CONSORTIUM OF FORENSIC SCIENCE ORGANIZATIONS (CFSO)

FLASH BRIEF
JULY 2025

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.

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CFSO RECENT PUBLICATIONS

CFSO has published two newsletters recently regarding the proposed federal fiscal year 2026 budget. We appreciate members reaching out to their congressional members to discuss proposed cuts to the Coverdell grant program. If you have not done so already, an advocacy packet is available here to help you with this process. We have also published a list of the appropriate contacts at each Congressional office. Please let your organization's CFSO Board Member know when you have reached out so that we can follow-up with them. The latest budget newsletter is available here.

CFSO has recently published several documents that can be found on our website. The first document is a position paper on rapid DNA. Rapid DNA represents a significant advancement in forensic DNA analysis and can be a valuable tool for the law enforcement and medicolegal death investigation communities. CFSO identifies the opportunities and risks associated with this instrumentation and encourages Congress to evaluate the federal funding mechanisms for this instrument. The paper can be downloaded here.

CFSO published a response to the Office of National Drug Control Policy about their request for comment on their proposed national drug strategy. This document can be found on the CFSO website under 2024-2025 Federal Advocacy Efforts. CFSO has also published information about federal agency reorganization plans and federal budget cuts in this area of the CFSO website.

BJS CENSUS

CFSO encourages every publicly funded forensic science service provider to complete the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) census in a timely manner. The BJS launched the new Census of Publicly Funded Forensic Crime Laboratories (CPFFCL) to better understand the current workloads and resources available among Forensic Service Providers across the United States. The previous CPFFCL collected data from 2020, and the new CPFFCL gathers much-needed national statistics on emerging issues and challenges facing laboratories during 2024. Eligible laboratories received a letter and email from RTI International with the CPFFCL survey. Join other laboratories and respond by July 18th. A timely response to this survey is vital for the data to be available to the community and to CFSO. Please contact RTI at bjsforensics@rti.org for more information or with any questions. CFSO produced a statement to BJS regarding the census last year.

ISO 21043 SERIES PUBLISHED

The final three standards of the ISO 21043 series for *Forensic Sciences* have been officially published along with the updated vocabulary document. This marks the completion of a multi-year effort involving global collaboration to develop international best practices for forensic processes.

The ISO 21043 standards provide comprehensive guidance for the entire forensic process, including:
- The collection, handling, and preservation of forensic evidence;
- Examination and analysis procedures;
- Interpretation and reporting of forensic results; and
- Quality management considerations to ensure reliability and consistency.

CFSO applauds all members of the U.S. Technical Advisory Group (US TAG) to ISO TC 272. The US TAG is chaired by CFSO member organization ASCLD, and CFSO member organization AAFS participates through the Academy Standards Board. Other CFSO members participate in the US TAG through ANAB, AFQAM, ASCIA, DFBA, or NIST. The United States played an important role in shaping these standards to reflect the practical needs and priorities of the U.S. law enforcement and forensic science communities. The ISO 21043 standards are available for review and purchase at the following links:

- **ISO 21043-1:2025 — Part 1: Vocabulary**
  https://www.iso.org/standard/87128.html
- **ISO 21043-2:2018 — Part 2: Recognition, Recording, Collecting, Transport and Storage of Items (currently in revision)**
  https://www.iso.org/standard/72041.html
- **ISO 21043-3:2025 — Part 3: Analysis**
  https://www.iso.org/standard/72040.html
- **ISO 21043-4:2025 — Part 4: Interpretation**
  https://www.iso.org/standard/72039.html
- **ISO 21043-5:2025 — Part 5: Reporting**
  https://www.iso.org/standard/73896.html

The ISO TC 272 continued work at a meeting in The Hague, Netherlands, the week of June 30, 2025 with projects including ISO 18385 revisions, ISO 21043-2 revisions, and other new work items. More information regarding the ISO TC 272 is available at https://www.iso.org/committee/4395817.html

NTVIC PUBLICATION ON FIGG

The [National Technology Validation and Implementation Collaborative](#) has recently published revision 3 of the FIGG policy and procedures best practices document. This revision continues to refine these policies by working with private and public labs, genealogists, privacy experts, attorneys, and others to ensure accurate implementation in the public space. All NTVIC publications are open-access, and they encourage public dialog and open comments to the authors. The NTVIC now has prominent public forensic science service providers from over 34 states and the District of Columbia participating on the steering group, with hundreds of individuals working on the subcommittees. They recently added a group studying fiscal implementation, cost-benefit analysis, and return on investment. The most recent publication is available from the journal FSI-Synergy at https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2589871X25000221

JUSTICE ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM REPORT FOR 2024

PUBLICATION ADVISORY

BJS Releases Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program, 2024

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), in the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs (OJP), released the report "Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program, 2024." This report describes the steps taken to calculate the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) formula-based award amounts and presents summary results of the fiscal year 2024 calculations.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2005 merged two grant programs to establish the JAG program. The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) administers the program, and BJS calculates the award amounts. The JAG program provides states, tribes, and local governments with critical funding necessary to support a range of criminal justice areas. States and localities receive funds based on their resident population, as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau and on violent crime data reported to the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program. Publicly funded forensic science service providers are eligible for JAG funding.

Title: Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program, 2024 (NCJ 310411)
Author: Lizabeth Remrey, PhD, BJS Statistician
Where: https://bjs.ojp.gov/library/publications/justice-assistance-grant-jag-program-2024

PROPOSED CUTS TO FEDERAL FORENSIC PROGRAMS

CFSO has been closely monitoring any proposed cuts to forensic science programs at the federal government level. CFSO has expressed great concern to the Acting Director of NIST and also the Deputy Attorney General's Office about how proposed cuts could impact forensic science in the United States. CFSO produced a [memo to the DOJ](#) about their proposed cuts and the need for programs to continue. CFSO also produced a [memo for NIST](#) to raise the visibility of vital programs they are proposing to cut. These memos have been provided by CFSO to federal agencies and Congress.

FEDERAL GRANTS

CFSO has been notified that Debbie Smith (CEBR), Coverdell, and other forensic grant solicitations for FFY25 should be released soon. CFSO is also tracking federal efforts to cut grants to jurisdictions identified as "sanctuary jurisdictions." CFSO provided information to our membership on February 5, 2025, and then again in an email on May 30, 2025, linking to a DHS Press Release. The administration has since removed the link to a list of jurisdictions, and CFSO has followed up with BJA grant managers for further clarification. No further information is available on specific sanctions for entities identified as sanctuary jurisdictions at this time. CFSO will continue to follow up with OJP and BJA on this potential issue for forensic service providers.

DNAMIX 3RD PUBLICATION

The third (and final) publication from the DNAmix study has been published by the *Journal of Forensic Sciences*.

- Hicklin RA, Richetelli N, Bever RA, Davoren JM. Inter-laboratory variation in interpretations, comparisons, and statistical analyses of DNA mixtures. *Journal of Forensic Sciences* 2025;00:1–23. Please note that although the DOI link is paid access, the article can be freely accessed using this link.

DNAmix2021 was a large-scale inter-laboratory study conducted to assess variation in interpretations, comparisons, and statistical analyses of DNA mixtures. Analyses were based on 765 responses by 106 participants from 52 labs. Eight distinct DNA mixtures were created, each of which was provided to participants as a contributor packet (the person of interest (POI) was in the mixture), or as a noncontributor packet (the POI was NOT in the mixture).

A great deal of information is included in the appendices.

Deidentified responses are included here.

The first two papers from the DNAmix study were published in 2023:

- Hicklin RA, Richetelli N, Emerick BL, Bever RA, Davoren JM (2023). Variation in Assessments of Suitability and Number of Contributors for DNA Mixtures. *Forensic Science International: Genetics*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fsigen.2023.102892 (paid access; accepted manuscript)
- Brinkac LM, Richetelli N, Davoren JM, Bever RA, Hicklin RA, (2023) "DNAmix 2021: Laboratory policies, procedures, and casework scenarios summary and dataset", *Data in Brief* 48(109150), 2023. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dib.2023.109150 (open access)

NIST RADAR CONFERENCE

NIST recently invited CFSO Chair Matthew Gamette and Legislative Liaison Beth Lavach to attend a workshop entitled "Toward Increased Data Sharing and Standardization for Illicit Drug Analysis and Monitoring." A total of 54 attendees from across the country were invited to discuss current drug surveillance systems and planning for improvements to existing systems and new systems needed. During the two-day workshop, members from seven broad communities (customs and border interdiction, public health and harm reduction, law enforcement and first responders, forensic science, emergency medicine, medical examiner and coroner, and policymaker) shared their perspectives on the current state and opportunities for improvement within their fields. Many of the challenges facing workshop participants were not unique to any one community, and several major challenges were observed by everyone present. Based on the discussions within the workshop, five areas were identified where NIST could assist the represented communities in addressing analytical and data challenges and meet the requirements outlined in the TRANQ Research Act. These include: i) advancing analytical measurements, ii) creating next-generation data analysis tools, iii) development of standards (physical, reference, and documentary), iv) increased education and training, and v) continued convening of personnel from all communities involved in addressing the drug overdose epidemic.

NIST ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE CONFERENCE

The [Harnessing AI for Forensics Symposium](#) was a two-day collaborative event designed to connect forensic practitioners and artificial intelligence (AI) technology experts to identify effective, practical applications of AI to modernize and strengthen forensic capabilities.

With the goals of accelerating innovation and removing barriers to the deployment of AI solutions, the symposium focused on:
- Promoting greater awareness of the current capabilities and limitations of AI-enabled systems among forensic science service providers.
- Driving efficient acquisition and deployment of AI to improve productivity and streamline forensic workflows, such as automating routine tasks, thereby freeing personnel for higher-value activities.
- Sparking innovation among industry professionals to develop AI-enabled solutions that address the needs and challenges of the forensic science community.

The symposium took place on **July 8th and 9th, 2025**, in Washington, D.C. There was also an option for participants to join virtually.

Through expert-led presentations, panel discussions, and topic-focused breakout sessions, participants explored use cases drawn from both forensics and other industries. Breakout sessions provided hands-on opportunities to brainstorm the development of AI-powered approaches for forensic science applications.

Target Audience: This symposium was intended for forensic experts, crime laboratory managers, quality assurance managers, attorneys, judges, researchers, AI developers, policymakers, and special interest groups relating to forensic science, criminal justice, or AI.