



Central (Richmond)



Northern (Manassas)



Eastern (Norfolk)



Western (Roanoke)

DEPARTMENT OF FORENSIC SCIENCE UPDATE

Linda C. Jackson, Director

Presented to the Forensic Science Board

January 3, 2024





Central Laboratory Capital Project



- On schedule for completion in Q4 2025
- Building updates available online

<https://dfs.virginia.gov/regional-labs/new-central-laboratory-facility/>

Coming Q1 2026



Mobilization
January 2023



Ground
Breaking
03/02/23



Structure
Complete
Q4 2023



Exterior Skin
Complete
Q3 2024



Final
Inspections
Q4 2025



Topping Out
Ceremony -
December 20,
2023





Agency Meetings and Presentations

- Management Review – November 29-30, 2023
- Annual Director's Address – December 12, 2023
- Emergency Preparedness Tabletop Exercise – December 19, 2023



MISSION

- To provide laboratory services in criminal matters in the Commonwealth of Virginia,
- Support the criminal justice system with quality and timely services, and
- Advance the understanding of forensic science in order to promote public safety.



Vision & Values

- Vision – Providing unbiased support of the criminal justice system by leading in the field of forensic science
- Values – Commitment to:
 - Quality
 - Integrity
 - Impartiality
 - Diversity
 - Resilience



Post-Conviction Project

- Case files identified for review as part of project to be returned to State Records Center
- In process of being returned to investigating agency:
 - Evidence identified in case files
 - Dried sample extracts



Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) Podcast Review



- Admissible: Shreds of Evidence podcast
 - <https://www.npr.org/podcasts/1164809981/admissible-shreds-of-evidence>
- Podcast discusses allegations made predominantly against Mary Jane Burton, a former serologist, who retired in 1988
- Allegations referred to the SAC for review pursuant to Virginia Code § 9.1-1113(C)



SAC Podcast Review

- Established subcommittee with five subject matter experts
- Virtual meeting - October 2023
- Next meeting - January 9, 2024, in person at the Central Laboratory in Richmond



SAC Podcast Review

- Links to the materials and the recording of the first virtual meeting are available on the Department's website

Materials

<https://dfs.virginia.gov/sac-materials/>

Initial virtual meeting

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5jT5u7LeQBw>



CERTIFICATE OF ACCREDITATION

The ANSI National Accreditation Board

Hereby attests that

**Virginia Department of Forensic Science
Crime Laboratory System**

Fulfills the requirements of

ISO/IEC 17025:2017

Accreditation Requirements for Forensic Testing and Calibration (2023)


FBI Quality Assurance Standards for Forensic DNA Testing Laboratories:2020

FBI Quality Assurance Standards for DNA Databasing Laboratories:2020

In the field of

Forensic Testing & Calibration

This certificate is valid only when accompanied by a current scope of accreditation document.
The current scopes of accreditation can be verified at www.anab.org.


Pamela L. Sale, Vice President, Forensics



Expiry Date: 30 September 2026
Certificate Numbers:
FT-0051
FT-0052
FT-0053
FT-0054
FC-0004



Accreditation

- Internal audits are scheduled for the month of February 2024
- Surveillance Assessment May 21-23
- Certificates and Scopes are available on the DFS website:

<https://www.dfs.virginia.gov/about-dfs/accreditation/accreditation-documentation/>



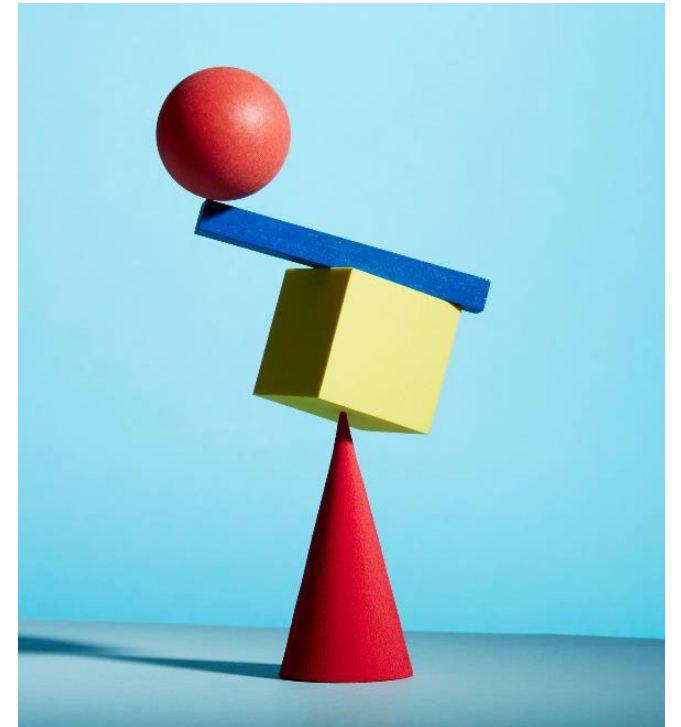
Customer Working Group

- Seeking feedback from customers on evidence submission policies and services provided
- Planning meeting for beginning of 2024
- Will seek nominations for new members



Evidence Receiving Restructuring

- Addressing risk
- Evidence Program Manager – Ellen Spain
- Increasing Quality Assurance
- Decreasing reliance on part-time staff
 - Funding and FTEs to convert 3 part-time Forensic Evidence Specialists to full-time in Governor's Introduced Budget





Sexual Assault Kit Processing Unit

- Creating unit in Central (under DTS) consisting of Forensic Scientist – Biologist positions
 - Currently have 3 positions but will increase to 5 (2 additional in Governor's Introduced Budget)
 - Training on kit screening and DNA processing
 - Will begin with kits from Central and Western
- Report writing will be divided up between staff based on complexity of results
- New BJA CEBR grants require documented policy that prioritizes the analysis of samples from homicides and sexual assaults



Administrative Reports Submitted

- Forensic Science Board – Annual Report
- SWaM Plan 2024 - Procurement
- Agency Strategy and Workforce Planning Report - HR
- DFS Salary Administration Plan – HR
- Agency Risk Management and Internal Control Standards (ARMICS) - Finance



Forensic Science Academy

- Completed the 108th, 109th and 110th sessions in 2023
- Graduation keynote speakers:
 - Honorable Richard E. Moore, Retired Judge, Sixteenth Judicial District
 - Indigent Defense Commission Executive Director Maria D. Jankowski
 - Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security Terrance C. Cole
- First Session for 2024 begins January 29
 - Bedford City Police Department
 - Bedford County Sheriff's Office
 - Blacksburg Police Department
 - Blackstone Police Department
 - Botetourt County Sheriff's Office
 - Fairfax City Police Department
 - Giles County Sheriff's Office
 - Herndon Police Department
 - Manassas City Police Department
 - Northampton County Sheriff's Office
 - Virginia State Police - Divisions V and VI



Board of Pharmacy Expedited Scheduling

DFS recommended two (2) compounds in October 2023. The compounds were considered at the Board's December 6th meeting and are pending final approval.

Hallucinogenic Properties:

- 4-propoxy-3,5-DMA
- 5-methoxytryptamine



FY24 Planned Equipment Purchases

Master Equipment Replacement Plan

- 220 Breath Alcohol Instruments
- 4 Toxicology GC-NPD/FIDs
- DME Casework backup server and new tool
- Trace Evidence Glass Refractive Index Measuring System (GRIM) (W)
- Trace Evidence Ion Chromatograph (C)
- Controlled Substances FTIR/ATR (E)
- Forensic Biology Robot
- NIST Library upgrades for Chemistry and Toxicology



Toxicology Updates

- DUI/DUID Decentralization
 - Eastern Laboratory fully staffed with 3 Forensic Toxicologists
 - Transitioning York County, Cities of Hampton and Newport News from Central to Eastern on February 1, 2024
- New THC method that can **qualitatively** differentiate Δ^9 -THC and Δ^8 -THC currently being implemented
- Updates to method that will allow the **quantification** of Δ^8 -THC in addition to Δ^9 -THC currently being validated

Case Statistics

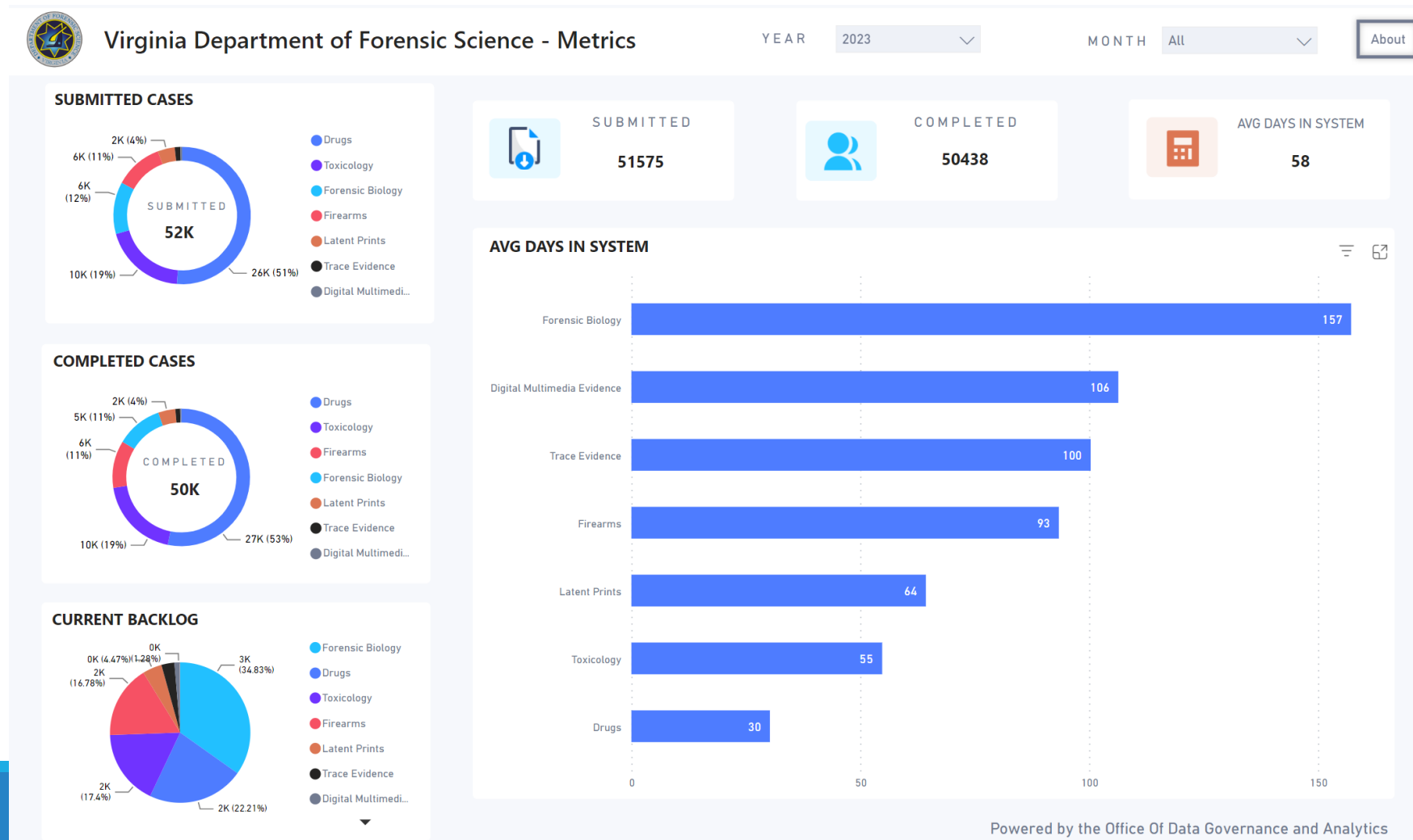
Year End Statistics will be finalized after January 6, 2024.



Dashboards for Case Statistics

- Project with the Office of Data Governance and Analytics (ODGA)
- Draft public dashboard provided for interactive performance statistics

<https://dfs.virginia.gov/about-dfs/case-statistics-dashboard/>



Budget and Resources



Carryover Funds from FY23 to FY24

- DFS ended FY23 with a General Fund balance of \$2,365,142
- DFS has been approved to carryover this balance to FY24 to pay for new evidential Breath Alcohol instruments



FY 24 Budget Amendments

- DFS received \$248,035 and 4.00 FTE for the following positions (salaries prorated to begin January 1, 2024):
 - Full-time Technician (transition part-time to full-time Evidence Receiving) = \$58,271 per year
 - Forensic Scientist Biologists (2) = \$194,416 per year
 - PERK Coordinator = \$109,353 per year
 - Laboratory Specialist (THC legislation response) = \$94,705 per year



FY24 Budget, as Amended

	Item Description		Appropriations (\$)	
	First Year FY2023	Second Year FY2024	First Year FY2023	Second Year FY2024
Total for DFS			\$59,127,378	\$58,320,478 \$58,568,513
• General Fund Positions	341.00	341.00 345.00		
• NGF Positions	14.00	14.00		
• Position Level	355.00	355.00 359.00		
• Fund Sources: General	\$56,446,890	\$55,639,990 \$55,888,025		
• Fund Sources: Federal Trust	\$2,680,488	\$2,680,488		

Governor's Introduced Biennial Budget for FY25/26



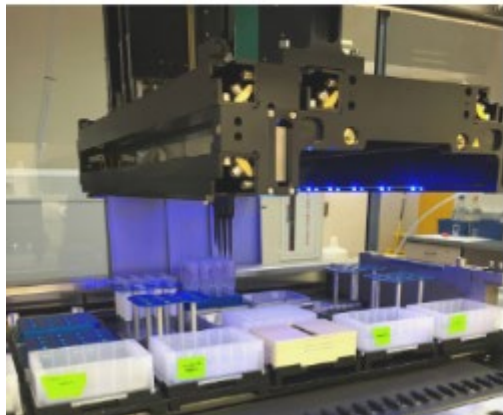
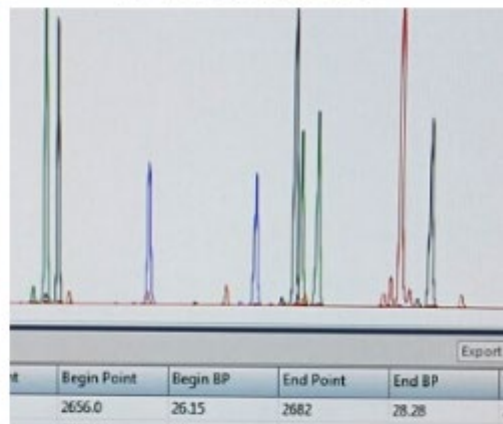
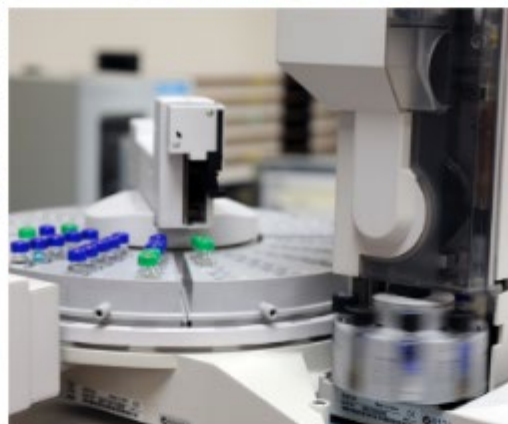
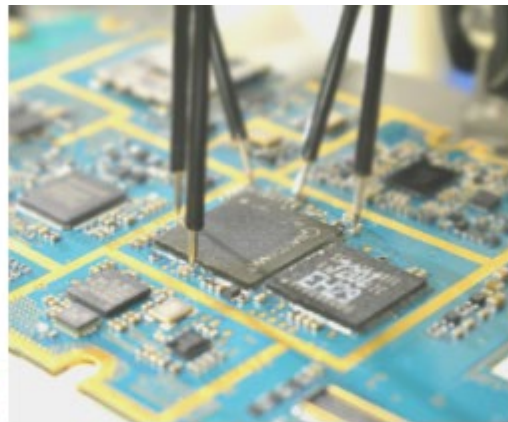
Title	FY25	FY26	GF FTE	NGF FTE
Fund increase in staffing for Forensic Biology (DNA) Section (2 Biologists, 1 Forensic Scientist)	\$ 278,026	\$ 353,976	3	-
Fund increase in staffing and oversight for Evidence Receiving Section	\$ 225,548	\$ 225,548	3	-
Fund tools used to unlock mobile cellular devices	\$ 107,770	\$ 107,770	-	-
Reclassify positions to align with fund source	-	-	-	2
Fund strangulation kits and DNA Forensic Scientist position (required by HB2150)	\$ 119,333	\$ 163,442	1	-



Grant Funds Awarded

FY 2023 National Sexual Assault Kit Initiative

- The Virginia Office of the Attorney General (OAG) received funding for the PERK Tracking System Coordinator position (until January 10, 2024)
- DFS has been allocated \$40K for DNA staff overtime to review data from DNA Labs International (DLI) for one year
- Awaiting formal subaward paperwork



Thank you!