



### B32 2005 Census of Crime Laboratories

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After attending this presentation, attendees will become familiar with the data gathered in the 2005 Census of Crime Laboratories, including the success of survey methods and information describing the functions, staffing, budget, workload, backlogs, and resource needs of the surveyed laboratories.

This presentation will impact the forensic community and/or humanity by updating data contained in the 2002 Census and will help to set crime laboratory management and funding priorities for public agencies nationwide.

Outcome: The information in this presentation updates data contained in the 2002 Census and will help to set crime laboratory management and funding priorities for public agencies nationwide.

Sam Houston State University, in cooperation with the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors (ASCLD) and the National Forensic Science Technology Center (NFSTC), conducted the *2005 Census of Publicly Funded Crime Laboratories*, with grant support of the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics. The 2005 Census was administered to 393 public crime laboratories and gathered information on the functions, personnel, expenditures, workload, backlog, and resource needs of crime laboratories nationwide. This new census updates and builds upon the 2002 Census of Crime Laboratories that found backlogs of requests requiring scientific analysis jumped from 290,000 requests to more than 500,000 requests. Other principal findings in the 2002 Census included:

- The nation's crime laboratories employed more than 9,000 FTE personnel and had budgets totaling more than \$750 million.
- Laboratories received more than 2.7 million requests for services and were able to process just under 2.5 million of them by yearend.
- Controlled substances constituted half of all laboratory requests, followed by toxicological and latent print analyses.
- DNA requests, although making up just 2% of new requests, are an area where backlog was increasing fastest – for every five requests completed, about six requests remained outstanding at yearend.
- Labs estimated that \$70 million in new personnel costs and about \$500 million for renovated and larger facilities, new instrumentation, and equipment were needed to achieve 30-day turnaround times on requests.

The new 2005 Census was significant in that it employed new survey technology allowing crime laboratories to use a CD to transmit their information electronically to the project's data base server at Sam Houston State University. Laboratories could also submit their data by logging onto the project's Internet site, or by submitting their paper survey through conventional mail. Technical assistance was also offered to crime laboratories in completing their surveys by staff at Sam Houston State and by a group of ASCLD and NFSTC advisors. The goal of the project was to achieve a 100% response rate from identified laboratories.

The 2005 Census updates all information items gathered in the 2002 survey. The new Census is also important in that it asks additional information about laboratories' use of data bases (CODIS, NIBIN, and AFIS), the status of their information management systems, a more detailed breakdown of the costs of new equipment needed by disciplinary area, added information about types of DNA casework and databasing requests, the internal and external costs for outsourcing DNA casework and CODIS data-basing, controlled substances and toxicology, and added detail about peer review activities. Additional open-ended questions asked about innovative programs used by laboratories to manage casework, and improvements made to the physical structure of laboratories in recent years.

Data collection and analysis continues through calendar year 2006, and updated information will be presented at the 2007 Annual Meeting.

#### **Census, Survey, Crime Laboratories**