

**CONSORTIUM OF FORENSIC SCIENCE
ORGANIZATIONS (CFSO)**

FLASH BRIEF

APRIL 2023

The mission of the CFSO is to speak with a single forensic science voice on behalf of its member organizations of matters of mutual interest regarding forensic science, to influence public policy at the national level, and to make a compelling case for greater federal funding for public crime laboratories and medical examiner and coroner offices. The primary focus of the CFSO is national, state, and local policymakers, as well as the United States Congress.

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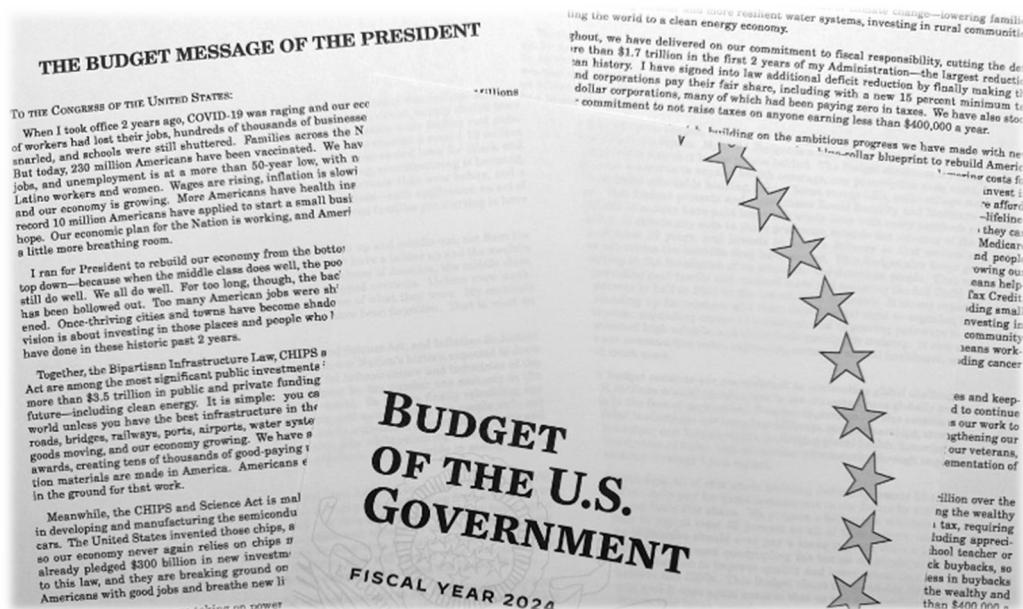
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Budget Briefing

The FY24 budget proposal has been delivered from the Biden Administration to Congress. In short, forensic science has grown in the federal budget and is now spread across three agencies: Department of Justice, Department of Commerce (NIST) and Department of Health and Human Services (CDC). Please find below the detail for each budget. CFSO will track this as it moves through Congress and provide updates.



PC AP News

Funding FY23 final vs. FY24 proposed

| DOJ | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Program | FY23 Actual | FY24 Request |
| National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) | \$3.5m | \$5.0m |
| Missing Persons and Identified Remains Act | \$8.0m | \$7.0m |
| Forensics Ballistic Program | \$1.5m | 0 |
| National Center of Forensics | 0 | \$4.0m |
| Forensic Science Research and Development Program (new program) | 0 | \$15.0m |
| DNA Programs | \$170.0m | \$147.0m |
| DNA Analysis and Capacity Enhancement Program | \$130.0m | \$112.0m |
| Other Federal, State, and Local Forensic Activities | \$20.0m | \$19.0m |
| Kirk Bloodsworth Post Conviction DNA Testing Program | \$15.0m | \$12.0m |
| Sexual Assault Forensic Exam Program Guide | \$5.0m | \$4.0m |
| Community Teams to Reduce the Sexual Assault Kit (SAK) Backlog | \$55m | \$100.0m |
| Regional Sexual Assault Investigative Training Academies | 0 | \$20.0m |
| Coverdell Forensic Science Grants | \$35.0m | \$35.0m |
| Forensic Support for Opioid and Synthetic Drug Investigations | \$17.0m | \$17.0m |
| Forensics Training and Technical Assistance (new program) | 0 | \$5.0m |
| Commerce: NIST | | |
| Forensic Science Research | \$22.0m | N/A* |
| OSAC | \$3.5m | N/A* |
| Technical Merit Evaluations | \$1.5m | N/A* |
| SDO Grant | N/A | N/A* |
| HHS: CDC | | |
| Opioid Overdose Prevention and Surveillance | \$505.579m | \$713.369m |
| National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) | \$24.5m | \$34.5m |

*N/A=not available

LANGUAGE

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (referencing forensics)

Forensic Science Research and Development Program (\$15.0 million): The FY 2024 Budget requests \$15.0 million as a carve-out under the Byrne Justice Assistance Grants (JAG) program to establish a dedicated program to support forensic science research designed to promote criminal justice system efficiencies and cost-effectiveness and ensure the fair and impartial administration of justice. The program

will fund both intramural and extramural research and support collaborative partnerships with academic, governmental, and private entities across the criminal justice and research communities. NIJ will also leverage this program to support graduate research fellowships in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields to increase the number of research-oriented practitioners, who are critical to serving the needs of the field.

In FY 2024, the President's Budget requests \$15.0 million to establish a dedicated program to support forensic science research and development. NIJ will use the program to implement Department priorities through mission-driven research in the physical and social sciences to evaluate field implementation and measure the impact of innovative forensic technologies and practices. Expected outcomes include new technologies, tools, and evidence-based practices that improve the strength and efficiency of forensic science. The resulting improvements to forensic science will promote criminal justice system efficiencies and cost-effectiveness, and the fair and impartial administration of justice.

The Forensic Science Research and Development Program will fund both intramural and extramural research and support collaborative partnerships with academic, governmental, and private entities across the criminal justice and research communities. NIJ would also leverage this program to support graduate research fellowships in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields to increase the number of research-oriented practitioners, who are critical to serving the needs of the field. Accordingly, NIJ seeks to: 1) create and sustain this necessary program; 2) expand forensic research into digital evidence, forensic genetic genealogy, and the application of artificial intelligence, including machine learning; and 3) couple forensic science innovations with social science evaluations of field implementation and impact, thus promoting the adoption of evidence-based technologies and practices nationwide.

Justification: The request will allow OJP to continue to provide strong federal leadership in forensic science. It aligns with the Administration's priorities of providing research to enhance the criminal justice system and implementing state-of-the-art tools for fighting crime and improving the reliability of forensic analysis to enable examiners to report results with increased specificity and certainty. Forensic science research provides law enforcement and crime laboratories with novel techniques and tools to analyze evidence in a court of law. As a result, forensic science research enhances the criminal justice system by providing more efficient, higher-quality technologies which can expedite and inform investigations and prosecutions, such as improving the quality and application of impression and pattern evidence, as well as developing drug-analyzing tools to combat the opiate crisis and drug-impaired driving.

Funding forensic science research is widely supported by criminal justice organizations and the scientific community. For example, the Innocence Project "supports increasing funding for research at science-based agencies and institutions" while recognizing that past NIJ forensic science research investments have advanced and improved the validity of forensic science.^{34 35} The high demand for forensic science research outstrips the capacity of the current program. In FY 2021, NIJ was only able to fund 30 of 165 highly rated peer review proposals under the Research and Development in Forensic Science for Criminal Justice Purposes solicitation.

Impact on Performance: This request supports DOJ Strategic Objective 3.3: *Reform and Strengthen the Criminal and Juvenile Justice Systems to Ensure Fair and Just Treatment* by strengthening science-based systems and technologies used to exonerate the innocent or prosecute the guilty. Forensic research ensures that robust, objective, and modern tools can be used responsibly

and reliably in crime laboratories, medical examiner and coroner offices, and law enforcement agencies. Expected outcomes include innovative technologies and tools that improve the efficiency and quality of science across the criminal justice system.

NIJ tracks the following measures for its research and development activities.

- Number of citations of NIJ products in peer reviewed journals
- Number of technologies fielded as a result (in whole or in part) of work funded under the NIJ award
- Number of scholarly products that resulted in whole or in part from work funded under the NIJ award.

“Federal policy makers should ensure the ability of the NIJ to advance forensic science research and development through dedicated, adequate, and stable appropriations coupled with funding flexibility to help support both short- and long-term research strategies. In order to ensure funding stability from year to year, policy makers should designate a dedicated funding stream for research and development that is of sufficient magnitude to address the challenges facing forensic science.”³⁶

³⁴ <https://innocenceproject.org/forensic-science-problems-and-solutions/>

³⁵ <https://innocenceproject.org/lasting-impact-of-2009-nas-report/>

³⁶ National Institute of Justice, *Support for Forensic Science Research: Improving the Scientific Role of the National Institute of Justice*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, 2015. <https://nij.ojp.gov/library/publications/support-forensic-science-research-improving-scientific-role-national-institute>

National Center on Forensics (\$4.0 million): \$4.0 million (as a carveout from the Byrne Justice Assistance Grants program) to provide. The FY 2024 President’s Budget requests dedicated funding for the National Center on Forensics program. First funded in FY 2020, this program is focused on developing and providing learning opportunities in the forensic sciences for medical students, prosecutors, judges, and law enforcement. The program goals include developing opportunities and partnerships to benefit current and future practitioners in the field, improve the forensic science workforce expertise through knowledge transfer and professional development, and enhance medicolegal death investigation practices, particularly in underserved rural areas.

Description of Item In FY 2024, the President’s Budget requests \$4.0 million (as a carveout from the Byrne Justice Assistance Grants program) to reestablish the National Center on Forensics program. This program, which was first funded in FY 2020, will develop and provide learning opportunities in the forensic sciences for medical students, prosecutors, judges, and law enforcement. The program goals include developing opportunities and partnerships to benefit current and future practitioners in the field, improve the forensic science workforce expertise through knowledge transfer and professional development, and enhance medicolegal death investigation practices, particularly in underserved rural areas.

Justification The National Center on Forensics will provide OJP the opportunity to incorporate lessons learned and developed outputs from the FY2020 and FY2021 programs into a single 5-year award that aims to support forensic science by advancing a highly skilled workforce. As identified in

NIJ's 2019 Needs Assessment of Forensic Laboratories and Medical Examiner/Coroner Offices, there is a national need to improve the forensic science personnel pipeline through education and nontraditional academic programs, particularly with respect to medicolegal death investigation and the legal community. When well trained in the forensic sciences, medical examiners, judges, law enforcement, and prosecutors can help administer fair and impartial justice, thus supporting efforts to combat violent crime and gun violence.

Impact on Performance This program supports the Department's Strategic Plan Objective 2.3: *Combat Violent Crime and Gun Violence*. This initiative will support the continuation of the National Center on Forensics grant program, which is designed to enhance the workforce pipeline associated with forensic science and the medicolegal death investigation systems. Expected outcomes include knowledge transfer activities that improve the forensic science subject matter expertise of medical examiners, coroners, prosecutors, and judges across the criminal justice system.

NIJ tracks the following measures for its training and technical activities.

- Number of training curricula
- Number of trainings (In-Person, Web-based, Workshop, Peer-Peer, Other)
- Number of individuals who attended, completed, and evaluated the training

DNA Related and Forensic Programs and Activities (-\$23,000): The reduction will fund these programs at the same level as in FY 2022; most of the impact of this reduction will be focused on backlog reduction efforts. Purpose: Maximize the use of DNA and other forensic technology in the criminal justice system to ensure accuracy and fairness.

Description: Grants to states to purchase equipment, conduct analysis and review of data, and upload data into national databases. DNA and forensic science can speed the prosecution of the guilty, protect the innocent from wrongful prosecution, and exonerate those wrongfully convicted of a crime.

In FY 2024, the President's Budget requests \$147 million for DNA Related and Forensic Programs and Activities, which is a decrease of \$23 million below the FY 2023 Enacted level. This reduction will fund these programs at the same level as in FY 2022; most of the impact of this reduction will be focused on backlog reduction efforts.

DNA-Related and Forensic Programs and Activities supports a variety of programs including:

- The Capacity Enhancement for Backlog Reduction Program, which provides grants to state and local crime labs to support DNA evidence analysis and backlog reduction efforts;
- Other Federal, State, and Local Forensic Activities, which supports a variety of forensic research and training and technical assistance programs;
- The Kirk Bloodsworth Post-Conviction DNA Testing program, which supports review of cases and additional DNA evidence testing in cases where a wrongful conviction is suspected; and
- The Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners program, which supports training for sexual assault nurse examiners (SANEs) and the development of SANE programs to improve the investigation and prosecution of sexual assault cases.

Justification

The FY 2024 budget request will specifically reduce funding for the Capacity Enhancement for Backlog Reduction (CEBR) Program by \$18 million compared to FY 2023 Enacted levels. This reduction in funding will affect accredited crime laboratories that process forensic DNA samples for entry into the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI's) Combined DNA Index System (CODIS). Because awards are distributed to the approximately 130 eligible laboratories in the U.S., the impact of this reduction in funding to individual laboratories to process samples for CODIS will be relatively small. Additionally, because CEBR awards are made annually and span a 24-month period of performance (POP), grantees are not expected to have any major interruptions in funding availability due to the overlapping POP of these awards. For laboratories that are concerned about the reduction of CEBR funding, they will be made aware of other programs available to support laboratory activities such as the Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) program and Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grant program, which both support similar activities funded under the CEBR program. The combination of the small reductions to individual awards, the 24-month POP, and the alternative funding options noted above will minimize the effects of this reduction on individual crime labs.

The FY 2024 budget request includes minor funding reductions for the other programs supported by the DNA-Related and Forensic Programs and activities that will not result in any significant effects on these programs. These reductions include:

- Other Federal, State, and Local Forensic Activities (-\$1 million);
- Kirk Bloodworth Post-Conviction DNA Testing (-\$3 million); and
- Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (-\$1 million).

Impact on Performance DNA Related and Forensic Programs and Activities support the Department's Strategic Plan Objectives 2.3: *Combat Violent Crime and Gun Violence*, 3.3: *Reform and Strengthen the Criminal and Juvenile Justice Systems to Ensure Fair and Just Treatment*, and 2.6: *Protect Vulnerable Communities*. This decrease will primarily impact accredited forensic science laboratories and likely result in a slight decrease in forensic DNA cases processed for CODIS. Given this and the well-documented increases in DNA cases requested for testing from law enforcement agencies year after year, an increase in national DNA backlogs is expected.

Forensics Training and Technical Assistance +\$5,000,000: In FY 2024, the President's Budget requests \$5.0 million to establish a national Forensics Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) program to support and enhance the capacity and program outcomes of active and existing BJA site-based forensic grantees through a range of TTA services. The program will also highlight real-time success for BJA program dollars across its forensic science portfolio. Funding under this program would provide states, localities, and tribes with resources and tools to improve the quality of their forensic science services to meet the challenges of crime and justice and improve overall public safety.

Grantees receiving funding under several forensic science programs would receive TTA under this program, which were transitioned from NIJ to BJA in FY 2020: (1) DNA Capacity Enhancement for Backlog Reduction CEBR/Debbie Smith Act grants (formula); (2) Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Program (formula); (3) Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Program (competitive); (4) Prosecuting Cold Cases using DNA (competitive); (5) Post-conviction DNA Testing Assistance (competitive); (6) Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence-Inventory, Tracking, and

Reporting (competitive); and (7) Strengthening the Medical Examiner-Coroner System Program (competitive).

Justification

The Justice Department makes significant investments in forensics programs, yet there is currently no mechanism or resource to provide direct training or technical resources in support of these investments. Training and technical assistance are vital for ensuring that grantees have the necessary direction and support during implementation of grant funded activities and the success of grantees, both individually and as a group, is important to crime victims and communities seeking justice. The new TTA Program will provide critical support for infrastructure, training, staffing, and operationalizing new technologies into practice on a national scale, including validations. There are over 500 active awards under various OJP forensic science programs; these grantees would benefit from the proposed Forensics TTA program.

The TTA provider will initially focus on the following four priority deliverables: (1) Recruit/Maintain/Use of a Cadre of Subject Matter Experts, (2) Advisory Board Development, (3) Website Development, and (4) Convening of Annual Grantee's Meeting. The TTA provider will also develop a detailed plan to address additional deliverables under the program, and as supplemental funding resources potentially become available that may include:

- Assigning technical assistance coaches to support the seven BJA forensic science programs, and future programs;
- Delivering a wide range of ongoing, direct, and targeted TTA services to BJA forensic science grantees (both remote and onsite), throughout the duration of the grant awards;
- Convening virtual Working Groups comprised of grantee members from the individual BJA forensic science grant programs;
- Hosting webinars related to forensic site-based grant programs, including orientation webinars for each grant program to onboard new grantees;
- Engaging proactively with grantees to monitor progress toward achieving their programmatic goals and identify lessons learned;
- Communicating regularly with BJA to assess the impact of TTA services on program goals and individual sites' progress; and
- Partnering with organizations as needed whose expertise and experience can best meet grant recipients' needs when subject matter expertise is not present within the primary TTA provider's organization.

Impact on Performance : This program supports the Department's Strategic Plan Objective 2.3: *Combat Violent Crime and Gun Violence*. The TTA provider will implement a range of resources and services that will improve the quality and practice of forensic science through innovative solutions that support development, technology, information exchange, and training/best practices resources for the criminal justice community. Currently the Forensics TTA Program is being funded through the state and local forensics activities budget line item (~\$15-20M annually) that is shared annually between both BJA and NIJ, for various forensic science activities. However, the establishment of a separate and distinct funding source would enhance the overall capacity of the Forensics TTA Program to better meet the growing needs of grantees and the field.

Regional Sexual Assault Investigative Training Academies (\$20 million): This new program will provide cutting-edge, evidence-based and trauma-informed training on investigating and prosecuting sexual assault for law enforcement, prosecutors, and victims’ advocates across the United States.

In FY 2024, the President’s Budget requests \$20.0 million for the Regional Sexual Assault Investigative Training Academies Program. This new program will provide cutting-edge, evidence-based, and trauma-informed training on investigating and prosecuting sexual assault for law enforcement, prosecutors, and victims’ advocates across the United States.

Justification

In the United States, an estimated one in three women and one in six men are survivors of sexual violence, with a sexual offense occurring every 73 seconds. Three out of every four sexual assaults go unreported to the police, and even when they are reported, some are not prosecuted due to investigative and/or prosecutorial deficiencies. This not only discourages victims from reporting sexual assault, but also allows persons to go unpunished and to commit further crimes.

There are approximately 18,000 law enforcement agencies in the United States. Most of these agencies, along with prosecutor offices, lack adequate training required to successfully investigate and prosecute sexually-motivated crimes. While BJA’s Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) offers a robust training and technical assistance program, it is primarily focused on cold cases and serving SAKI grantees and does not have the capacity to address the needs of every police agency and prosecutors’ office across the country. This request will expand access to investigative training for law enforcement and prosecutors in units dedicated to sex crimes.

Impact on Performance

The request will allow BJA to support more criminal justice professionals across the country and improve investigations and prosecutions of sexual assault crimes. This funding will provide access to information on the neurobiology of trauma as well as cutting edge investigative strategies to move cases through the system to conviction and resolution in a victim-centered, trauma-informed manner.

National Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI): Purpose: Address a common gap in response to rape and sexual assault at the state, local, and tribal levels by promoting timely resolution of cases associated with sexual assault kits (SAKs) that have never been submitted or are backlogged at crime labs for forensic DNA testing.

Description: This program supports community efforts to identify critical needs in the areas of sexual assault prevention, investigation, prosecution, and victims’ services and to implement strategies to address these needs. These strategies typically include plans for expediting the analysis of untested evidence kits. This program also provides training and technical assistance designed to improve the justice system’s response to rape and sexual assault cases throughout the Nation.

In FY 2024, the President’s Budget requests \$100.0 million for the Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI), an increase of \$45.0 million over the FY 2023 Enacted level. This program assists state, local, and tribal jurisdictions in ensuring just resolution to sexual assault cases associated with sexual assault kits (SAKs) in law enforcement custody that have never been submitted to a crime laboratory for Combined DNA Index System (CODIS)-eligible DNA testing. Funding for this program also supports the SAKI Training and Technical Assistance Program, which provides direct assistance to support law enforcement with the investigation of future, new, active, and inactive cases in order to solve and reduce violent crimes.

The requested funding will:

- Increase awards to jurisdictions to address high volumes of SAKs and subsequent investigations and prosecutions.
- Support a holistic approach that encourages jurisdictions to implement sustainable changes in procedures and policies to ensure that unsubmitted kits do not accumulate in the future and that the overall response to sexually motivated crimes is enhanced to ensure timeliness and a victim-centered focus.
- Provide funding to support investigative and prosecutorial efforts that will allow jurisdictions to address the rape kit backlog, identify and link individuals who commit non-preferential violent serial offenses in an effort to combat and prevent future sexual assaults, solve additional violent crimes, and leverage the SAKI model to improve overall public safety.
- Expand the reach of the existing training and technical assistance program, which will assist additional criminal justice professionals as well as research, evaluate and promote best practices for all aspects of the criminal justice process for current and future sexual assault cases.

Justification

Since its launch in 2015, SAKI has helped improve the justice system's response to sexual assault. SAKI-funded programs have assisted in identifying and apprehending individuals who commit violent offenses and in reducing the number of unsubmitted sexual assault kits. More than 80 grantees have received SAKI funding over the last eight years. To date, more than 183,139 sexual assault kits have been inventoried, over 90,243 kits have been sent for testing, and more than 80,325 kits have been tested to completion.

The impact of SAKI is demonstrated at the community level both in terms of getting dangerous individuals off the street and empowering victims to come forward. Approximately 50 percent of all DNA profiles uploaded from SAKI cases are resulting in CODIS hits, helping agencies prosecute these offenses. To date, there have been over 15,784 CODIS hits, with 2,252 CODIS hits to persons committing serial sex offenses and 8,298 CODIS hits to persons committing other serial violent offenses.

The FY 2024 President's Budget proposes to build on the program's current achievements, continuing to support the program's six (6) purpose areas, with a holistic approach designed to hold individuals who commit violent offenses accountable, while championing the healing of survivors in a trauma-informed manner.

Impact on Performance

This increase will allow for broader impact to the field, increasing community safety with greater identification and accountability of individuals who commit violent offenses, along with justice for victims. Further, the increase will allow BJA to assist more jurisdictions in reforming the manner in which they address violent sexual offenses, while also providing the freedom to move beyond kit testing to support sustained criminal investigations and prosecutions of the nation's most violent individuals.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE/NIST

KEY EXCERPTS FROM THE BUDGET:

Forensic Science is housed in the Standards Coordination and Special Programs Office. “The primary goal of the Standards Coordination and Special Programs is to provide for NIST functions in both the management of cross-cutting laboratory research programs, and NIST’s engagement in standards policy, and documentary standards development. “

“Base Program Standards Coordination and Special Programs house cross-cutting NIST activities managed by the Associate Director for Laboratory Programs (ADLP) that deal with select R&D programs, documentary standards coordination, and policy development.

1. The Special Programs Office (SPO) plans and manages high-profile programs that span the mission and expertise of multiple NIST laboratories to address critical national needs. To meet these needs, SPO works with and forges partnerships among government, private industry, academia, and professional organizations to provide world-class leadership in advanced measurement science, science-based standards, and data-driven technology innovations. SPO actively fosters communication and collaboration between NIST and external stakeholder communities, as well as agile collaboration across organizational boundaries at NIST. SPO’s portfolio of programs includes the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Measurements Program, the Forensic Science Program, the Open Data Program, and other programs designated by the ADLP. “

- “The NIST Forensic Science Program is working to strengthen forensic practice through research and improved standards, conducting research in several forensic disciplines, including digital evidence, forensic genetics, biometrics, firearms and toolmarks, drugs and toxins, statistics, trace analysis, forensic algorithms and data, and quality assurance (which includes interlaboratory studies and proficiency testing). NIST provides physical reference standards and data that help forensic laboratories validate their analytical methods and ensure accurate test results. The program also supports the Center for Statistics and Applications in Forensic Evidence (CSAFE), one of three *NIST Center of Excellence*, which is working to develop new statistical methods for use in pattern and digital evidence examination. “

2. The Standards Coordination Office (SCO) advises NIST leadership on policy and strategy as they relate to NIST’s statutory role and responsibilities in standardization and serves as a normative standards and conformity assessment related multi-functional resource for NIST and U.S. government staff. The primary work areas of the SCO are highlighted below.

- Standards Coordination: Standards effectively expedite trade and stimulate economic growth when they are developed, maintained, and applied in accordance with national policy, processes, and procedures. NIST provides guidance, training, information, and assistance so that companies, government agencies, standards bodies, and others can successfully work together on essential standardization and conformity assessment activities.
- Standards Policy: The U.S. government’s role in the development and use of standards and conformity assessment is guided by the National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act of 1995 (P.L. 104-113), OMB Circular A-119, and other Federal laws, regulations, and international agreements.
- Standards and Trade and Regulation: NIST provides a range of resources and activities to help users navigate the complex U.S. and international standards landscape. NIST coordinates with the World Trade Organization, Technical Barriers to Trade Related Inquiry Point and Notification Authority, and Standards Information Center -- providing unique standards, conformity assessment and

technical regulations related information to NIST staff, U.S. government employees, U.S. exporters, and foreign trading partners.

Conformity Assessment and Laboratory Accreditation: Standards expedite trade across borders only when agreed-upon standards are followed consistently. NIST fosters compliance by evaluating conformity assessment accreditation bodies and ensuring adherence to standards specified in international agreements. NIST operates the National Voluntary Laboratory Accreditation Program (NVLAP) for the U.S. by providing accreditation to testing and calibration laboratories based on evaluation of their technical qualifications and competence to perform certain types of tests in specified fields using internationally accepted guides and standards. NIST also designs and implements procedures for accrediting laboratories for their capability to provide calibrations traceable to national standards. NIST also designs and implements procedures for accrediting laboratories for their capability to provide calibrations traceable to national standards.”

Examples of Accomplishments

Through its work in this activity and sub activity, NIST has delivered significant impact to stakeholders in the Federal Government and industry. Programs managed by the SPO, and SCO have yielded significant impacts.

- The NIST [Forensic Science Research Program](#) facilitated the development of a [DNA Analysis Process Map](#) and a [Footwear and Tire Analysis Process Map](#) through collaborations with OSAC’s [Human Forensic Biology Subcommittee](#) and [Footwear & Tire Subcommittee](#). The process mapping team worked together to capture and document the diverse practices of multiple laboratories. The maps, released in May and June 2022, benefit the forensic science community by providing a behind-the-scenes perspective into the various components and complexities involved in the examination process. These maps can also be used to identify best practices, reduce errors, assist in training new examiners, and highlight areas where further research or standardization would be beneficial to analyze forensic evidence.
- The NIST Forensic Science Research Program reviewed the scientific foundations of bite mark analysis, a forensic technique in which marks on the skin of a biting victim are compared with the teeth of a suspected biter, and published findings in a draft report, *Bite mark Analysis: A NIST Scientific Foundation Review*. The report fills a need identified in a [landmark 2009 study](#) by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, which called for research to address issues of accuracy, reliability and validity in many forensic science disciplines, including bite mark analysis.

Statement of Operating Objectives

Special Programs Office - NIST’s SPO plans and manages high-profile programs that span the mission and expertise of multiple NIST laboratories to address critical national needs. To meet these needs, SPO works with and forges partnerships among government, private industry, academia, and professional organizations to provide world-class leadership in advanced measurement science, science-based standards, and data-driven technology innovations. SPO actively fosters communication and collaboration between NIST and external stakeholder communities, as well as agile collaboration across organizational boundaries at NIST.

In Forensic Science, NIST is focused on:

- Advanced Forensic Science Research – NIST researchers work both on technologies for forensic analysis and the mathematical and statistical tools that help quantify confidence in the results of a forensics test. To disseminate this work into the forensic science community, NIST develops measurement protocols, calibration systems, Standard Reference Materials and Data, authoritative guidelines, and works with standards-developing organizations to formalize many of these as consensus standards.
- Science-based Standards Development – Since 2014, NIST has administered the Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) for Forensic Science Program which brings together over 500 members representing forensic science stakeholders from academia, Federal, state, and local government, and the private sector to facilitate the development of scientifically sound forensic science standards and encourage their adoption across the country. OSAC has over 90 standards listed on its OSAC Registry and has received declarations from over 80 forensic science service providers that have implemented standards listed on the OSAC Registry.
- Scientific Foundation Studies – NIST conducts in-depth reviews to identify priorities for future research, help laboratories identify appropriate limitations on the use of forensic methods, and suggest steps for moving the field forward. NIST recently published two of several scientific foundation reviews on [DNA mixture interpretation](#).
- Operation of the NIST Center of Excellence in Forensics – CSAFE was established in 2015 and renewed in 2020 to help build a statistically sound and scientifically solid foundation for the analysis and interpretation of pattern impression and digital evidence. This multi-university *NIST Center of Excellence* is working to address the issues of accuracy, reliability, and validity of analyses in the examination of pattern and digital evidence.
- NIST plans to expand its Forensic Science Program in four major areas of computational forensic science, forensic science data, forensic science quality assurance, and forensic science education for the legal community.

Material Measurement Laboratory (MML): The Material Measurement Laboratory is the national reference laboratory for measurements in the chemical, biological, and material sciences. MML conducts research on the composition, structure, and properties of industrial, biological, and environmental materials and processes. MML develops tools such as reference measurement procedures, certified reference materials, and critically evaluated data and best-practice guides used by U.S. industry to assure measurement quality and improve process efficiency. This work improves U.S. competitiveness in an increasingly challenging global environment. MML enables measurements in areas of national importance, including:

- Safety, Security, and Forensics – Providing tools to help forensic crime laboratories validate their analytical methods and ensure accuracy in their results for DNA and biological evidence, fingerprint and pattern evidence, illicit drugs, digital evidence, ballistics, and trace evidence, developing metrologies for threat detection and protective materials.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES: CDC

Opioid Overdose Prevention and Surveillance (+207.8 million)

In FY 2024, CDC's request for Opioid Overdose Prevention and Surveillance is \$207.8 million above the FY 2023 enacted level. Efforts will support integration of state and local prevention and response efforts, provide support for providers and health systems prevention (including use of prescription drug monitoring programs as a clinical decision support tool), enhance partnerships with public safety and first responders, establish and improve linkages to medications for opioid use disorder and other supportive services through harm reduction activities, and empower individuals to make informed choices. These activities support multiple initiatives included in ONDCP Policy Priorities and the National Drug Control Strategy.

Firearm Injury and Mortality Research (+\$22.5 million)

In FY 2024, CDC requests an increase of \$22.5 million above the FY 2023 enacted level. CDC will continue to fund research to identify the most effective ways to prevent firearm related injuries and deaths. This will include additional funding opportunities to support R01 research grants to improve understanding of firearm injury, inform the development of innovative and promising prevention strategies, and rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of strategies to keep individuals, families, schools, and communities safe from firearm-related injuries, deaths, and crime. CDC will fund additional research grants to support new investigators and will focus on improving collection and dissemination of timely data on firearm-related deaths, data on nonfatal firearm injuries, and data on behavioral issues related to firearms such as safe storage. This will include the expansion of the Firearm Injury Surveillance Through Emergency Rooms (FASTER) program to as many states as possible.

National Violent Death Reporting System (+\$10.0 million)

In FY 2024, CDC requests an increase of \$10.0 million over the FY 2023 enacted level for the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS). CDC will enhance support to NVDRS recipients to implement and maintain the system, monitor and report data, and use these data to inform prevention efforts to save lives. CDC will continue to increase the use of NVDRS data by characterizing manner of death and identifying key populations for study (e.g., ethnic, racial, rural, sexual and gender minorities, military).