



## Criminalistics Section – 2004

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### **B36 2002 Forensic Crime Laboratory Survey Results**

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After attending this presentation, attendees will have received an updated overview of management, caseload, and resource needs of the nation's crime laboratories.

This presentation will provide laboratories and policy makers with current management and resource needs information about the nation's publicly funded crime laboratories.

The Center for Research in Law and Justice and the Survey Research Laboratory at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), in concert with the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors (ASCLD), were funded by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) to undertake a census of all publicly funded crime laboratories throughout the United States. In addition to gathering baseline statistical information on operations and workload, BJS also wanted us to assess where added resources were needed. In addition, unlike earlier surveys, the goal was to reach 100% of the nation's publicly funded crime laboratories. UIC and ASCLD received funding to undertake this research, given their experience in conducting surveys and studies of crime laboratories over the past twenty-five years.

Staff worked extensively with ASCLD and the community of crime laboratories to develop a comprehensive listing of laboratories. A draft version of the survey was designed and pre-tested in selected jurisdictions. All names and addresses were verified via telephone contacts. The survey itself had six primary areas: Organization, Budget, Staff, Workload, Outsourcing, and Quality, Training, & Research. The first section was designed to determine the political entity and population of jurisdictions served, and types of forensic functions performed in each laboratory. Next, we examined the budget breakdown of each laboratory, and sources of funding. To gain a greater sense of the crime laboratory workloads, we queried labs about the number of cases received and backlogged, and the volume of requests received, worked, and backlogged in 2002. We also asked about the performance expectations that laboratories had of various examiner specialists, and what added resources would be needed to reduce backlogs. Questions were asked about the number of requests outsourced (e.g., controlled substances, toxicology, DNA/CODIS), as well as the cost and funding sources for such testing. Lastly, we asked if laboratories were accredited, the types of proficiency tests in which they were engaged, and the dedication of resources to training and research.

UIC will provide BJS with a documented, formatted, and archivable data set, and BJS will publish and disseminate a Bulletin describing results. Project staff, as well as BJS and ASCLD representatives, will be available to answer questions.

### **Crime Laboratories, Survey, Management and Resources**