

In 2014, the nation's 409 publicly funded forensic crime labs received an estimated 3.8 million requests for forensic services, which was down from 4 million requests in 2009. These labs analyzed and reported on physical evidence collected during criminal investigations at the request of police departments, prosecutors' offices, courts, and correctional facilities.

Crime lab functions

Most crime labs provided forensic services in multiple disciplines in 2014. More than 8 in 10 (81%) crime labs handled the identification of illegal drugs and other controlled substances. Nearly two-thirds (62%) of labs analyzed biological samples, such as blood and saliva. The majority (63%) analyzed fingerprints recovered from crime scenes. Nearly half (48%) examined trace evidence, such as fire debris, hair, or gunshot residue.

About lab requests

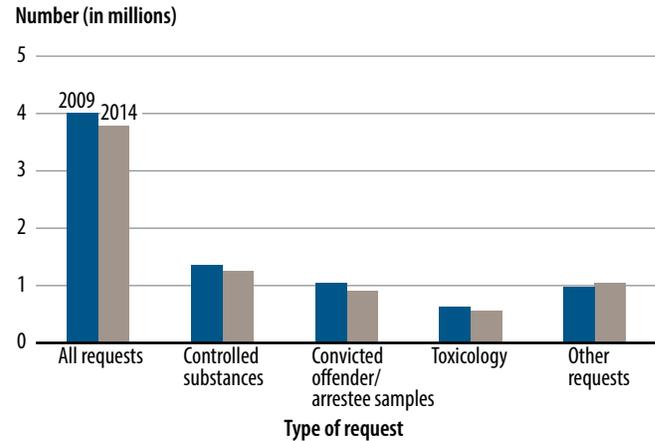
About three-quarters of the requests received by crime labs in 2014 involved the analysis of controlled substances (33%), biological samples collected from convicted offenders and arrestees for a DNA database (24%), or toxicology (15%). These services also accounted for the majority of the requests received by crime labs in 2009.

More than half of the approximately 4 million requests received in 2014 were submitted to state labs. The composition of the forensic work handled by U.S. crime labs varied among those serving federal, state, county, and municipal jurisdictions. Toxicology analysis made up a larger percentage of requests at county labs than federal and municipal labs. DNA database samples of convicted offenders and arrestees made up a larger percentage of requests to federal and state lab than those made to county and municipal labs.

Backlogged requests

At yearend 2014, publicly funded crime labs had a backlog of 570,100 requests for forensic services, down from 895,500 backlogged requests at yearend 2009. To address the demands for forensic services, 38% of publicly funded crime

Number of requests for services received by publicly funded forensic crime labs, by type of request, 2009 and 2014



Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Census of Publicly Funded Forensic Crime Laboratories, 2009 and 2014.

labs outsourced one or more types of forensic services in 2014, up from 28% in 2009. Municipal labs were more likely than federal and state labs to outsource forensic services in 2014. Toxicology analysis and forensic biology collected during criminal casework were the most commonly outsourced requests.

Lab employees

The operating budgets for publicly funded forensic crime labs in 2014 totaled \$1.7 billion. In addition to their budgets, crime labs received funding from other sources, such as grants and charging fees for forensic services. Labs serving state jurisdictions accounted for nearly half of the overall budget, and labs with 25 or more employees accounted for more than 80% of the total. Lab expenditures included personnel, supplies, equipment, and construction costs.

Publicly funded crime labs employed 14,300 full-time personnel in 2014, and about half worked in state-operated labs. The mean number of full-time lab employees was 35, and the median number was 20 employees per lab. More than half (60%) of employees were analysts who prepared and analyzed evidence and reported on their conclusions.

The full report (*Publicly Funded Forensic Crime Laboratories: Resources and Services, 2014*, NCJ 250151), related documents, and additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics can be found at www.bjs.gov.