



DNA Backlog Clearance Project

Volume 1, Issue 2: September 23, 2013

Focus of update:

This newsletter is designed to provide regular updates pertaining to the DNA Backlog Clearance Project. The project will continue until all testing is complete, reports issued by the external vendors, technical reviews finalized, and investigative follow up conducted. This edition will focus on updating stakeholders on progress made thus far and metrics related to the process.

Inside this issue:

Focus of update	1
Outsource Update	1
Process Summary	1
Progress by the numbers	2
What's to Come?	2

Action Research Project

The NIJ Sexual Assault Action Research Project is progressing and ultimately NIJ will publish the research findings. Research teams are working in Wayne County Michigan and Houston. Teams from the two jurisdictions include criminal justice researchers and representatives from the police department, crime lab, prosecutor's office, and community-based victim services organizations. Some of the research questions being examined include: Should all SAKs be tested?, Is a triage method more effective?, and How should victims be notified when a case is reopened after many years? According to NIJ the goal of the project is to produce transportable lessons and strategies to help other jurisdictions that discover untested SAKs in police evidence rooms which have not been sent to a crime lab for analysis. For more information visit NIJ at the following link: <http://www.nij.gov/topics/forensics/sexual-assault-kits.htm>

Outsource Update:

Cases Outsourced to date:

Location	To Bode	To Sorenson	Total to Date
Crime Lab	1,729	1,668	3,397
Property Division	2,856	2,807	5,663
Total to Date	4,585	4,475	9,060

As explained in the February 13, 2013 Mayor's Report, this DNA clearance project will affect approximately 10,000 cases to include stored sexual assault kits (SAKs), active cases and approximately 1,000 new SAKs that will come in during the contract period. The total cases outsourced to date is reflected above and newly submitted SAKs will be sent out as they come in. As a reference, the full report presented to City Council on February 13, 2013 can be found by following this link: <http://www.houstontx.gov/mayor/press/20130213.html>

Process Summary:

As test reports are received from outside vendors, a mandatory technical review is completed. This is a requirement for CODIS. Following the required technical review, test results are immediately sent to the concerned investigative division for follow-up and or case closure. As previously explained, cases may or may not add to the investigation depending on results received. Furthermore, cases that do yield a DNA profile may lead to a suspect previously identified in the investigation. Each case must be followed up on in accordance with the details of that investigation. Moreover, in some cases that yield useable results it may or may not affect the investigation due to other variables such as an inability to locate a complainant or a complainant not willing to pursue prosecution.

Progress by the Numbers:

Testing complete to date:

Cases Outsourced	Reports Complete	Technical Reviews in progress	Technical Reviews complete
9,060	2,797	1,412	1,385

No Investigative Benefit:

Category	Number
Negative Screening	445
No DNA Result	46
No DNA found foreign to complainant	261
Excessive number of contributors: <i>If too many contributors are included in a mixture and a single profile cannot be deduced, the data can not be entered into CODIS, per CODIS guidelines.</i>	39
Insufficient data for CODIS entry: <i>CODIS requires a minimum standard for entry. At the state level (SDIS), there must be at least 7 loci on evidence. At the national level (NDIS), there must be at least 10 loci on evidence. References require all 13 core loci. Partial profiles, while suitable for comparison, may not be suitable for CODIS-entry. In addition to a minimum number of loci, CODIS also requires a statistical threshold to be exceeded before a partial profile can be entered.</i>	94
Sample type not CODIS eligible: <i>Per CODIS guidelines, forensic profiles must be associated with a crime scene. Some reference samples are not eligible for CODIS entry.</i>	36
Total to Date	921*

* These cases represent those where nothing probative to the investigation was determined by the testing effort. These cases may be closed or remain active and investigated if other evidence exists. This will be determined through the investigative follow-up.

Possible Investigative Benefit:

Category	Number
CODIS entries to date	464**

** These cases represent those where a profile was developed meeting CODIS guidelines and a CODIS entry has been completed. When a CODIS hit is received it is reported to the concerned investigative division for immediate follow-up. CODIS hits must be verified and confirmed by the State. CODIS data will be shared in future reports as investigative follow up allows and to the extent that active investigations with known suspects are not compromised. It is important to remember that a CODIS entry will not always result in a match. Furthermore, a match could be a “name” hit or a “case to case” hit.

**What’s to come?
Investigative Follow–Up**

As testing continues, all results are sent to the concerned investigative division for case follow-up. The amount of follow-up required will vary depending on the facts in each case. At the conclusion of the entire DNA clearance project a report will be provided depicting the investigative case disposition. The categories tracked will include: **Closed, Inactive, Open, Arrest/Charges Filed, Previously Adjudicated and False Arrest.** At this point in the process it is premature to report on final case dispositions. All evidence has been shipped and is in the process of being tested. No backlog of evidence to be sent out for testing remains.