

Sheriff's Forensic Laboratory (3017P)

Program Locator

- County
 - Criminal Justice
 - Sheriff's Office
 - Administrative and Support Services
 - Professional Standards Bureau
 - ▷ **Forensic Laboratory**
 - Patrol Bureau
 - Investigations Bureau
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Program Outcome Statement

The San Mateo County Forensic Laboratory serves all criminal justice agencies by providing specialized investigative and scientific analytical services, which results in professional conclusions and expert testimony to support the investigation and adjudication of alleged criminal activity and to ensure public safety.

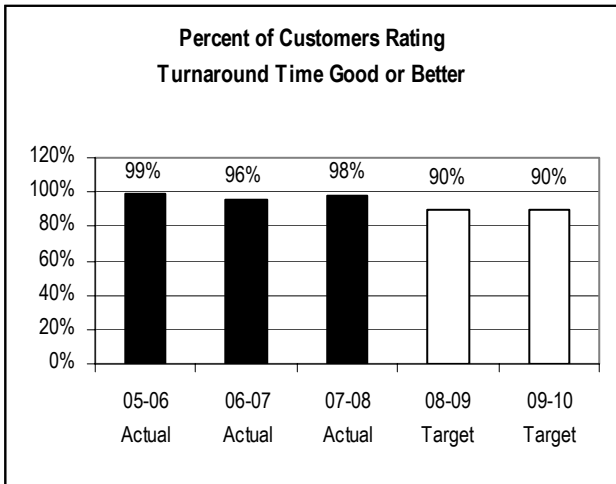
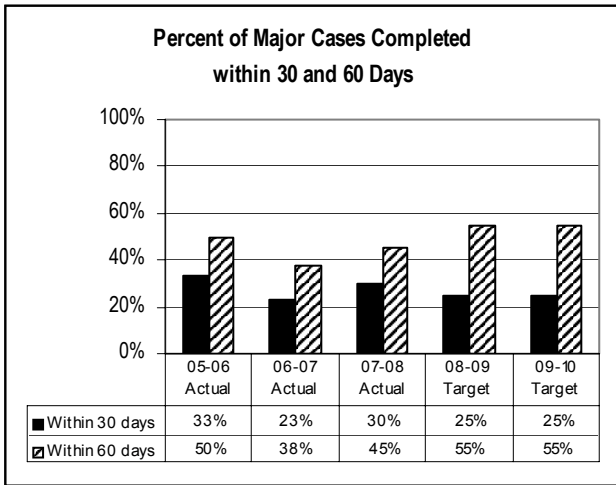
Services and Accomplishments

The Forensic Laboratory contributes to the goals of the Shared Vision 2010 commitment to Ensure Basic Health and Safety for All by ensuring proper evaluation and analysis of evidence collected at a crime scene, which is instrumental to the investigation, solution and prosecution of crimes. Forensic laboratories make critical and cost effective contributions to law enforcement. Timely identification or elimination of suspects improves the quality of justice and saves countless hours of investigative time that would otherwise be spent on following false leads. These activities directly help maintain and enhance the safety of residents and visitors, assist vulnerable portions of our population to achieve a better quality of life, and help children to grow up in safe neighborhoods.

The following are major accomplishments in the current year:

- Deployed the Laboratory's Information Management Systems (LIMS) to client agencies
- Continued collaboration with Santa Clara County Crime Laboratory, Los Angeles County Coroner's Office, and Redwood Toxicology Laboratory to offset operating costs
- Filled five positions with new employees and added several new instruments to help achieve more efficient casework analysis, turnaround times, and ensure staff depth in critical service areas including forensic biology and latent prints
- Renewed the Laboratory's contract services with the Vallejo Police Department and entered into a new contract to provide services to the Concord Police Department
- With grant money purchased several critical instruments for the Forensic Biology Unit: a 7500 Real-Time PCR for DNA quantitations, an EZ1 robot for DNA sample extractions, and an ABI 3130 Genetic Analyzer for typing amplified DNA samples

Headline Measures



Story Behind Performance

The San Mateo County Sheriff's Office Forensic Laboratory's focus for this Fiscal Year 2007-2008 was to continue to develop the Laboratory's abilities to better service client agencies, while exploring areas for revenue generation. The Laboratory deployed its Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) to our client agencies. This is a web-based application that resides on LawNet and allows client agencies greater real-time access to Laboratory information. Law enforcement agencies and the District Attorney's Office can download electronic laboratory reports, crime scene photos, submit case information for incoming evidence, and check the status of on-going casework. These features allow the

Laboratory's client agencies greater access to their cases, at their convenience, while saving valuable Laboratory staff time in the Clerical and Property Units. Over 90% of the law enforcement agencies in San Mateo County were trained and are using the LIMS system.

Not only does the LIMS System streamline the information process of the Laboratory to its clients, it also makes evidence submission more efficient by use of electronic signature pads for evidence transfers, which also reduces paper consumption. All Laboratory Units are currently employing the LIMS System for case management, note taking, report writing, and report review and issuing. LIMS is used by the Forensic Laboratory's Supervisors and Management to review analysis requests, make case assignments, and to monitor the Laboratory case turnaround times and case production.

The Laboratory continued its contractual and professional relationships with the Santa Clara County Crime Laboratory, the Los Angeles County Coroner's Office, and the private laboratory, Redwood Toxicology Laboratory. Santa Clara County Crime Laboratory performs forensic analysis that are not of high enough volume for our Laboratory to maintain competency and efficiency in case analysis - Arson and Questioned Documents are examples of this type of case work. The Los Angeles County Coroner's Office performs Gun Shot Residue (GSR), testing for the County of San Mateo, thus saving the Laboratory from purchasing a Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM), which is an extremely expensive instrument. In the area of urine toxicology the Laboratory has maintained its contract with Redwood Toxicology Laboratory to obtain quicker analysis results at substantial cost savings then performing this testing in-house. These outsourcing arrangements have proven to be very cost effective, while also achieving excellent analysis times for all investigative leads and trial calendars.

Timely analysis is a key measure of success. If evidence cannot be examined within deadlines imposed by the courts, cases are delayed lengthening the time suspects are incarcerated before trial and placing a strain on the crime victims and their families. Delays can also cause release of offenders who may re-offend while awaiting trial, or prolong the exoneration of individuals falsely accused of a criminal act and accurate investigative leads that allow investigators to focus on the true perpetrators of crimes in San Mateo County.

In continuing efforts to meet the demand for service, the Laboratory has brought on five new forensic scientists: one in the Latent Print Unit, one in the Controlled Substances Unit, and three in the Forensic Biology Unit. One of these Forensic Biology positions is funded by Proposition 69 funds to aid in off setting the increase work load that will occur when the State of California goes to a Full Felon DNA Database of all arrestees from the State's current DNA Database of those convicted of Crimes Against Persons and Arson.

This year, with grant funds, the Laboratory purchased three critical instruments to support the Forensic Biology Unit. New instruments require staff time to validate and demonstrate that they function reliably and perform to the specifications required for forensic

analysis. All of the instruments have been validated and the appropriate Forensic Biology staff are being trained to utilize these instruments. These purchases were made to automate areas of DNA analysis, increasing processing turnaround times and alleviating staff time to perform the complicated analysis requiring their expertise.

To assist in offsetting increases in operating costs, the Laboratory has continued its contract with the Vallejo Police Department for \$150,000 and entered into a new service contract with the Concord Police Department for \$35,000.

Major challenges over the next two years will be:

- To maintain current laboratory accreditation
- To continue work on the accreditation process for the ASCLD/LAB change over to ISO/IEC17025:2005(E) standards, mandated by 2010
- To maintain current FBI/DNA Audit status which allows the Laboratory to enter DNA profiles into databases
- To continue to improve evidence processing turnaround times
- To continue to train staff and develop the Laboratory's capacity
- To seek additional Lab revenue through grant opportunities and contract services

Program Objectives

The Forensic Laboratory will meet performance targets by doing the following:

Continue to Improve Laboratory Capabilities and Service Levels

- Fully utilize the Laboratory's databases in DNA, Latent Prints and Firearms Analysis to develop suspect-less case leads and make associations to serial criminal behavior
- Continue cross training of professional staff to increase efficiency of each unit and form the basis of a team approach to casework requiring multiple analyses
- Continue efforts to move the Laboratory's Quality System to new international standards required under ISO/IEC
- Continue working with County criminal justice agencies to reduce and refine the amount of evidence submitted for examination per case through direct outreach

Explore Opportunities for Additional Revenue

- Seek additional opportunities offered through forensic science grants
- Seek out other law enforcement agencies outside of San Mateo County in need of contract laboratory services, and determine if the laboratory can cost-effectively provide desired contract services with a resulting net income growth for the Laboratory and no diminished service to San Mateo County clients

Performance Measures Summary Table

Performance Measures	FY 2005-06 Actual	FY 2006-07 Actual	FY 2007-08 Actual	FY 2008-09 Target	FY 2009-10 Target
What/How Much We Do (Effort)					
Total number of major case items received	3,150	3,503	7,320	3,600	3,600
- Firearm items	787	895	813	900	900
- Latent print items	1,575	1,807	5,556	1,800	1,800
- Forensic Biology (DNA) items	787	801	951	900	900
Number of alcohol case items received	1,025	1,229	2,284	1,250	1,250
Number of drug case items received	3,552	3,333	3,418	2,171	2,171
Number of field calls	28	14	66	20	20
Number of items and analysis requests generated by field calls	140	69	458	100	100
Positive Associations ⁽¹⁾					
- AFIS Positive Associations	---	36	75	---	---
- CODIS Positive Associations	---	15	96	---	---
- NIBIN Positive Associations	---	5	14	---	---
How Well We Do It (Quality / Efficiency)					
Field call meetings and reports completed within 10 business days	80%	85%	93%	90%	90%
Major cases:					
- Average turnaround time (in days)	41	83	102	50	50
- Percent completed in less than 30 days	33%	23%	30%	25%	25%
- Percent completed in less than 60 days	50%	38%	45%	55%	55%
Alcohol cases:					
- Average turnaround time (in days)	3	3	3	3	3
- Percent completed within 5 days of receipt	---	98%	98%	100%	100%
Drug cases:					
- Average turnaround time - days	4	9	11	3	3
- Percent completed within 4 days of receipt	---	10%	26%	20%	20%
- Percent completed within 7 days of receipt	---	50%	45%	75%	75%
Is Anyone Better Off? (Outcome / Effect)					
Percent of customers rating turnaround time as good or better	99%	100%	98%	90%	90%
Percent of customers rating forensic laboratory services as good or better	100%	100%	99%	90%	90%

⁽¹⁾ Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS), Combined DNA Index System (CODIS), and National Integrated Ballistics Information Network (NIBIN) database positive associations are recorded as actuals only. FY 2006-07 is the first year that data is available.

Sheriff's Forensic Laboratory (3017P) Resource Allocation Summary

	Actual 2006-07	Actual 2007-08	Revised 2007-08	Adopted 2008-09	Change 2008-09	Adopted 2009-10
Salary Resolution	32.0	32.0	32.0	31.0	(1.0)	31.0
Funded FTE	32.0	32.0	32.0	31.0	(1.0)	31.0
Total Requirements	6,086,628	6,129,796	6,507,516	6,762,372	254,856	6,896,241
Total Sources	4,784,431	4,282,585	4,624,050	4,791,380	167,330	4,915,310
Net County Cost	1,302,196	1,847,211	1,883,466	1,970,992	87,526	1,980,931
NCC Breakdown						
Federal Grants Match			358,244	464,181	105,937	563,447
Local Grants Match			1,257,492	1,257,492		1,257,492
Mandated Services			267,730	249,319	(18,411)	159,992

Discretionary Net County Cost

The portion of this program's FY 2008-09 Adopted Budget which is funded by the General Fund or Net County Cost (NCC) is \$1,970,992 or 29%, of which 100% is mandated.

FY 2008-09 Program Funding Adjustments

The following are significant changes from the FY 2007-08 Revised to the FY 2008-09 Adopted Budget:

1. Adjustments to Provide Current Level of Services

Budget adjustments have been made to meet performance targets; negotiated labor increases; inclusion of merit increases; annualization of mid-year position changes; adjustments to benefits costs; adjustments in contract services; adjustments in grant revenue and expenses; and deletion of one-time purchases.

Revenue/Sources	Appropriations	Intrafund Transfers	Reserves	Net County Cost	Positions
35,338	177,709	0	25,000	167,371	0

2. Legal Office Specialist

One vacant Legal Office Specialist has been deleted to meet budget target. The impact on the Crime Lab is minimal. The position has been vacant for one year and the support work provided in the past by this position has been allocated to other staff with satisfactory results.

Revenue/Sources	Appropriations	Intrafund Transfers	Reserves	Net County Cost	Positions
0	(79,845)	0	0	(79,845)	(1)

3. National Institute of Justice Appropriation for DNA Backlog

This is the annual National Institute of Justice appropriation to support DNA backlog work. The award is effective on October 1, 2008 and will be used to fund DNA testing equipment and supplies and to hire contractors and science interns to complete backlog work.

Revenue/Sources	Appropriations	Intrafund Transfers	Reserves	Net County Cost	Positions
131,992	131,992	0	0	0	0

4. Forensic Laboratory Instrument Replacement Fund

Most major lab instruments exceed \$100,000 to replace and funds for replacement come from grants applied for through the National Institute of Justice DNA program. In the event that a grant is not awarded, the Forensic Laboratory has established a laboratory instrumentation replacement fund. The Sheriff's Office is reallocating reserves to capital equipment to establish replacement funds for major laboratory instruments.

Revenue/Sources	Appropriations	Intrafund Transfers	Reserves	Net County Cost	Positions
0	25,000	0	(25,000)	0	0

TOTAL FY 2008-09 PROGRAM FUNDING ADJUSTMENTS

Revenue/Sources	Appropriations	Intrafund Transfers	Reserves	Net County Cost	Positions
167,330	254,856	0	0	87,526	(1)

FY 2009–10 Program Funding Adjustments

The following are significant changes from the FY 2008-09 to the FY 2009-10 Adopted Budget:

5. Adjustments to Provide Current Level of Services

Budget adjustments have been made to meet performance targets: negotiated labor increases; inclusion of merit increases; annualization of mid-year position changes; and adjustments in contract services and grant revenue.

Revenue/Sources	Appropriations	Intrafund Transfers	Reserves	Net County Cost	Positions
123,930	133,869	0	0	9,939	0