



FY 2024-2025

ANNUAL REPORT

NORTH CAROLINA STATE CRIME LABORATORY



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STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

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October 1, 2025

Co-Chairs, Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety
North Carolina General Assembly
Raleigh, NC 27601-2808

RE: Report on Work of the NC State Crime Laboratory for FY 2024-2025

Dear Chairs:

Pursuant to Session Law 2013-360, Section 17.2, the Department of Justice is pleased to submit the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Annual Report for the North Carolina State Crime Laboratory to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety. In addition to the data on evidence submissions, case completions, and other workload measures, the report provides updates on significant achievements and internal improvements that focus on quality, efficiency, and transparency.

Please let our team know if you have any questions. Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Eric Wilson
Chief of Staff

EW/dr

Enclosure

cc: NCGA Fiscal Research Division

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Executive Summary

The State Crime Laboratory (SCL) continues to provide forensic services that meet the highest quality standards possible. The SCL has successfully maintained ISO/IEC 17025 (2017) accreditation and compliance with DNA Quality Assurance Standards (QAS). The laboratory's accreditation was continued in FY 24-25 after a remote surveillance assessment by our accrediting body. This marks the laboratory's thirty seventh year of accreditation.

Given current market competition, we continue to have difficulty retaining qualified staff. We are respectfully requesting an appropriated recurring salary adjustment fund to address retention needs for the Forensic Scientist series, including salary increases and promotional opportunities. This salary adjustment fund will combat the \$2M human capital loss over the last six fiscal years and allow us to offer more competitive salaries, fill current vacancies more quickly, and retain trained forensic scientists. Each time a trained scientist resigns, the Laboratory spends approximately \$100,000 to train a new employee to fill the vacated position. In FY 2022-2023 alone, approximately 20 people were trained to fill open scientist positions – equating to \$2M of state funds that were spent to pay employees who are not yet contributing to the pending caseload. In FY 2023-24, approximately 18 scientists were in training which equates to an additional \$1.8M of state funds. In FY 2024-2025, approximately 19 scientists were in training which equates to an additional \$1.9M of state funds. During this time period, no evidence was analyzed by those analysts. This figure does not include the monetary loss of time set aside by current employees to train the new hires. This resulted in a loss of \$5.7M over three years while incurring a strain on the system to complete training of analysts. A recurring salary adjustment fund would help to retain employees who have historically left for higher paying salaries and will give the state a larger return on investment.

The SCL is extremely grateful for the addition of a \$1M recurring equipment fund provided in the FY 2022-2023 budget. To-date, the State Crime Laboratory has procured scientific instruments and equipment with this funding to further aid in technological advances and replace outdated and failing equipment. These purchases include, but are not limited to, RAPID DNA technology instrumentation¹, replacement of a distilled water filtration system, a hydrogen generator used in the analysis of DWI casework, replacement of Gas Chromatograph Mass Spectrometers (GC/MS)², replacement of Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy (FTIR)³, replacement of comparison microscopes for Firearms examinations, and digital cameras for latent print examination. Such instrumentation and equipment are critical to casework in multiple disciplines within the laboratory system.

Since FY 23-24, the SCL continues to gain efficiencies in a number of disciplines through application of Lean Six Sigma (LSS) methodologies, procurement of advanced technologies and software, the filling of vacant scientist positions, and partnerships with stakeholders. In FY 24-25, the SCL purposed an employee to obtain certification as a LSS Black Belt. This will ensure for years to come the SCL can continue LSS practices of adequately assessing, standardizing, eliminating waste, and gaining efficiencies in all processes within the crime lab system.

One of the greatest gains to-date for the SCL, is the ability for our Forensic Toxicologists to testify remotely instead of in-person. In FY 24-25, remote testimony continues to save hundreds of hours of time as well as the cost of travel. This has allowed for more efficient testing of toxicology cases and ultimately benefits all stakeholders.

The SCL continues to partner with DOJ IT, Government Data Analytics Center (GDAC), and the SAS Institute

¹ RAPID DNA Technology instruments have the ability to develop a profile using a single piece of equipment within approximately two hours. This technology is mostly utilized in the field or in booking stations. The FBI is in the processes of developing standards and policies for its use to analyze crime scene samples.

² Gas Chromatograph Mass Spectrometers are instruments used to identify the presence or absence of controlled substances DWI and Seized Drug casework.

³ Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy is an instrumental technique used by the Drug Chemistry Section in the analysis of seized drugs.

to automate the process for DNA Database sample expungement notifications, stop work notifications, toxicology blood destruction notifications, and CODIS hit follow-up. The finalized scope of work for the project has been developed. The cost of building the portal with automation is almost \$1.8 million.

The State Crime Laboratory will continue to provide quality and timely forensic analysis and impartial expert testimony for the benefit of North Carolina's criminal justice system.

NORTH CAROLINA STATE CRIME LABORATORY ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025⁴

This report is presented to the Chairs of the North Carolina General Assembly Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety and to the North Carolina General Assembly Fiscal Research Division as directed by Section 17.2 of S.L. 2013-360, the Appropriations Act of 2013.

I. Preface

The laboratory remains dedicated to ensuring that all operations are focused on achieving the mission to conduct the highest quality, technically proficient forensic analysis in a timely manner and provide impartial expert witness testimony.

II. Quality (Accreditation and Certification)

The SCL's forensic services continue to meet the highest quality standards possible. The SCL maintains accreditation under strict ISO/IEC 17025 requirements and is accredited by the ANSI National Accreditation Board (ANAB). ANAB is a signatory to the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) as required by Session Law 2011-19 on accreditation for the SCL. The Laboratory was assessed in April of 2025, by ANAB, using ISO/IEC 17025:2017 standards, the FBI Quality Assurance Standards for Forensic DNA Testing Labs, and the FBI Quality Assurance Standards for DNA Databasing Laboratories. As a result of the assessment, ANAB renewed the Lab's accreditation in the Field of Forensic Testing.

III. Case Submissions and Completions⁵ and Pending Case Load

1. Case Submissions

In FY 2024-2025, **34,509 submissions (39,638 case records)**, including over **56,024** items of evidence (See Appendix A), were accepted at the SCL's three locations. Submissions to the laboratory remain constant. [Note in Appendix A that tribal land submission data is included]. Submissions are defined as the number of times an agency submits a request form for evidence. There may be multiple examination requests (case records) on a form with one item of evidence or multiple items.

The submission form total examination requests, herein referred to as "case records" for 2024-25 total examination requests (case records) are broken down as follows:

- The **Raleigh Crime Laboratory** received 17,309 case record submissions and 15,581 DNA Database submissions for a total of 32,890 submissions.
- The **Triad Regional Crime Laboratory** received 10,110 case record submissions.
- The **Western Regional Crime Laboratory** received 12,219 case record submissions.

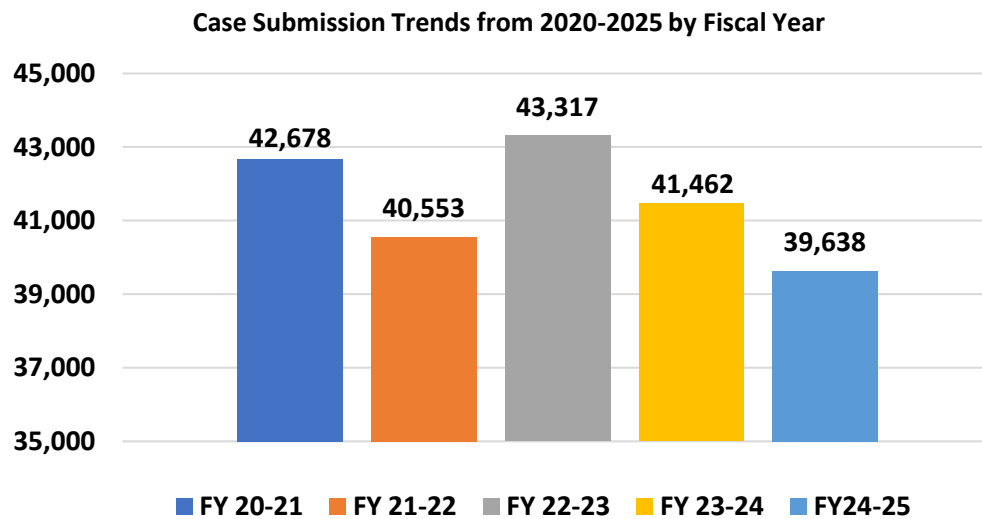
⁴This Report addresses the statutorily mandated "previous fiscal year" (July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025), and thus only briefly mentions, when required by context, important Crime Lab developments occurring on or after July 1, 2025.

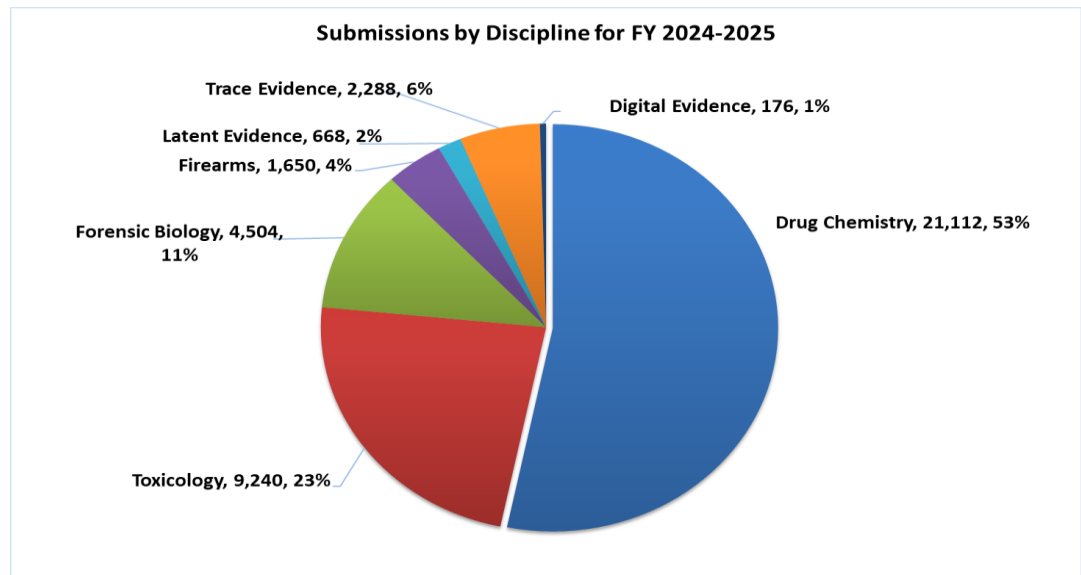
⁵ This information is provided in compliance with S.L. 2013-360 (1) and (2) which requires that the Annual Crime Laboratory Report contain "(1) Information about the workload of the Laboratory during the previous fiscal year, including the number of submissions, identified by the forensic discipline, received at each location of the Laboratory. (2) Information about the number of cases completed in the previous fiscal year, identified by forensic discipline, at each location of the Laboratory."

a. Case Submissions by Forensic Discipline and Laboratory Location

In FY 2024-2025, the SCL received the following case record requests, broken down by forensic discipline and laboratory location:

	<u>Raleigh</u>	<u>Triad</u>	<u>Western</u>	<u>TOTALS</u>
Drug Chemistry	7,885	5,172	8,055	21,112
Toxicology	3,894	2,874	2,472	9,240
Forensic Biology	2,619	1,065	820	4,504
Firearms	1,137	194	319	1,650
Latent Evidence	359	162	147	668
Trace Evidence	1,252	634	402	2,288
Digital Evidence	163	9	4	176
TOTALS	17,309	10,110	12,219	39,638

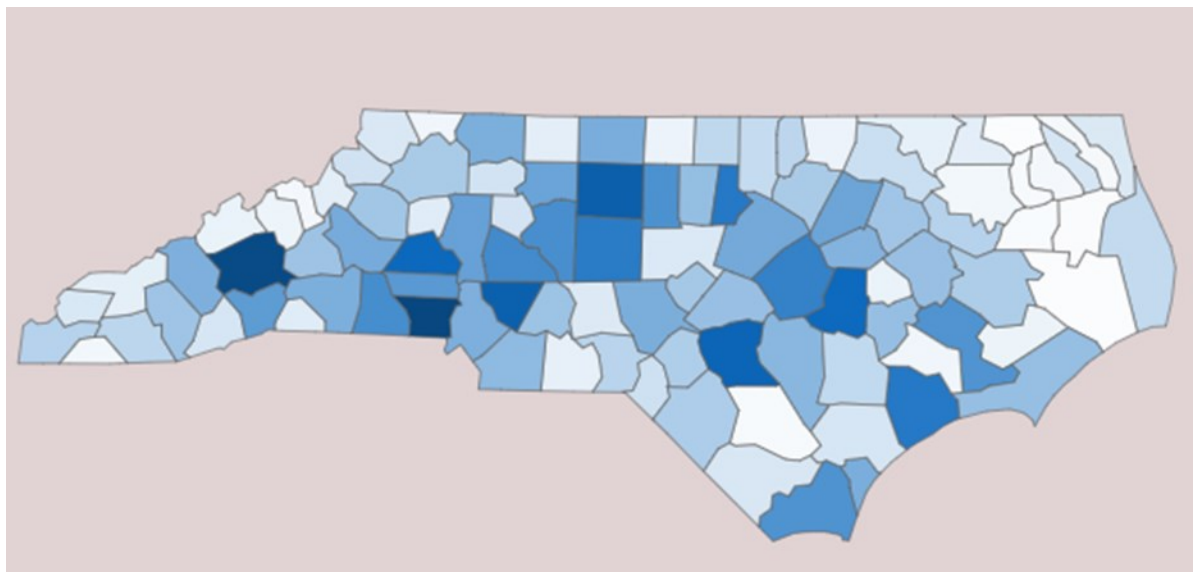




b. Case Submissions by County⁶

Evidence item submission data for the past five fiscal years per North Carolina County may be found in Appendix A. Here is a chart to display these submissions by case record⁷; the lighter color represents the fewest submissions, and the darker blue represents the most.

Heat Map showing Distribution of Submissions by County FY 2024-2025



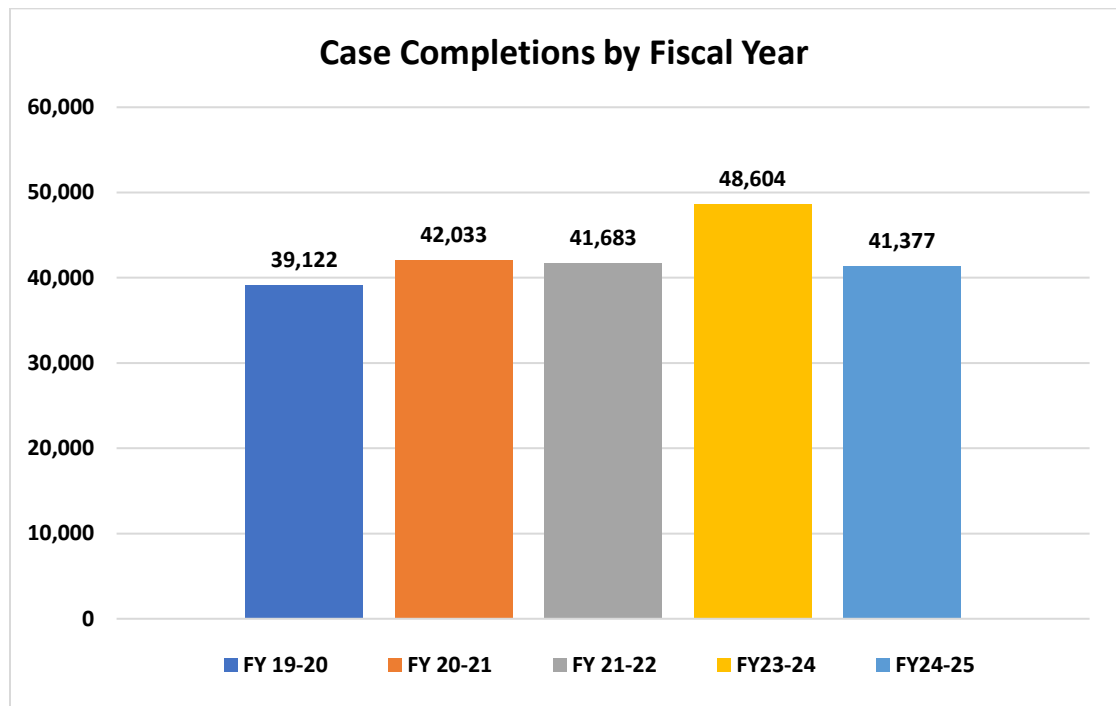
2. Case Completions

⁶This information is provided in compliance with S.L. 2013-360 (3) which requires that the Annual Crime Lab Report contain "A breakdown by county of the number of submissions received by the Laboratory in the previous fiscal year." The numbers in these tables do not include Convicted Offender or DNA upon Arrest submissions as those number are captured in the "Annual Report of DNA Database".

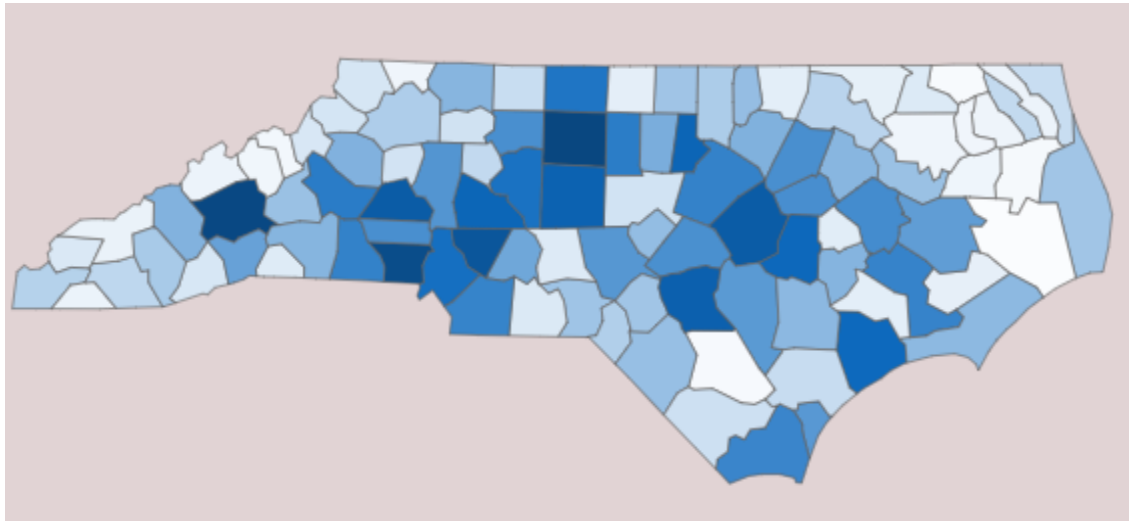
⁷ A case record is a sub-folder within an agency case file that results in a Laboratory Report. There may be multiple case records (Laboratory Reports) in a criminal case. For example, a homicide case submitted may result in a firearms report, a latent evidence report, and a DNA report.

- a. For FY 2024-2025, scientists in the SCL system worked **41,377** case records, broken down as follows:
- The **Raleigh Crime Laboratory** worked 21,891 case records, as well as 641 CODIS hits to the DNA Database
 - The **Triad Regional Crime Laboratory** worked 6,284 case records.
 - The **Western Regional Crime Laboratory** worked 13,202 case records.
- In FY 2024-2025, the SCL completed the following cases, broken down by discipline and laboratory location:

	<u>Raleigh</u>	<u>Triad</u>	<u>Western</u>	<u>TOTALS</u>
Drug Chemistry	10,575	4,115	8,507	23,197
Toxicology	4,238	2,062	2,763	9,063
Forensic Biology	2,431	1	1,490	3,922
Firearms	1,969	0	61	2,030
Latent Evidence	350	105	178	633
Trace Evidence	2,146	1	203	2,350
Digital Evidence	182	0	0	182
TOTALS	21,891	6,284	13,202	41,377



Heat Map showing Distribution of Completions by County FY 2024-2025



b. Pending Caseload over a Five-Year Period

A five-year study of the Laboratory's pending caseload shows an increase of exams waiting for analysis through 2022 and then a decline in pending examinations from 2022 to 2025. This decline in pending examinations is a direct correlation between the number of scientists trained and cases that can be completed. Between July 2022 and June 2025, fifty-one scientists were trained and released in a forensic discipline (or a secondary sub-discipline) to perform casework.



c. Lead Times⁸

Lead times at the SCL continue to improve as additional scientists complete their required training and begin to work on active cases. The average lead time for the SCL (the time the customer feels) calculated for the last reportable quarter of the fiscal year approximately is 217 days. Lead times for individual cases vary depending on the amount of evidence submitted and the types of analysis requested. The average turnaround time to complete a laboratory exam from start to finish is 44 days.

d. Rush Case Program

The SCL continues to operate a successful rush case program to give law enforcement agency heads or prosecutors the option to expedite cases when appropriate. Upon the request of a law enforcement agency head or prosecutor the SCL can rush or expedite a case for public safety or court purposes. Depending on the evidence submitted and the type(s) of analysis requested, rush cases can be worked in a matter of days. Laboratory management welcomes inquiries from law enforcement agency heads or prosecutors about cases when a rush request may be needed.

e. Court Testimony and Judicial Efficiencies

In FY 2024-2025, laboratory scientists spent a total of 2,173 hours attending court. Of those hours, they spent 1,150 hours traveling to court, 697 hours waiting to testify, and 326 hours testifying.

The passage of N.C. G.S. 15A-1225.3 now allows a Forensic Toxicologist to testify remotely if appropriate notice is provided to the defendant. The Laboratory has received 969 virtual subpoenas from a total of 41 counties. **In FY 24-25, scientists appeared virtually 47 times and testified 32 times across 21 different counties.** As of September 2025, the laboratory has saved 458 hours of travel time to court which equates to 28,608 miles not driven.

f. Outsourcing and Untested Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kits (SAECK)

The State Crime Laboratory completed the testing and reviews of all submitted inventoried sexual assault kits in early 2024.

All information regarding the STIMS has been reported in the legislatively mandated STIMS report required by NCGS § 114-65.

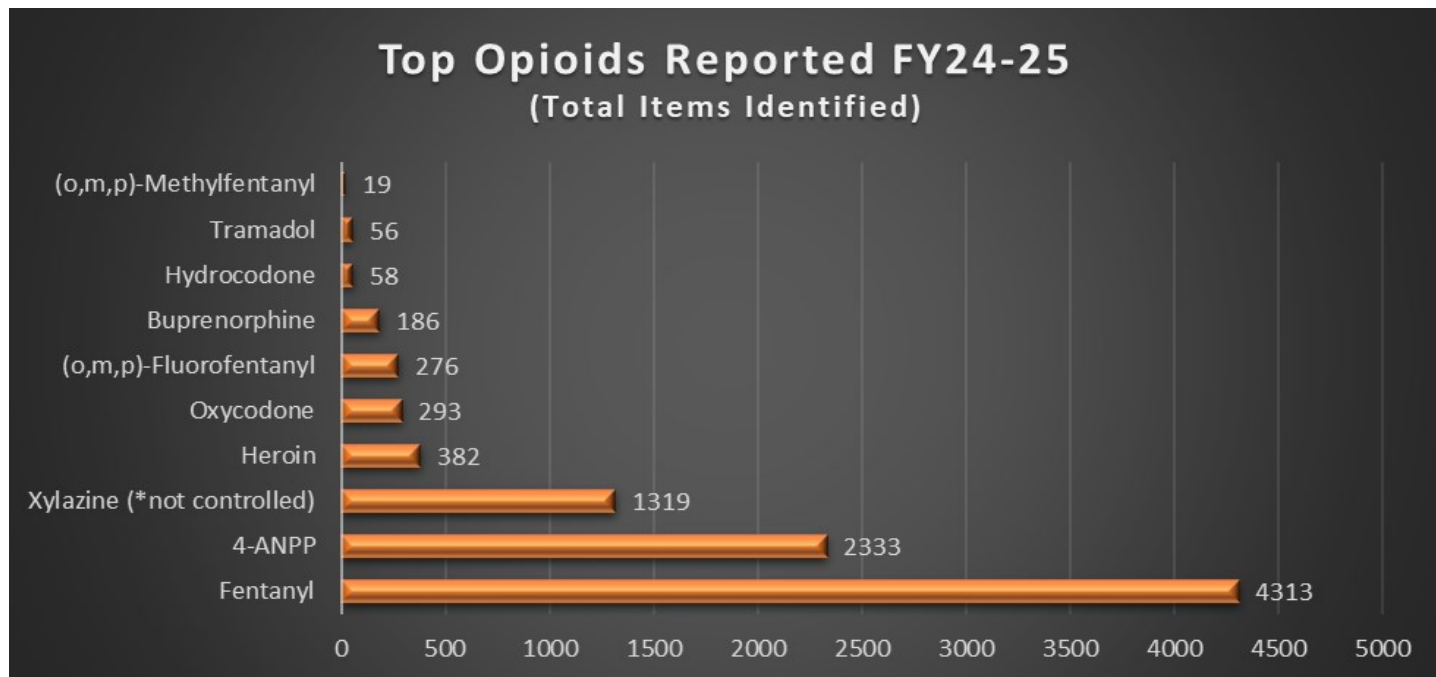
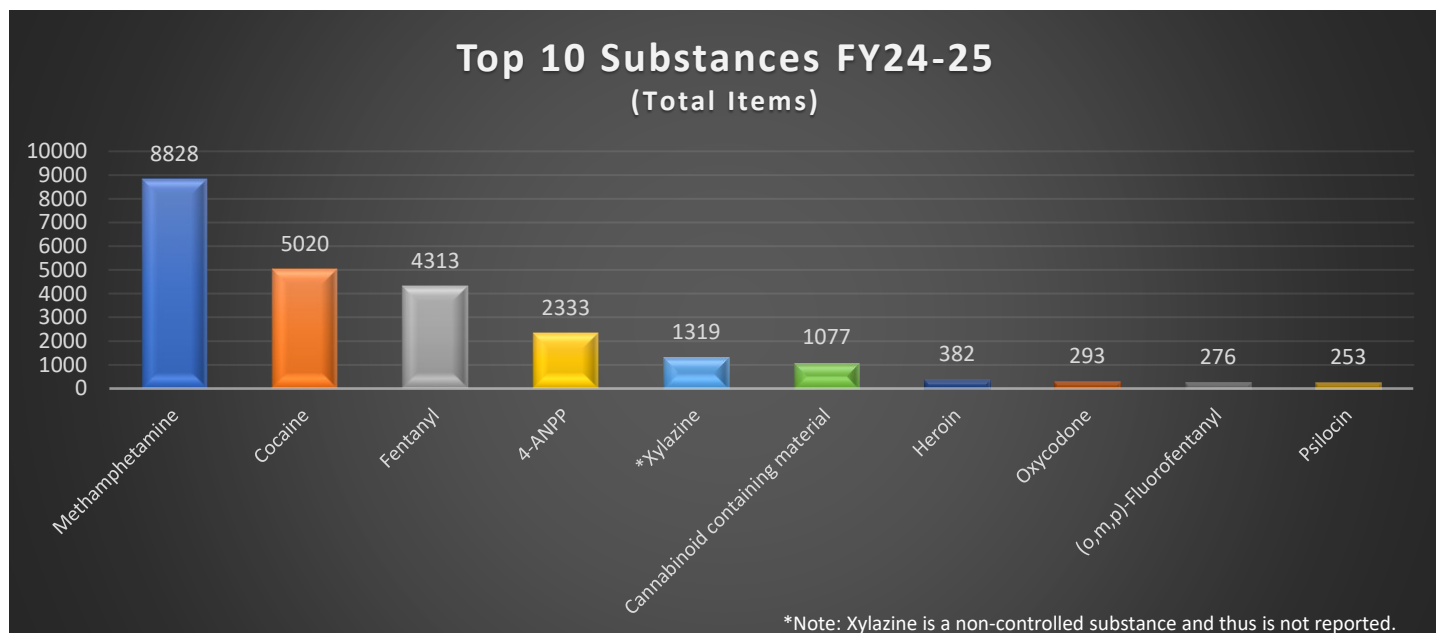
g. Statistics and Trends in Drug Chemistry and Toxicology

The Crime Laboratory collects various data which are reported to the Federal Government for statistical purposes, trend monitoring, and policy making.

The Drug Chemistry Section continues to see an increase in the complexity of cases submitted. Analysis of these items involves counting and verifying the number of units present, and documenting and analyzing multiple units to meet statutory weight thresholds. Often there is more than one controlled substance present in these samples or varying concentrations of these substances, which requires repeat and/or additional analysis and takes longer for scientists to analyze. Additionally, there continues to be an increase in the number of clandestine pharmaceutical and non-pharmaceutical tablets. The top 10 substances for FY24-25 made up roughly 96% of total item identifications. Out of this, methamphetamine, cocaine, and fentanyl accounted for approximately 72% of reported controlled substances. Methamphetamine was

⁸ **Lead Time** is defined as the time from when the evidence is submitted to the SCL to when the report is published. This includes time the evidence sits in the Laboratory evidence vault waiting to be assigned to an analyst. **Turnaround time** is defined as the time from when the analyst receives the evidence until the time they publish a report at the completion of their analysis.

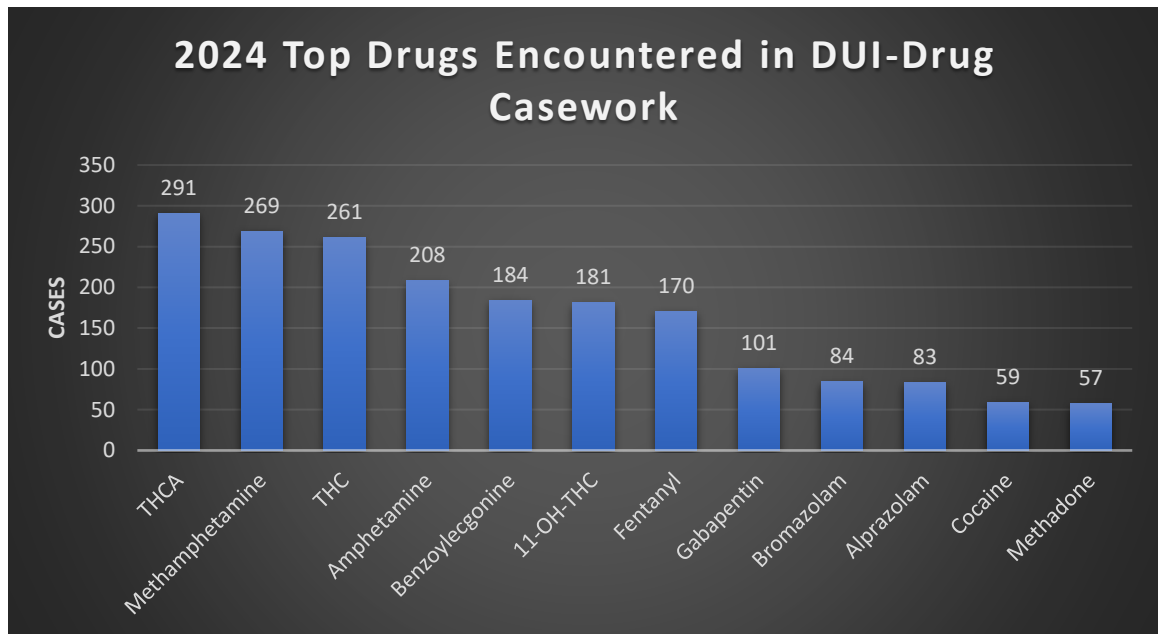
identified in 34.97% of analyzed items, followed by Cocaine at 19.89% and Fentanyl at 17.08%. Cannabinoid containing material included plant material, vape liquids, waxes, etc. and encompassed a variety of compounds to include delta 9-THC, delta 8-THC, cannabidiol (CBD), and delta 9-THCA. In FY 24-25, a total of 1319 samples analyzed contained xylazine. The top ten reported controlled substances can be found in the below chart, as well as the top 10 Opioids identified in FY 24-25. **The SCL continues to see a rise in other opioid classes, such as nitazenes and xylazine.**



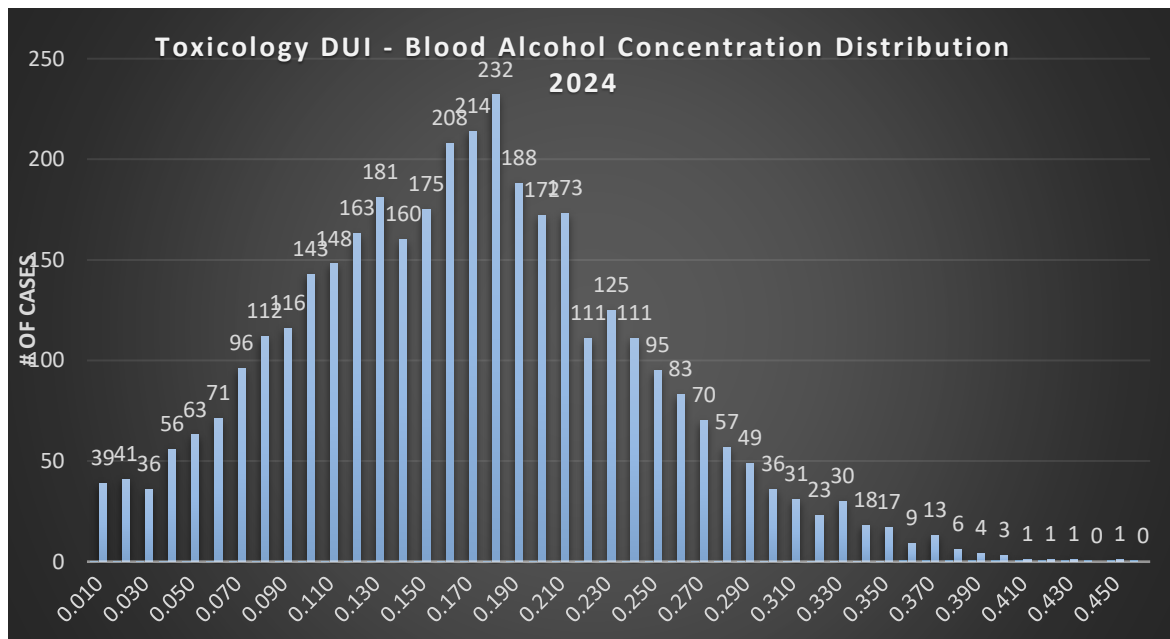
****Xylazine is not a controlled substance at the time of this report.***

In FY 2024-2025 the **Toxicology Section** of the SCL completed 5,061 driving under the influence of alcohol cases (DUI) and of 2,633 driving under the influence of drugs (DUID) cases. Approximately 77% of the DUI cases were positive for alcohol, with the average BAC equal to 0.17 g/100mL. There was an average of 2.5 different drugs identified in the positive samples. (Down from 2.9 drugs per sample in the previous year). The most prevalent drugs identified continued

to be cannabinoids (THC and metabolites; marijuana) followed by Methamphetamine and/or Amphetamine. The designer drug, Bromazolam, prevalence increased approximately 60% this FY and continues to be the most encountered designer benzodiazepine in DUI cases. The prevalence of fentanyl in DUI cases increased 45% and Gabapentin prevalence increased approximately 15% compared to the previous fiscal year.



Below is the chart of distribution of Blood Alcohol Concentrations analyzed in calendar year 2024:



IV. Process Improvements

The SCL continues its concerted effort to identify cases that have been disposed of in court (“stop-work cases”) and no longer need forensic analysis. The SCL routinely provides prosecutors with cases that appear to have cleared the court system, but the Laboratory has not received a disposition notice. The list of cases the SCL provides is done so to request confirmation that the case is completed and that no further Laboratory work is required. The NC Conference of District Attorneys has facilitated prosecutorial review of these notices, and nearly **all forty-three District Attorneys are participating**.

As a result, the SCL is able to focus on the cases where forensic analysis is still needed. Stopping work on 5,901 case records for FY 24-25 equals a savings of \$4.8M in unnecessary testing.

The SCL continued conversations and finalized plans in FY 24-25 to work with GDAC and SAS Institute to create a one stop portal for our stakeholders to access and provide the SCL real time information on CODIS hits, DNA arrestee expungements, stop work cases, and blood sample destructions from disposed DWI cases. The total price for this automated portal, which will assist SCL stakeholders in part in providing statutorily mandated information to the SCL, is \$1.8M. Providing one point of access to share information in a timelier manner is a high efficiency gain for both the SCL and its stakeholders and notably appreciated by SCL stakeholders based on a pilot project for this portal currently being conducted.

V. Human Capital

In FY 2024-2025 there were 15 hires, 18 internal promotions, and 10 separations. The SCL had a vacancy rate of 13.9% at the end of the fiscal year.

The process of filling vacancies and training a new scientist can take from one to two years, depending on the scientific discipline. During training, a forensic scientist cannot test items of evidence submitted in criminal cases and therefore cannot contribute to overall casework or case reduction during this time.

The SCL and DOJ continue to work to find ways to attract and retain highly qualified employees. The past two fiscal years have seen improvement in the ability to fill vacancies. However, more can be done to retain scientists, as salary and lack of opportunity for advancement are consistent reasons cited for scientists leaving employment with the SCL. We are respectfully requesting a recurring salary adjustment fund appropriated to address recruitment and retention needs for the Forensic Scientist series, including salary increases and promotional opportunities.

The chart below depicts the hiring and losses specifically of scientists, for the last six fiscal years:

Fiscal Year	Number of Scientists Hired	Number of Those Scientists Who Have Since Resigned	~Discipline Departed From	Human Capital/ Financial Loss	~Tenure of Scientists who Resigned
FY 19-20	8	5	Drug Chemistry (2); Forensic Biology (2); Latent (1)	\$500,000	1.1 years, 3.4 years, 4.4 year, 5.3 years, 4.0 years
FY 20-21	18	6	Forensic Biology (3); Firearms (3);	\$600,000	1.5 years, 1.4 years, 1.5 years, 2.8 years, 2.8 years, 2.8 years
FY 21-22	*20	**7	Forensic Biology (2); Firearms (1); Drug Chemistry (2); Digital (2)	\$700,000	1.4 years, 1.8 years, 1.9 years, 3.0 years, 3.3 years, 1.8 years, 3.7 years
FY 22-23	11	**2	Drug Chemistry (1); Firearms (1)	\$100,000	6 months, 2.9 years
FY 23-24	11	**1	Forensic Biology (1)	\$100,000	1.9 years
FY 24-25	7	0		\$0	
Totals	75	21		\$2,000,000	Avg tenure: 2.5 years

Note 1: Attrition rate of scientists hired in the last six fiscal years is 28% (21 resignations/75 hires).

With an average tenure of approximately 2.5 years, the \$2.0M of the State's investment had very little return since the training period is between 1 to 2 years.

Note 2: Each time a scientist resigns, the Laboratory spends approximately \$100,000 to train a new employee to fill the vacated position. There is no return on investment during this period as the scientist is not permitted to work criminal evidence until he or she completes a rigorous training program. (Each scientist must complete modules of training which include written and oral examinations, practical exercises, a competency test(s), and a mock trial before training is considered complete.). In FY 2024-2025 the NCSCL trained approximately 19 scientists. This equates to \$1.9M of funds to pay employees who are not yet contributing to the pending caseload. This figure does not include the monetary loss of time set aside by other trained scientists to train the new hires. A recurring salary adjustment fund would help retain employees who have historically left for higher paying salaries and will give the laboratory a larger return on investment.

VI. Fiscal Resources⁹

At the beginning of calendar year 2014, the SCL began participating in Project Foresight through the West Virginia University College of Business & Economics. The purpose of the collaboration was to begin building a detailed picture of the fiscal resources required to operate a forensic laboratory to include determining the cost of each test.

The FORESIGHT Project Report indicates that the SCL is comparable to other like-size, publicly funded state forensic laboratories servicing like-size state populations. Nine of the thirteen investigative areas noted were lower in cost per case compared to the FORESIGHT median cost per case. Note that one item may be investigated and counted in several investigation areas. The cost includes allocations for capital, wages & salary, benefits, overtime & temporary hires, chemicals, reagents, consumables, gases, travel, quality assurance and accreditation, service of instruments, non-instrument repairs and maintenance, equipment leasing, utilities, telecommunications, overhead, and other expenses.

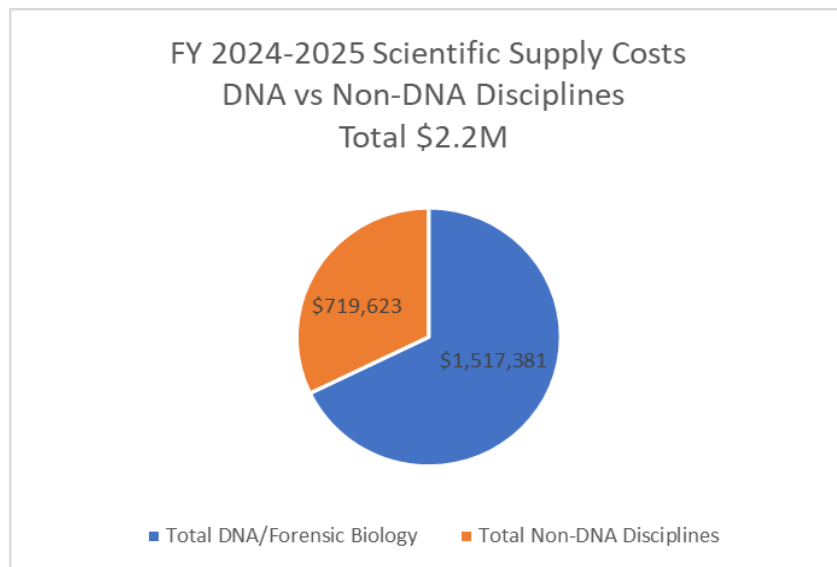
The chart below depicts cost per case at the SCL based on data submitted to the Foresight Project:

Cost per Case				
Area of Investigation	North Carolina State	25th percentile	Median	75th percentile
Blood Alcohol	\$173.52	\$141.14	\$233.65	\$356.97
Crime Scene Investigation	NA	\$1,793.84	\$4,113.62	\$8,560.74
Digital evidence	\$4,362.55	\$1,892.79	\$3,693.42	\$6,192.80
DNA Casework	\$1,504.95	\$1,320.14	\$1,623.57	\$2,417.89
DNA Database	\$226.37	\$53.19	\$90.47	\$160.36
Document Examination	NA	\$3,379.63	\$4,622.42	\$6,251.41
Drugs - Controlled Substances	\$292.03	\$318.20	\$428.21	\$568.17
Evidence Screening & Processing	NA	\$526.72	\$1,083.24	\$1,309.00
Explosives	NA	\$7,968.19	\$10,286.19	\$18,713.45
Fingerprints	\$3,649.76	\$777.75	\$1,258.03	\$1,846.49
Fingerprints Database (including IAFIS)	NA	\$262.14	\$595.58	\$866.54
Fire analysis	\$827.45	\$1,926.55	\$3,083.14	\$4,865.47
Firearms and Ballistics	\$1,834.69	\$1,361.33	\$2,183.20	\$3,500.71
Firearms Database (including NIBIN)	\$55.12	\$74.01	\$177.54	\$325.13
Forensic Pathology	NA	\$1,673.75	\$2,269.77	\$2,730.75
Gun Shot Residue (GSR)	\$893.61	\$2,323.12	\$3,334.33	\$4,565.81
Marks and Impressions	\$3,363.67	\$3,192.62	\$6,537.63	\$8,770.07
Serology/Biology	\$2,908.43	\$887.67	\$1,212.69	\$2,049.40
Toxicology ante-mortem (excluding BAC)	\$1,041.08	\$582.43	\$738.39	\$995.88
Toxicology postmortem (excluding BAC)	NA	\$641.57	\$857.76	\$1,096.61
Trace Evidence	\$4,495.97	\$3,630.65	\$5,090.04	\$6,967.03

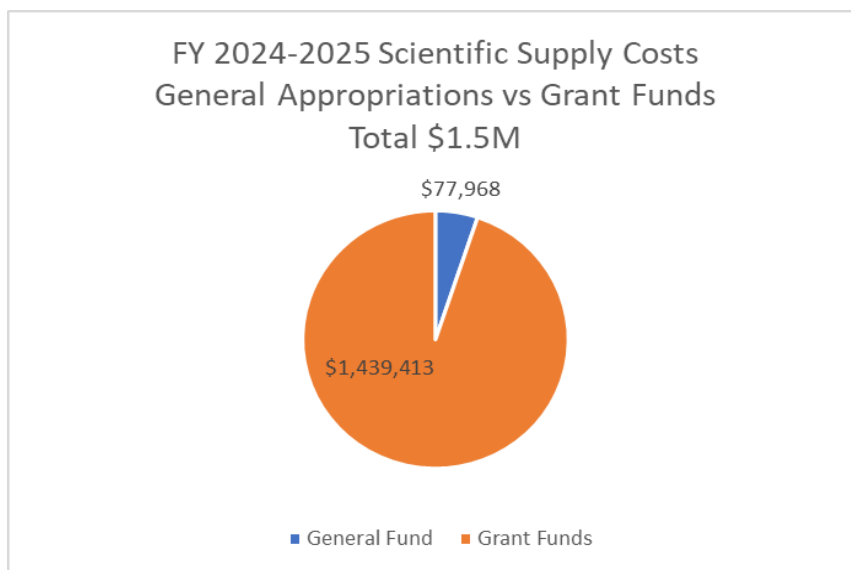
As newly hired scientists completed their training and began work on active criminal cases and as submissions have increased for the last six years, the SCL's supply costs have also increased. During FY

⁹ S.L. 2013-360 (4) also provides that the Annual Crime Laboratory Report contain "[a]n average estimate of the dollar and time cost to perform each type of procedure and analysis performed by the Laboratory." The Crime Laboratory initiated participation in "Project Foresight," operating out of West Virginia University, which compiles such information for forensic laboratories. The data collection deadline for the Project Foresight Annual Report reflects the comparison or cost for fiscal year 2023-24. The next report for fiscal year 2024-25 will be published in May of 2026.

2024-2025, the SCL expended \$2.2M on scientific supplies of which 68% was DNA-related. Specifically, \$1,517,381 was expended on DNA, while \$719,623 was expended on non-DNA disciplines



Of the DNA expenditures, 5% or \$77,968, was from general fund appropriations and the remaining 95% or \$1,439,413, was from grant funding.



During FY 2024-2025, the SCL had active funding from various federal grants ranging from approximately \$6.6M to \$9.6M. Funding was utilized to replace scientific instruments, purchase supplies, and to pay for training for SCL staff to meet mandated certification and accreditation requirements.

The SCL system has approximately \$14.1M in instrumentation throughout all three labs as reflected below:

Raleigh Lab Instrument Total	\$ 8,628,485.32
Triad Lab Instrument Total	\$ 2,146,758.99
Western Lab Instrument Total	\$ 3,329,804.14

Instrument cost varies within the laboratory system from a \$75,000 comparison microscope used in the comparison of Firearms evidence to a \$185,000 genetic analyzer used to separate and analyze DNA in homicides and sexual assaults in Forensic Biology, to a \$355,000 Quadropole Time of Flight (QTOF) Instrument used in DWI analysis in Toxicology.

In addition to instrumentation cost, the SCL paid approximately \$1.8M for maintenance contracts for instrumentation in FY 24-25.

VII. Expansion

The SCL continued to expand its services, replace outdated equipment, and conduct significant internal system and external stakeholder analysis to determine the future needs within each of the disciplines during FY 24-25.

The Drug Chemistry and Toxicology disciplines continue to encounter complex opioids such as fentanyl and fentanyl-based analogs, as well as xylazine and nitazenes. These types of drugs require extensive and complicated testing that may lengthen turnaround times in some cases. The SCL continues to monitor new and emerging compounds as well as new technologies for testing in these disciplines. The SCL has reduced lead times in the disciplines of Drug Chemistry and Toxicology BAC testing to under 90 days.

Firearms analysis is currently offered only in the Raleigh laboratory. At the time of this report, there are four trained examiners working cases for the state of NC. There are; however, seven trainees in the two-year Firearms Examiner training program to become fully trained examiners. Additionally, two vacant Firearms Examiner positions currently have a candidate in process for hire. Expansion of this discipline back to our Western laboratory is being evaluated once all trainees are qualified and working cases. Additionally, the Firearms discipline continues to work on the validation of the 3D virtual microscopy unit purchased to aid in the analysis of firearm examinations.

Rapid DNA is a term used to describe the fully automated process of developing a DNA profile from a reference sample (mouth swab) in 1-2 hours without the need for a DNA laboratory or human intervention. Some law enforcement agencies in the state have already purchased these systems and others have interest in doing so. The SCL serves as the State level administrator for access to CODIS. The SCL has purchased a Rapid DNA system and is finalizing the validation of the instrument. This will allow the SCL to produce policies, guidelines, and training procedures in accordance with emerging mandated federal standards for accredited DNA testing laboratories. In order for law enforcement agencies who have purchased Rapid systems to utilize the power of CODIS, it will be necessary to for those agencies to become accredited under the SCL's accreditation. More information will be distributed in the near future to all stakeholders.

VIII. Conclusion

The SCL continues to provide quality and timely forensic analyses, impartial expert testimony, and stakeholder engagement.

After a remote surveillance assessment by the SCL's accrediting body in FY 24-25, the laboratory


continues to maintain accreditation. This marks the laboratory's thirty seventh consecutive year of accreditation. Forensic services provided by the State Crime Lab continue to meet the highest quality standards possible.

Given the competitive job market, the SCL needs to remain competitive in salary offers. This will allow us to better retain and recruit scientists. We are respectfully requesting a recurring salary adjustment fund be appropriated to address recruitment and retention needs for the Forensic Scientist classification series. A recurring salary adjustment fund will allow us to offer more competitive salaries thus filling current vacancies faster and facilitate retention of forensic scientists so that we can continue to meet the State's public safety needs.

The SCL continues to partner with DOJ IT, the Government Data Analytics Center (feasa), and the SAS Institute to automate the process for DNA Database sample expungement notifications, stop work notifications, toxicology blood destruction notifications, and CODIS hit follow-up. The finalized scope of work for the project has been developed. The cost of building the portal with automation is almost \$1.8 million.

Looking forward, the State Crime Laboratory will continue to seek innovative ways to reduce turnaround times for casework, research and invest in technology, and work to expand training opportunities for scientists.

Respectfully submitted October 1, 2025,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amanda Thompson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Amanda Thompson
Director, North Carolina State Crime Laboratory

Appendix A - Submissions by County

County	7/1/2022 to 6/30/2023		7/1/2023 to 6/30/2024		7/1/2024 to 6/30/2025	
	<u>Submissions</u>	<u>Items Submitted</u>	<u>Submissions</u>	<u>Items Submitted</u>	<u>Submissions</u>	<u>Items Submitted</u>
Alamance	479	710	562	874	633	962
Alexander	149	238	132	160	112	190
Alleghany	82	98	48	69	58	82
Anson	62	136	65	105	72	229
Ashe	138	160	175	226	142	213
Avery	82	113	95	133	107	153
Beaufort	360	453	396	617	315	440
Bertie	37	86	69	131	44	116
Bladen	59	93	37	79	28	59
Brunswick	831	1131	686	934	620	888
Buncombe	1675	2542	1650	2731	1646	2619
Burke	420	518	501	662	507	635
Cabarrus	900	1362	857	1166	995	1614
Caldwell	411	545	373	477	355	485
Camden	52	86	48	82	37	62
Carteret	360	599	366	507	379	513
Caswell	63	92	78	108	70	99
Catawba	734	935	970	1363	898	1386
Chatham	119	220	180	313	121	168
Cherokee	276	411	262	416	276	387
Chowan	30	75	38	52	28	53
Clay	59	96	59	92	53	114
Cleveland	714	1553	805	1780	670	1108
Columbus	273	428	282	552	136	346
Craven	667	1026	682	1146	636	1378

7/1/2022 to 6/30/2023**7/1/2023 to 6/30/2024****7/1/2024 to 6/30/2025**

County	<u>Submissions</u>	<u>Items Submitted</u>	<u>Submissions</u>	<u>Items Submitted</u>	<u>Submissions</u>	<u>Items Submitted</u>
Cumberland	960	1594	860	1411	964	1810
Currituck	78	93	163	199	133	184
Dare	256	351	272	347	212	272
Davidson	632	857	636	834	668	909
Davie	129	220	153	241	151	261
Duplin	347	461	301	415	229	347
Durham	1215	1163	755	960	707	1141
Edgecombe	362	652	409	740	340	614
Forsyth	883	999	595	755	437	809
Franklin	290	455	434	653	302	465
Gaston	1805	2834	1689	2598	1766	2685
Gates	11	15	17	25	16	25
Graham	59	87	60	82	147	175
Granville	155	234	149	249	201	352
Greene	52	90	73	104	72	109
Guilford	1389	1993	1303	1940	1103	1809
Halifax	288	429	212	382	192	330
Harnett	297	426	363	520	370	582
Haywood	665	1038	554	847	491	745
Henderson	740	1030	735	1047	622	871
Hertford	132	605	87	193	104	280
Hoke	271	746	264	650	252	676
Hyde	1	1	17	26	16	22
Iredell	494	720	574	854	526	616
Jackson	340	484	342	522	371	528
Johnston	578	834	717	1028	707	1097
Jones	44	75	66	113	61	89
Lee	333	528	268	468	316	641

7/1/2022 to 6/30/2023

7/1/2023 to 6/30/2024

7/1/2024 to 6/30/2025

County	<u>Submissions</u>	<u>Items Submitted</u>	<u>Submissions</u>	<u>Items Submitted</u>	<u>Submissions</u>	<u>Items Submitted</u>
Lenoir	520	1109	459	896	361	1018
Lincoln	597	834	624	781	636	809
Macon	227	336	259	359	248	341
Madison	95	112	125	170	74	112
Martin	216	509	290	543	259	496
McDowell	282	450	324	488	371	546
Mecklenburg	454	632	382	514	426	522
Mitchell	56	67	47	58	42	54
Montgomery	132	250	124	254	109	216
Moore	568	895	527	809	481	663
Nash	445	555	512	602	532	753
New Hanover	533	977	469	649	408	794
Northampton	48	84	68	118	88	147
Onslow	772	1106	731	1163	760	1357
Orange	401	641	298	498	357	654
Pamlico	126	172	159	186	73	95
Pasquotank	169	389	161	343	153	378
Pender	141	251	193	332	141	245
Perquimans	55	84	54	358	40	218
Person	225	592	235	461	230	413
Pitt	384	709	422	747	304	644
Polk	142	189	150	215	117	191
Randolph	819	1137	742	979	792	1100
Richmond	485	705	278	701	244	508
Robeson	506	931	339	684	269	764
Rockingham	500	680	495	684	459	654
Rowan	778	1702	751	1105	669	1078
Rutherford	607	850	388	500	455	589

7/1/2022 to 6/30/2023**7/1/2023 to 6/30/2024****7/1/2024 to 6/30/2025**

<u>County</u>	<u>Submissions</u>	<u>Items Submitted</u>	<u>Submissions</u>	<u>Items Submitted</u>	<u>Submissions</u>	<u>Items Submitted</u>
Sampson	427	967	416	750	434	646
Scotland	195	341	170	354	166	339
Stanly	400	488	293	421	364	507
Stokes	139	175	116	168	102	137
Surry	331	504	406	547	466	614
Swain	119	162	60	85	98	142
Transylvania	130	182	169	240	155	210
Tyrrell	29	38	14	19	18	20
Union	664	838	698	936	400	563
Vance	291	469	239	330	230	462
Wake	733	920	775	742	357	632
Warren	40	62	77	122	60	167
Washington	32	43	26	65	24	47
Watauga	270	349	199	235	160	230
Wayne	884	1575	828	1585	860	1455
Wilkes	331	448	317	485	309	476
Wilson	685	1176	499	887	441	758
Yadkin	182	288	243	345	166	224
Yancey	88	144	50	71	70	98
Tribal*	142	209	147	215	117	195
TOTAL	38,233	59,046	36,832	56,777	34,509	56,024

*Tribal data for “submissions” and “items submitted” is new to this appendix for the 2024-2025 report.