



Central (Richmond)



Northern (Manassas)



Eastern (Norfolk)



Western (Roanoke)

# DEPARTMENT OF FORENSIC SCIENCE UPDATE

Linda C. Jackson, Director

Presented to the Scientific Advisory Committee

October 7, 2025





# Central Laboratory Capital Project

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- On schedule for completion in Q4 2025 and move-in Q1 2026
- Major milestones:
  - Began meeting with contracted move management company
  - HVAC and mechanical equipment power up continues
  - First “punch list” inspections begin in October







Shielded Room for  
Digital Evidence



Firing Range





# Facility Planning

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## Moving

- DGS contracted a moving management company
- Phased approach to minimize service disruptions
- Anticipate move beginning mid-January 2026
- Four- to six-week timeline


## Disposition of Current Building

- Met with DRES to begin process
- Begun process to surplus excess materials



# DNA Collection Kits for Victims of Strangulation

- HB 2150 (2023) requires DFS to provide “trace evidence collection kits” beginning July 1, 2025
- Kit is called “Neck and Fingernails Kit”
- Designed to collect trace amounts of DNA primarily from the necks and fingernails of victims of strangulation
- Law enforcement may be requested to pick up Neck and Fingernail Kits from healthcare provider collection sites, but they will not be tracked in the PERK Tracking System nor are they required to be submitted to DFS for testing



**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**  
**DEPARTMENT OF FORENSIC SCIENCE**  
**NECK & FINGERNAILS KIT**  
For the collection of trace [DNA] evidence per § 19-2-11.5 (2025)


**COLLECT WITHIN 48 HRS OF STRANGULATION (ONLY)**

**FOR MEDICAL PERSONNEL**  
PATIENT'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Print. For Anonymous Kit, please include jurisdiction of offense in lieu of patient name.)  
FACILITY: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Print) (Phone Number/Extension)  
CLINICIAN(S): \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Print) (Title)  
KIT SEALED BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Print) (Title)

**FOR OCME USE ONLY**  
MEDICAL EXAMINER: \_\_\_\_\_ OCME CASE# \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Print)

**CHAIN OF CUSTODY**  
RELINQUISHED BY: \_\_\_\_\_ AGENCY: \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ TIME: \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm  
RECEIVED BY: \_\_\_\_\_ AGENCY: \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ TIME: \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm  
RELINQUISHED BY: \_\_\_\_\_ AGENCY: \_\_\_\_\_  
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VANF100:KENV-11 3/25

  
NFK225-00996

# DNA Capacity Enhancement Notice

- Outsourcing contract with Bode Cellmark Forensics, Inc. for “non-persons” cases from all locations
- DFS will review DNA data and upload and search profiles at the state and national levels, if qualifying
- Additional use of STRmix™ for two- and three-person mixtures in “persons cases”

<https://dfs.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/NOTICE-DNA-Capacity-Enhancement.pdf>



## COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

### DEPARTMENT OF FORENSIC SCIENCE

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR  
A Nationally Accredited Laboratory  
dfs.virginia.gov

700 North 5<sup>TH</sup> Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219-1416  
(804) 786-2281 FAX (804) 786-6857

#### DFS POLICY NOTICE

To: All Agencies Served by DFS

From: Linda C. Jackson, Director *Linda Jackson*

Date: June 3, 2025

RE: **DNA Capacity Enhancement: Outsourcing and STRmix™ Expansion**

The Virginia Department of Forensic Science (DFS) is pleased to announce two initiatives that will increase the analytical capacity of the Forensic Biology (DNA) Section and help reduce case turnaround times.

#### Case Outsourcing

Beginning July 1, 2025, DFS will send selected cases to Bode Cellmark Forensics, Inc. (Bode), located in Lorton, VA, to provide outsourced testing. “Non-persons cases” (e.g., larcenies, felons in possession of firearms or drugs) will be selected for outsourcing, and DFS anticipates transferring approximately 600 cases to Bode by the end of 2025. Initially, cases from the Western Laboratory will be outsourced, and then the project will expand to include cases from the other regions.

For these outsourced cases, Bode will issue reports to the submitting agency. DFS will review the DNA data generated by Bode for possible upload and searches in the DNA Data Bank at the state and national levels. For cases that are uploaded and searched, DFS will issue Certificates of Analysis to submitting agencies with the search information and will also report any DNA matches that occur as a result.

DFS is committed to supporting these outsourced analyses with testimony, if it is required. DFS will pay private laboratory staff for their court appearance or will reanalyze the case at DFS, if possible, in order to provide a DFS scientist for testimony.

#### Additional Use of STRmix™

DFS is expanding its use of STRmix™ probabilistic genotyping software, which will reduce analysis times for cases including two- to three-person mixture profiles. As indicated in the [notification dated December 27, 2021](#), DNA examiners use this software when they have identified these mixtures in “non-

# Firearms Customer Notice

- Firearms comparisons suspended in the Western Laboratory and removed from the scope of accreditation
- Cases are being transferred to other regional laboratories
- Case prioritization:
  1. Public safety concerns
  2. Juveniles held in secure detention
  3. Violent crimes based on speedy trial dates
  4. Violent crimes based on set trial dates
  5. All other cases



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#### DFS POLICY NOTICE

TO: All Agencies Served by DFS  
FROM: Linda C. Jackson, Department Director *Linda C. Jackson*  
DATE: June 12, 2025  
RE: Suspension of Western Firearms Comparison Capabilities

Recently the Department of Forensic Science (DFS) notified its accrediting body, the ANSI National Accreditation Board (ANAB), that it has halted firearms comparisons in our Western Laboratory and removed firearms and toolmark comparison analysis and other associated components from the Western Laboratory's scope of accreditation. Comparison cases are currently being transferred from the Western Laboratory to other regional laboratories for analysis. National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) entry and function evaluations are still being performed at the Western Laboratory.

In a previous [DFS Policy Notice](#) issued on February 27, 2025, DFS notified its stakeholders of the significant strain on the Firearms & Toolmarks Section due to staffing shortages. With this loss of capacity, DFS anticipates an additional impact to its firearms comparison case backlog and turnaround times. Please review the previous DFS Policy Notice for the Department's case prioritization factors. Law enforcement is reminded to triage comparison requests to focus on those items of evidence that are essential to each case.

To the extent feasible, DFS would ask that its firearms forensic scientists be "on call" for testimony to allow them to continue their work in the laboratory. If agreed to by the parties and the court, video testimony can be utilized and would reduce travel time for examiners, as they are currently analyzing cases from across the state.

For additional information, contact Western Laboratory Director Kevin Patrick ([kevin.patrick@dfs.virginia.gov](mailto:kevin.patrick@dfs.virginia.gov) or 540-283-5966). To notify a regional laboratory regarding a speedy trial or trial date for a firearms case, please contact the Firearms & Toolmarks Section Supervisor:

Laboratory	Supervisor	Phone	Email
Central (Richmond)	Stephen Atkinson	(804) 588-4141	<a href="mailto:stephen.atkinson@dfs.virginia.gov">stephen.atkinson@dfs.virginia.gov</a>
Eastern (Norfolk)	Allison Milam	(757) 355-5965	<a href="mailto:allison.milam@dfs.virginia.gov">allison.milam@dfs.virginia.gov</a>
Northern (Manassas)	Cara McCarthy	(703) 334-9723	<a href="mailto:cara.mccarthy@dfs.virginia.gov">cara.mccarthy@dfs.virginia.gov</a>



# New Seized Drug Data Dashboards



Home



Reports

Sign In

## Data-Driven Insights for Virginia's Substance Use Crises

Virginia Substance Use Disorder Analytics (SUDA) is your resource for the latest data and insights to help address opioid and substance use challenges across the Commonwealth.





# Scientist Recruitment and Retention

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- Concerns with recruiting and retaining scientific staff
- In Q3/Q4 2024, the Supervisor and 2 Forensic Scientists in the Northern Laboratory Latent Prints Section resigned for higher paying federal jobs
  - Filled the Supervisor position internally
  - Two scientist positions have been posted 4 times



# Compensation Study

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- Sent salary surveys to 24 laboratories and received 8 replies
  - 4 respondents were in region of Northern Laboratory
  - 2 respondents were federal laboratories
- 2023 ASCLD Salary Survey also considered
- Focused on forensic scientists, toxicologists, forensic lab specialists, and evidence specialists



# Cost of Living Index (COLI)

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## Cost-of-Living Comparison:

Location	COLI (National Average = 100)
Manassas (Northern)*	144.7
Washington, DC**	141.9
Richmond (Central)*	112.1
Norfolk (Eastern)*	104.5
Virginia**	100.7
Roanoke (Western)*	97.0

\*Salary.com COLI by City 2025

\*\* World Population Review COLI by State 2025





# Study Results

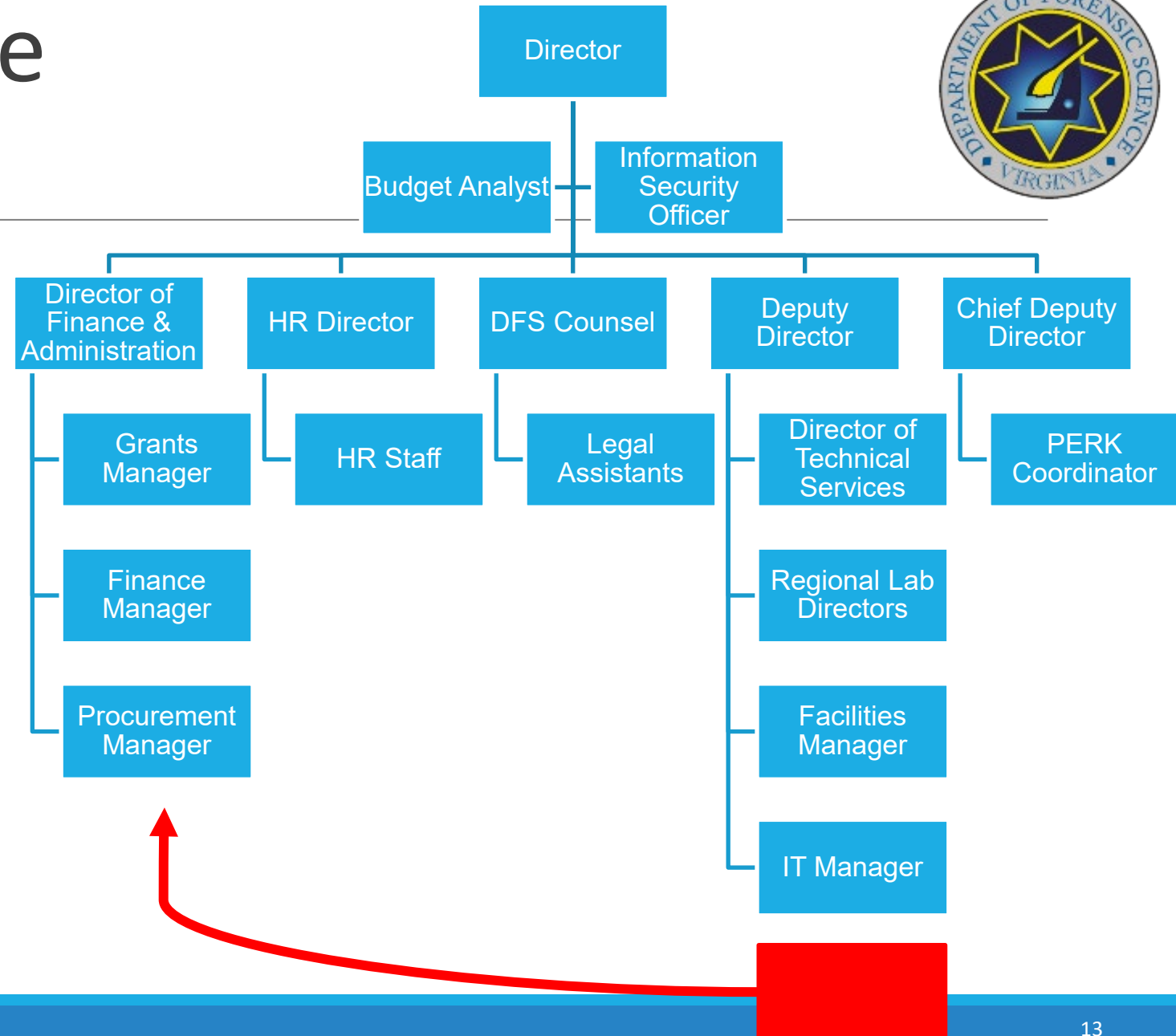
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- All Northern salaries for position types were below current survey minimums based on comparison to labs in Northern VA region (-9% to -32%)
- For other statewide salaries, the entry level trainee position was below survey minimum (-30%) as well as forensic laboratory specialist (-13%) and evidence receiving (-20%) positions, but all other scientists were at or above market
- **In budget request process**

# Director's Office Reorganization



- Created and filled Director of Finance & Administration position to better align functions and responsibilities
- Donna Carter



# Potential Legislation – Scientific Advisory Committee

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## § 9.1-1112. Meetings and chairman.

The Committee shall meet twice a year in the City of Richmond and at such other times and places as it determines or as directed by the Governor or the Forensic Science Board. A chairman shall be elected from among the members appointed by the Governor. Staff to the Committee shall be provided by the Department of Forensic Science.

- Remove designated meeting location to allow meetings in the new Central Laboratory in Hanover County



# Case Statistics

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Available using the Case  
Statistics Dashboard

[https://dfs.virginia.gov/about-  
dfs/case-statistics-dashboard/](https://dfs.virginia.gov/about-dfs/case-statistics-dashboard/)



# Workload Statistics – 2025 Q3

Section	Cases Submitted	Cases Completed	Caseload (Backlog)	Average Case TAT (in days)
Controlled Substances	7,049	6,651	2,704	39
Digital & Multimedia Evidence (DME)	32	28	89	172
Firearms & Toolmarks	1,056	1,009	1,715	173
Forensic Biology (DNA)	1,428	1,555	3,836	236
Latent Prints & Impressions	522	616	335	77
Toxicology	2,371	2,269	1,240	47
Trace Evidence	108	137	354	239

# Budget and Resources

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# Staffing and Budget

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- Maximum Employment Limit: 369 (342 GF + 27 NGF)
- Current Staffing: 324 GF + 17 NGF (all vacant GF positions are in-recruit)
- ~\$5,453,000 remained at the end of FY2025
  - Did not use carryover from FY2024 for Breath Alcohol instruments
  - Did not pay normal prepayments to other state agencies
  - Requested to carryover to pay for Breath Alcohol instruments and address the unknown increases in utilities related to the new facility



# Final Budget – FY26

- Adds 2 Biology Forensic Scientists (1 filled, 1 in interviews)
- Adds 2 Facilities Specialists for new Central Laboratory (filled)
- Adds 1 Senior Legal Assistant to assist with MJB project (filled)

	First Year - FY2025	Second Year - FY2026	
Total For Department of Forensic Science	\$64,075,932	<del>\$64,153,890</del>	\$64,790,000
General Fund Positions	342	<del>342</del>	347
Nongeneral Fund Positions	27	27	27
Position Level	369	<del>369</del>	374
Fund Sources:			
General	\$61,295,876	<del>\$61,373,834</del>	\$62,009,944
Federal Trust	\$2,780,056	\$2,780,056	

# Grant Funding – Requesting Board Permission to Apply

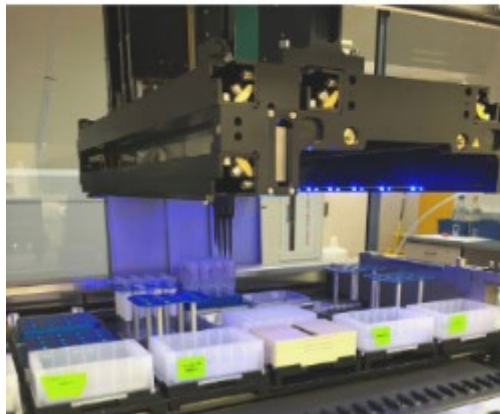
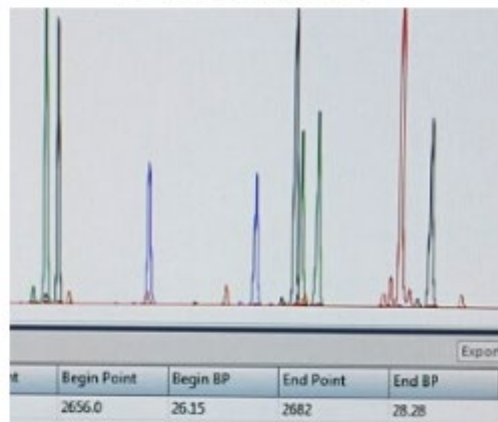
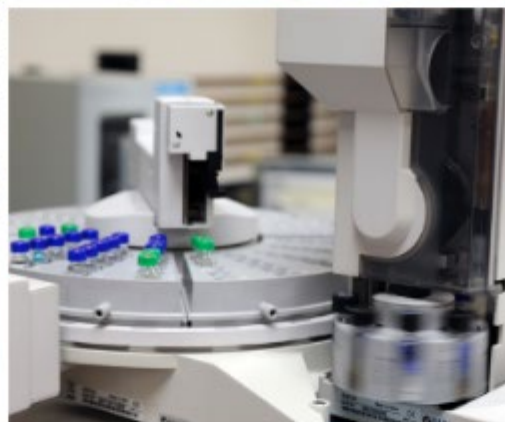
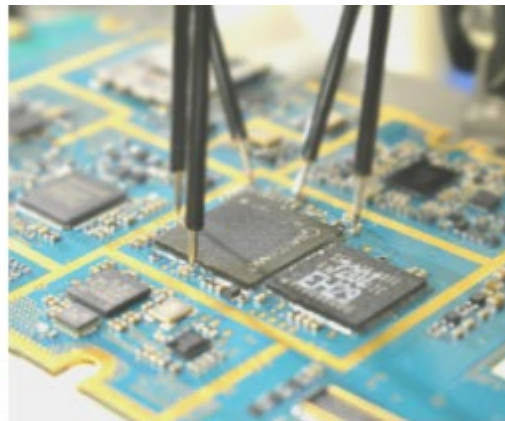
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## **Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Grants**

- **FY25 DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction Grant Program**  
DFS will apply directly to BJA for funding under this program to support DNA personnel, supplies, equipment, and continuing education. The formula amount for VA is \$1,858,249. Deadline to apply is October 29, 2025.
- **FY25 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grant Program**  
DCJS will apply directly to BJA for funding under this program for Virginia. DFS will utilize funding for training and continuing education in the Chemistry, Physical Evidence, and Toxicology Program Areas, and for equipment and/or software items. The formula amount for VA is \$475,556, which will be divided evenly between DFS and the OCME. Applications to DCJS are due by October 23, 2025.





Thank you!