methods that can be used when drugs are discovered in the field. To be led by an accredited institution of higher learning, the training should incorporate evidence collection and testing technologies and methods that are reliable within state and local court systems.

<https://bja.ojp.gov/DFT20>

Applications are due May 8, 2020

BJA Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse Site-based Program (COSSAP)

The Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse Program (COSSAP) was developed as part of the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) legislation. COSSAP's purpose is to provide financial and technical assistance to states, units of local government, and Indian tribal governments to develop, implement, or expand comprehensive efforts to identify, respond to, treat, and support those impacted by illicit opioids, stimulants, and other drugs of abuse. COSSAP aims to reduce the impact of these substances on individuals and communities, including a reduction in the number of overdose fatalities, as well as mitigate the impacts on crime victims by supporting comprehensive, collaborative initiatives. <https://bja.ojp.gov/funding/opportunities/bja-2020-17023>

Applications are due May 21, 2020

Research and Evaluation for the Testing and Interpretation of Physical Evidence in Publicly Funded Forensic Laboratories, Fiscal Year 2020

With this solicitation, NIJ seeks proposals for basic or applied research and development projects. An NIJ forensic science research and development grant supports a discrete, specified, circumscribed project that will:

1. Increase the body of knowledge to guide and inform forensic science policy and practice; or

2. Lead to the production of useful material(s), device(s), system(s), or method(s) that have the potential for forensic application.

The intent of this program is to direct the findings of the research and evaluation towards the identification of the most efficient, accurate, reliable, and cost-effective methods for the identification, analysis, and interpretation of physical evidence for criminal justice purposes.

All applications are due by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on May 18, 2020.

NOTE: Links to all the documents the CFSO publishes as well as pertinent government links and documents can be found at our site: www.thecfso.org