

California Crime Laboratory Review Task Force
D R A F T (8/7/08) - Laboratory Visit Interview

In this interview, we're asking you to think big, and offer suggestions and ideas that may be completely incompatible with your actual institutional constraints and organizational beurocracy. That being said, the purpose of the Task Force is to make recommendations as to how best to configure, fund, and improve the delivery of state and local crime laboratory services in the future. It's a big set of topics, but if you had center stage for five minutes in front of the State's policymakers, what would you focus on to improve forensic science services in your laboratory, your jurisdiction, and the State?

Are there inefficiencies in our current crime lab system that could be corrected without spending more money? What are they? How could they be fixed?

What factors come to mind as the key elements that hinder your lab's ability to meet the expectations of its client agencies?

Are those expectations realistic, or should they be adjusted in some way? Describe?

How would your lab's operations be different if you were able to implement a fully-funded budget every year?

How would your lab's operations be different if you were fully staffed?

What are your views, if any, about consolidating laboratories (either inside jurisdictions, or regionally, or statewide) to maximize efficiency? Benefits? Drawbacks?

How about re-assigning laboratory functions by forensic discipline (e.g., all ballistics in county done by PD lab, all trace evidence done by SO lab)?

In a perfect world, what would your laboratory's human resources situation look like? (E.g., steady stream or qualified criminalist applicants [qualified how?]; little turnover, etc.)

What factors account for the current deviations from this ideal?

What inefficiencies in your human resources situation are most glaring? (E.g., need to train and supervise inexperienced criminalists)? Do you see any solution?

Describe university-level and caseworker training/education resources and opportunities that would enhance or do enhance your ability to employ qualified criminalists.

Do you see any solutions to government lab human resources problems other than increased salary budgets? What are they?

How would a limited increase in salary budgets be most efficiently spent (e.g., more managerial positions, higher entry-level salaries?) Why?

What would you think about California having a statewide forensic science oversight commission like New York or Virginia? Advantages? Disadvantages? Concerns?

Looking ahead, do you see any significant problems for government forensic science looming in the future? What are they? How can they be avoided? (Again, think big.)

Are there any survey answers you would like to expand on or explain? Please do so?