

Report Highlights



Forensic Services Section DNA Evidence Testing

Department of Public Safety • Colorado Bureau of Investigation
Performance Audit • February 2026 • 2552P

OFFICE OF THE STATE AUDITOR

C O L O R A D O

Key Concern

Since February 2025, CBI has made substantial progress in reducing the time it takes to provide DNA testing results. However, at the time of the audit, CBI had not reached its DNA testing timeliness goals and we identified several risk areas and information systems issues that could reduce CBI's ability to achieve and maintain timely DNA testing.

Key Findings

- CBI's average time to complete DNA testing for sexual assault cases decreased from 450 days in June 2025 to 190 days in January 2026, a 58 percent reduction, but still substantially above CBI's internal 90-day goal and statute's 60-day goal.
- CBI's plan to address the timeliness of its testing results, which includes outsourcing about 1,900 sexual assault cases to private labs, and increasing the number of in-house scientists it has available to complete DNA tests, appears reasonable. However, CBI is still vulnerable to several risks that could impact its ability to complete timely testing, including staff turnover and extended leave, and increased testing submissions from law enforcement agencies. Further, with the number of scientists at CBI labs increasing, CBI may need additional staff to manage the scientists and provide training.
- CBI could improve its information systems used for DNA testing by assessing options to address several issues we identified, which included delays caused by software compatibility issues and older equipment that can take CBI staff away from their testing duties, and case management system limitations that reduce management's ability to pull data to monitor operational trends and performance.

Background

- The Forensic Services Section within CBI is responsible for testing evidence, including DNA evidence, submitted by law enforcement agencies in Colorado. CBI operates four labs across the state and in Fiscal Year 2026, the Forensic Services Section was appropriated 139 full-time equivalent staff, 39 of which were scientists specializing in DNA testing.
- CBI's DNA testing times, including for sexual assault cases, increased substantially in Calendar Years 2023 through 2024, largely due to CBI's need to review a large volume of cases after the discovery of alleged misconduct by a former CBI DNA scientist.

Audit Recommendations Made	Agency Responses		
	Agree	Partially Agree	Disagree
8	8	0	0