



Criminalistics Section – 2005

B132 The FBI's Regional Mitochondrial DNA Laboratory Program

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Attending this presentation, the forensic community will be introduced to the four regional mitochondrial DNA laboratories funded by the FBI to which they may submit cases for analysis at no-cost.

This presentation will impact the forensic community and/or humanity by providing a better understanding of the possibility for increased throughput of mitochondrial DNA casework at no cost through the FBI's four regional mitochondrial DNA laboratories which will be accepting casework in late 2005.

This presentation will familiarize the audience with a new program initiated by the FBI to increase the availability of no-cost mitochondrial DNA analyses to the law enforcement community. The FBI's fiscal year 2003 budget included \$4,000,000 to establish and operate four regional mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) laboratories. The Congressional authorization requires the FBI Laboratory to provide technical management and quality assurance for regional labs and the regional labs to conduct mtDNA analysis for both forensic casework and missing persons. Competitive procurement began in June of 2003 at a briefing with about 35 state and local crime labs attending or requesting materials. Twelve applications were received in mid-July and cooperative agreements were awarded in September 2003 to the Arizona Department of Public Safety Central Crime Laboratory in Phoenix, AZ, the Connecticut Forensic Science Laboratory (Department of Public Safety) in Meriden, CT, the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension Forensic Science Laboratory in St. Paul, MN, and the New Jersey State Police Laboratory in Hamilton, NJ. All four regional mtDNA labs are state-wide, full-service crime labs accredited by ASCLD/LAB in biology and trace evidence and have established forensic nuclear DNA and CODIS/NDIS programs. Under the cooperative agreements, the FBI will train and equip regional laboratories and authorize mtDNA cases to be analyzed according to the Quality Assurance Standards and Scientific Working Group on DNA Analysis Methods (SWGDM) Guidelines for mtDNA Nucleotide Sequence Interpretation Guidelines. The regional laboratories will provide facilities, employees, and supervision to conduct mtDNA casework, with the FBI reimbursing direct expenses, including salaries and benefits for up to nine employees, space renovation required for mtDNA operations, equipment and maintenance, supplies, training, and travel. When the regional labs are operational, cases will be directed to them and they will be responsible for performing analysis, reporting results, and testifying, if necessary. Fully operational regional labs will have the capacity to examine 120 cases per year, and the regional lab will retain 25% of this capacity for internal allocation. The remaining 75% will be allocated by the FBI for the regional lab's service area. The current status of the program and procedures for submission of cases will be discussed. The regional mitochondrial DNA program will more than double the nation's capacity for no-cost forensic mtDNA casework when fully operational in September 2005.

Mitochondrial DNA, Regional Laboratories, FBI Laboratory