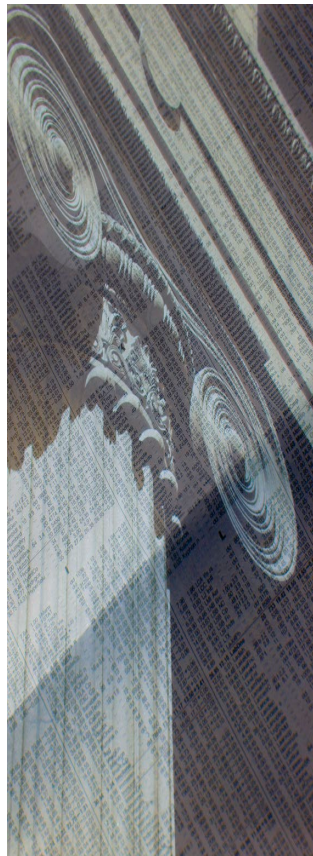




*CONSORTIUM OF FORENSIC SCIENCE
ORGANIZATIONS (CFSO)*

FLASH BRIEF

AUGUST 12, 2026

The mission of the CFSO is to speak with a single forensic science voice on behalf of its member organizations on matters of mutual interest regarding forensic science, to influence public policy at the national level, and to make a compelling case for greater federal funding for public crime laboratories and medical examiner and coroner offices. The primary focus of the CFSO is national, state, & local policymakers, as well as the United States Congress.

FY27 BUDGET CONTINUING RESOLUTION

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The Senate has passed a Continuing Resolution (CR) for the FY27 budget that will fund the government through December 11, 2026. This CR will need to go back to the House for a vote as the House bill did NOT include all the anomalies¹ requested by the White House. The Senate bill did not include all the White House anomalies either but did include more than the House. Some of the anomalies may be pertinent to forensics. See below for specifics:

- The CR will delay implementation of most of the federal hemp restrictions scheduled to take effect on November 12, 2026. Note this is not in the House bill, so it would need to be included in that bill also. This provision does not repeal Section 781 of the FY26 Agricultural Appropriations Act; it provides a temporary delay. Specifically, the switch from the current delta-9 THC standard to a broader total THC standard of 0.4 mg total THC per container limit on finished hemp products and certain restrictions on naturally occurring cannabinoids and intermediate hemp products. The CR would still allow restrictions on cannabinoids that cannot naturally be produced by a cannabis plant (certain synthetic or chemically converted cannabinoids) to proceed on the original November timetable.
- The Senate CR prohibits OMB from implementing the grant rule called "**Regulation for Federal Financial Assistance**" until after December 11, 2026. This rule would change how federal grants are awarded, managed, and potentially

¹ Legislative anomalies are special provisions in a CR that go beyond simply extending prior-year funding. They are used to alter the amount, duration, or purpose of appropriated funds for certain programs or activities, often to advance specific policy priorities. (Thompson Coburn LLP)

terminated. That provision would give political appointees greater discretion over grant awards, allow agencies to have broader authority to terminate grants, and introduce new policy-based criteria into grantmaking decisions.

This CR is a pre-emptive action as the Senate has NOT introduced any of the FY27 appropriations bills yet and with the midterm elections coming up Congress is only in session for a few more weeks.

Notification Regarding Electronic DNA Data File Security

August 12, 2026

CFSO is aware and has been talking with member organizations and also with Thermo-Fisher Scientific to share information with the community about a DNA data file vulnerability. CFSO has established a website to share information about this issue and inform the community. The website is <https://thecfso.org/uncategorized/2026/08/thermo-fisher-data-vulnerability/> We have posted the Thermo-Fisher notification, information from those that discovered the vulnerability, a notification from ASCLD, and a publication by the FBI. CFSO will continue to dialog with stakeholders, vendors, and others about both external and internal security risks to lab data. A working group has been established by CFSO, ASCLD, NTVIC, and Thermo-Fisher Scientific to continue to address this issue and inform the community.

Important Webinar on ISO 21043 (Part 4 Interpretation Standard)

August 12, 2026

CFSO has been alerted to an important webinar hosted by the AAFS on Aug 13, 2026 at 12pm-1:30pm ET. https://accounts.aaafs.org/Events/Event_display.aspx?EventKey=AUG0813 This webinar provides recommendations and requirements for the interpretation of observations used to reach opinions across forensic disciplines. As this is a more challenging topic, this webinar will be longer than previous events to better cover this subject and allow for more questions from the audience. Important decisions are being made about this standard being considered for the NIST OSAC Registry. Practitioners are encouraged to attend and provide feedback to their CFSO member organization representative on the FSSB (where this standard is being considered). The webinar is open to all and will be recorded and available for viewing in two weeks from August 13.

National Forensic Science Week is September 20-26, 2026

Forensic Science is often viewed by our local, state, and federal policymakers as it appears in many TV shows and in the movies. In those portrayals, the impression is often conveyed that crime scenes can be processed, evidence examined, and suspects identified many times within hours, if not minutes. Often, forensic pathologists on TV cannot only determine both the cause and manner of

death quickly but also the time of death. Forensic science laboratories and medical examiner/coroner offices are also often depicted as having endless amounts of magic technology, and more importantly, the needed resources to assist in their analyses. This, of course, is not true, and our forensic community needs additional resources to acquire even the most basic pieces of equipment. Your respective Congressional policymaker, however, may also mistakenly believe from these portrayals and mischaracterizations of the forensic community that you have infinite resources available to your respective offices. Therefore, National Forensic Science Week provides you the opportunity to educate them from the forensic science community perspective.

CFSO has compiled a sample packet and how-to guide for you to use during Forensic Science Week 2026. Included you will find:

- 1) How to contact your Member of Congress or other policy-members and invite them to your office.
- 2) Planning guide for meetings.
- 3) What you should present during their visit: Talking points and an outline for a packet they can take away with them.
- 4) Information about links on the thecfso.org website for white papers to use if you'd like to provide more detail to your policymakers. <https://thecfso.org/national-forensic-science-week/>

As always if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call or email the CFSO.

National Forensic Science Grants

CFSO has been discussing the current status of federal grants with representatives of the Department of Justice and Congress. As practitioners are aware, many of the “formulary” grants for FY25 have now been released and funded. Among those are Coverdell, CEBR (Debbie Smith), and Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN). The solicitation for PSN was just released for FY25 and FY26 in one funding opportunity. The solicitations for FY26 for these formulary grants have not been released, but we have been told that they are written and are working their way through the approval chain at DOJ.

However, practitioners have also noticed that most of the competitive forensic science awards for FY25 have not been funded and no FY26 solicitations have been issued. Grants like SAKI and other competitive forensic science grants at DOJ are indefinitely delayed, likely due to litigation over grant solicitation provisions. CFSO is aware of these issues and is actively meeting with Congress and DOJ in an attempt to address this vital issue for forensic science practitioners.