



Proposed Forensic Center

Presentation

Public Safety Committee

March 19, 2012



Proposed Forensic Center Background From Mayor's Report

- Forensic science refers generally to the application of scientific principles to the collection and analysis of evidence for use in a court of law.
- Scientific assessment conducted in forensic investigations should be independent of law enforcement and political processes.
- The creation of a consolidated Forensic Center as a stand-alone operation will provide better utilization of resources and independence from HPD.
- Creation of the Forensic Center as a City Department would not be viewed as independence in the eyes of the public nor facilitate a future regional Forensic Center. That goal will best be achieved by creating a Local Government Corporation (LGC).
- A Regional Forensic Center could be a second step, jointly sponsored by the City and the County.

Proposed Forensic Center Keys to Public Trust

Independence

Accreditation

Accountability

Proposed Forensic Center Independence

- The Forensic Center must be truly independent.
 - Independent from persons who could have an incentive to attempt to influence the analysis of evidence in a particular case:
 - Law enforcement agencies
 - Prosecutors
 - Elected Officials
 - Citizens groups
 - An important goal of the Center will be to build public confidence in the objectivity of evidence presented in criminal proceedings.
 - Jurors who suspect that evidence has been influenced by factors other than scientific standards may be tempted to disregard the evidence in favor of their personal perceptions of the case.

Proposed Forensic Center

Role of the LGC Creating Independence

- Set policy for the operation of the Center
- Balance the interests of law enforcement and the public with the rights of the accused person(s)
- Ensure sound financial management
- Will be designed to accommodate eventual collaboration with the County but can also operate separately

Proposed Forensic Center LGC Details

- The Mayor and City Council authorize the creation of a Local Government Corporation to manage the Forensic Center.
- Five Directors will be nominated by the Mayor and confirmed by City Council. They shall have the following professional credentials:
 - **Position 1** – a person who understands the judicial system and is well qualified to manage an independent operation with significant community interactions
 - **Position 2** – a person with significant law enforcement experience/background
 - **Position 3** – an attorney licensed to practice law in Texas who is well qualified to address forensic science issues from the perspective of an advocate for persons accused of crimes
 - **Position 4** – a person who is technically well qualified to provide forensic guidance
 - **Position 5** – a person who is well qualified to provide financial guidance
- The Local Government Corporation will operate as an independent business entity with the appointed Directors.

Proposed Forensic Center LGC Details (cont'd)

- The Bylaws of the LGC will require the appointment of a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to advise the Directors regarding protocols, personnel, equipment, finances and other matters related to the operation of the Center.
- One or more of the appointees to the TAC are to be members of the ASCLD, the American Board of Forensic Toxicologists and/or the International Association for Identification.

Proposed Forensic Center

HPD Forensic Center Assets

- All existing assets including equipment, grant funds and personnel will be transferred to the LGC.
- The City will work with HPOU and HOPE to seek to accommodate current city employees who wish to remain with the City. Currently have 188 FTE's working in HPD units.

Proposed Forensic Center

Current Estimated HPD Forensic Services Funding

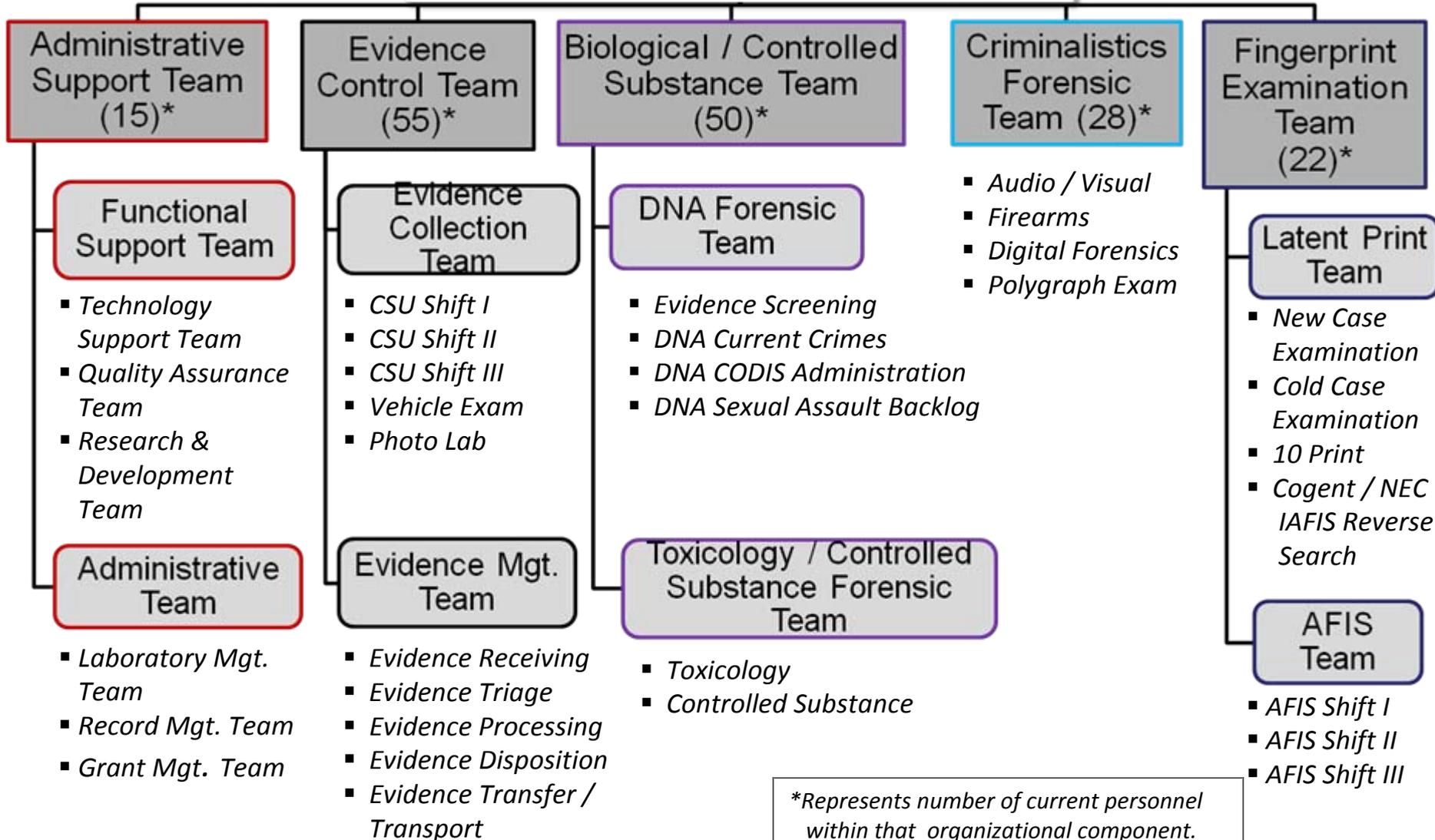
Funding Source	Crime Laboratory	Identification Division
General	\$7,164,730	\$13,347,229
Grant	\$1,148,812	\$969,045
Asset Forfeiture	\$100,000	\$140,000
Total	\$8,413,542	\$14,456,274
Total FY12	\$22,869,816	

Proposed Forensic Center Accreditation

- Crime Lab components:
 - Controlled Substances
 - DNA
 - Serology
 - Firearms
 - Toxicology
- Identification Unit components:
 - Automated Fingerprint Identification System
 - Crime Scene Unit
 - Digital Forensics Unit
 - Forensic Audio-Video
 - Latent Prints
 - Photo Lab
 - Polygraph Unit
- All of the above HPD forensic science operations will be turned over to the proposed Forensic Center.
- The Center will be required to obtain and maintain accreditation for all disciplines under the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors/LAB International Program (ASCLD/LAB).
- The ASCLD/LAB areas of focus are laboratory management and operations, personnel qualifications and the physical plant.
- Certification requires rigorous programs for both quality assurance (error prevention) and quality control (error detection).

LGC Board of Directors

Forensic Science Executive Director



Proposed Forensic Center Accountability

- The LGC will be managed by the Board of Directors confirmed by City Council.
- The LGC will set policy and operational standards for the Center.
- The operation of the LGC will safeguard the integrity of the forensic operations and be accountable for its performance to the public and law enforcement communities.
- Annually City Council will be asked to fund the LGC as a contract operation.

Proposed Forensic Center Future Regional Crime Lab

- Proposed LGC structure is fully consistent with either a regional or City-only facility.
 - Basic principles in all cases are:
 - Independence
 - Accreditation
 - Accountability
- Dialogue with County is ongoing.
 - Long term new facility for the Institute of Forensic Science (Medical Examiner) being developed at County. If approved by Commissioners Court will open in 2015/2016.
 - Short term DNA laboratory expansion in a separate County-leased facility is more likely in 2013
 - LGC can consider contract operations if joint operations are not yet implemented

Proposed Forensic Center Timeline

- February 15, 2012
 - Mayor's Report to City Council
- March 19, 2012
 - Presentation to Public Safety Committee
- April
 - City Council action on creation of the LGC – including Board appointments
- May
 - Review of backlog plans (HPD)
 - Personnel plans being developed (LGC)
- June/August
 - Staff planning activity (LGC)
 - Ongoing dialogue with the County (City)
- September/beyond
 - Implementation of organization (LGC/City)

Proposed Forensic Center Questions

