FORENSIC SCIENCE BOARD
2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Virginia Code § 9.1-1110(B) requires the Forensic Science Board (FSB) to review and make recommendations by November 1 of each year concerning items 1 through 6 below. Chapter 473 of the 2019 Acts of Assembly requires that information about use of the Physical Evidence Recovery Kit (PERK) Tracking System also be included in the Forensic Science Board's Annual Report. Accordingly, this Report is broken out into the following seven sections:

Contents

1. NEW MAJOR PROGRAMS AND PLANS FOR THE ACTIVITIES OF DFS AND ELIMINATION OF PROGRAMS NO LONGER NEEDED 2

DFS Accreditation Through ANSI National Accreditation Board (ANAB) 2

Central Laboratory Facility Project 3

Service Area Activities 4

Historical (Archived) Case File Review Project 5

Microscopic Hair Comparison Case Review 6

2. POLICY AND PRIORITIES IN RESPONSE TO AGENCY NEEDS 6

Improving Timeliness 6

Caseload Data 6

Breath Alcohol Tests Administered 9

Factors Affecting DFS Workloads and Backlogs 10

3. GENERAL FISCAL YEAR OPERATIONAL BUDGET AND ANY MAJOR CHANGES IN APPROPRIATED FUNDS 13

Budget Overview 13

Grant Awards 14

Grant Applications 14

4. ACTIONS TO FOSTER AND PROMOTE COORDINATION AND COOPERATION BETWEEN DFS AND THE USER PROGRAMS WHICH ARE SERVED 14

Notices Sent to DFS User Agencies 14

Enhancing External Communication 15

Compounds Scheduled Through Board of Pharmacy Regulations 16

Report of *Drug Cases Submitted to the Virginia Department of Forensic Science* 16

DRAFT

Training 17
Legal Resources Provided on DFS Website 18
5. RULES AND REGULATIONS NECESSARY TO CARRY OUT THE PURPOSES AND INTENT OF CHAPTER 11 OF TITLE 9.1 OF THE CODE OF VIRGINIA (DFS) 18
Regulations 18
6. ANY RECOMMENDATIONS SUBMITTED TO THE FORENSIC SCIENCE BOARD OR THE DIRECTOR BY THE SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE 18
Scientific Advisory Committee Recommendations/Actions 18
7. INFORMATION ABOUT USE OF THE PHYSICAL EVIDENCE RECOVERY KIT (PERK) TRACKING SYSTEM 19
PERK Tracking System Overview 19
PERK Tracking System Training 20
Kits in the PERK Tracking System 20
Actions Performed on Kits in the PERK Tracking System 21
Designated Statutory Reasons for Non-Submission 23
PERK Legislation Compliance 24
Attachment A - FORENSIC SCIENCE BOARD MEMBERS 26
Attachment B - SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS 27

The Forensic Science Board held meetings on January 6, 2025 (virtual), April 23, 2025 (in-person), July 9, 2025 (virtual) and October 8, 2025 (in-person). The in-person meetings were held at the DFS Central Laboratory in Richmond. A list of members of the Board is included as Attachment A.

Pursuant to Va. Code § 9.1-1110(B) and Chapter 473 of the 2019 Acts of Assembly, the Board makes this report.

1. NEW MAJOR PROGRAMS AND PLANS FOR THE ACTIVITIES OF DFS AND ELIMINATION OF PROGRAMS NO LONGER NEEDED

DFS Accreditation Through ANSI National Accreditation Board (ANAB)

The Department is currently accredited by the ANSI National Accreditation Board (ANAB). DFS was initially accredited in 1989 through the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors/Laboratory Accreditation Board (ASCLD/LAB), which merged with ANAB in 2016. Each DFS regional laboratory is accredited through ANAB as a testing laboratory, and the Breath Alcohol Section is accredited as a calibration laboratory.

DFS is on a four-year accreditation cycle and was reassessed by ANAB in 2022. Accreditation is an independent, third-party assessment of DFS conformance to hundreds of criteria specified in the International Standard ISO/IEC 17025 (General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories), ANAB's Accreditation Requirements for Forensic Testing and Calibration, the FBI Quality Assurance Standards for Forensic DNA Testing Laboratories, and the FBI Quality Assurance Standards for DNA Databasing Laboratories.

In September 2025, a week-long, onsite reassessment was conducted by a 26-member ANAB team. All four DFS forensic laboratories and the DFS calibration (Breath Alcohol) laboratory were visited by the assessors. Generally, such assessments are conducted on a four-year cycle. However, ANAB asked if DFS would be willing to be reassessed earlier in the current cycle due to scheduling issues in 2026 for ANAB. DFS agreed to the updated timeline and contract modification due in part to the upcoming move of the Richmond operations. The accreditation process is ongoing and DFS expects the official accreditation decision later this year.

Additional information about the Department's accreditation, including Accreditation Certificates and Scope documents, can be found on the DFS website at: http://www.dfs.virginia.gov/about-dfs/accreditation/accreditation-documentation/

Central Laboratory Facility Project

Construction activities of a new Central Laboratory Facility in Hanover County began in early 2023 and are on time and on budget. DFS is anticipating a phased move from the current location in downtown Richmond to commence approximately the third week of January 2026. A recent photograph (September 19, 2025) of the construction site is shown below:

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Service Area Activities

New Forensic Biology Methods and Software

Validation, development of the section protocols, and staff training on the new robotic workstation continue. The work toward implementing the new thermal cyclers continues with the data generated being very similar to the data generated on our existing thermal cyclers. This is promising in that it will limit the downstream changes to current instrumentation settings. The validation of the next version of the STRmix software will begin once the new thermal cyclers are online. A testing procedure for trace DNA on spent shell casing is currently being tested and the beginning bid preparation for next generation sequence analysis instrumentation has started.

New Toxicology Methods

In 2025, the Chemistry Research Section validated several methods for implementation in the Toxicology Section including a presumptive screening method for nitazenes in response to increased usage of this class of compounds. The Toxicology section also verified a new approach to the analysis of blood alcohol samples that substitutes nitrogen as the carrier gas for helium in response to the ongoing helium shortage. This new methodology has the potential to reduce costs to DFS by using the more available and lower priced nitrogen gas.

New Controlled Substance Methods

Pursuant to 6VAC40-30, the Department completed one request for presumptive mobile instrument (MX908 Handheld Mass Spectrometer) evaluation. This mobile instrument would be used to determine whether a material is a controlled substance or an imitation controlled substance, as defined in Va. Code § 18.2-247, or marijuana as defined in Va. Code §§ 4.1-600 and 18.2-247. Under Va. Code § 19.2-188.1, the Department approves field tests for use by law enforcement officers pursuant to regulations adopted in accordance with the Administrative Process Act (Va. Code § 2.2-4000 et seq.). The Department received instruments and training in early October 2024, and the evaluation was completed and approval published in the *Virginia Register of Regulations* on March 10, 2025.

Procedures are being updated in the Controlled Substances Section to allow extrapolation of a unit count. As the number of cases with thousands of illicit tablets seized has increased, the utility of examiner time spent counting was discussed with customers. Unit count extrapolation will be used for large cases where manually counting requires

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substantial resources in both time and physical space. Unit count will be extrapolated based on the weight of the evidence.

Changes to Trace Evidence Methods

Procedures are being updated in the Trace Evidence section to incorporate Micro X-ray Fluorescence Spectrometry (μXRF) for elemental analysis into the forensic comparison of glass. Studies have shown that discrimination between glass sources increases with the addition of elemental analysis. Verification will be achieved to the ASTM Standard Test Method, currently on the OSAC (Organization of Scientific Area Committees) Registry.

Proposed New Breath Alcohol Instrument

A Notice of Award was issued on March 7, 2025, concerning a proposed new evidential breath alcohol instrument, the Dräger Alcotest® 9510. The procurement process is ongoing, but nearing completion.

"Prelog" Electronic Evidence Submission System

The Department has begun a "soft launch" of an electronic system known as "Prelog," which will be used to document the submission of evidence from law enforcement agencies to DFS. Two law enforcement agencies are testing the system's functionality. Currently, such submissions are documented on a paper form known as a "Request for Laboratory Examination." Virginia Code § 19.2-187.01 was recently amended to authorize the use of electronic signatures in the new system.

Historical (Archived) Case File Review Project

The Department began its Historical or Archived Case File Review Project after obtaining funding in FY16. Through the project, an electronic database of archived case file information is being created that includes scanned copies of all Certificates of Analysis and available case information (e.g., the jurisdiction of the offense, the investigating agency, victim and suspect names, date evidence received, type of examination, and examiner names). The database of archived case files will include cases from 1973 through 1994. DFS implemented a Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) in 1995, so DFS is already able to electronically search cases from 1995 forward using its LIMS.

The Department has six wage positions assigned to the project, each working approximately 20 hours per week. As of August 29, 2025, over 338,300 of the estimated 1,000,000 archived case files covering the relevant period have been entered into the database. In FY24, DFS integrated the currently available database of case information and

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scanned documentation with the Department's LIMS for increased searchability. The two databases continue to be integrated.

Microscopic Hair Comparison Case Review

In 2016, the Board created a Microscopic Hair Comparison Case Review Subcommittee, which developed a process for the initial screening of DFS's microscopic hair comparison cases and for the review of transcripts in cases with convictions. A Review Team, consisting of two attorneys (i.e., one defense attorney and one prosecutor) and one DFS scientist with experience as a hair examiner, conducts reviews of the transcripts and makes recommendations to the Subcommittee regarding whether notification to the parties is appropriate in each case. The Department discontinued Microscopic Hair Comparisons in 2006.

The Department has continued its work identifying microscopic hair examination cases as part of its Historical Case File Review. For cases determined to include positive, probative hair associations, the Department confirms conviction information and seeks out transcripts or transcript substitutes, where appropriate, for review. As of September 2025, 1,917 positive, probative associations have been identified, and conviction and transcript inquiries have been sent to the appropriate Circuit Court Clerks' offices.

The Microscopic Hair Comparison Case Review Subcommittee met April 23, 2025, to review recommendations made by the Review Team regarding seven transcripts. Notifications were made by the Department in two of those cases as indicated by the Subcommittee.

At the Mid-Atlantic Innocence Project's (MAIP's) request, the Subcommittee approved a revision to the Defendant Notification letter to add MAIP as an additional resource for those seeking legal assistance.

2. POLICY AND PRIORITIES IN RESPONSE TO AGENCY NEEDS

Improving Timeliness

Caseload Data

The caseload data reported in the table below reflects, for FY24 and FY25, the total number of case submissions statewide for each DFS testing section, the ending backlog (total number of cases on hand) in each section as of the end of the respective fiscal years, and the average case turnaround time (number of days from receipt of evidence in a case

DRAFT

by DFS to the release of the Certificate of Analysis) for each section. The table also specifies the percentage change for each category, by section, between the two fiscal years.

Section	Case Submissions			Backlog			Average Turnaround Time for Cases Completed (days)		
	FY24	FY25	% Change	As of 6/30/24	As of 6/30/25	% Change	FY24	FY25	% Change
Controlled Substances	28,403	26,382	−7%	2,327	2,240	−4%	30	35	17%
Digital & Multimedia Evidence	176	116	−34%	138	85	−38%	149	300	101%
Firearms & Toolmarks	5,341	3,952	−26%	1,684	1,660	−1%	104	147	41%
Forensic Biology (DNA)	6,616	6,091	−8%	3,416	3,818	10%	178	231	30%
Latent Prints & Impressions	2,083	2,124	2%	370	408	10%	77	89	16%
Toxicology*	10,196	9,771	−4%	1,402	1,128	−20%	55	52	−5%
Trace Evidence	692	620	−10%	324	380	17%	134	183	37%

*This does not include cases the OCME outsourced directly to a private laboratory until March 2024.

The table below presents, for each testing discipline, the ending backlog as of September 30, 2025, and the average turnaround time for cases completed in September 2025.

WILL INSERT UPDATED TABLE ONCE NEW STATS COME OUT ON 10/6/25

Section	Ending Backlog As of 9/30/2024	Average TAT (in days) September 2024
Controlled Substances	2,338	33
Digital & Multimedia Evidence	120	283
Firearms & Toolmarks	1,800	138
Forensic Biology (DNA)	3,670	238
Latent Prints & Impressions	516	83
Toxicology*	1,544	49
Trace Evidence	339	187

Submissions to the Controlled Substances Section rose in FY23 and FY24 after several years of reduced case submissions during and after the pandemic. In FY25 the section experienced a 7% decline in submissions, falling below the number of FY23 submissions (27,217). Overall case backlog decreased in FY25 with a minor increase in turnaround times.

After several years of case submission increases to the Firearms & Toolmarks Section, submissions significantly decreased (-26%) in FY25. The biggest driver in the overall reduction of firearms case submissions is the increasing number of state and local law enforcement agencies with the capability of entering cartridge casing evidence and those from seized crime guns for National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) searching. Despite changes in staffing and the revision of the Western Laboratory's accreditation scope removing comparison examinations, the Section's backlog has decreased; case turnaround times remain high, since the remaining comparison cases are more time consuming than NIBIN cases. Cases are being transferred around the state for examination and verification. DFS is recruiting for three Forensic Scientist positions. Currently, there are five Forensic Scientist Trainees in the two-year training program for new firearms examiners: two nearing completion, two mid-way through, and one just beginning.

Statewide the submissions of Forensic Biology cases are down slightly in FY25, but the backlog of cases has increased. Staffing to help address the backlog includes three examiners in training in the Western Laboratory with an expected completion date in 2026. In the Northern Laboratory one examiner is expected to complete training in November 2025, and currently two examiner positions are in recruitment. Four positions (two biologist and two examiners) are in recruitment in the Central Laboratory, and an examiner is expected to complete training in October 2025. To further address workloads, a Physical Evidence Recovery Kit (PERK) Processing unit has been established in the Central Laboratory and is addressed later in this report. Additionally, a case outsourcing contract has been implemented which is also addressed later in the report.

The Latent Prints & Impressions Section saw increases in both case submissions (2%) and backlog (10%) from FY24 to FY25. Staffing changes, technological issues, and the size and complexity of cases received, both in items to be examined and number of latent prints to be compared, have resulted in an increase in a 16% turnaround time for cases completed. Currently there are two forensic scientist trainees in Latent Prints, expected to complete training in late 2025 and mid-2026. There are also two Forensic Scientist positions in recruitment for the Northern Laboratory.

DRAFT

The Digital & Multimedia Evidence Section saw a 34% reduction in cases from FY24 to FY25. The backlog decreased (-38%), and turnaround time increased (101%). These differences are due in part to the time allocated to training the two newest Forensic Scientists in their sub-discipline areas, a vacant wage position, and increased examination capabilities by submitting agencies. Additionally, there has been an increase in submissions involving broken or damaged items that require repair prior to examination. Locating and replacing necessary parts adds to the case completion time. The previously added Forensic Laboratory Specialist (FLS) wage position, who assisted in the initial triage of cases and evidence, has been vacated and is currently in recruitment.

The Department continues to rebuild capacity in the Trace Evidence Section following an examiner's retirement and another's promotion in 2023. An examiner's recent resignation has impacted these efforts, and the position is being recruited. Two examiners are currently in training to assist in the rebuilding. One is expected to complete their training in Gunshot Primer Residue by the end of 2025, and the other training in Explosives Analysis is expected to complete training in 2026.

Breath Alcohol Tests Administered

Based on data downloaded from evidential breath test instruments statewide, the number of breath alcohol tests performed dropped significantly beginning in March 2020 as a result of the pandemic. The table below shows the number of tests performed by month comparing recent years, as well as the percentage change for each month for FY24 to FY25. The overall number of breath tests per year continues to be below pre-pandemic levels. There were 24,102 breath tests initiated in FY19 compared to 19,460 in FY25.

Tests by Month	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	% Change FY24 - 25
July	1,478	1,661	1,606	1,654	+3.0%
August	1,553	1,582	1,609	1,772	+10.1%
September	1,569	1,665	1,720	1,626	-5.5%
October	1,362	1,685	1,775	1,593	-10.3%
November	1,318	1,489	1,599	1,597	-0.1%
December	1,353	1,671	1,728	1,660	-3.9%
January	1,388	1,694	1,482	1,427	-3.7%
February	1,530	1,608	1,636	1,521	-7.0%
March	1,750	1,815	1,766	1,757	-0.5%
April	1,711	1,655	1,578	1,649	+4.5%
May	1,675	1,778	1,628	1,677	+3.0%

DRAFT

June	1,374	1,617	1,588	1,527	-3.8%
Overall	**18,061**	**19,920**	**19,715**	**19,460**	**-1.3%**

Factors Affecting DFS Workloads and Backlogs

Outsourced Testing of OCME Toxicology Cases

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) maintains accreditation through the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME). NAME requires that 90% of all toxicology testing be completed within 90 days. Further, the OCME has found it difficult to meet the NAME requirement of completing 90% of autopsy cases within 90 days due, in part, to situations where DFS Toxicology Section had insufficient testing capacity. As DFS Toxicology staffing levels decreased in the Western Laboratory in FY25, outsourcing was utilized in that laboratory and will continue to be utilized until staffing levels can accommodate the workload.

Increased THC Testing in DUI Cases

As of January 1, 2023, DFS made a change to the general analytical protocols for Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol or Drug cases (DUI/DUID). The updated DUI/DUID protocols are designed to identify alcohol and drugs that can impair driving using two levels of testing for alcohol and impairing drugs. Some exceptions to the testing protocol may be necessary due to customer requests for additional testing. The first step of testing is a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) determination. If the BAC is equal to or greater than 0.100 % by weight by volume (%w/v), the sample will be screened for cannabis-related compounds using an immunoassay. If the BAC is less than 0.100 % by weight by volume, a broader immunoassay screen is completed to determine if any drug is potentially present and further analysis as appropriate is conducted. Comparing FY25 to FY24, the percentage of cases with BAC ≥0.100% w/v and quantifiable THC were approximately 23% and 24%, respectively.

Total Number of Impaired Driving Cases FY2024 (total cases = 4,636)		
	Cases with BAC ≥0.100% w/v	Cases with BAC <0.100% w/v
Number of Cases	2,207	2,411
Number of Cases with THC	533	861

DRAFT

Total Number of Impaired Driving Cases FY2025 (total cases = 4,565)		
	Cases with BAC ≥0.100% w/v	Cases with BAC <0.100% w/v
Number of Cases	2,253	2,300
Number of Cases with THC	522	1,010

THC Concentration FY2024		
	Cases with BAC ≥0.100% w/v	Cases with BAC <0.100% w/v
Average THC Concentration	0.0059 mg/L	0.0078 mg/L
Median THC Concentration	0.0036 mg/L	0.0047 mg/L

THC Concentration FY2025		
	Cases with BAC ≥0.100% w/v	Cases with BAC <0.100% w/v
Average THC Concentration	0.0055 mg/L	0.0082 mg/L
Median THC Concentration	0.0037 mg/L	0.0049 mg/L

DNA outsourcing

The Department established a DNA outsourcing contract to process 600 cases a year with two, one-year renewals. This will increase analytical capacity while new staff are in training. Non-persons cases, which include property crimes and possession type cases, were chosen for the project. These types of cases were selected because they typically have a small number of items to test and have limited court appearances for DNA staff. The 600 cases for 2025 have been transferred to the private laboratory for testing with the majority of the cases coming from our Western Laboratory. Data from the cases will be reviewed by the Biology Section for upload and searches of eligible profiles in DNA databases.

PERK Processing Unit

The PERK processing unit became operational in July of 2025. These scientists screen sexual assault evidence for male DNA and perform DNA testing on samples from

sexual assault victims. The data for cases requiring more complex interpretations and statistical calculations will be forwarded to other scientific staff for reporting. The group is currently concentrating on cases from the Western Laboratory and Central Laboratory. This type of triage unit has been recommended in national best practices for DNA case processing to separate the processes of evidence screening from DNA analysis in order to standardize workflow and increase the predictability of case output which leads to increases in case completion productivity.

Subpoenas and Court Appearances

When examiners are out of the laboratory for court appearances, they have fewer hours available to perform forensic analyses. Controlled Substances and Toxicology are the two sections that receive the largest volume of subpoenas, and the Toxicology Section makes the most court appearances. In FY25, while the number of court appearances dropped, the total time away from the laboratory increased. DFS staff continue to work with stakeholders to increase the use of video testimony and/or implement specialty dockets to reduce examiner time away from laboratories.

Appearance Year	Days Away	# of subpoenas	# of appearances	# times testified
FY23	891	15,697	4,438	927
FY24	742	14,264	3,668	807
FY25	792	13,492	3,236	677

Ability to Hire and Train Qualified Examiners

The demand for trained, experienced examiners has exceeded the supply for many years. To fill positions with limited qualified applicants, DFS hires and trains individuals with the necessary educational credentials but without practical experience. The table below reflects the average length of the training for new scientists hired as trainees in each discipline. The length of training for scientists who come to DFS as previously "qualified" in another laboratory system may be reduced. Current examiners conduct the training for new hires and must dedicate significant time to working with the trainees, which results in decreased case output for the examiners conducting the training.

Section(s)	Average Examiner Training Period
Firearms & Toolmarks - NIBIN	6 months
Forensic Scientists in Breath Alcohol, Controlled Substances, DME, Forensic Biology (DNA), Latent Prints, Impressions, Toxicology, Trace Evidence	12 months
Toxicology - Toxicologists	18 months

Firearms & Toolmarks – Forensic Scientists	24 months

3. GENERAL FISCAL YEAR OPERATIONAL BUDGET AND ANY MAJOR CHANGES IN APPROPRIATED FUNDS

Budget Overview

The Department's annual operating budget for FY26 is:

General Fund Base Budget	$62,009,944
Technical Adjustments to Base Budget	$0
Additions to Base Budget	$ 0
Non-General Funds	$2,780,056
TOTAL OPERATING BUDGET	$64,790,000

The Department's annual operating budgets for FY25 and FY26 are:

	FY25	FY26
General Funds	$65,766,492	$62,009,944
Non-General Funds	$3,560,089	$2,780,056
TOTAL OPERATING BUDGET	$69,326,581	$64,790,000

The FY25/FY26 biennial budget included new funding and positions for additional staffing in Forensic Biology (3 positions for backlog reduction and 1 position for HB2150(2023)), Evidence Receiving (3 positions), and Toxicology (1 position in Technical Services) to screen high alcohol DUI cases for drugs. In addition, funding was provided for tools to unlock mobile cellular devices in the DME Section.

Grant Awards

During the period of October 1, 2024, through September 30, 2025, funding was awarded to DFS under the following grant programs:

FY25 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Program – $ **514,996** was awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) to the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) as the State Administering Agency. DCJS provided the funds equally to DFS and the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) via subawards. The DFS portion ($**257,483**) is for training and continuing education of scientific staff in the

DRAFT

Chemistry, Physical Evidence, and Toxicology program areas, as well as equipment for the Firearms and Toolmarks Section. The grant period for the DFS subaward is January 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026.

FY24 DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction Grant – $**2,033,717** was awarded by BJA to enhance capacity in the Forensic Biology Section. The funds are to be used to support personnel, training, equipment, and supplies. The grant period is October 1, 2024–September 30, 2026.

2025 Highway Safety Grant Program – $**311,273** in federal funds was awarded by DMV for the DFS Breath Alcohol Section. Funding is provided for reimbursement of travel costs for law enforcement officers, supplies needed for breath alcohol classes, continuing education for DFS Breath Alcohol personnel, and the retention of the grant-funded Breath Alcohol Forensic Scientist position. The award requires a match of 25%. The grant period was October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025.

2025 Highway Safety Grant Program (TREDS Project) – $**468,760** was awarded to DFS under its TREDS (Traffic Records Electronic Data System) Program. The project goal is to decrease the turnaround time of data from the OCME to DMV in cases involving motor vehicle accident fatalities. DFS received funds to retain two part-time FLS II positions and hire six full-time FLS III positions to assist in the Toxicology Sections statewide to increase capacity. The award requires a match of 25%. The grant period was October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025.

Grant Applications

The solicitation periods for the two annual block grants, FY25 DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction Grant and FY26 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Program, were significantly delayed in 2025.

ADD BOARD ACTIONS FROM OCTOBER MEETING

4. ACTIONS TO FOSTER AND PROMOTE COORDINATION AND COOPERATION BETWEEN DFS AND THE USER PROGRAMS WHICH ARE SERVED

Notices Sent to DFS User Agencies

Policy Notices

- ***Utilization of M-Vac Systems for DNA Cases*** **-** On February 3, 2025, the Department sent notice to law enforcement agencies concerning vacuum cleaner-type laboratory

devices that can be used to collect cells from clothing and other objects. DFS does not currently conduct DNA analysis on the filters used for collecting the cells. Guidance was provided for agencies considering using a private laboratory for such testing.

- ***Apple iOS Operating System Security Enhancements Require Timely Action –*** On February 20, 2025, the Department sent notice to law enforcement agencies concerning security enhancement to Apple iOS 18 operating systems that can impede the Department's ability to access data on compatible iPhones.
- ***Firearms Case Prioritization –*** On February 27, 2025, the Department sent notice to its user agencies that due to staffing shortages, its Firearms & Toolmarks Section has experienced a higher case backlog and longer case turnaround times. The method of DFS case prioritization was provided.
- ***Approval of Presumptive Mobile Instrument for the Detection of Drugs –*** On March 12, 2025, the Department sent notice to its user agencies concerning its approval of the MX908 Handheld Mass Spectrometer for law enforcement presumptive field testing of drugs pursuant to 6 VAC 40-30.
- ***DNA Capacity Enhancement –*** On June 30, 2025, the Department sent notice to its user agencies announcing two initiatives that will increase the analytical capacity of the Forensic Biology (DNA) Section and help reduce turnaround times: (1) case outsourcing of "non-persons cases" to a private laboratory, and (2) expanded use of probabilistic genotyping software, which will reduce analysis times for certain mixture profiles.
- ***Western Firearms Comparison Capabilities –*** On June 12, 2025, the Department sent notice to its user agencies that it halted firearms comparisons in its Western Laboratory with such cases being transferred to other DFS regional laboratories for analysis.
- ***Neck and Fingernails Kits –*** On June 30, 2025, the Department sent notice to its user agencies that it would be supplying a new type of evidence collection kit to health care providers to be used in the collection of evidence during forensic medical examinations from victims of alleged strangulation. This is the result of legislation that amended Chapter 1.2 of Title 19.2 of the Code of Virginia. See Acts of General Assembly, 2023, Ch. 532.

Enhancing External Communication

The DFS website includes a public-facing Case Statistics Dashboard. The dashboard provides information on case submissions, case completions, average case turnaround times, and caseloads/backlogs. A user may select metrics for specific months or years concerning information from different sections, including Drugs (Controlled Substances), Forensic Biology (DNA), Firearms (includes Toolmarks), Trace Evidence, Toxicology, Digital Multimedia Evidence (DME), and Latent Prints (includes Impressions). Dashboard data is updated monthly. DFS recently added a Seized Drug Dashboard to its website,

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which is discussed below. Some Evidence Handling and Laboratory Capabilities Guides designed to be a resource to law enforcement officers were also updated this year on the Department's website.

Over the past year, DFS staff provided agency updates to various external entities, including the Virginia Sheriffs' Association, the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police, the Virginia Association of Commonwealth's Attorneys, and the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia (new judge orientation).

Compounds Scheduled Through Board of Pharmacy Regulations

Pursuant to Va. Code § 54.1-3443(D), in consultation with DFS, the Board of Pharmacy is permitted to temporarily place substances into Schedule I or II via an expedited regulatory process. DFS monitors evidence submissions to its Controlled Substances Section and tracks new compounds that are submitted statewide. DFS recommends compounds to the Board of Pharmacy for this process on a quarterly basis for their consideration under the statute.

Between October 1, 2024, and September 30, 2025, DFS consulted with the Board of Pharmacy on 17 compounds. These included: four synthetic opioids, seven compounds expected to have hallucinogenic properties (Schedule I), one compound expected to have depressant properties (Schedule I), and five cannabimimetic agents (Schedule I). Ten of the 17 compounds have been placed into Schedule I via Board of Pharmacy regulation, and seven are under administrative review.

Report of *Drug Cases Submitted to the Virginia Department of Forensic Science*

The Department receives tens of thousands of drug samples every year submitted by law enforcement agencies from across the state. The annual report of *Drug Cases Submitted to the Virginia Department of Forensic Science*, a joint effort by DFS and the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), highlights the frequency with which various selected drugs are submitted, broken out by the seven Virginia State Police divisions and 32 Virginia Court Districts. On September 30, 2025, the Department released the report of *Drug Cases Submitted to the Virginia Department of Forensic Science CY202*4, which is accessible at: https://dfs.virginia.gov/documentation-publications/.

Seized drug data is also available on a public-facing dashboard that is updated monthly. The dashboard became operational this year with the assistance of the Office of Data Governance and Analytics (ODGA) and DCJS. It is accessible at: https://dfs.virginia.gov/seized-drug-dashboard/

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Training

Forensic Training Section

The Department's Forensic Training Section conducts the Forensic Science Academy (FSA), a nine-week school in Crime Scene Technology. Each nine-week FSA session provides in-depth training to twelve select law enforcement personnel in the recognition, documentation, collection, preservation, and handling of physical evidence through classroom instruction by forensic experts, evidence collection demonstrations, and numerous practical exercises in simulated crime scenes. The 113th FSA Session graduated November 15, 2024, the 114th FSA Session graduated March 28, 2025, and the 115th FSA Session graduated June 27, 2025. The 116th FSA Session began in September 2025. Beginning with the 116th FSA Session, the section will be utilizing mirrorless camera systems, recognizing that this new technology is being adopted by many of our user agencies.

The Forensic Training Section also presents numerous short courses throughout the year on various crime scene investigation subjects, including Basic Crime Scene Investigation, Basic Digital Crime Scene Photography, and Impression Evidence Documentation and Collection. The Virginia Forensic Science Academy Alumni Association Annual Retraining Seminar was conducted on September 3 - 5, 2025 in Virginia Beach. Approximately 120 attendees heard presentations regarding topics such as case studies, legal and laboratory updates, and how new technology can assist with crime scene documentation.

Breath Alcohol Instrument Operator Training

The Department's Breath Alcohol Section provides maintenance of the evidential breath alcohol instruments, responses to legal requests for information, testimony, and training for law enforcement personnel. From July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025, the Breath Alcohol Section conducted 44 initial breath alcohol instrument operator (three-day) classes and licensed 783 new operators. Initial breath alcohol instrument operator classes have space for 20 students per class allowing for up to 880 new operators to be trained per year. During this period, the Section continued to utilize the online recertification course, and offered 18 of these courses, relicensing 1,295 operators online during FY25. In addition, the Section conducted 71 in-person recertification (four-hour) sessions and subsequently relicensed 1,203 operators in person. There are 6,090 licensed operators statewide.

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Legal Resources Provided on DFS Website

The Department provides Legal Resources on its website. Topics include Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Requests, Subpoenas Duces Tecum (SDTs), Requests for Results and Orders for Scientific Investigations under Va. Code § 9.1-1104, Long Term Storage Orders under § 19.2-270.4:1, Post-Conviction Testing under § 19.2-327.1, and Witness Subpoenas for Civil Cases. Updated Model Orders are also available. The information can be accessed on the DFS website at: https://dfs.virginia.gov/about-dfs/legal-resources/

5. RULES AND REGULATIONS NECESSARY TO CARRY OUT THE PURPOSES AND INTENT OF CHAPTER 11 OF TITLE 9.1 OF THE CODE OF VIRGINIA (DFS)

Regulations

DNA Samples for Arrestees Regulations

The Board approved amendments to 6 VAC 40-40-80 and 40-40-90 at its April 10, 2024 meeting. These amendments are part of the Board's efforts to reduce discretionary requirements for law enforcement when submitting DNA buccal samples required for those individuals who are arrested for violent felonies and some breaking and entering offenses under Virginia Code § 19.2-310.2:1. The proposed amendments permit law enforcement to utilize the already existing DNA data bank sample tracking system for the submission of DNA buccal samples rather than having law enforcement officers fill out a preprinted form as part of the buccal sample kit. This fast-track action was approved by the Governor's Office on April 1, 2025, and published in The Virginia Register of Regulations on April 21, 2025 (Vol: 41 Iss: 18). It became effective on June 5, 2025.

6. ANY RECOMMENDATIONS SUBMITTED TO THE FORENSIC SCIENCE BOARD OR THE DIRECTOR BY THE SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) met in person on April 22, 2025, and by video conference on October 7, 2025. A list of its members is included as Attachment B.

Scientific Advisory Committee Recommendations/Actions

SAC Meeting on April 22, 2025

At its April 22, 2025 meeting, the SAC received reports from the DFS Director, the Controlled Substances Subcommittee, the Toxicology Subcommittee, and the Forensic Biology Subcommittee.

The Controlled Substances Subcommittee recommended closing the review of a validation plan concerning the Department's research on new methods to (1) quantitate

methamphetamine hydrochloride, and (2) extrapolate the number of pills or tablets in a sample based on weight.

The Toxicology Subcommittee recommended closing the review of (1) a validation plan for an added wash step to a cannabinoids extraction procedure, and (2) a validation summary for presumptive screenings for nitazenes.

The Forensic Biology Subcommittee recommended closing the review of a validation summary of the PowerQuant® system on the Quant Studio™ 5 PCR instrument.

Staff from the Virginia State Crime Commission provided a status update on the review of the Mary Jane Burton cases. Recent legislation enacted in 2025 pertaining to the review of Burton's testing, analysis, and testimony was discussed. The DFS Counsel provided an update on outreach to inmates and law enforcement. See the 2024 Forensic Science Board Annual Report for background information.

A new Chair and Vice Chair were elected.

SAC Meeting on October 7, 2025

TO BE UPDATED AFTER THE MEETING

7. INFORMATION ABOUT USE OF THE PHYSICAL EVIDENCE RECOVERY KIT (PERK) TRACKING SYSTEM

PERK Tracking System Overview

In accordance with Va. Code § 19.2-11.13, DFS maintains a statewide electronic tracking system for physical evidence recovery kits (PERKs). All health care providers, law enforcement agencies, the Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services (DCLS), and the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) are required to update the status and location of each kit in the PERK Tracking System whenever such status or location changes. Use of the System became mandatory on July 1, 2020.

It is important to acknowledge the limitations associated with data derived from the PERK Tracking System. The System was designed to track individual PERKs and not for broad data analysis.

On a regular basis, DFS performs multiple standardized quality checks to identify anomalies in the data. With these findings, DFS provides targeted assistance to agencies

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and their users so that they can adjust information that may have been entered in error or add entries that may have been skipped entirely.

PERK Tracking System Training

Only authorized personnel from collection sites, law enforcement, DCLS, and DFS may access the System. Users are granted access to the System only after completing PERK Tracking System Training provided by DFS.

Collection Sites

Virginia Code § 19.2-11.5 defines the term "health care provider" (collection sites) for purposes of the PERK legislation. Collection sites include any hospital, clinic, or other medical facility that provides forensic medical examinations to victims of sexual assault. As of September 1, 2025, 38 collection sites have received PERKs from DFS for collection and have staff trained to use the system.

Law Enforcement

Virginia Code § 19.2-11.5 defines the term "law enforcement agency" for purposes of the PERK legislation. It means the state or local law-enforcement agency with the primary responsibility for investigating an alleged sexual assault offense case. As of September 1, 2025, there are 213 law enforcement agencies that are active system users, which is defined as an agency that has initiated at least one action in the System.

Victim Advocates

Although victim advocates do not have direct access to the PERK Tracking System, law enforcement agencies with victim advocates on staff (or who work for a Commonwealth's Attorney's Office) may provide these victim advocates with viewer-only access to their agency account.

Kits in the PERK Tracking System

The Department of Forensic Science receives new, bar-coded PERKs from an outside vendor and initiates the kit history in the PERK Tracking System. Kits are then distributed to collection sites throughout the state, and to hospital systems with locations in Tennessee, and to a limited number of law enforcement agencies. Once a kit has been collected during a forensic medical examination, the kit will be designated as either an "anonymous kit" or an "offense reported kit." An anonymous kit is one where the victim elects, at the time of the examination, not to report the sexual assault to law enforcement.

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Anonymous Kits

As of September1, 2025, there were 2,084 kits listed in the System as anonymous. This number is an approximation as there have been limited situations where a collection site has transferred an anonymous PERK to a law enforcement agency which affects the data.

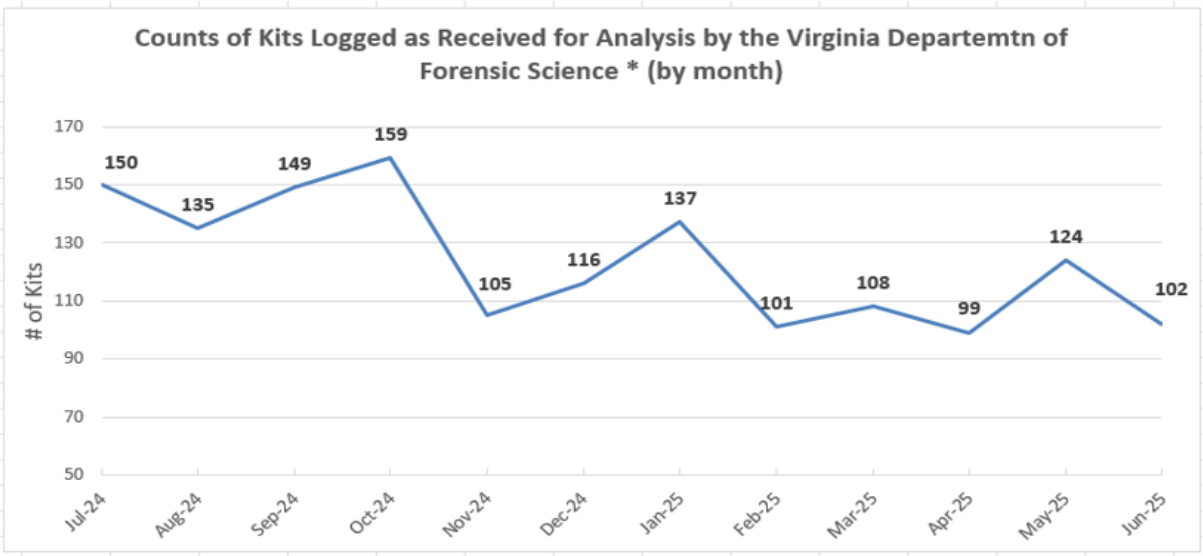
Not all anonymous kits remain anonymous. Victims who, at the time of collection, elect not to report the offense to law enforcement may subsequently decide to report the offense. In FY25, 28 kits in anonymous storage at DCLS became offense reported and were transferred to the investigating law enforcement agency.

Actions Performed on Kits in the PERK Tracking System

Actions Performed on Kits in the PERK Tracking System (July 1, 2024- June 30, 2025)	Count of Kits
Kits Collected by Collection Sites	1,541
Virginia (non-OCME Collection Sites)	1,508
OCME	30
Tennessee Collection Sites	3
Kits Received by DCLS for Anonymous Storage	334
Kits Received by Law Enforcement from Collection Sites or DCLS	1514
Kits Received by Law Enforcement from Other Law Enforcement Agencies	25
From Virginia Law Enforcement Agencies	16
From Non-Virginia Law Enforcement Agencies	9

Kits Received by DFS for Analysis

From July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025, DFS logged the receipt of 1,485 kits from law enforcement for analysis. Since July 2024, DFS has logged the receipt of an average of 123.75 kits per month for analysis.



*Kits logged as received from law enforcement by DFS for analysis; only includes the initial submission of kits that were submitted multiple times. Kits counted in this graph include barcoded PERKs (including OCME PERKs), non-barcoded legacy PERKs, and non-Virginia kits.

Kits Destroyed

As of September 1, 2025, 48 kits had been logged as destroyed since the System's inception. Prior to July 1, 2022, law enforcement could choose from one of three "Reasons" when logging the destruction of a kit in the System: "Exempt from Submission – Not Connected to Crime," "Exempt from Submission – Routine Death Investigation," or "Submitted for Analysis – Statutory Requirements for Destruction Met." The most common Reason selected was "Exempt from Submission – Not Connected to Crime" (29 kits, 60%). One kit (<1%) was logged as destroyed because it was connected to a routine death investigation.

Effective July 1, 2022, Va. Code § 19.2-11.8 was amended and now includes mandatory retention periods for PERKs including those that are exempt from submission to DFS for analysis. Previously, mandatory retention periods only applied to PERKs that had been returned to law enforcement upon completion of analysis by DFS. Generally, the minimum retention period for a law enforcement agency is now 10 years.

Since this statutory change, two kits were logged as destroyed by a law enforcement agency in March 2023 and February 2024, apparently prior to the ten (10) year retention period. DFS works with staff from the Office of the Attorney General to educate System users to prevent such occurrences. From July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025, four kits were

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destroyed with the law enforcement agency indicating the reason as "Not Connected to a Crime - Ten (10) Year Minium Retention Period Met."

Victim PINs Granted

Victims with anonymous PERKs may access the System through the Victim Portal by entering their unique PERK ID number, which should be provided to them at the time of examination by the health care provider/collection site. Victims who elect to report the offense to law enforcement will be required to enter a PIN, in addition to their kit's unique PERK ID, to access the System. Effective July 1, 2022, Va. Code § 19.2-11.11 requires law enforcement to provide victims, parents, guardians, or next of kin with this PIN plus the PERK ID and information for accessing the Victim Portal as long as doing so will not interfere with the investigation or prosecution of the offense.

As of September 1, 2025, 1,496 Victim PINs have been granted by law enforcement, and 368 of those were granted in FY25. By design, the System does not capture whether these PINs were actually used to access the Victim Portal.

Designated Statutory Reasons for Non-Submission

Pursuant to Va. Code § 19.2-11.8, a law enforcement agency that receives a PERK must submit the kit to DFS for analysis within 60 days unless one of five statutory exceptions applies. If a collected PERK received by a law enforcement agency will not be submitted to DFS for analysis because an exception applies, the statutory reason for non-submission should be designated in the PERK Tracking System. These statutory exemptions are:

1. The PERK is anonymous;
2. The PERK is part of a routine death investigation and the medical examiner and law enforcement agree that analysis is not warranted;
3. The PERK is connected to an out-of-state offense;
4. The investigation associated with the PERK is being transferred to another law enforcement agency; and
5. The PERK was determined by the law enforcement agency not to be connected to a criminal offense.

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Kits logged as Exempt from Submission by Law Enforcement* (From System Inception to September 1, 2025)	Count of Kits
Not Connected to Crime	951
Routine Death Investigation	105
Transfer of Investigation (to a Virginia Law Enforcement Agency)**	24
Anonymous***	29
Out-of-State Offense	30
TOTAL	1,139

*Not all law enforcement users will explicitly designate that a kit is exempt from submission in the System but will instead only log a related subsequent action. For example, a law enforcement user may not designate that a kit is exempt from submission because it is associated with an out-of-state offense and may only log the transfer of the kit to an out-of-state agency. Such scenarios are captured here.
** The receiving law enforcement agency will determine whether submission is required by law and update the kit's status accordingly in the System.
*** The status of an anonymous kit also changes when received by DCLS or when the victim reports the offense.

The most widely designated statutory reason by law enforcement agencies for not submitting an offense reported kit for analysis to DFS is that the law enforcement agency considers the kit to meet the statutory exemption contained in Va. Code § 19.2-11.8(A)(iv): "the physical evidence recovery kit was determined by the law-enforcement agency not to be connected to a criminal offense." Recall, as of July 1, 2022, such kits nonetheless must be retained by the law enforcement agency for a minimum retention period of 10 years.

Of all the offense reported kits logged as received by law enforcement agencies from either a Collection Site, DCLS, or another law enforcement agency since inception of the System in 2020 to September 1, 2025, 11% (951 out of 8,586) have subsequently been logged as exempt from submission to DFS for analysis because they were deemed not to be connected to a criminal offense. Virginia Code § 19.2-11.8 (A)(iv) provides no guidance to law enforcement agencies as to the nature or extent of investigation required, the standard of proof to be considered, or a requirement to consult with another entity (such as the relevant Commonwealth's Attorney's Office). This exemption relates to the requirement that DNA profiles must be linked to the commission of crime prior to being uploaded to CODIS.

PERK Legislation Compliance

As indicated above, Va. Code § 19.2-11.8 requires any law enforcement agency receiving a PERK to submit the kit to DFS for analysis within 60 days of receipt unless one of the five statutory reasons applies. Law enforcement users are notified if they have missed this deadline in two ways: 1) through the PERK Tracking System's internal notification system, and 2) through targeted emails sent by DFS at the beginning of every

month. Law enforcement agencies will receive the email notification if either of two scenarios applies: (1) If they have logged the receipt of a collected kit more than 60 days ago, but they did not log it as transferred to DFS for analysis or as falling under one of the statutory reasons for non-submission, or (2) if another user (i.e., collection site, DCLS or another law enforcement agency) has logged the transfer of a kit to the affected law enforcement agency more than 60 days ago, and no further action has been logged in the System with respect to the kit.

DFS sent a recent round of notifications to law enforcement on September 2, 2025. There were 35 kits with 16 agencies that had logged the receipt of a collected kit more than 60 days ago but had not logged it as transferred to DFS for analysis or as falling under one of the statutory reasons for non-submission. There were nine kits with five agencies that had kits logged as transferred to their agency more than 60 days ago with no further action being logged in the System, including the initial receipt by the law enforcement agency.

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Attachment A - FORENSIC SCIENCE BOARD MEMBERS
(as of October 1, 2025)

- **Colonel Matthew Hanley** – Term: period in office or employment Superintendent of the Virginia State Police
- **Jackson Miller (Chair)** – Term: period in office or employment Director of the Department of Criminal Justice Services
- **William T. Gormley, M.D.** – Term: period in office or employment Chief Medical Examiner
- **Caroline D. Juran** – Term: period in office or employment Executive Director of the Virginia Board of Pharmacy
- **Theo Stamos** – Term: period in office or employment Designee of Jason S. Miyares, Attorney General of Virginia
- **Karl R. Hade** – Term: period in office or employment Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia
- **Delegate Charniele L. Herring** – Term: period in office or employment Chair of the Virginia State Crime Commission,
- **Denise M. Toney, Ph.D.** – Term: period in office or employment Director of the Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services
- **The Honorable Russett Perry, Senator** – Term: period in office or employment Designee of Senator Scott Surovell, Chair of the Senate Committee for Courts of Justice (Judiciary Committee)
- **The Honorable Vivian E. Watts, Delegate** – Term: period in office or employment Designee of Delegate Patrick Hope, Chair of the House Committee for Courts of Justice
- **George C. Maha, Ph.D.** – Term: designated by Scientific Advisory Committee Chair Member of the Scientific Advisory Committee
- **Richard P. Meyers (Vice Chair)** – Term: designated by Scientific Advisory Committee Chair Member of the Scientific Advisory Committee
- **Officer Allen Evans**– Term: ending 6/30/2029, Governor Appointee – Member of Law Enforcement
- **The Honorable Eric Olsen** – Term: ending 6/30/2029, Governor Appointee – Member of the Virginia Commonwealth's Attorneys Association
- **Graven Craig**– Term: ending 6/30/2029, Governor Appointee – Criminal defense attorney with specialized knowledge in the area of forensic sciences

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Attachment B - SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS
(as of October 1, 2025)

- **Linda C. Jackson** – Term: period in office or employment Director of the Department of Forensic Science
- **Aine Ramirez –** Term: ending 6/30/2027**,** Governor Appointee – Director of a private or federal forensic laboratory
- **Erin P. Forry (Chair)** – Term: ending 6/30/2027, Governor Appointee – Scientist or other person with education, training or experience in laboratory standards or quality assurance regulation and monitoring
- **Peter M. Vallone, Ph.D**. – Term: ending 6/30/2029, Governor Appointee – Molecular Biologist
- **George C. Maha, Ph.D.** – Term: ending 6/30/2027, Governor Appointee – Population Geneticist
- **Richard P. Meyers** – Term: ending 6/30/2026, Governor Appointee – Forensic Chemist
- **Jennifer Breaux (Vice Chair)** – Term: ending 6/30/2027, Governor Appointee – Forensic Biologist
- **Christopher Bommarito** – Term: ending 6/30/2026, Governor Appointee – Trace Evidence Scientist
- **Marc A. LeBeau, Ph.D.** – Term: ending 6/30/2026, Governor Appointee – Toxicologist certified by the American Board of Forensic Toxicology
- **Kenneth B. Zercie** – Term: ending 6/30/2027, Governor Appointee – Member of the Board of the International Association for Identification
- **William E. Demuth, II** – Term: ending 6/30/2029, Governor Appointee – Member of the Board of the Association of Firearms and Tool Mark Examiners
- **Randall E. Beaty** – Term: ending 6/30/2026, Governor Appointee – Member of the International Association for Chemical Testing
- **Kathleen Corrado, Ph.D.** – Term: ending 6/30/2029, Governor Appointee – Member of the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors

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