



*American Academy of Forensic Sciences
American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors
International Association for Identification
International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners
National Association of Medical Examiners
Society of Forensic Toxicologists/ American Board of Forensic Toxicology*

February 2, 2024

The Honorable Laurie E. Locascio
National Institute of Standards and Technology
100 Bureau Drive
Gaithersburg, MD 20899

Dear Director Locascio,

The Consortium of Forensic Science Organizations is a collaborative of the leading forensic science organizations in the United States representing over 21,000 forensic science practitioners including virtually all forensic science laboratory, medical examiner office, and coroner office leaders. We are writing to respectfully request a meeting with you and the appropriate staff in your organization.

As you know, the casework for crime labs, toxicologists, medical examiners, and coroners has increased exponentially over the last several years. This casework is exacerbated by the fentanyl crisis, the increase in gun violence, and the proliferation of violent crime in the United States. According to the CDC, rates of overdose deaths involving synthetic opioids increased over 22% from 2020 to 2021. The rate of overdose deaths involving synthetic opioids in 2021 was nearly 22 times the rate in 2013. According to data by Gun Violence Archive, gun violence increased 69% from 2014 to 2021. The average annual growth in forensic science backlog in the United States from 2013 to 2020 was 190.3% in blood alcohol, 628.6% in Crime Scene Investigation, 88.5% in fingerprints, 110.3% in toxicology, and 50% in firearms. States recently surveyed by our organization provided data to support increased firearms case submissions between 18% and 154% in the last few years.

This dramatic increase has created a strain on our forensic science community. The Department of Commerce and specifically the National Institute of Standards and Technology plays a critical role in the forensic community for both research and standards policy. Each of these are priorities in our community. Standards provide a foundation for consistency in our processes that are critical to ensuring the quality and reliability of our work. Research continues to be a much-needed area in forensics to continue the advancement of our methods. We have recently met with the leadership of our member organizations and compiled a document of our current needs and concerns that we would like to share with your office. Specifically, we would like to discuss the following:

1. FUNDING:

1. Building the capacity of forensic science service providers (laboratory instrumentation, IT equipment, IT infrastructure, IT databases and data sharing networks).
2. Continuation of federal support for Standards Development Organizations (SDO) to support the SDOs making and maintaining forensic science standards.
3. Providing more resources for Black Box and White Box studies.
4. Developing fiscal estimates of each OSAC Registry standard and providing funding for forensic science service providers to implement OSAC Registry standards.

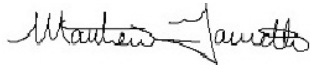
2. RESEARCH:

1. Adding valuable areas of research such as:
 1. Detection and identification of emerging drugs.
 2. Per se limits or impairing effects of various drugs.
 3. Statistics in pattern disciplines (LP, Shoe/Tire, Firearms) with real implementations.
2. Researchers/POST Docs embedded in the labs with specific projects that lab directors have determined will lead to solutions for problems we have (MFRC model).
3. More biometrics research for MBIS applications and field instrument use (in the field for real-time identification).

OPERATION:

1. Making chemical standards available to the forensic science community for emerging drugs.
2. Identification of “Core” OSAC standards needed for any discipline and refinement of the registry.
3. Providing more quality assurance chemical standards for new technology validations and blind proficiency reference materials for forensic disciplines.
4. Continuing to address problems with interoperability-among identification systems such as the Automated Biometric Identification System (ABIS).
5. Improving education and workforce development training programs in support of practitioners entering the forensic science field.
6. Developing technical/discipline leader training in validation, measurement uncertainty, and statistics.
7. Assisting with technology implementation and validation criteria in areas such as:
 1. 3D Firearms
 2. LC/MS/MS, LC-QTOF
 3. Roadside screening of drugs (THC, emerging drugs)
 4. Roadside screening of Tox (THC, emerging drugs)
 5. Proteomics

We look forward to hearing from you about scheduling a meeting or meetings to discuss these important topics.



Matthew Gamette-CFSO Chair
On behalf of the CFSO Board of Directors
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