



OFFICE OF RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE


Marc Elrich
County Executive

Tiffany Ward
Director and Chief Equity Officer

MEMORANDUM

November 27, 2023

To: Jennifer Bryant, Director
Office of Management and Budget

From: Tiffany Ward, Director
Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice 

Re: Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) Supplemental Appropriation (SA) #24-31
Montgomery County Government, Department of Police, Bureau of Justice
Assistance Programs, (BJAG) FY23 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement
Grants Program – Competitive Grant Award (\$499,993)

- I. **FINDING:** The Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) finds that Supplemental Appropriations #24-31 – FY23 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program – Competitive Grant Award has the potential to reduce racial disparities and inequities. Enhancements to the Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) Crime Laboratory will reduce backlogs in forensic services, better equipping MCPD with the ability to solve crimes and prevent drug-related deaths-which can impact low-income as well as black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) communities. However, based on the information provided, ORESJ is unable to draw conclusions about the extent to which this supplemental appropriation will reduce any gaps for low-income and communities of color in the County. Therefore, ORESJ's finding is inconclusive.
- II. **BACKGROUND:** SA #24-31 – FY23 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program – Competitive Grant Award will appropriate federal grant dollars to support equipment acquisition, contracted staff support, and training and professional development for the Department's Crime Laboratory. Increases in opioid and gun crime cases have limited the Crime Laboratory's ability to respond in a timely matter and have exceeded MCPD's capacity to analyze evidence quickly and accurately to support effective criminal investigations and prosecutions. Grant funds will be used to reduce

backlogs and will specifically support the following within the Firearms Examination Unit and Forensic Chemistry Unit:

- Acquisition of a State-of-the-Art Mass Spectrometer and High-Capacity Virtual Microscopy Scanner and Analysis Software;
- Employment of a Contracted Firearms/Toolmark Examiner;
- Training and Professional Development;
- Collaboration and Outreach Initiatives; and
- Evaluation and Quality Assurance.

ORESJ has previously analyzed several policing and public safety-related supplemental funding requests. Our analysis can be found in the following:

- 1) REIA #23-69 – Amendment to the FY23-28 Capital Improvements Program for the construction of a new 6th District Police Station
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/23-69.pdf>
- 2) REIA #23-70 & #23-94 – FY23-28 Capital Improvements Program for the Public Safety Communications Center Phase II
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/23-94.pdf>
- 3) REIA #23-28 Police Accountability and Community Transparency (PACT) Grant Award
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/23-28.pdf>
- 4) REIA #24-21 Drone as First Responder Pilot Program (\$350,000)
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/24-21.pdf>

Finally, the following REIA provides additional examples of applying a Targeted Universalist approach when there is a universal benefit within a public safety context.

- 5) REIA #23-100 – FY23 Operating Budget, Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service Senator Amoss Fire, Rescue and Ambulance Fund (State 508) Grant
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/23-100.pdf>

cc: Marcus Jones, Chief, Montgomery County Police Department
Ken Hartman, Director, Strategic Partnerships, Office of the County Executive