



Central (Richmond)



Northern (Manassas)



Eastern (Norfolk)



Western (Roanoke)

# DEPARTMENT OF FORENSIC SCIENCE UPDATE

Linda C. Jackson, Director

Presented to the Scientific Advisory Committee

October 13, 2021





# Central Laboratory Capital Project

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- Construction package presented to General Assembly capital funding committee
- Construction (Working) drawings are being prepared for submission for final approval by DEB
- Groundbreaking/Site preparation currently anticipated in late first quarter of 2022
- Project completion anticipated 2024





# Virginia Forensic Science Week

September 19 - 25, 2021



- Governor Northam proclaimed September 19 – 24 as Virginia Forensic Science Week
- Presented 70 service awards
- Planned local recognition activities



# Audits and Reviews

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- Beginning
  - Office of the State Inspector General Audit to identify areas where potential improvements to effectiveness, efficiency and economy of operations
- Completed
  - IT Security Audit completed by VITA
  - National Institute of Justice Desk Audit of 2018 Toxicology Research Grant



# New Policy Initiatives

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## ONE Virginia Plan

- Including Diversity, Equity & Inclusion language in Employee Work Profiles
- DHRM Road to Cultural Competence training in October
- Researching virtual laboratory tour videos





# New Policy Initiatives

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## EO 77 – Reduction of Solid Waste and Single Use Plastics

- Submitted spreadsheet to DEQ on September 20, 2021
- Disposable plastic laboratory consumables are utilized to significantly reduce the potential for cross contamination between samples
- Single use plastic consumables are part of validated methods
- Medical exemption
- Current laboratory recycling programs are being evaluated





# Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) Projects

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## Forensic Advantage

- DNA Data Bank Sample Tracking System
- Prelog for evidence submission information
- Expungement Module
- Power BI for data presentation



# Forensic Training for Attorneys and Judges

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- Began in 2018
- 2018 and 2019: DNA Training
- 2019: Driving Under the Influence Training – Toxicology & Breath Alcohol
- 2021: Controlled Substances Analysis
- No CLE credits



# Workload Statistics

DFS Workload Statistics	Case Submissions			Difference FY19/FY21
	FY19	FY20	FY21	
Section				
Controlled Substances	34,787	33,757	27,111	-22%
Digital & Multimedia Evidence	233	119	178	-24%
Firearms & Toolmarks	6,627	7,202	8,169	+23%
Forensic Biology	6,027	5,988	6,430	+7%
Latent Prints & Impressions	2,558	2,581	2,196	-14%
Toxicology	9,669	10,047	11,384	+18%
Trace Evidence	714	679	714	0%
Total	60,615	60,373	56,182	-7%



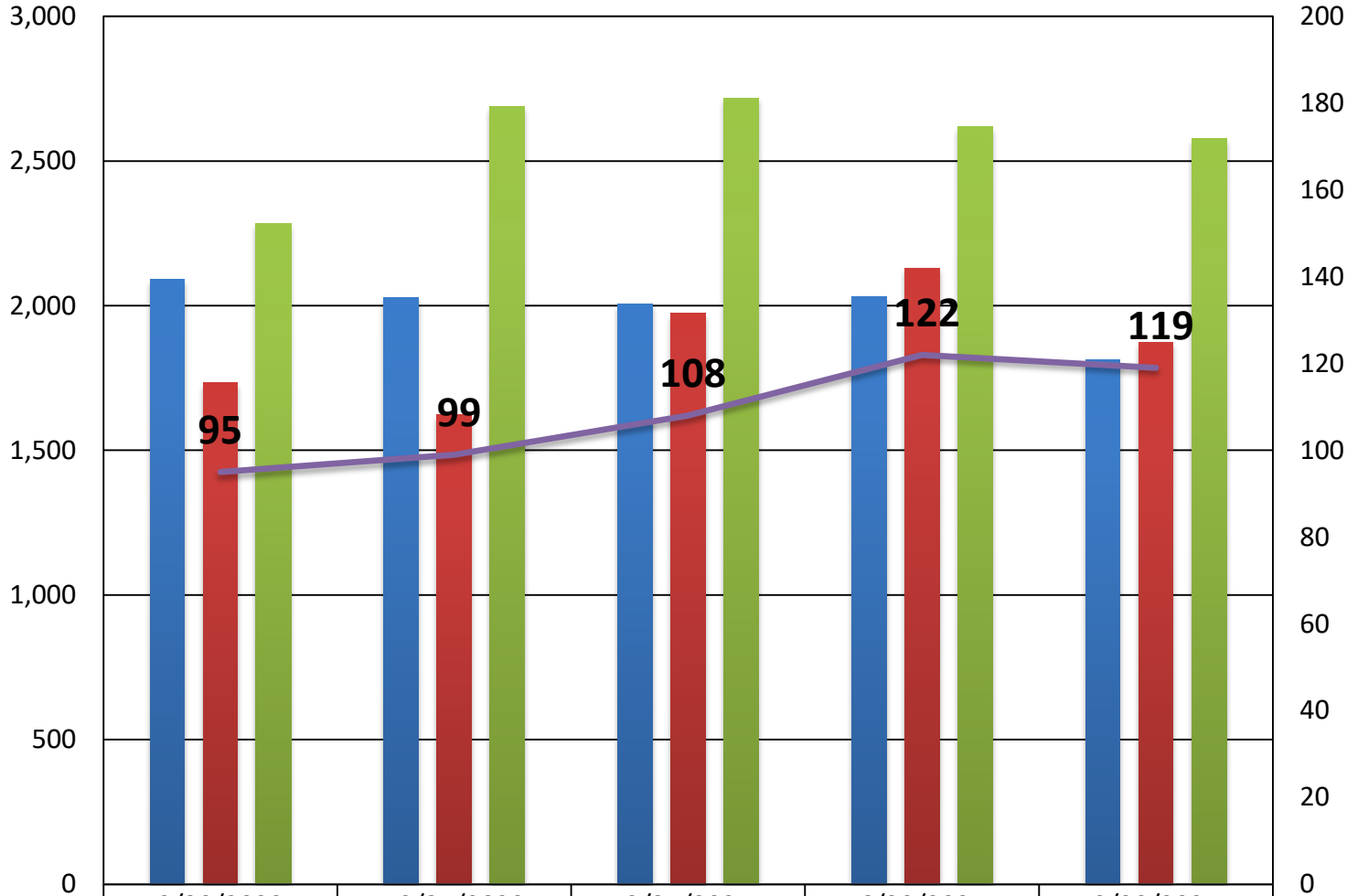
# September Workload Statistics

Discipline/Section	Ending Backlog As of 9/30/2021	Average TAT (in days) September 2021
Controlled Substances	1,157	22
Digital & Multimedia Evidence	81	133
Firearms & Toolmarks	2,578	125
Forensic Biology (DNA)	1,798	161
Latent Prints & Impressions	346	61
Toxicology	1,377	58
Trace Evidence	151	84

# Firearms & Toolmarks

Number of Cases

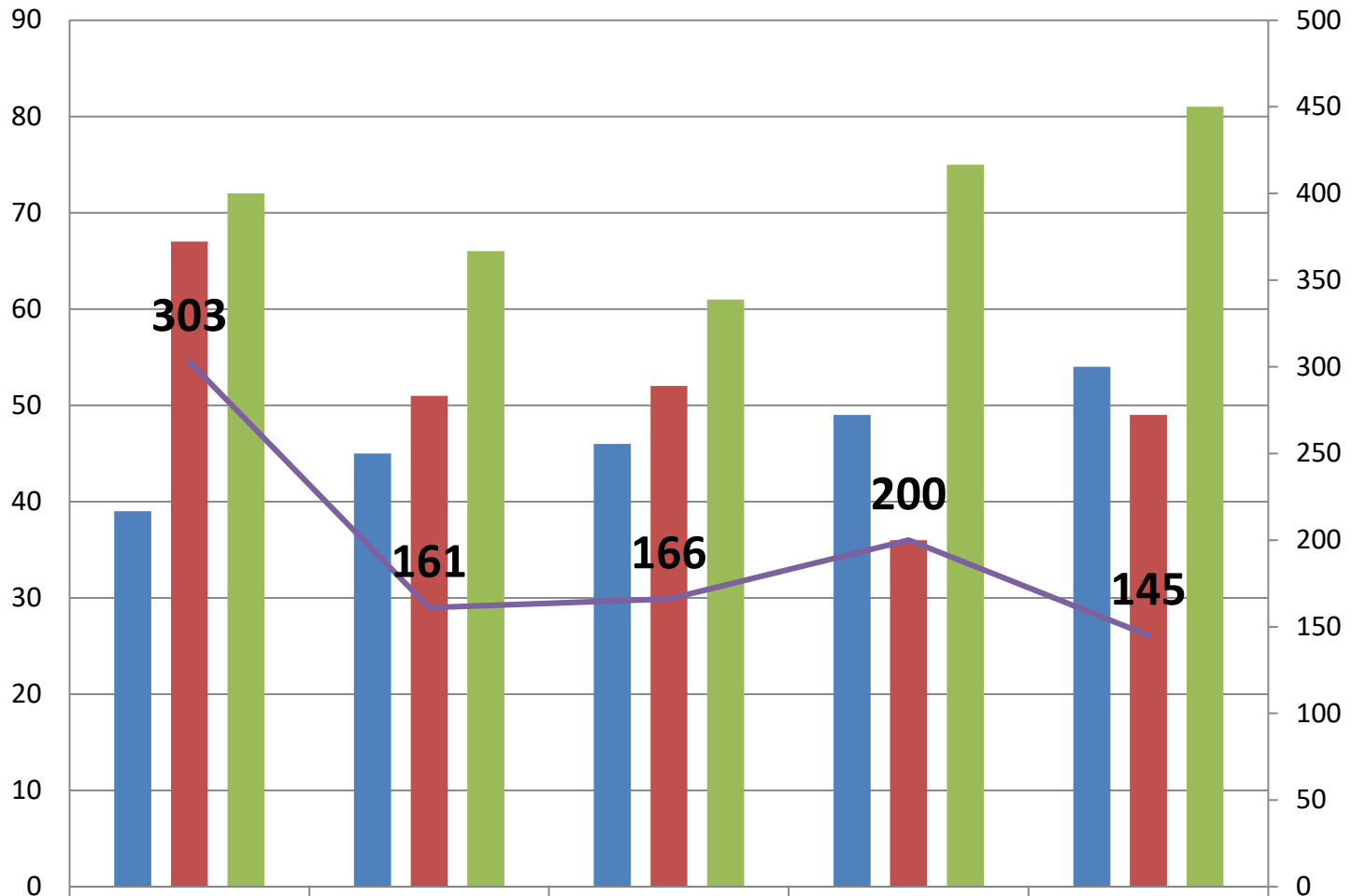
Number of Days



	9/30/2020	12/31/2020	3/31/2021	6/30/2021	9/30/2021
<span style="color: blue;">■</span> Cases Received*	2,092	2,029	2,005	2,030	1,812
<span style="color: red;">■</span> Cases Completed	1,734	1,624	1,975	2,130	1,875
<span style="color: green;">■</span> Caseload	2,283	2,688	2,718	2,618	2,578
<span style="color: purple;">—</span> Average Days in System	95	99	108	122	119

# Digital and Multimedia Evidence

Number of Cases Number of Days

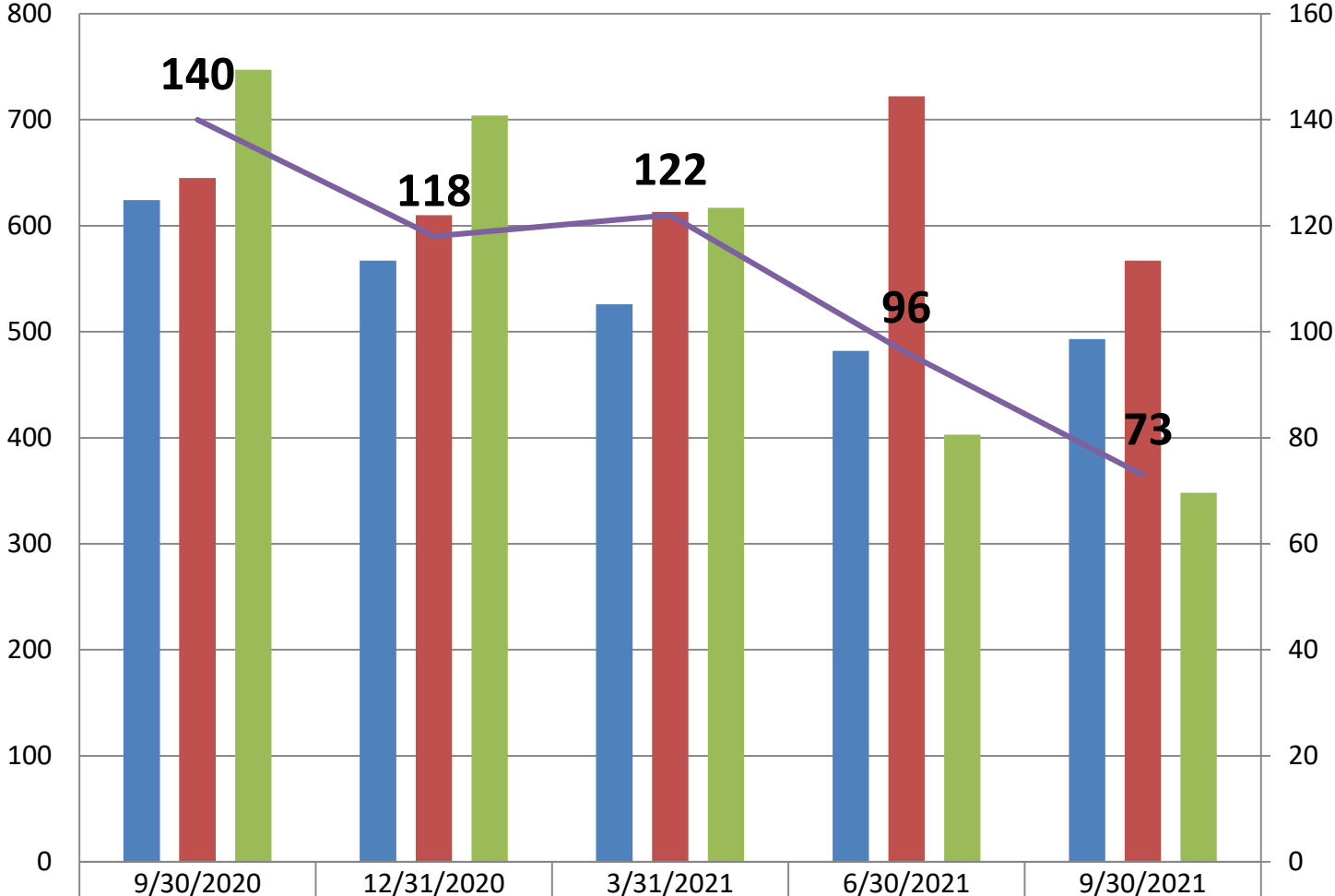


<span style="color: blue;">■</span> Cases Received*	39	45	46	49	54
<span style="color: red;">■</span> Cases Completed	67	51	52	36	49
<span style="color: green;">■</span> Caseload	72	66	61	75	81
<span style="color: purple;">—</span> Average Days in System	303	161	166	200	145

# Latent Prints & Impressions

Number of Cases

Number of Days

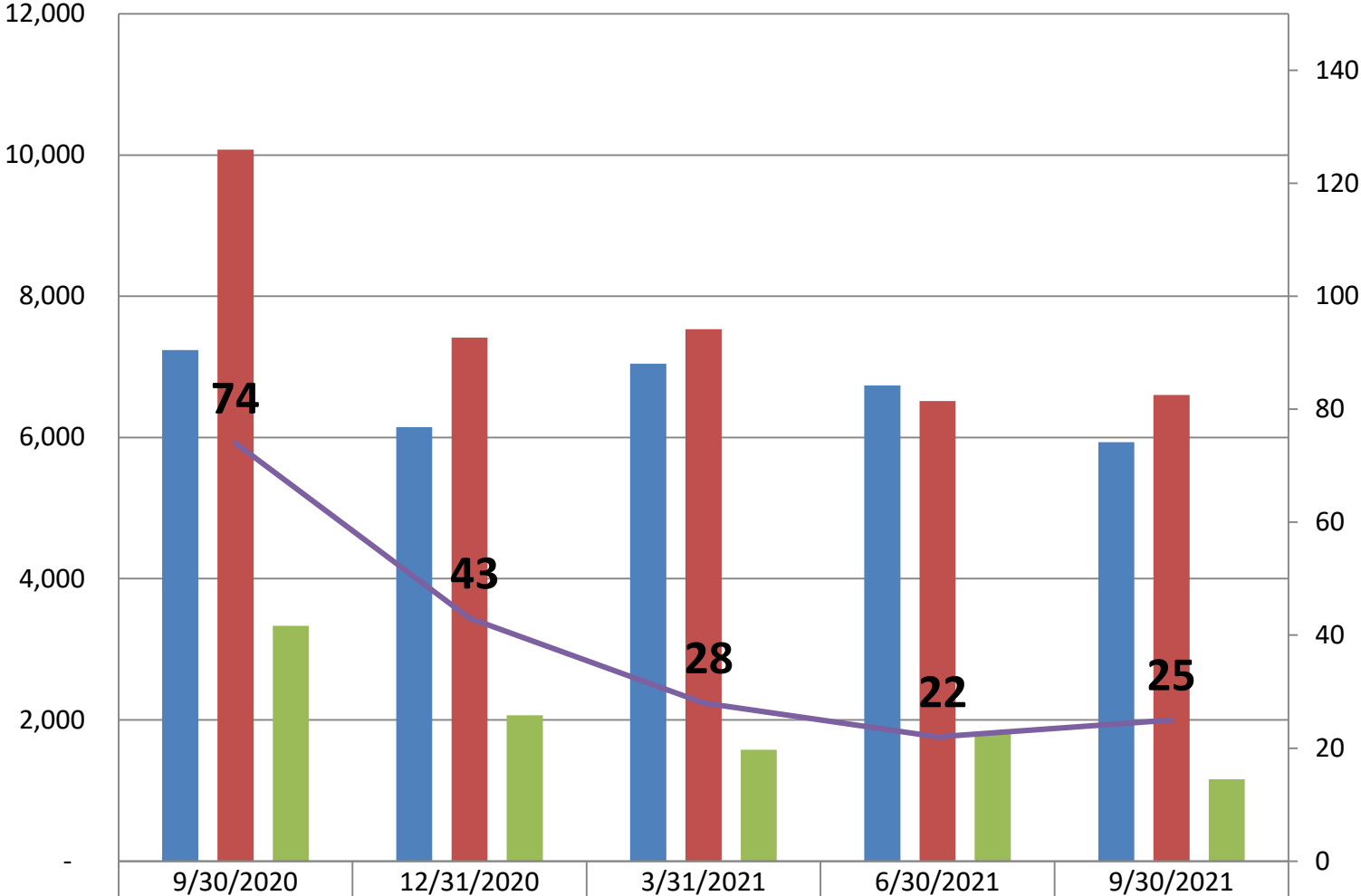


Cases Received*	624	567	526	482	493
Cases Completed	645	610	613	722	567
Caseload	747	704	617	403	348
Average Days in System	140	118	122	96	73

# Controlled Substances

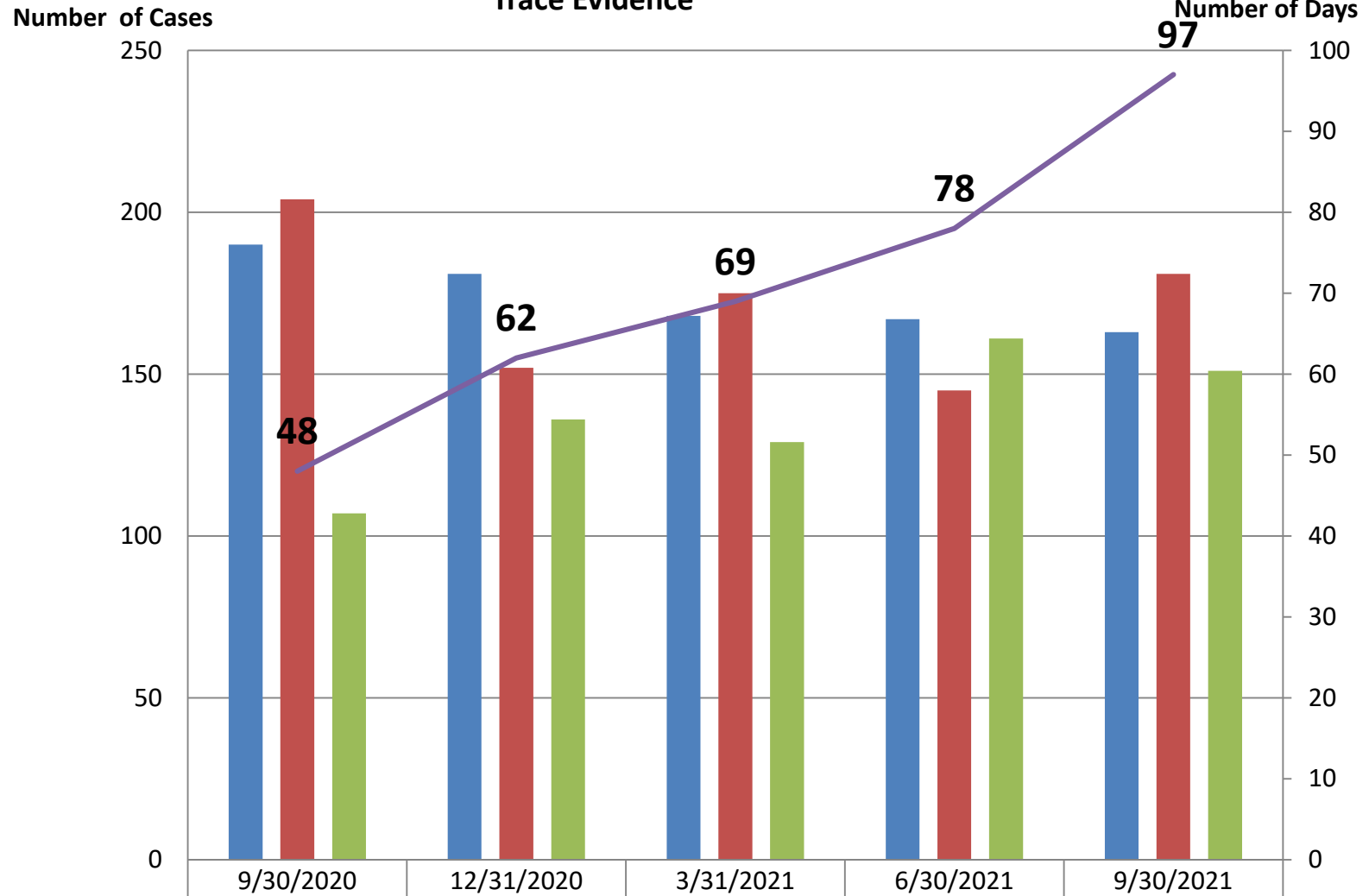
Number of Cases

Number of Days



<span style="color: blue;">■</span> Cases Received*	7,239	6,148	7,046	6,739	5,933
<span style="color: red;">■</span> Cases Completed	10,076	7,416	7,533	6,514	6,603
<span style="color: green;">■</span> Caseload	3,333	2,066	1,578	1,818	1,158
<span style="color: purple;">—</span> Average Days in System	74	43	28	22	25

## Trace Evidence



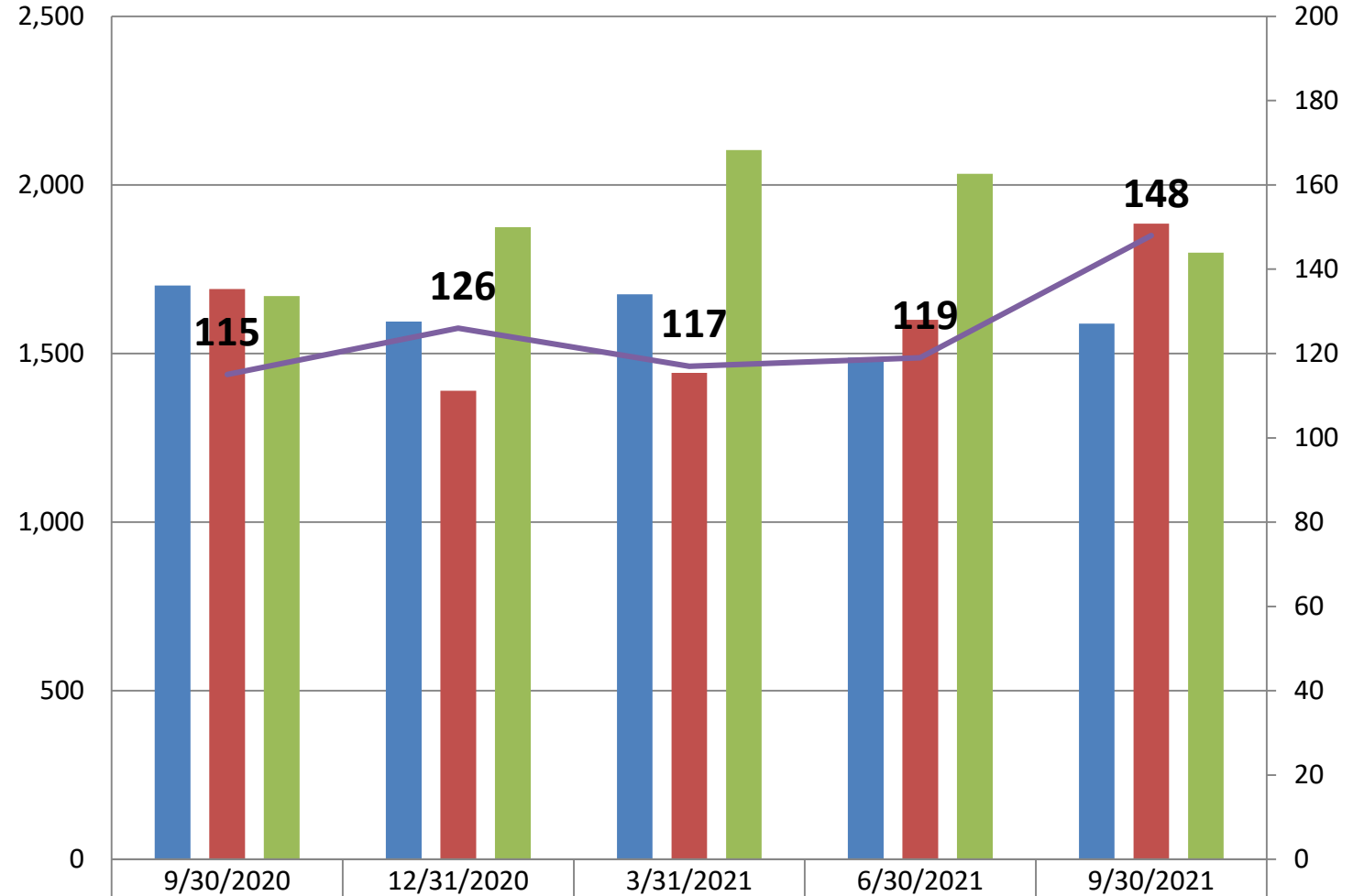
<span style="color: blue;">■</span> Cases Received*	190	181	168	167	163
<span style="color: red;">■</span> Cases Completed	204	152	175	145	181
<span style="color: green;">■</span> Caseload	107	136	129	161	151
<span style="color: purple;">—</span> Average Days in System	48	62	69	78	97



# Forensic Biology (DNA)

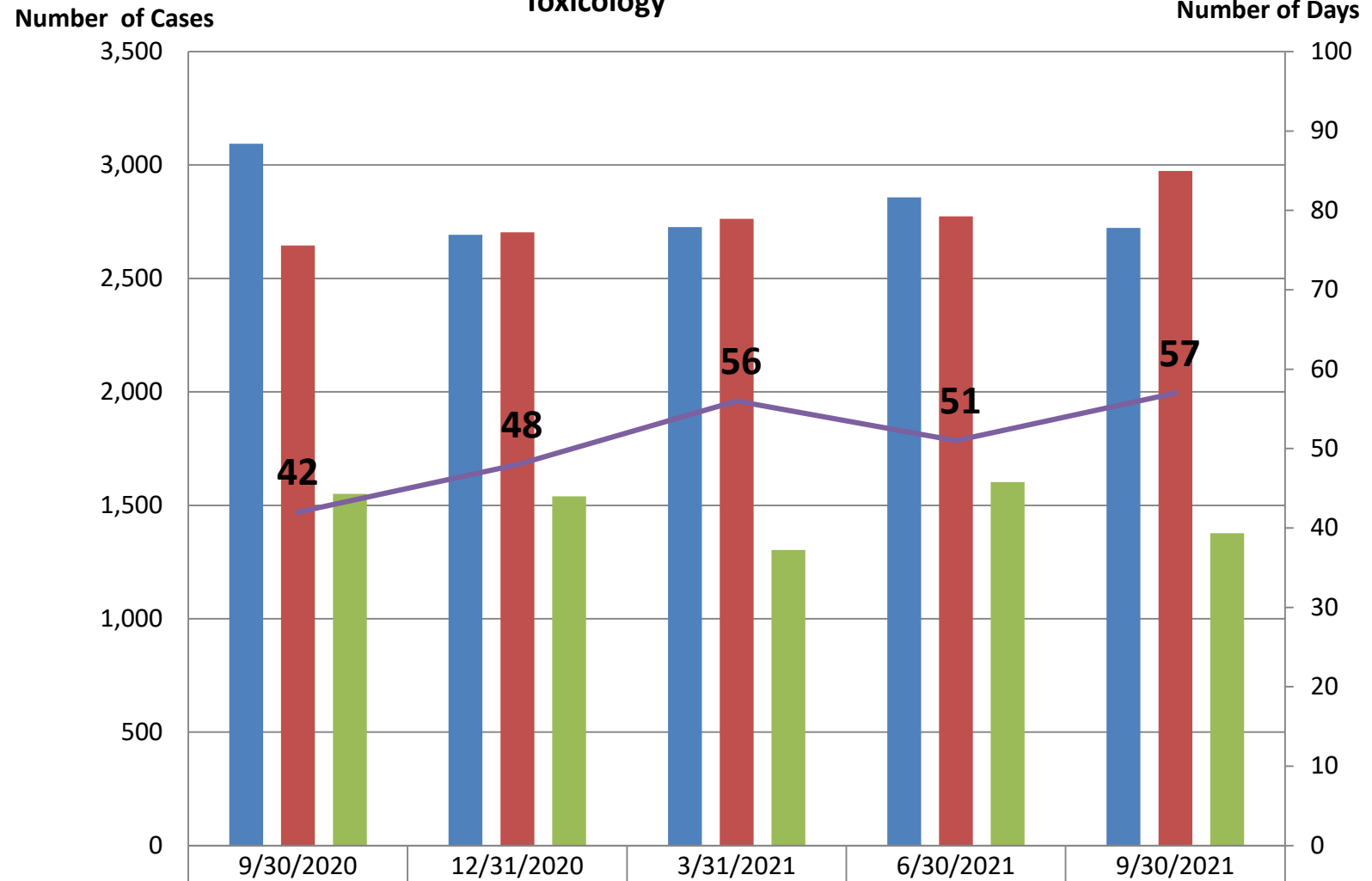
Number of Cases

Number of Days



Cases Received*	1,702	1,595	1,676	1,488	1,589
Cases Completed	1,691	1,390	1,443	1,600	1,885
Caseload	1,670	1,875	2,103	2,033	1,799
Average Days in System	115	126	117	119	148

## Toxicology



	9/30/2020	12/31/2020	3/31/2021	6/30/2021	9/30/2021
<span style="color: blue;">■</span> Cases Received*	3,094	2,692	2,726	2,858	2,723
<span style="color: red;">■</span> Cases Completed	2,645	2,703	2,763	2,774	2,974
<span style="color: green;">■</span> Caseload	1,551	1,540	1,303	1,602	1,377
<span style="color: purple;">—</span> Average Days in System	42	48	56	51	57



# PERK Tracking

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- Funding for PERK Tracking System Coordinator through 2023
- Mandatory use as of July 1, 2020, but not all law enforcement agencies have begun use
- Notifying non-compliant agencies monthly if they have received at least one PERK and not submitted the kit(s) to DFS within 60 days (or designated one of the statutory reasons for non-submission)
- Forensic Science Board reports on PERK Tracking usage in annual report to the legislature, due November 1

# Budget and Resources

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# Biennial FY22 Budget

<b>Service Areas</b>	<b>General Fund (FY22)</b>	<b>Federal Funds (FY22)</b>	<b>ARPA (FY22)</b>	<b>Grand Total (FY22)</b>	<b>% of overall budget</b>
Forensic Biology	\$12,281,935	\$1,758,391		\$14,040,326	<b>25%</b>
Chemistry	\$14,424,012	\$38,000		\$14,462,012	<b>26%</b>
Toxicology	\$8,615,582	\$565,551		\$9,181,133	<b>16%</b>
Physical Evidence	\$9,633,931	\$54,600		\$9,688,531	<b>17%</b>
Forensic Training	\$366,856	\$17,550		\$384,406	<b>1%</b>
Administration/Facilities/IT	\$8,003,338	\$4,838	\$505,375	\$8,513,551	<b>15%</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$53,325,654</b>	<b>\$2,438,930</b>	<b>\$505,375</b>	<b>\$56,269,959</b>	<b>100%</b>



# Grant Awards Received

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## FY 2022 Highway Safety (DMV) Grant for Breath Alcohol (BA) Section

- Period: Oct. 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022
- Funds for Breath Alcohol:
  - Funding for 1 BA Forensic Scientist
  - Reimbursement for law enforcement officers traveling for breath alcohol instruction
  - Continuing education for DFS BA Staff
  - Classroom supplies/iClickers
- Federal Funds Awarded: \$278,055
- DFS Match (in-kind): \$69,514

## FY 2022 Highway Safety (DMV TRENDS Office) Grant for Toxicology Section

- Period: Oct. 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022
- Funds for Toxicology:
  - Continuation of 4 part-time Forensic Laboratory Specialist (FLS) positions
  - Additional 4 full-time FLS positions
- Federal Funds Awarded: \$293,313
- DFS Match (cash/in-kind): \$73,329



# Grant Awards Received

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- DCJS Byrne Justice Assistance Grant Funding
  - Continued funding for 3<sup>rd</sup> Forensic Training Section Instructor (part-time)
  - Grant Period: July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2024
  - \$45,407 per year includes funding for salary and course supplies
- Ensures 3 Forensic Science Academy sessions while maintaining Short Course offerings



# Grant Awards Pending

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## FY 2021 DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction (CEBR) Grant

DFS applied to the Bureau of Justice Assistance for funds under this program to increase/maintain capacity in the Forensic Biology and the DNA Data Bank Sections by continuing to fund personnel, purchase supplies, and add items of equipment. Funds will also be used to provide the required continuing education for DNA scientists.

Total funds requested: Federal = \$1,743,265

## FY 2021 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grant

DCJS applied for these funds on behalf of DFS and the OCME. DFS will utilize funds to provide continuing education to scientific staff in the various disciplines. DFS also plans to use funds to contract with the LIMS provider (TCSC) to increase capabilities of the LIMS to allow for a paperless, electronic review process for the generation of reports.

Total funds requested: \$508,328

DFS Portion = \$254,164



# American Rescue Plan Act Spending Proposal



To address public safety “by investing in technology and equipment to allow law enforcement to more efficiently and effectively respond to the rise in gun violence resulting from the pandemic”

– [Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds FAQ, p. 20](#)

- Firearms submissions to DFS increased 14% in CY2020
  - Providing investigative leads in violent crimes involving guns can help reduce/prevent further gun violence and therefore increase public health
1. Add equipment for three (3) additional Firearms forensic scientists - \$300,000 FY22
  2. Purchase additional NIBIN equipment - \$205,375 FY22 with \$25,000 in future years

<https://dpb.virginia.gov/forms/forms.cfm?search=American%20Rescue%20Plan%20Act%20Budget%20Request%20Submissions>



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Thank you!