

The Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General (OIG) today released a report revealing deficiencies in the Office of Justice Programs (OJP), National Institute of Justice's (NIJ) oversight of the Solving Cold Cases with DNA Program. The OIG's review identified issues related to NIJ's monitoring of the use of program funding, program implementation, and performance reporting.

To further the use of DNA technology to solve cold cases, the NIJ launched the Solving Cold Cases with DNA program (Cold Case DNA program) in 2005. The Cold Case DNA program offers funding to state and local governments to identify, review, and investigate violent crime cold cases that have the potential to be solved through DNA analysis.

Our review included audits of six specific award recipients. We found that two of these recipients, the Jackson County, Missouri Prosecutor's Office (Jackson County), and the Kansas City, Missouri Board of Police Commissioners (Kansas City), were using award funds for unallowable purposes, resulting in questioned costs totaling \$944,756, and funds to better use totaling \$415,829. NIJ did not identify these issues despite having conducted an in-depth review of Jackson County's award, which was closely aligned with Kansas City's award as the two agencies were awarded funds to conduct dual reviews of the same cases.

We also found that one award recipient; the Colorado Department of Public Safety (CDPS) encountered problems implementing its Cold Case DNA program. We determined that the CDPS experienced major delays in both spending and drawing down award funds. However, NIJ did not resolve this issue despite a number of indicators that should have been evident in the course of its general monitoring, such as slow spending and award extension requests.

Finally, we found that NIJ did not identify issues at all six of the recipient sites we visited related to the accuracy of their performance reporting. We identified metrics related to the number of cases reviewed and subjected to DNA analysis that were understated by as much as 89 cases in a given period and overstated by as much as 31 cases in a given period. In addition, we found that, as partnering agencies, Kansas City and Jackson County counted 485 of the same cases in both of their performance reports, contrary to OJP guidance. We also determined that Kansas City and Jackson County reviewed a large number of ineligible cases that were included as part of the metrics reported, all resulting in significant overstatements. NIJ did not identify these issues despite conducting in-depth reviews of two of the six programs we reviewed.

The report released today made three recommendations to the NIJ to enhance oversight of the Solving Cold Cases with DNA Program. NIJ agreed with all three recommendations.

The report can be found on the OIG's website at: <http://www.justice.gov/oig/reports/2014/a1430.pdf>