DEPARTMENT OF FORENSIC SCIENCES

FY 2023 PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

JANUARY 16, 2024

CONTENTS

1 DEPARTMENT OF FORENSIC SCIENCES

Mission: The mission of the Department of Forensic Sciences (DFS) is to produce high quality, timely, accurate, and reliable forensic science with the use of the best available technology and practices, unbiased science, and transparency with the overall goal of enhancing public health and safety.

Services: DFS provides independent analysis of evidence and samples submitted by agencies within the District of Columbia and its federal neighbors. The DFS analyzes evidence submitted from criminal cases, including DNA, fingerprints, firearms, materials, drugs and digital evidence. The DFS also provides expert witness testimony in defense of their analytical reports in the District's courts of law. The Public Health Laboratory Division provides diagnostic and analytical testing for biological pathogens and chemical agents from clinical, environmental, or food sources and provides emergency response testing. The Crime Scene Sciences Division provides the collection, analysis, processing, and preservation of evidence found at crime scenes in the District. The DFS Directorate supports the work of the entire agency through strategic direction, training, quality assurance, research, recruitment and hiring of personnel, information technology, data management, fleet management, procurement, and other administrative support services. The Scientific Advisory Board provides guidance by providing peer review to ensure that scientifically valid protocols are developed, followed, and updated.

2   2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Accomplishment	Impact on Agency	Impact on Residents
The Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) Forensic Chemistry Unit (FCU) was a recipient of the CDC's Overdose Data to Action (OD2A) grant for state surveillance funding, to include the biosurveillance portion only awarded to 20 entities.	This grant funding will allow FCU to supplement staffing needs with needed positions. The surveillance activity also allows DFS/FCU to remain in a leadership position in the forensic community as our data is more real time and actionable, as well as providing services many forensic laboratories do not.	As a recipient of the OD2A grant, FCU will be able to continue drug trend monitoring through seized drug analysis and needle exchange syringe surveillance and expand to encompass suspected non-fatal overdose to bridge the gap between use and fatal overdose data previously under-reported in DC.
The Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) Latent Fingerprint Unit (LFU) completed an extensive training program with Evolve Forensics to strengthen their skill sets and enhance their work product.	The training will improve the quality of LFU's work, while keeping DFS up-to-date with the latest advancements in forensic science.	This training program has equipped the LFU with the necessary knowledge and skills to provide more accurate and reliable results, helping them to better serve the District and contribute to the investigation and resolution of cases.
The Public Health Laboratory (PHL) implemented wastewater testing for COVID-19 surveillance in the District	This project is supported by grant funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as part of the National Wastewater Surveillance System (NWSS). Funding supports the training of laboratory staff, testing supplies, and instrumentation.	Testing of wastewater is a passive surveillance tool to track trends of infections in the community and determine appropriate methods of for containing outbreaks and developing methods to mitigate infection Samples from all wards are collected and tested every week.

3   2023 OBJECTIVES

Strategic Objective
Provide high-quality forensic science and public health laboratory analysis to stakeholders so they can execute their own core services to the public in a timely manner. Our three overarching core services are: crime scene evidence collection, forensic science analysis, and public health laboratory diagnostic, analytical, and emergency response testing
Provide administrative support, training and risk management oversight to our laboratory and technical units by ensuring compliance with the legal mandate to make analysis documents available. The science lab units will each have administrative support services to maintain operational capacity in the form of training, continuing education, safety, risk management, quality and legal support
Create and maintain a highly efficient, transparent, and responsive District government.

4   2023 OPERATIONS

Operation Title	Operation Description
Provide high-quality forensic science and public health laboratory analysis to stakeholders so they can execute their own core services to the public in a timely manner. Our three overarching core services are: crime scene evidence collection, forensic science analysis, and public health laboratory diagnostic, analytical, and emergency response testing	
Improve laboratory efficiency through technological advances: Key Project	DFS will continue to expand its capabilities as a top tier forensic and public health laboratory by implementing new scientific programs and investing in laboratory equipment infrastructure.
Provide timely testing of pathogens of public health significance: Daily Service	The Public Health Laboratory will provide diagnostic, analytical and emergency response testing for biological pathogens and chemical agents from clinical, environmental, or food sources.
Conduct professional and expedient crime scene responses, collection, and storage of evidence: Daily Service	The Crime Scene Sciences Division will serve as stewards of evidence by maintaining custody of evidence from collection to storage at DFS.
Conduct timely forensic analysis: Daily Service	The Forensic Science Laboratory division will conduct coordinated and timely forensic analysis in accordance with industry standards and accreditation guidelines.
Provide administrative support, training and risk management oversight to our laboratory and technical units by ensuring compliance with the legal mandate to make analysis documents available. The science lab units will each have administrative support services to maintain operational capacity in the form of training, continuing education, safety, risk management, quality and legal support	
Offer training curriculum for professional development: Daily Service	Provide a training curriculum to DFS employees to ensure they maintain skill sets, meet standards of excellence, and deliver high quality, accurate, and reliable services
Monitor quality compliance with certification requirements: Daily Service	Assurance that DFS produces products that are fit for stakeholders' purposes by maintaining ISO 17025 accreditation for the agency, maintains Clinical Laboratory Improvement Act (CLIA) certification, as well as, compliance with applicable federal regulations such as the Division of Select Agents and Toxins (DSAT)
Oversee the laboratory environment is both safe and healthy for staff: Daily Service	Establish, manage and ensure compliance of federal, district, and local regulations and policy; and provide medical surveillance to staff, mandates safety training for all staff members, and audits laboratory facilities to ensure a safe work environment
Create and maintain a highly efficient, transparent, and responsive District government.	
Efficiently procure vital services and resources: Daily Service	Proactively procure the necessary services, supplies, and equipment for the laboratories to meet the daily needs of scientists and agency personnel
Strategically forecast, analyze, and present agency data to determine levels of resource efficiency and goal attainment: Key Project	Analyze raw data and present graphical visuals of real-time workload from data obtained from LIMS, and other databases to better inform strategic leadership decisions to enhance laboratory services

Operation Title	Operation Description
Responsible for human capital management and recruitment for DFS and serves as liaison to external entities: Daily Service	Supports the hiring of new employees and provides employee data on residency, on-board time, and performance plan completion from data pulled from PeopleSoft
Education and Grief Counseling Services: Daily Service	Education and Grief Counseling Services
Provide legal advice to the agency and facilitate stakeholder engagement: Daily Service	Facilitate stakeholder engagement, legally advise director level decision-making, train scientists for court testimony and presentation of scientific expertise, draft contracts and agreements with government and private organizations, and process discovery requests
Ensures all IT systems and databases are operational and secure for scientists and agency personnel to deliver reports and services to stakeholders: Daily Service	Promote and facilitate the effective integration of technology into the DFS divisions by developing, supporting, and maintaining a highly effective, reliable, secure, and innovative information systems to support agency needs

5 2023 STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

In FY 2023, Department of Forensic Sciences had 6 Strategic Initiatives and completed 16.67%.

Title	Description	Update
Quality Management System	In the agency's pursuit of re-accreditation and improvement of the quality management system, the agency will increase its efforts in promoting transparency and accuracy with the development of an online portal for sharing of documentation with stakeholders while also establishing a portal specific to the public to review documents relative to the agency's quality assurance protocols.	Completed to date: 0-24% The progress of this initiative in Q4 is ongoing, focusing on developing the scope, identifying software, and staffing.
Recruitment	To ensure timely critical forensic and public health services to the residents of the District of Columbia, the agency will increase staffing levels by driving down the vacancy rate through recruitment efforts that effectively attract highly skilled talent and incorporate retention efforts that focuses on maintaining employee longevity.	Completed to date: 75-99% The agency has developed and implemented a legal training program dedicated to courtroom testimony. All current DFS employees, with a required courtroom testimony component to their role, have completed a mock trial. Newly hired employees are required to participate in and complete a mock trial, upon completion of their practical training.
Training and Development	With the agency's $600,000 budget enhancement in training funds for Fiscal Year 2023, the agency will continue to monitor and track the number of trainings, number of staff trained, and the various training opportunities incorporated to help enhance and improve employee knowledge, skills, and abilities within the various disciplines performed within the agency.	Completed to date: 50-74% The agency remains incumbered at approx. 80% to 90% of the total balance supporting staff in the maintenance & achievement of their required credentials; leadership development for all managers and professional training/conference attendance.
Training and Development	In the agency's pursuit of re-accreditation, the agency will develop a training program dedicated to courtroom testimony that includes a collaborative component with prosecutors and defense attorneys.	Completed to date: Complete In the agency's pursuit of re-accreditation, the agency will develop a training program dedicated to courtroom testimony that includes a collaborative component with prosecutors and defense attorneys.

Recruitment	In the agency's efforts to grow its cohort, the agency will seek out partnerships with local universities to inform and recruit rising professionals of the work and opportunities available with DFS to help expand a pool of skilled talent for wider recruitment selection as job opportunities become available.	Completed to date: 50-74% The agency's outreach program has hosted several events with high schools, colleges, and universities to establish and cultivate relationships to expand the agency's candidate pools to recruit and hire for both full-time and internship opportunities. The agency continues to cultivate its relationship with American, Bowie State, George Mason, George Washington, and Howard universities. Additionally, working to formalize recruitment relationships with Georgetown and West Virginia universities.
Communications/ Outreach	As part of the agency's efforts to promote inclusion in scientific disciplines, DFS will complete and publish an augmented reality book for utilization during outreach activities to engage, inform, and inspire the community to consider exploring the various forensic and public health career paths performed at DFS.	Completed to date: 0-24% The progress has stalled due to vendor pricing increases for production and maintenance.

6 2023 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND WORKLOAD MEASURES

Key Performance Indicators

Measure	Directionality	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023 Q1	FY 2023 Q2	FY 2023 Q3	FY 2023 Q4	FY 2023	FY 2023 Target	Was 2023 KPI Met?	Explanation of Unmet KPI
Provide high-quality forensic science and public health laboratory analysis to stakeholders so they can execute their own core services to the public in a timely manner. Our three overarching core services are: crime scene evidence collection, forensic science analysis, and public health laboratory diagnostic, analytical, and emergency response testing											
Percent of crime scenes responded to within 30 minutes	Up is Better	84.9%	80.6%	78.3%	77.2%	77.2%	79.6%	77.9%	90%	Unmet	Increased traffic, the uptick in crime, and staffing levels during FY23, have affected CSSU's ability to reach crime scenes within a 30-minute window of receiving calls for service.
Percent of Crime Scene Reports completed within 14 calendar days	Up is Better	89.6%	83%	85.9%	88.3%	84.2%	66.3%	81.6%	95%	Unmet	The uptick in calls for service, along with staffing levels in CSSU, have impacted CSSU's ability to complete reports within 14 days.
Percent of all firearms will be transferred to the Evidence Control Branch (ECB) within 21 days after all forensic tests are completed	Up is Better	96.6%	96.7%	100%	100%	100%	97.7%	99.3%	90%	Met	
Percent of biological terrorism and chemical terrorism samples with preliminary results reported within one business day	Up is Better	100%	100%	No applicable incidents	100%	100%	100%	100%	90%	Met	
Percent of OCME samples ordered in microbiology will be tested and reported within 12 business days of receipt in the laboratory	Up is Better	87.4%	96.3%	100%	100%	100%	90.9%	98.7%	90%	Met	

Key Performance Indicators *(continued)*

Measure	Directionality	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023 Q1	FY 2023 Q2	FY 2023 Q3	FY 2023 Q4	FY 2023	FY 2023 Target	Was 2023 KPI Met?	Explanation of Unmet KPI
Percent of Core Laboratory Response Network for Chemical Threats (LRN-C) methods within the Clinical Toxicology Unit (CTU) that are evaluated as competent by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) LRN-C Program (competence is defined as successful score of >80% in two-out-of-three testing events, per method)	Up is Better	75%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	80%	Met	
Percent of all rabies STAT specimen with human exposure are tested and reported to the Zoonotic Disease Epidemiologist within 24 hours or 1 business day of receipt in the laboratory	Up is Better	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	95%	Met	
Percent of samples ordered in molecular diagnostics will be tested and reported within 72 hours or three (3) business days of receipt in the laboratory	Up is Better	97.9%	99.8%	No applicable incidents	No applicable incidents	100%	100%	100%	90%	Met	
Percent of all jewelry received will be transferred to Evidence Control Branch (ECB) within 14 days	Up is Better	98.6%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	90%	Met	
Percent of all drugs will be transferred to Evidence Control Branch (ECB) within 30 days after all forensic testing is completed	Up is Better	98.4%	88.4%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	90%	Met	
Percent of cases received in the Forensic Chemistry Unit will be tested and reported within 60 days of receipt in the laboratory	Up is Better	99.1%	96.3%	No applicable incidents	No applicable incidents	100%	95%	95.9%	90%	Met	
Percent of homicide cases completed in less than 60 days	Up is Better	New in 2023	New in 2023	90%	44.4%	23.3%	63.1%	57.1%	New in 2023	New in 2023	All cases are currently being outsourced, Signature Science was off-line for two months and experienced delays

Measure	Directionality	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023 Q1	FY 2023 Q2	FY 2023 Q3	FY 2023 Q4	FY 2023	FY 2023 Target	Was 2023 KPI Met?	Explanation of Unmet KPI
Percent of priority cases completed in less than 60 days	Up is Better	New in 2023	New in 2023	93.9%	66.7%	33.3%	33.3%	75.4%	New in 2023	New in 2023	All cases are currently being outsourced, Signature Science was off-line for two months and experienced delays
Provide administrative support, training and risk management oversight to our laboratory and technical units by ensuring compliance with the legal mandate to make analysis documents available. The science lab units will each have administrative support services to maintain operational capacity in the form of training, continuing education, safety, risk management, quality and legal support											
Percent of scientists meeting technical competency requirements	Up is Better	98.7%	80.4%	92.9%	96.7%	94.8%	98.2%	95.6%	95%	Met	
Percent of safety incident reports submitted to DFS Safety Officer within two (2) business days	Up is Better	100%	100%	No applicable incidents	100%	100%	No applicable incidents	100%	100%	Met	
Percent of QCAR situation and root cause analysis sections completed within 30 business days	Up is Better	65.5%	26.4%	83.3%	66.7%	50%	66.7%	70%	100%	Unmet	The Quality Unit being understaffed, the responsible respective units' delayed responses to complying with the timeline due to their understaffing, and no Quality Manager for 6 months in FY23, has affected Quality's ability to meet their target of 100%.
Percent of FOIA responses returned on time (15 business days)	Up is Better	97.4%	92%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	Met	

Workload Measures

Measure	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023 Q1	FY 2023 Q2	FY 2023 Q3	FY 2023 Q4	FY 2023
Conduct professional and expedient crime scene responses, collection, and storage of evidence							
Number of evidence items received	74,902	55,898	14,992	19,066	51,421	21,280	106,759
Number of crime scenes processed	6,005	4,539	822	1,423	4,611	5,395	12,251
Conduct timely forensic analysis							
Number of service requests from stakeholders	4,037	5,119	694	793	843	1,182	3512
Number of CODIS database hits	185	42	17	18	12	12	59
Number of AFIS database entries	3,847	1,302	364	335	827	388	1914
Number of CODIS database entries	402	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of AFIS database hits	931	461	88	111	189	64	452
Number of samples processed (Drug Analysis of Syringe Kits)	New in 2023	New in 2023	1	4	No applicable incidents	6	11
Number of samples processed (Syringe Surveillance)	New in 2023	New in 2023	592	690	772	708	2762
Provide timely testing of pathogens of public health significance							
Number of Proficiency Tests performed	86	119	22	18	63	51	154
Number of clinical and surveillance tests performed	229,770	79,937	12,088	7,902	2,718	3,010	25,718
Number of verification/validation efforts performed	31	19	No applicable incidents	8	2	5	15
Monitor quality compliance with certification requirements							
Number of Quality Corrective Action Requests opened	93	52	8	7	2	5	22
Number of stakeholder complaints received	0	0	No applicable incidents	No applicable incidents	No applicable incidents	No applicable incidents	No applicable incidents
Number of internal audits	17	9	1	No applicable incidents	6	1	8
Offer training curriculum for professional development							
Number of training hours completed by employees	4,790	3,470.8	1,081.7	822.8	527.6	1,829.2	4261.2
Oversee the laboratory environment is both safe and healthy for staff							
Number of safety incidents reported	15	3	No applicable incidents	7	2	No applicable incidents	9
Efficiently procure vital services and resources							
Number of requisitions submitted into PASS	283	229	20	105	26	8	159
Ensures all IT systems and databases are operational and secure for scientists and agency personnel to deliver reports and services to stakeholders							

Workload Measures *(continued)*

Measure	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023 Q1	FY 2023 Q2	FY 2023 Q3	FY 2023 Q4	FY 2023
Number of IT service requests received	1,348	939	313	297	312	355	1277
Provide legal advice to the agency and facilitate stakeholder engagement							
Number of discovery requests received	439	398	120	163	144	181	608
Number of MOA/MOUs the agency enters into with other agencies	21	12	16	4	12	25	57
Number of FOIA requests received	37	15	7	5	2	2	16
Responsible for human capital management and recruitment for DFS and serves as liaison to external entities							
Number of employees on-boarded	50	32	4	9	7	15	35