

Welcome to the National Association of Forensic Science Boards!



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The National Association of Forensic Science Boards (NAFSB) is a grass-roots initiative to ensure that State-level forensic science boards are best positioned to benefit forensic science. The NAFSB provides a forum for these groups to communicate and share their different experiences and identify best practices that are most applicable to each state's unique circumstances. For states that are considering changes to the structure of their board or developing a new board, the NAFSB can provide information about what has and has not previously worked in regard to structures, memberships, stakeholder engagement, and outcomes. The NAFSB is not a federal entity or a national governing body. Its work is solely dedicated to the support of grassroots efforts to improve forensic science governance.



2023 Inaugural Conference ^{en}

NAFSB is holding its first conference in Austin, Texas on November 16 and 17, 2023. The conference will be held at the Barbara Jordan State Office Building and hosted by the Texas Forensic Science Commission. Registration for the conference is now closed. Watch this space for documents and videos from the conference!

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<https://www.nafsb.org/>

Existing state forensic science boards and commissions are listed below. This listing does not imply affiliation with the NAFSB and is provided for informational purposes only.



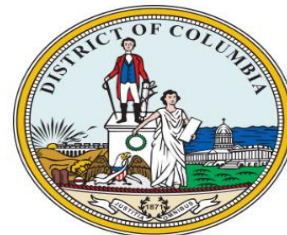
Arizona Forensic Science Advisory Committee



Arkansas State Crime Laboratory Board



Delaware Commission on Forensic Science



Washington, DC Science Advisory Board



Illinois Forensic Science Commission



Indiana Commission on Forensic Science



Maryland Laboratory Advisory Committee



Massachusetts Forensic Oversight Board



Missouri Crime Laboratory Review Commission



Montana Laboratory Advisory Board



New York State Commission on Forensic Science and DNA Subcommittee



North Carolina Forensic Advisory Board



Oklahoma Forensic Sciences Improvement Task Force



Rhode Island State Crime Laboratory Commission



Texas State Forensic Science Commission



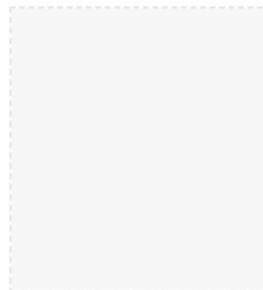
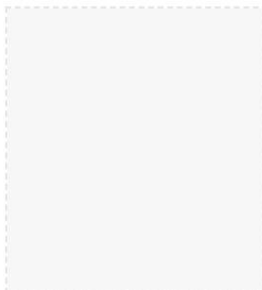
Virginia Forensic Science Board and Scientific Advisory Committee



Washington State Forensic
Investigations Council



Wisconsin Division of Forensic
Science Submission Advisory
Committee



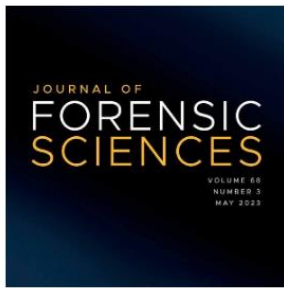
Please let us know if you are aware of any errors or omissions on this list. See [Contact](#). Thank you!

Resources



Forensic Science Improvement

Welcome to the NAFSB! We are pleased to share information and research related to forensic science improvement and grassroots-level initiatives. Feel free to suggest information or organizations for posting by contacting us at admin@nafsb.org. Existing state boards can be reached from the home page.



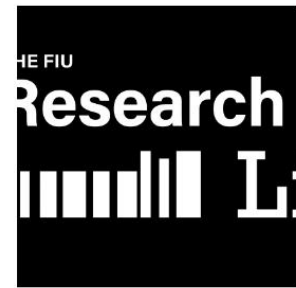
Wrongful convictions and claims of false or misleading forensic evidence, Journal of Forensic Sciences paper by Dr. John Morgan



Quality Management and Oversight of Texas Forensic Science Service Providers, Ph.D. Thesis by Dr. Sarah Chu



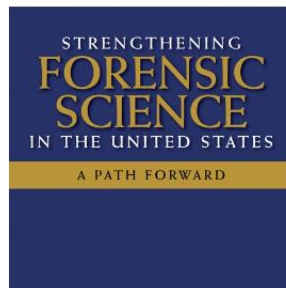
Forensic Science State Commissions and Oversight Bodies – 2022 Update



Research Forensic Library of the Global Forensic and Justice Center at Florida International University



[Report to Congress: Needs Assessment of Forensic Laboratories and Medical Examiner/Coroner Offices](#), National Institute of Justice, 2019



2009 Report from the National Academy of Science on Forensic Science Improvement



Speaker Biographies--2023 NAFSB Conference in Austin, TX



State Forensic Science Commissions--2016 Report

About the NAFSB

The National Association of Forensic Science Boards (NAFSB) is a grass-roots initiative to ensure that State-level forensic science boards are best positioned to benefit forensic science. The NAFSB has been established with the goal of being a means for existing forensic science boards to disseminate and exchange best practices, research, expertise, data, and lessons learned. Many states have forensic science boards, but the scope of their authorities and memberships varies considerably. The NAFSB provides a forum for these groups to communicate and share their different experiences and identify best practices that are most applicable to each state's unique circumstances. The NAFSB can provide technical assistance and training for board members and staff and improve access to the latest forensic science research and evidence-based policy and practice. For states that are considering changes to the structure of their board or developing a new board, the NAFSB can provide information about what has and has not previously worked in regard to structures, memberships, stakeholder engagement, and outcomes. Such guidance will improve the relevance and effectiveness of boards to ensure that they support forensic science improvement and engage with forensic science leaders and stakeholders with a collaborative mindset.



Q. Is the goal of the new NAFSB to somehow reconstitute the National Commission on Forensic Science or in some way create a national oversight board for forensic science lab?

A. No, the NAFSB is not a federal entity or a national governing body. The NAFSB supports the work of State-level boards and commissions by encouraging communication and sharing lessons learned. Each State has its own criminal justice system independent of the Federal government, and most crimes are adjudicated on the State or local level. It is vitally important that States have the information they need to support reliable forensic science. Many States have formed boards and commissions for this purpose, and the NAFSB works to improve and support the work of these grassroots initiatives while leveraging and encouraging communication across the groups.

Q. What is the history of the NAFSB?

A. For many years, advocates have emphasized forensic science reform at the national level, but these efforts have had limited impact. Meanwhile, State-level boards and commissions have quietly made enormous progress to improve the support for crime laboratories and policies and practices in forensic science. John Morgan—a former State legislator—and Marna McLendon—a former state prosecutor—have discussed the benefit of an association supporting State and local forensic improvement initiatives for many years.

This past year, John published his research on wrongful convictions in the Journal of Forensic Sciences. The data from that study prompted John and Marna to consider the idea of a national association to help the work of State boards and commissions. This was March of 2023. They both felt this might be useful and reached out to the existing forensic science boards and commissions and key crime lab leaders. There was a very immediate response – YES! At the 2022 conference of the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors (ASCLD), these leaders met for the first time and formed an NAFSB planning committee. The Texas Forensic Science Commission invited this new "group" to have a conference in November, in Austin, TX.

Our planning group has met monthly, with lots of communication exchanges in between. We wanted to make sure that the first conference was valuable for those engaged with boards and commissions, as well as for other crime lab directors and public policy colleagues who may wish to explore having boards or commissions in their state. The various boards and commissions will be able to describe their beginnings, makeup, and duties and responsibilities. We plan to learn from each other.

As for what our future holds, we are just taking this first step to incorporate as a nonprofit, and to come together at a conference and exchange ideas. After the conference, we plan to form a board of directors to oversee the NAFSB, staff the association, and explore ways to sustain the association's work in the long term.

No one on the planning group has suggested that the NAFSB would be a stepping stone to a national commission with oversight responsibilities. That concept would contradict our mission to strengthen State-level forensic science improvement initiatives.

Q. What is the NAFSB mission?

A. The mission of the Association is to disseminate and exchange best practices, research, expertise, data, and lessons learned among state-level forensic science boards and governing the forensic science community.

Expanding on that statement, we recently provided a statement to ASCLD regarding the association. Many states have forensic science boards and commissions, but the scope of their authorities and memberships varies considerably. The NAFSB provides a forum for these groups to communicate and share their experience to improve their effectiveness. The association can provide useful technical assistance and training for board members and staff and ensure they have access to the latest research related to forensic science and evidence-based policy and practice. For states that are considering changes to the structure of their board or developing a new board, the NAFSB can provide information about best practices, structures, memberships, stakeholder engagement, and outcome expectations. Such guidance will improve the relevance and effectiveness of boards to ensure that they support forensic science improvement and engage with forensic science leaders with a collaborative mindset.

Q. Is the Association planning on reaching out to individual state legislatures to advocate for oversight or governance of state forensic labs?

A. No. The outreach we have been conducting has been directed to established board and commissions, interested state forensic lab directors and leaders, and other stakeholders to include as many engaged attendees as possible in our conference and association. Members of the planning group are from states with boards and commissions, both regulatory and advisory. We want to hear from each other what structures work best and how commissions and boards conduct their business and who is included on their commissions and boards as well as subcommittees. Challenges and lessons learned will be discussed at the November conference. There are states that have formed task forces to consider some form of forensic science board or commission but have not as yet moved forward with legislative enactment. There are states that may want to consider a board or commission. NAFSB does not believe there is one model board or commission that would work for all states, but to the extent that state forensic lab leadership and policy makers want to explore that formation, association members are willing and open to exchanging information concerning what has worked well in other States.

The Association is not in a position to be an advocacy organization. Its members, however, are open to working with others upon request to share their experiences.

Q. Is NAFSB funded by any organization or government entity?

A. The NAFSB is not funded by any organization or governmental entity. We have applied for status as a non profit corporation in North Carolina and will consider filing to be a 501 (c)(3) corporation. The conference this year is hosted by the Texas Forensic Science Commission, and we have a meeting location in Austin, TX. There is no conference fee, but anyone that wants to attend will have to pay their own expenses. We have no funds at this point at all! In November, at the conference, we will be discussing bylaws and membership fees to provide some ability to support the NAFSB's work long-term. We will consider what our future is, how we would like to evolve and if we have a revenue source through membership fees, how we might use that for a website and other means of sharing information.

Q. What is the ultimate vision of the NAFSB?

A. Colleagues from a variety of backgrounds have come together to create the NAFSB to share experiences with the goal of serving the forensic science community. We believe forensic science boards and commissions can be a positive influence if they have the opportunity to learn from each other and their stakeholders. Early on in our process, the Texas Forensic Science Commission offered to host a conference and this was planned fairly quickly for November, 2023 in Austin, Texas. It was seen as a way to bring us together to share and discuss our experiences. Part of that discussion will include where we want to go as an association and how we might evolve. Our conference will include the participation of a variety of stakeholders and forensic science experts.

Q. What have been the successes in forensic science labs in state with a commission or board?

A. There is limited objective data on the impact of forensic science boards and commissions—that is a big reason why the NAFSB conference will be focused on that topic. The agenda of the conference includes presentations from a number of scientists and staff of existing boards and commissions to address how they have been effective in supporting solid and reliable forensic science and assisting state forensic labs in achieving the highest level of reliability and quality assurance. Presentations also include discussions of the challenges and obstacles that can arise with such commissions and boards, and hopefully suggestions how to move forward. The experiences of the different state commissions and boards have been varied. We want to learn from each other and engage all the stakeholders (attorneys, judges, law enforcement, victim advocates, researchers, and others) to build relationships, trust and communication. The end goal – effective, reliable forensic science.

Meet our organizing committee! In early 2023, advocates for the improvement of forensic science governance convened in Austin, Texas to initiate the National Association of Forensic Science Boards. Since then, we have been joined by key leaders who share a common goal--the reliable use of science to improve the fair administration of justice.



Lynn Garcia
General Counsel, Texas Forensic
Science Commission



Jill Dooley
Director, Office of Forensic Services,
New York State Division of Criminal
Justice Services



Daniel Katz
Director, Maryland Department of
State Police Forensic Sciences
Division



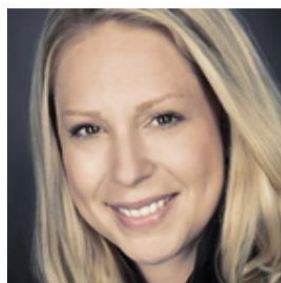
Jennifer Naugle
Deputy Administrator, State of
Wisconsin Department of Justice,
Division of Forensic Sciences



Kermit Chanel
Retired Executive Director Arkansas
State Crime Lab



Stephen Butler
Crime Laboratory Manager, Arizona
Department of Public Safety



Leigh Tomlin
Associate General Counsel, Texas
Forensic Science Commission



Sarah Chu
Director of Policy and Reform,
Perlmutter Center for Legal Justice
at Cardozo Law



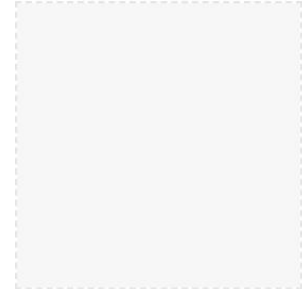
John Morgan
Acting Executive Director, NAFSB



Marna McLendon
Coordinator, NAFSB



Kerry Collins
Undersecretary of Forensic Science,
Massachusetts



Contact



Contact Us...

Please email your inquiries: admin@nafsb.org

You may also contact:

John Morgan, Acting Executive Director, NAFSB

Phone: (919) 589-7030

National Association of Forensic Science Boards
Inaugural Conference November 16-17, 2023
Barbara Jordan Conference Center
Austin, Texas

Thursday, November 16th

9:00 to 9:45 Opening Plenary Session

Welcome to Texas — Court of Criminal Appeals Judge Barbara Hervey

Why are we here and what do we hope to accomplish over the next two days?
— Michael Coble and Lynn Garcia, Texas Forensic Science Commission

Collaboration Across States: Judge Kent Cattani and Judge Ron Reinstein
(Retired) – Arizona Forensic Laboratory Advisory Committee

9:45 – 10:00 Break

10:00 – 11:00 The Development and Implementation of the Statutory Regulation of
Forensic Science in England and Wales – Gary Pugh OBE, UK Forensic Science
Regulator

11:00 – 12:00 Forensic Science Improvement in the United States – John Morgan

12:00 – 1:00 Lunch

1:00 – 2:15 Forensic Science Boards in Practice

Moderator: Marna McLendon

Building Forensic Science Accountability Together – Sarah Chu

New Board – Massachusetts – Kerry Collins and Lisa Kavanaugh

Advisory Boards—Arizona, North Carolina – Judge Ron Reinstein (Retired),
Judge Kent Cattani, and Kermit Channell

2:15 – 3:30 Discussions

A. Pros and Cons of FSB Models (Dan Katz, Maryland, moderator)

B. What Do Crime Labs Have to Gain? (Stephen Butler, Arizona; Peter Stout, Texas, moderators)

3:30 – 3:45 Break

3:45 – 5:15 How Does a Commission Evolve?

Moderator: Kermit Channell

Establishment and Evolution of Self-disclosure, OSAC Implementation, Code of Professional Responsibility, and Forensic Licensing Programs – Lynn Garcia and Leigh Tomlin —Texas

Establishment and Evolution of Report Standards — Jill Dooley, New York

6:30 Optional Conference Dinner (location TBD)

Friday, November 17th

8:30 – 10:00 Lessons Learned

Moderator: John Morgan

“Not Success Stories” — Dan Katz, Maryland

Washington DC — Amanda Sozer, SNA International

Boards in Practice – Wisconsin, Katie Hoffmeyer; Massachusetts, Lisa Kavanaugh

10:00 – 10:15 – Break

10:15 – 11:30 Discussions

A. Identifying Stakeholders and Working Together (Marna McLendon, Arizona, moderator)

B. How Can Boards and Commissions Help Each Other? (Lynn Garcia, Texas, moderator)

C. Small State Boards (Kermit Channell, moderator)

11:30 – 12:00 Break & Networking

12:00 – 12:45 Guiding New Boards and Commissions

<https://www.nafsb.org/>

Moderator: Kerry Collins

Establishing A New Commission – Illinois — Robin Woolery

The Michigan Commission We Needed – John Collins

12:45 – 1:00 Break

1:00 – 2:00 Working Lunch

The Australian Model — Linzi Wilson-Wilde, Chief Executive Officer, Forensic
Science Queensland, Queensland, Australia

2:00 – 2:15 Future of the NAFSB — John Morgan