



## F16 Partnering With Law Enforcement to Implement Novel DNA Technologies

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**Learning Overview:** After attending this presentation, attendees will understand how partnering with law enforcement to evaluate and adopt technologies can lead to impactful implementation.

**Impact on the Forensic Science Community:** This presentation will benefit the forensic science community by showing how approaching new technologies collaboratively can create a model for evaluating and implementing new technologies in the future.

Every year, new technologies are introduced that have the potential to change the way we do things. Some are new applications of technologies from other spaces, some are novel technologies that can significantly change or disrupt the way we operate. Not every individual, company, or agency is going to be an early adopter. Many do not have the funding, the bandwidth, or the desire to implement these technologies. However, it is important to support early adopters or we, as a community, risk the technology becoming obsolete or discarded before it has the opportunity to be impactful and make a difference to our communities.

Bode began working with law enforcement agencies to develop local DNA databases in 2013 to address a specific need. Small and midsize departments often do not have the same access to technologies that larger agencies have. Through the local DNA database program, DNA results are delivered from both reference samples and evidence in 30 days or less. Additionally, with the wide variety of DNA legislation, many state DNA databases do not contain DNA profiles from arrestees. Approximately 40% of states do not take DNA upon arrest, meaning the databases are only populated with those that are convicted of crimes, and most often that is further limited to felony convictions. As a result, the impact of DNA technology to drive or support investigations is limited in higher volume property or gun crimes, which are often the most common in the department's community. Local databases enable law enforcement to use DNA on the cases impacting their community the most.

Throughout the development of DNA programs for law enforcement, Bode has regularly engaged with clients and stakeholders, both individually and as a group. There are no universal standards specific to local databases, but most of the stakeholders have an interest in ensuring the technology is properly adopted so that it protects the program and allows it to develop.

Bode took that approach with its clients, including creating regular working groups, sharing protocols, and developing guidelines to manage local DNA database programs. As an organization of forensic experts, it was important to share knowledge with those using it so that they understood both the power and limitations of how it could help. By working and engaging with clients, they also took ownership of the technology and wanted to protect the work.

As new technologies such as rapid DNA are introduced, ongoing and regular engagement with these stakeholders is essential. Not every technology benefits the organization, but it is also understood that helping to implement new solutions rather than ignoring them would ultimately benefit the client, their communities, and the technology itself. Specifically, for rapid DNA, this meant offering a turnkey solution—validating the technology, creating guidelines for use, and designing training programs.

We all share a mission of improving public safety. All of us can continue to embrace that mission through using the tools that are available. Through this collaboration, not only have we enabled new technology to help get answers sooner, but we have also created a template for introducing new technologies in the future.

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### DNA, Rapid DNA, Database