



The author(s) shown below used Federal funding provided by the U.S. Department of Justice to prepare the following resource:

Document Title: Efficiency in Processing Sexual Assault Kits
in Crime Laboratories and Law
Enforcement Agencies

Author(s): Kevin J. Strom, Ph.D., Josh A. Hendrix,
William J. Parish, Ph.D., Ph.D., Patricia
Melton, Ph.D.

Document Number: 250682

Date Received: August 2017

Award Number: 2013-NE-BX-0006

This resource has not been published by the U.S. Department of Justice. This resource is being made publically available through the Office of Justice Programs' National Criminal Justice Reference Service.

Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

June 2017

Efficiency in Processing Sexual Assault Kits in Crime Laboratories and Law Enforcement Agencies

Final Report

Prepared for

Cathy Girouard

National Institute of Justice
810 7th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20531
Phone: (202) 353-9244
Cathy.Girouard@usdoj.gov

This project was supported by Award Number 2013-NE-BX-0006 awarded by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The points of view in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Prepared by

RTI International

3040 E. Cornwallis Rd
Post Office Box 12194
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709-2194

Kevin J. Strom, PhD

Policing, Security, and Investigative Science

William J. Parish, PhD

Behavioral Health Economics Program

Josh A. Hendrix, PhD

Policing, Security & Investigative Science

Patricia Melton, PhD

Center for Forensic Sciences



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section	Page
Study Overview	1
Research Questions	1
Study Design and Methods	2
Surveys	2
Site Visits.....	2
Analytical Approaches and Findings	3
Submission and Testing Rates	3
Production Functions.....	4
Case Closure Rates	6
Perceptions of Efficient Practices	6
Conclusion and Recommendations	9
Appendix	11

Study Overview

Unsubmitted sexual assault kits (SAKs) that accrue in U.S. law enforcement agencies (LEAs) have been the subject of increasing attention for the past decade, as have *untested* SAKs pending analysis in crime laboratories. The field needs a research-informed approach to identify the most efficient practices for addressing the submission of SAKs in LEAs and the testing of SAKs in laboratories. This approach would also determine whether specific policies or characteristics of a jurisdiction result in more efficient processing outcomes. This mixed-methods study examines intra- and interagency dynamics associated with SAK processing efficiency in a linked sample of crime laboratories ($N = 145$) and LEAs ($N = 321$). Relying on responses to a national survey of laboratories and a matched sample of LEAs, researchers at RTI International used regression analysis and stochastic frontier modeling to assess how labor and capital inputs, evidence policies, evidence management systems, and models of cross-agency coordination affect SAK processing efficiency. Semistructured interviews with personnel from forensic laboratories, LEAs, and prosecutor's offices in six jurisdictions were used to elaborate on critical themes relating to SAK processing efficiency.

Research Questions

Research questions are organized into four sections:

Submission and Testing Rates addresses whether laboratory or LEA characteristics are associated with efficiency at laboratory, LEA, and jurisdiction levels and includes one research question:

- What laboratory or LEA characteristics (e.g., size of agency, use of technology) are associated with SAK testing or submission rates?

Production Functions estimates the productivity of laboratory and LEA processing inputs and provides each unit with a technical efficiency score. Research questions include these:

- How productive are laboratory DNA processing inputs and LEA labor inputs?
- Do resource utilization inefficiencies contribute to the accumulation of SAKs in LEAs or laboratories? If so, what would be the impact if all inefficiencies were eliminated?

Case Closure Rates investigates relationships between LEA submission rates and case closures and between laboratory testing rates and case closures. This section has the following research question:

- Do testing or submission rates affect the number of cases that can be closed?

Perceptions of Efficient Practices examines qualities or practices of agencies that are perceived to enhance efficiency. This section includes the following research question:

- From the perspective of LEAs, laboratories, and prosecuting attorneys, what qualities or practices are most important for efficiency in SAK processing?

Study Design and Methods

To address the aforementioned research questions, RTI project staff conducted a 2-year mixed-methods study in three phases:

- In **Phase I**, a national survey was administered to state, county, and municipal laboratories that conduct biological forensic analysis, and an additional survey was given to a sample of LEAs that submit SAK evidence to these laboratories. Questions were designed to assess SAK outputs (e.g., submission/testing rates) and inputs (e.g., labor, capital, policies, interagency communication).
- In **Phase II**, production functions were estimated to examine effects of labor and capital inputs, in addition to policies, management systems, and cross-agency coordination on efficiency.
- In **Phase III**, six jurisdictions were recruited for site visits, and qualitative methods were used to understand how LEAs, laboratories, and prosecutors implement practices that affect efficiency.

Surveys

The project team developed separate surveys of crime laboratories and an associated linked sample of LEAs (surveys provided in the appendix). The sampling plan began with a national survey of state and local crime laboratories that conduct biological forensic analyses ($n = 222$). Laboratories were drawn from the Bureau of Justice Statistics' 2009 Census of Publicly Funded Forensic Crime Laboratories (CPFFCL). The final response rate was 67% (147 laboratories). The second step was to select a sample of LEAs from the population of LEAs submitting forensic evidence to these responding laboratories, with the goal of sampling four LEAs per laboratory ($n = 588$). The population of LEAs (from the Uniform Crime Reports database) was matched with the sample of jurisdictions reported by the laboratory agency, and a merged list was created with both the sampled laboratories and the population of LEAs submitting to those laboratories. The merged list was used as the LEA sampling frame from which lead letters and reminders were developed and sent to each agency's chief. A total of 321 LEAs responded to the survey.

Site Visits

The project team conducted site visits with six jurisdictions that included a LEA, its corresponding laboratory, and a prosecutor's office. To select sites, the LEA sample was restricted to agencies with 100 or more FTE sworn officers because smaller LEAs typically receive very few SAKs annually and we wanted to prioritize jurisdictions that process a larger number of SAKs across the system. Jurisdictions were then categorized into one of five groups by efficiency and policy: *Low Efficiency, Low Policy*; *Low Efficiency, Mixed Policy*; *Mixed Efficiency, Mixed Policy*; *High Efficiency, Mixed Policy*; and *High Efficiency, High Policy*. Classifications were based on the number of SAKs the LEA submitted to a laboratory for testing relative to the total number it received in the past year, the number of SAKs the

laboratory tested relative to the total number it received in the past year, and the number of formal policies in place at the laboratory and LEA. Two sites were recruited from the *high efficiency, high policy group*, and one site was recruited for each of the other five groups.

Separate semistructured interview guides (included in the appendix) were developed for LEAs, laboratories, and prosecutor's offices. Questions were designed to gain information regarding characteristics, factors, and processes that are perceived to be important for SAK processing efficiency. Interview teams consisted of two interviewers who rotated the roles of lead interviewer and notetaker. On average, sessions lasted 2 hours. With one exception, agency interviews were conducted separately. In one jurisdiction, a prosecutor was interviewed in the presence of the LEA and the laboratory (at their request).

Analytical Approaches and Findings

This section summarizes key findings and describes the analytical approaches used for each area of interest.

Submission and Testing Rates

Highly efficient LEAs were defined as having *submission rates* (i.e., SAKs submitted for testing/SAKs received) greater than or equal to 80%; highly efficient laboratories were defined as those with *testing rates* (i.e., number of SAKS tested/SAKs received) greater than or equal to 80%. Highly efficient jurisdictions were defined as those in which both the LEA and its corresponding laboratory were previously classified as highly efficient. Multivariate logistic regression was used to predict the odds of membership in highly efficient groups, using LEA and laboratory characteristics as predictors. The decision to use an 80% threshold was based on our intention of operationalizing high efficiency with the highest possible submission and testing rates while securing enough variation in the outcomes to run models that included both laboratories and LEAs. Higher thresholds were explored, but 80% is both a high rate of submission/testing while also providing a sufficient amount of statistical power.

LEA characteristics included number of fulltime equivalent (FTE) sworn officers, budget, presence of a sex crimes unit, perceived barriers to submission (e.g., inability of laboratory to produce timely results; uncertainty regarding where SAKs should be sent for analysis, etc.), method used to obtain SAKs from medical facilities (e.g., officer collects the SAK following the examination; officer waits for notification from the medical facility, etc.), frequency of interagency communication, presence of an interagency evidence tracking system, and types and numbers of formal policies in place. *Laboratory characteristics* included number of analysts, number of complete equipment sets (e.g., quantitative PCR thermal cyclers, electrophoresis detection systems, genetic analyzers, etc.), use of robotic extraction or amplification systems (or both), membership in a multilaboratory system,

presence of a case manager, recent implementation of new policies, recent purchases of new equipment, outsourcing of cases, presence of a backlog reduction program, receipt of funds for such a program, assistance to other laboratories to reduce their backlog, presence of a data management system, type of jurisdiction served, interagency communication, and types and numbers of policies in place.

Are any laboratory or LEA characteristics associated with testing or submission rates?

LEA efficiency:

LEA variables associated with a higher likelihood of high LEA efficiency include the following: having a 100% submission policy; having a higher number of formal policies in place; perceiving no barriers to submission; and using a method to obtain SAKs that does not involve officers waiting for notification from the medical facility.

Laboratory efficiency:

Laboratory variables associated with a higher likelihood of high laboratory efficiency include having an evidence acceptance policy; having a policy to test all items; and not having policies related to case removal, 100% analysis, or mandatory submission of standards from consensual partners.

Jurisdictional-level efficiency:

Three laboratory variables were associated with high jurisdictional efficiency: having a no-suspect policy, having a higher number of analysts, and being a part of a multilaboratory system. Two LEA policies were associated with high jurisdictional efficiency: having a policy to submit 100% of all SAKs and having a prioritization policy based on time elapsed.

Production Functions

Research questions for this section relate to the productivity of key laboratory and LEA processing inputs and the overall technical efficiency levels of LEAs, laboratories, and jurisdictions. Dependent variables are the number of SAKs submitted by LEAs and the number of SAKs tested by laboratories. Our empirical analysis of SAK processing is organized around the following question: Are accumulations of SAKs driven by technical *inefficiencies in the management* of input resources (i.e., DNA analysts, equipment, etc.) or by an *insufficient level* of input resources? Stochastic frontier is used to identify the production frontier, or the maximum number of SAKs that could be processed given the productive resources available to each unit, and to assess whether the distribution of unit residuals is substantially left-skewed. Left-skewing suggests that the units are systematically producing fewer SAKs than the resources described by the estimated production function would allow them to produce.

How productive are DNA processing inputs and LEA labor inputs?

Results suggest both that SAK testing is highly labor intensive and that analysts in the laboratory are highly productive. The number of SAKs tested increases around 43% for every 100% increase in analysts. Controlling for the number of SAKs received also has an impact; the top two thirds of laboratories, by the number of SAKs received, process 115 (208%) more SAKs than laboratories in the lower third. Case removal policies are associated with a 59% reduction in the number of SAKs processed. With respect to the level of technical efficiency, laboratories are not processing at their production frontier. Laboratories are, on average, testing fewer than 70% of the SAKs they could be, given their available resources. Formal testing provides evidence that the estimated level of underproduction is systematic and statistically significant.

Submitting SAKs is also labor intensive, and sworn personnel are highly productive. The number of SAKs submitted by LEAs increases by about 25% for every 100% increase in the number of FTE sworn officers. A higher number of SAKs received is associated with a larger number of SAKs submitted; LEAs in the top two thirds of the distribution submit around 100 (200%) more SAKs than LEAs in the lower third. LEAs in which notification is required prior to collecting the SAK submit 20%–24% fewer SAKs. Likewise, LEAs that reported submission barriers submit approximately 35% fewer SAKs. Stochastic frontier results indicate that a fairly substantial amount of inefficiency across LEAs; LEAs are submitting fewer than 60% of the SAKs that are technically possible, given the level of input resources and estimated productivity of those input resources. Formal statistical significance testing confirms systematic underperformance across LEAs.

Do resource utilization inefficiencies contribute to the accumulation of SAKs in LEAs or laboratories? If so, what would be the impact if all inefficiencies were eliminated?

Technical inefficiencies explain a substantial portion of a laboratory's SAK testing backlog. However, even under perfect technical efficiency, slightly more than 50% of laboratories would still have a testing backlog. Among these laboratories, operating at perfect technical efficiency would have eliminated only 43%–54% of their testing backlogs, on average. These findings suggest that underperformance by laboratories is attributable partially to technical inefficiencies but also to insufficient resources, given that testing backlogs cannot be eliminated for many laboratories even if they were able to operate with perfect efficiency. Alternatively, technical inefficiencies explain a relatively small portion of LEA submission backlogs. Even under perfect technical efficiency, fewer than 15% of agencies would have been able to eliminate their SAK submission backlogs. Among those agencies, operating at perfect technical efficiency would have eliminated only about 32%–33% of their submission backlogs, on average. Taken together, this evidence suggests that LEA submission backlogs can be explained by the combination of both technical inefficiencies and a lack of resources.

Case Closure Rates

The relationship between characteristics of LEAs/laboratories and LEA case closure rates was assessed using multivariate logistic regression models. Case Closure Rate is defined as the number of forcible rape cases that remain open divided by the total number of forcible rape cases received. A dichotomous variable was created to serve as the dependent variable in which 0 = *case closure rate below 80%* and 1 = *case closure rate of 80% or higher*.

Do testing or submission rates affect the number of cases that can be closed?

Results indicate two noteworthy findings. First, the odds of LEAs' having high closure rates are more than 300% higher for agencies with a 100% evidence submission policy than for those that do not have such a policy. Second, the odds of LEAs' having high closure rates are around 500% higher for agencies that prioritize SAK submissions on the basis of time elapsed than for agencies that do not have this type of prioritization policy.

Perceptions of Efficient Practices

Open-ended responses provided on the surveys were analyzed to enhance our understanding of *why* certain characteristics or policies have an impact on efficiency. These included responses on the most important factors that were perceived to have influenced SAK processing efficiency (for LEAs) or testing efficiency (for laboratories). Eighty-eight percent of laboratory respondents and 95% of LEA respondents provided an answer. During site visits, respondents were asked to describe important factors for efficient SAK processing, as well as *why* they believed those qualities to have a meaningful impact.

The responses for the open-ended survey questions and interview data were systematically coded using a three-prong process: (1) responses were coded to identify themes, critical content, and underlying ideas; (2) similar types of information were grouped together into thematic categories; and (3) different ideas and themes were related to one another. Within each response, the analyst identified recurring words or ideas and actively sought out ideas that were not anticipated ("rich points") or that were strongly illustrative of the respondent's overarching orientation toward the questions.

What qualities or practices are perceived to be the most important for efficiency in SAK processing?

Open-ended survey questions

The most common responses from laboratories regarding factors that impact efficiency were, *adequate numbers of staff or sufficient numbers of trained/ specialized staff; the quality of information provided with the submission; interagency communication; the time-intensive nature of screening, technical review, and other laboratory processes; and the timeliness of SAK testing requests*. The most common responses from LEAs included the

following: *the quality of evidence collection, including the timeliness of the exam; laboratory processing delays; intra- and interagency communication; victim cooperation; submitting SAKs in a timely manner; and adequate numbers of staff.*

Site visits

During site visit interviews, respondents described critical factors for efficient SAK processing. With few exceptions (e.g., the importance of staffing), factors emphasized are unique from those most strongly correlated with efficiency in quantitative models.

Gatekeepers, decision-makers, and service providers: The power structure between LEAs, laboratories, and prosecutors and its impact on SAK processing efficiency

Respondents alluded to a power structure that exists between LEAs, laboratories, and prosecuting attorneys and that may have an acute effect on SAK processing.

- If the laboratory is acting as the “gatekeeper,” it sets the standard for what will be accepted for testing, providing little negotiation or collaboration with outside agencies. Therefore, a LEA submit-all SAK policy becomes limited by constraints set by the laboratory. The scenario may be more common when laboratories have established rules for evidence submission.
- In other jurisdictions, laboratory personnel perceived the LEA to be the key decision-maker and described frustrations with being treated like “service providers” with no voice. In two laboratories, concern was expressed regarding their lack of input in the decision for the LEA to implement a submit-all SAK policy, despite their limited resources.

The implementation of submit-all policies should be considered from a multidisciplinary approach, providing the opportunity for all agencies to discuss alternatives to case process, workflows, and capacity and thereby deriving a progress plan sufficient to meet the policy objectives.

Integration

The absence of a team-oriented mentality and failure to integrate various stakeholders into the investigation can have a negative impact on the jurisdiction’s ability to handle cases efficiently.

- Laboratory personnel who are not engaged with decisions at the jurisdictional level regarding SAK case management in general felt demoralized. By incorporating the laboratory into the case process through improved communication, updates and testing feedback enhances emotional investments and ultimately improves job satisfaction and performance levels.

- Themes related to integration and emotional buy-in also emerged during interviews with prosecuting attorneys. One office made an explicit effort to eliminate what was previously an “attorney-centric” approach by bringing paralegals and assistants into weekly case discussions, therefore building a sense of investment and belonging.

In general, across agencies, when people feel invested in the process and part of the team, performances, sustainability, and morale are improved.

Communication, revolving doors, and social capital: The significance of staffing and staff retention

Whereas measures related to interagency communication were not statistically associated with efficiency in our quantitative models, respondents at site visits believed that strong communication is critical and often mentioned it first when asked to identify factors that contribute to SAK processing efficiency.

- Respondents emphasized the importance of recruiting personnel with strong communication skills but also recognized that communication skills can be improved through concerted efforts.
- Multidisciplinary team meetings and open communication between agencies can assist personnel in understanding each other’s roles and responsibilities.
- Informal meetings for facilitating communication and cultivating personal relationships may also be of value because they foster a team-oriented mentality between the agencies. These informal meetings provide an opportunity to ask questions and provide a collaborative space supporting transparency.

Staff retention

Respondents identified staff retention as a critical component of strong inter- and intra-agency communication. The importance of staff retention was commonly attributed to the development of a common language, personal relationships, and an informal system of accountability.

- Longevity results in individuals who understand the laboratory language and therefore are more comfortable communicating with the laboratory. External agencies agree that improved communication with the laboratory streamlines processes that ultimately move cases along.
- Stability in staffing supports a network of personal relationships that improve communication and enable the jurisdiction to function more efficiently. The social capital that develops when people work together over extended periods of time has clear productivity benefits and having a personal relationship allows stakeholders to hold one another accountable.

- The physical proximity between personnel can affect communication and the sense of camaraderie. When agencies are housed in the same building, or very close by, personal bonds and communication remain strong. Providing the opportunity for facetime and spontaneous conversation maintains positive interactions.
- Sustainability of staffing has positive implications for SAK case processing. Respondents stated that staff turnover had negative repercussions for communication and efficiency. In addition, the length of time required for new personnel to be hired, trained, and to gain the experience to effectively work these cases negatively impacts case productivity across all agencies.

"Some people just burn out"

An important subtheme related to staff burnout emerged within larger themes of communication, staff retention, and social capital.

- Staff turnover feeds into a toxic cycle: staff reductions increase workloads for personnel who stay, indirectly promoting stress, propensities to burnout, and additional turnover. Individuals may harbor an incessant feeling of "not being caught up" resulting in a deep sense of fatigue that is not easily overcome.
- The gruesome nature of sexual assault crimes, paired with frustration toward the criminal justice system in bringing justice to victims can contribute to a sense of hopelessness and powerlessness that jeopardizes staff retention.

It is critical for people who work on sexual assault cases to develop skills related to stress management and positive health management. Agencies can internally address these issues by providing "check in" meetings to discuss stress levels and issues with particularly difficult cases. Informal systems that promote social bonding and camaraderie can also offset the emotional implications of working sexual assault cases. A mentor or partner system is also effective as it prevents people from feeling isolated, a contributor to staff turnover.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Unprecedented attention has been given to improving the ability of U.S. jurisdictions to process SAKs, including to collect, submit, and test sexual assault evidence. The goals of this study were to understand how efficiently LEAs and laboratories are processing SAKs and to identify factors or characteristics most strongly associated with efficiency. Results showed that, on average, LEAs and laboratories are not processing SAKs at the highest level of efficiency possible. For both types of agencies, but especially LEAs, insufficient resources are a key barrier that contributes to underperformance even if these agencies were capable of operating under perfect technical efficiency. Staffing issues and agency efficiency are deeply intertwined; adding law enforcement and laboratory staff can significantly increase the numbers of SAKs that are submitted and tested. Put more simply, investments in hiring,

training, and retention for staff that collect, process, and analyze SAK evidence are what is most needed to create a more efficient national system (see the graphic in the appendix). Furthermore, as jurisdictions create more capacity for SAK processing they must also develop effective means for investigating and prosecuting the sexual assault cases stemming from associated SAK evidence.

Another critical set of findings concerns SAK policies that dictate submission and analysis protocols. U.S. jurisdictions that were highly efficient in both submitting *and* testing SAKs were more likely to contain LEAs with submit-all SAK and SAK prioritization policies. Highly efficient jurisdictions were also more likely to include laboratories with no-suspect policies. Importantly, law enforcement policies that dictate either a submit-all or prioritization process for submission also led to significantly higher case clearance rates for sexual assault offenses. Although interagency communication was not shown to have a statistically significant effect on efficiency, respondents from laboratories and LEAs believed that it is a necessary and critical component of efficiency within jurisdictions.

In addition to the aforementioned findings, the following key observations were identified as overarching factors that strongly affect SAK processing. These findings relate to policy, resources, staffing, and communication. The recommendations below incorporate promising practices observed within the study.

- 1)** Sustainable staffing is formulated on positive integration and communication, workload capacity considerations, and positive health management.
Recommendation: establish formal and informal interactions that build a team-like mentality; provide opportunities to promote improved communication; and facilitate understanding of roles, responsibilities, and expertise.
- 2)** Effective interagency communication improves SAK processing.
Recommendation: create a collaborative environment and implement practices that promote and develop quality, transparent, and timely interagency communication.
- 3)** SAK processing is negatively affected by inefficient use of available resources and insufficient resources.
Recommendation: develop a holistic, systemwide SAK process map that identifies barriers to efficiency; establish policies that address staffing and technology deficiencies; and identify alternative workflows to streamline core processes.
- 4)** Overall jurisdictional efficiency is negatively affected when a single agency dictates SAK submission policy.
Recommendation: policies pertaining to SAK processing should be derived using an interagency multidisciplinary approach so that all individual agency considerations are addressed.

Appendix



Sexual Assault Kit Processing Efficiency in Law Enforcement Agencies and Crime Laboratories



LEA Efficiency

- Budget
- Sex Crimes Unit
- Perceived Barriers to Submission
- Method to Obtain SAKs from Medical Facility

Jurisdictional

What influences efficiency?

- Types and Number of Policies in Place
- Staffing (Analysts, Sworn FTE)
- Interagency Communication
- Presence of Interagency Data Management System

Crime Laboratory Efficiency

- Number and Types of Equipment
- Use of Robotic Systems
- Presence of a Case Manager
- Type of Jurisdiction Served

Study Design

Phase 1: Surveyed 145 crime laboratories and 321 LEAs

Phase 2: Matched crime laboratories and LEAs

Phase 3: Site visits to 6 crime laboratories and corresponding LEAs and prosecutors

Technical Efficiency

LEAs

Even if all agency resources (e.g., staff, equipment) were used to their fullest potential, about **75%** of LEAs would still have a backlog.

Crime Laboratory

Even if all laboratory resources (e.g., staff, equipment) were used to their fullest potential, about **50%** of laboratories would still have a SAK testing backlog.

Findings suggest that these backlogs can be explained by the combination of technical inefficiencies and a lack of resources.

Staffing and Resources

LEAs

The number of SAKs submitted increases by about **25%** for every **100%** increase in the number of FTE sworn officers.

Crime Laboratory

The number of SAKs tested increases by about **43%** for every **100%** increase in analysts.

Jurisdictions cannot create sustainable and efficient SAK processing without investing in LEA and crime laboratory staff.

SAK Processing Policies

LEAs

100% submission policies and higher # of formal policies are associated with high submission efficiency among LEAs.

Crime Laboratory

Evidence acceptance policies are associated with high testing efficiency among laboratories.

Agency policies directly affect partner agencies and should not be created in a silo.

Recommendations

Invest in staff hiring and retention



Develop a system-wide process map



Develop interagency multidisciplinary policies



The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) provided funding (Grant No. 2013-NE-BX-0006) to examine and identify the most efficient practices for addressing the submission of sexual assault kits (SAKs) in law enforcement agencies (LEAs) and testing of SAKs in crime laboratories.

NIJ Survey of Law Enforcement Sexual Assault Kit (SAK) Processing Efficiency

Please confirm your laboratory's name and contact information:

Agency Name: _____

Agency Address: _____

Point of Contact: _____

Agency Chief/Sheriff: _____

Agency Chief/Sheriff phone: _____

Agency Chief/Sheriff email: _____

Does your Agency collect sexual assault evidence?

Yes No

Does your Agency submit sexual assault evidence for processing?

Yes No

Please enter the name of the person who completed this survey:

Phone Number: () _____ - _____ **ext:** _____

Please enter the job title and rank of the person who is completing this survey:

Please enter the name of the direct supervisor of the person who is completing this survey:

Direct Supervisor's Phone Number: () _____ - _____ **ext:** _____

Instructions:

Please complete the following survey online at <https://surveys.rti.org/s3/SAK-Processing> using the unique password stated in the lead letter or fax the completed survey to 919-541-7250. If you do not have exact numbers for some of the questions, estimates are acceptable.

Any questions? Please contact Martin at RTI 1-800-334-8571 Ext. 25853 or e-mail Martin at mblanchette@rti.org

Part A. General

- A1. Please indicate the current number of authorized sworn personnel for your agency (authorized manpower), excluding sworn members that may be allocated to the forensic laboratory section. Full-time employees are those regularly scheduled for 35 hours or more per week.
- [] FULL-TIME
[] PART-TIME
- A2. What jurisdiction does your agency serve? (e.g., name of city, metropolitan area, county, state, college/university)
- _____
- A3. What is the approximate size (population) of the jurisdiction served?
- _____
- A4. During the fiscal year 2013, what was the total administrative budget allocated for your law enforcement agency? If you track funding primarily based on calendar year, enter values based on calendar year 2013.
- \$_____.
- A5. Does your agency have a unit which specifically investigates crimes of a sexual nature (including, but no limited to sexual assault)? This unit may consist of an individual officer.
- A5a.
- YES
 NO
- A5b. How many employees work in that unit?
- [] FULL-TIME
[] PART-TIME
- A5c. Please indicate the number of sworn and civilian employees work in that unit.
- [] Sworn
[] Civilian
- A6. Does your agency have established protocols for investigating sexual assault incidents?
- YES
 NO

A7. How many crime laboratories (state or local) does your agency submit sexual assault kits to?

_____ LABORATORIES

Please list the names of those laboratories here: _____

To fill out the following information, you may need assistance from your sex crimes unit, department, or division. Please consult with the appropriate division to ensure that the estimates are as specific as possible. **Estimates are acceptable if you do not have exact numbers for some of these questions.**

Part B. Forcible Rape Statistics

B1. How many forcible rape (including attempted forcible rape—UCR categories 2a and 2b) cases were reported to your agency during calendar year (CY) 2013 (January 1 to December 31, 2013)?

_____ CASES

B2. Of those rape cases reported in CY 2013, how many remain open?

_____ CASES

B3. Of the open rape cases reported in CY 2013, please estimate the percentage of cases for which forensic evidence was collected?

_____ %

Part C. Sexual Assault Evidence Policies

C1. Does your agency have internal policies and procedures in place that specifically address which types of sexual assault evidence are submitted by law enforcement for forensic analysis?

YES

NO

C2. If yes, please indicate whether the policy is (A) formal or informal; (B) The year the policy was implemented; and (C) any additional information regarding the policy.

Policy	YES	NO	Don't know	Formal/ Informal	Year Implemented	Additional information regarding the policy
a. A 100% submission policy for all sexual assault <u>kits</u> collected.						
b. A 100% submission policy for all sexual assault <u>evidence</u> (e.g., bedding) collected.						
c. Criteria for submitting sexual assault kits to the crime laboratory						
d. Mandatory criteria to record decisions justifying why a sexual assault kit was not submitted to the crime laboratory.						
e. A policy to prioritize the submission of evidence based upon the type of case (e.g., stranger vs. known suspects)						
f. A policy to prioritize the submission of evidence based upon the amount of time elapsed (e.g., new cases vs. cold cases)						
g. An evidence retention policy regarding preservation of biological evidence that was secured in the investigation of an offense if the defendant is found guilty						
h. An evidence retention policy regarding preservation of biological evidence that was secured in the investigation of an offense if the defendant is found NOT guilty						
i. A policy that requires approval of the prosecuting attorney or district attorney before submitting evidence to the forensic laboratory.						
j. A policy to destroy sexual assault kits after a given period of time (e.g., 10 years)						

- C3. Does your agency have other internal policies that govern sexual assault kits or sexual assault evidence not listed above?
- YES—Please specify: _____
- NO
- C4. Who or what determines what sexual assault kit components (e.g., specific items in the sexual assault kit such as clothing, swabs, etc.) are collected in your jurisdiction? Select all that apply.
- Crime laboratory
- Law enforcement
- Healthcare sector/medical providers
- District attorney
- Jurisdictional mandate/law
- Other—Please specify: _____
- C5. How long does your agency typically retain forensic evidence for unsubmitted (e.g., cases that are not prosecuted) sexual assault kits?
- [] YEARS
- [] MONTHS
- [] DAYS
- Indefinitely
- C6. How long does your agency typically retain forensic evidence for sexual assault cases adjudicated by the courts?
- [] YEARS
- [] MONTHS
- [] DAYS
- Indefinitely
- C7. Does your agency have an evidence destruction policy relating to the number of years required to retain non-submitted SAKs with **no suspect**?
- YES—How many years []
- NO—How long does your agency retain these SAK's [] YEARS
- Indefinitely
- Don't know

Part D. Evidence Management

- D1. Does your agency have a computerized system capable of tracking sexual assault forensic evidence?
- YES—Please specify the name of the system, if applicable: _____
- NO—Please specify process for documenting forensic evidence management:
- _____
- _____
- D2. Does your agency experience difficulties (e.g., storage space, access to proper refrigeration) storing any of the following? Select all that apply.
- Sexual assault kits
- Other types of sexual assault evidence (e.g., clothing, bed linens, etc.)
- DNA extracts from sexual assault evidence
- Other—Please specify: _____
- D3. Has your agency implemented new policies/procedures to improve efficiency in sexual assault kit evidence submission to crime laboratories within the past 5 years?
- YES—Please explain: _____
- NO
- D4. How often does your agency integrate the use of sexual assault forensic evidence as an investigative tool?
- Never
- Almost Never
- Sometimes
- Usually
- Almost Always
- Always

PART E. Inter-agency Communication and Coordination

- E1. Does your agency have a policy for obtaining SAKs from healthcare/medical facilities?
- YES
- NO

- E2. Do all hospitals in your jurisdiction have sexual assault kits on hand, or do officers deliver the kit to the hospital for the sexual assault incident?
- The hospitals always have sexual assault kits on hand
 - Law enforcement officers provide the sexual assault kits to the hospital
 - Sometimes the hospitals have kits on hand, and sometimes law enforcement provides the sexual assault kits to the hospital
 - We have another arrangement for providing sexual assault kits to hospitals. Please explain:

- Don't know
- E3. How are sexual assault kits obtained from healthcare/medical facilities? Select all that apply.
- Officer collects the kit immediately following the sexual assault examination
 - Officer waits for notification from healthcare/medical facility to collect SAK
 - Special officer assigned to routinely pick up SAKs from healthcare/medical facility(ies)
 - Medical/healthcare facility submits SAK directly to laboratory
 - Other—Please specify: _____

- E4. Is the above specific method for obtaining SAKs from healthcare/medical facilities included in your agency's policies and procedures?
- YES
 - NO

- E5. How often does your investigating officer have any direct involvement with:

	Never	Almost never	Some-times	Usually	Almost always	Always
a. crime laboratory personnel who analyze the sexual assault evidence?	<input type="radio"/>					
b. the prosecutors who will use the analysis results in court?	<input type="radio"/>					
c. the defense attorneys who will use the analysis results in court?	<input type="radio"/>					
d. sexual assault nurse examiners/sexual assault response teams (SANE/SARTs)?	<input type="radio"/>					

- E6. When a sexual assault kit is submitted to the crime laboratory, how often does communication (including email) take place between law enforcement personnel and the laboratory regarding the following:

	Never	Almost never	Some-times	Usually	Almost always	Always
a. suspect identification or whether sexual contact was admitted by the perpetrator?	<input type="radio"/>					
b. victim information?	<input type="radio"/>					
c. elements of the sexual assault case (e.g., circumstantial evidence)?	<input type="radio"/>					
d. the components of the sexual assault kit that will be tested?	<input type="radio"/>					
e. the estimated turnaround time for the forensic analysis of sexual assault evidence?						
f. details regarding the prosecution of a case (whether the case will move forward and when results are needed)?						
g. a discussion for the disposition of evidence for cases which will not be prosecuted?						
h. who receives the results of the analysis (e.g., does the law enforcement agency or the district attorney's office receive the results from the analysis)?						

- E7. When a sexual assault kit is submitted to the lab, how often does communication (including email) take place between law enforcement personnel and medical practitioners who perform clinical evidence collection regarding the following:

	Never	Almost never	Some-times	Usually	Almost always	Always
a. details of the sexual assault case?	<input type="radio"/>					
b. components of the SAK collected?	<input type="radio"/>					

- E8. Do you have a computerized system that tracks evidence across agencies in your jurisdiction? If so, please select all the agencies that share the evidence tracking system with your laboratory.

- YES
 NO → **GO TO QUESTION F1**

E9. Please select all the agencies that share the evidence tracking system with your agency.

1 Law enforcement

2 District attorney

3 Crime laboratory

4 Medical/healthcare sector

5 Other—Please specify: _____

Part F. Sexual Assault Evidence Processing

The next few questions ask about sexual assault evidence processing. **Estimates are acceptable if you do not have exact numbers for some of these questions.**

F1. What is the total number of sexual assault evidence kits collected by your agency in 2013?

_____ KITS

F2. What is the total number of sexual assault evidence kits submitted by your agency to a crime laboratory for analysis in 2013?

_____ KITS

F3. What is the total number of sexual assault evidence kits that were collected and kept in your agency's custody (not submitted to a crime lab) in 2013?

_____ KITS

F4. What is the total number of untested sexual assault evidence kits that have not yet been submitted to a crime laboratory and that remain in your agency's custody as of January 1, 2014?

_____ KITS

F5. If forensic evidence for sexual assault cases has not yet been submitted to a crime laboratory, please select all the factors affecting submission. Please select all that apply.

Sexual contact admitted by suspect

Suspect has not yet been identified

Suspect has been identified but not formally charged

Suspect adjudicated without forensic evidence testing

Case has been dismissed

Uncertain where to send forensic evidence for analysis

Analysis not requested by prosecutors

Inability of laboratory to produce timely results

Insufficient funding in crime laboratory to analyze forensic evidence

Laboratory will not accept forensic evidence due to backlog

Other—Please specify: _____

- F6. Does your evidence management system capture any of the factors described above for sexual assault cases? If yes, please indicate which factors are documented in your evidence management system. Please select all that apply.
- Sexual contact admitted by suspect
 - Suspect has not yet been identified
 - Suspect has been identified but not formally charged
 - Suspect adjudicated without forensic evidence testing
 - Case has been dismissed
 - Uncertain where to send forensic evidence for analysis
 - Analysis not requested by prosecutors
 - Inability of laboratory to produce timely results
 - Insufficient funding in crime laboratory to analyze forensic evidence
 - Laboratory will not accept forensic evidence due to backlog
 - Other—Please specify: _____
- F7. Does your agency have a sexual assault kit backlog reduction program or initiative in place?
- YES—**IF YES:** Provide the number of years in place: [] YEARS
 - NO
- F8. Did your agency receive funds specifically dedicated to reducing sexual assault kit backlogs? Please indicate the number of years for which your agency received funds
- YES
 - NO
- F9. Were those funds from the federal government, state, county, or municipal government?
- Federal government funds
 - State Funds
 - County Funds
 - Municipal Funds
 - Other—Please specify: _____

Part G. Overall

- G1. In your experience, what are the most important factors that impact the efficiency with which sexual assault kits are submitted to the crime laboratory by your agency?

G2. In your experience, what are the most critical factors that impact your agency's coordination and communication with individuals from other agencies (e.g., crime laboratory personnel, prosecutors, defense attorneys, SANE/SARTs)?

G3. What are your agency's greatest barriers in submitting sexual assault kits to crime laboratories for forensic analyses?

Crime Laboratory Sexual Assault Kit (SAK) Processing Survey

Lab ID: <<2009 Census Case ID>>	
<u>Please confirm your laboratory's name and contact information:</u>	
Laboratory name and address:	<<Laboratory Name>> <<Lab Address>> <<City>> <<State>> <<Zip>>
Point of Contact:	<<Point of Contact (POC)>>
DNA Manager/DNA Technical Leader:	_____
DNA Manager/DNA Technical Leader phone:	_____
DNA Manager/DNA Technical Leader email:	_____
Does your laboratory conduct DNA analyses?	1 <input type="radio"/> Yes 2 <input type="radio"/> No
Please enter the name of the person who completed this survey:	

Phone Number: () _____ - _____ ext: _____	

Instructions:

Please complete the following survey and return the survey in the postage-paid envelope provided. If you do not have exact numbers for some of the questions, estimates are acceptable.

Any questions? Please contact Martin at RTI 1-800-334-8571 Ext. 25853 or e-mail Martin at mblanchette@rti.org

Part A. Crime Laboratory Size and Budget

- A1. Which of the following best describes the jurisdiction served by your crime laboratory?
Select all that apply
- 1 City, borough, village, or town
 - 2 County
 - 3 State
 - 4 Federal
 - 5 Regional
 - 6 Other—**Please specify:** _____
- A2. Is your laboratory part of a multiple laboratory system?
- 1 Yes
 - 2 No
- A3. [IF A2 = YES] How many laboratories are in this system?
[] laboratories
- A4. What organization has administrative control of your laboratory? _____

- A5. What jurisdiction does your laboratory serve? (e.g., name of city, county, state)

- A6. Does your DNA laboratory primarily track funding based on the fiscal or calendar year?
- 1 Fiscal year
 - 2 Calendar year
- A7. During the fiscal year 2013, what was the total budget allocated for DNA laboratory operations? If you track funding primarily based on calendar year, enter values based on calendar year 2013.
\$_____.
- A8. As of January 1, 2014, how many full-time employees did you have working as DNA analyst/examiners? A DNA analyst/examiner is an individual who extracts, amplifies, analyzes and/or writes a report for DNA analysis of biological stains obtained from crime scene evidence.
[] employees

A9. Please indicate total expenditures for the DNA laboratory during the 2013 fiscal year and the costs for each of the following areas. If you track funding primarily based on calendar year, enter values based on calendar year 2013.

a. Total Expenditures \$_____ .00

Expenditures for questions b through e do not have to sum to total expenditures

b. Personnel \$_____ .00

c. Equipment

• Instrumentation \$_____ .00

• Service Contracts \$_____ .00

d. Laboratory Supplies \$_____ .00

e. Other \$_____ .00

A10. How many law enforcement agencies submitted sexual assault kits to your laboratory for analysis in 2013? If you do not know the exact number, please provide your best approximation.

[] Law enforcement agencies

Sexual Assault Evidence Processing

The next series of questions are about sexual assault evidence processing. Please note: a single case may include multiple requests/items. When answering these questions, please focus on requests for DNA evidence.

A11. How many new sexual assault kit DNA analysis requests were received in calendar year 2013?

[]

A12. How many sexual assault kit requests for DNA analysis were completed in calendar year 2013?

[]

A13. How many sexual assault kit DNA analysis requests were waiting for DNA analysis as of January 1, 2014?

[]

A14. How many sexual assault kit DNA analysis requests were backlogged (requests unreported for 30 days or longer) as of January 1, 2014?

[]

A15. Does your agency have a sexual assault kit backlog reduction program or initiative in place?

1 Yes—**IF YES:** Provide the number of years in place: [] Years

2 No

A16. Did your DNA laboratory receive funds specifically dedicated to reducing sexual assault kit backlogs? Please indicate the number of years for which your DNA laboratory received funds

1 Yes—**IF YES:** Provide the number of years in place: [] Years

2 No → **GO TO QUESTION A18**

A17. Were those funds from the federal government or your state?

1 Federal government funds

2 State Funds

3 Other—**Please specify:** _____

A18. Does your laboratory assist other laboratories with sexual assault kit backlogs?

1 Yes—**IF YES: Please explain:** _____

2 No

Part B. Sexual Assault Kit Processing

B1. What are the components of a sexual assault kit that your laboratory may receive for DNA analysis? Select all that apply.

1 Vaginal swab

2 Oral swab

3 Anal swab

4 Hair sample

5 Victim known sample

6 Underwear

7 Bed linens

8 Suspect known sample

9 Other—**Please specify:** _____

B2. Does your DNA laboratory receive the SANE documentation, which describes the case scenario along with the sexual assault kit?

1 Yes

2 No—**IF NO: Please explain:** _____

B3. Who determines what sexual assault kit components are collected in your jurisdiction? Select all that apply.

1 Crime laboratory

2 Law enforcement

3 Healthcare sector/medical providers

4 District attorney

5 Jurisdictional mandate/law

6 Other—**Please specify:** _____

- B4. Please indicate the number and type of each kind of equipment used for processing sexual assault kits in your laboratory. If your laboratory does not have the equipment, please enter "0."

Equipment	Number	Type of Equipment Used
Robotic systems—DNA extraction		
Robotic systems—amplification		
Thermal cycler		
Quantitative PCR thermal cycler		
Electrophoresis detection systems		
Genetic analyzers		
Workstations for data analysis		

- B5. How many labor hours are usually required to process and analyze one sexual assault kit? Please only use whole numbers and round to the nearest whole number.

- a. Serology screening procedures
[] hours
- b. DNA processing procedures (extraction, quantification, etc.)
[] hours
- c. DNA data analysis procedures (evaluation of data, report writing, statistical analysis)
[] hours
- d. DNA case review (technical or administrative review)
[] hours

- B6. For calendar year 2013, what was the average number of sexual assault kit cases analyzed per analyst?

TO CALCULATE: Take the total number of cases completed in 2013 divided by the number of analysts

[] Cases per analyst

Part C. Sexual Assault Evidence Policies

- C1. Does your laboratory have specific policies in place that determine which types of sexual assault evidence are submitted by law enforcement for analysis?

1 Yes

2 No

C2. Does your laboratory have any of the following policies in place? **If yes**, please indicate whether the policy is:

1. Formal or Informal;
2. The year the policy was implemented; and
3. Any additional information regarding the policy.

Policy	NO	YES	1. IF YES: Please indicate whether the policy is formal or informal	2. IF YES: Please indicate what year the policy was implemented	3. IF YES: Please provide any additional information regarding the policy
a. Case acceptance policy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Formal <input type="radio"/> Informal		
b. A policy to remove cases that will not be prosecuted	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Formal <input type="radio"/> Informal		
c. Evidence acceptance policy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Formal <input type="radio"/> Informal		
d. Evidence prioritization policy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Formal <input type="radio"/> Informal		
e. Evidence retention policy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Formal <input type="radio"/> Informal		
f. A case-item restriction policy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Formal <input type="radio"/> Informal		
g. A 100% analysis policy for all sexual assault kits submitted	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Formal <input type="radio"/> Informal		
h. A policy for testing <u>all</u> items in sexual assault kits submitted	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Formal <input type="radio"/> Informal		
i. A policy to analyze only the most probative evidence from sexual assault kits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Formal <input type="radio"/> Informal		
j. A sexual assault kit <u>only</u> analysis policy that excludes other forensic evidence collected	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Formal <input type="radio"/> Informal		
k. A policy to analyze whether male DNA is present prior to developing a DNA profile	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Formal <input type="radio"/> Informal		
l. A policy that allows for cancellations of forensic analytic requests	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Formal <input type="radio"/> Informal		
m. A policy for obtaining a consensual partner's known standard	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Formal <input type="radio"/> Informal		
n. A No Suspect case policy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Formal <input type="radio"/> Informal		

- C3. Are there any policies listed in the previous table that your laboratory does not currently have in place, but would like to have in the future?
- 1 Yes—**IF YES: Which one(s):** _____
- 2 No
- C4. Does your agency have other policies that govern sexual assault kits or sexual assault evidence not listed above?
- 1 Yes—**IF YES: Please specify:** _____
- 2 No

Part D. Evidence Management

- D1. Does your laboratory have a computerized data management system in place (e.g., LIMS) to monitor DNA forensic evidence inventory located in the DNA laboratory?
- 1 Yes → **CONTINUE TO D2**
- 2 No—Please specify process for documenting DNA forensic evidence management:
- _____
- _____

IF NO → GO TO D4

- D2. What type of LIMS is utilized by your DNA laboratory?
- 1 BARD
- 2 BEAST
- 3 Forensic Advantage
- 4 IBM AS 400 Based System
- 5 JusticeTrax
- 6 LabVantage
- 7 Lab Ware
- 8 NFLIS LIMS (NIMS)
- 9 Que-Tel
- 10 R. J. Lee Solutions
- 11 StarLIMS
- 12 Other data management system—**Please specify:** _____
- D3. If your DNA laboratory has a LIMS, are you utilizing bar code or Radio-Frequency Identification (RFID) technology?
- 1 Bar codes
- 2 RFID
- 3 Other

- D4. Does your laboratory have a Case Manager (may be titled differently) who is responsible for the disposition of cases within the laboratory (e.g., assigning cases to analysts, tracking completion of cases, etc.)?
- 1 Yes
2 No
- D5. Is there an individual within your laboratory who is tasked with the responsibility of retaining forensic evidence (e.g., someone overseeing all evidence within the DNA unit)?
- 1 Yes
2 No
- D6. Does your DNA laboratory experience difficulties storing any of the following? Select all that apply.
- 1 Sexual assault kits
2 Other types of sexual assault evidence (such as clothing, bed linens, etc.)
3 DNA extracts from sexual assault evidence
4 Other—**Please specify:** _____
5 None of the above
- D7. Is your crime laboratory facility (e.g., Evidence Management) experiencing difficulties storing sexual assault kits?
- 1 Yes
2 No
- D8. Is your crime laboratory facility (e.g., Evidence Management) experiencing difficulties storing other types of sexual assault evidence (e.g., bed linens, large items, clothing)?
- 1 Yes
2 No
- D9. Has your agency implemented new policies/procedures to improve efficiency in sexual assault kit evidence processing within the past 5 years?
- 1 Yes—**IF YES: Please explain:** _____
2 No
- D10. Has your agency purchased new equipment/technology to improve efficiency in sexual assault kit evidence processing within the past 5 years (e.g., restructuring, purchase/upgrade of equipment)?
- 1 Yes—**IF YES: Please explain:** _____
2 No
- D11. Within the last fiscal year, approximately what percentage of sexual assault cases has your laboratory outsourced for DNA analysis? A general estimate is acceptable.
- []%—**IF 0%: GO TO QUESTION E1**

D12. What type of laboratory did you outsource to within the last fiscal year? Select all that apply.

- 1 Private
- 2 Publicly funded
- 3 State laboratory
- 4 Government laboratory
- 5 A laboratory not listed here—**Please specify:** _____
- 6 We did not outsource to any laboratory within the last fiscal year

Part E. Inter-agency Communication and Coordination

E1. Are "Request for Testing" forms completed by law enforcement officials and submitted to the DNA laboratory along with sexual assault evidence?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

E2. Does your laboratory have a Case Manager (may be titled differently)?

- 1 Yes—**IF YES: CONTINUE TO TABLE E3**
- 2 No—**IF NO: GO TO E4**

E3. How often does your Case Manager have any direct involvement with:

	Never	Almost never	Some-times	Usually	Almost always	Always
a. The law enforcement personnel who submitted the sexual assault evidence?	<input type="radio"/>					
b. The prosecutors who will use the analysis results in court?	<input type="radio"/>					
c. The defense attorneys who will use the analysis results in court?	<input type="radio"/>					
d. Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners/Sexual Assault Response Teams (SANE/SARTs)?	<input type="radio"/>					

E3_SPEC. If you would like to explain your responses, please provide a comment here:

E4. How often do your DNA analysts have any direct involvement with:

	Never	Almost never	Some-times	Usually	Almost always	Always
a. The law enforcement personnel who submitted the sexual assault evidence?	<input type="radio"/>					
b. The prosecutors who will use the analysis results in court?	<input type="radio"/>					
c. The defense attorneys who will use the analysis results in court?	<input type="radio"/>					
d. Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners/ Sexual Assault Response Teams (SANE/SARTs)?	<input type="radio"/>					

E4_SPEC. If you would like to explain your responses, please provide a comment here:

E5. When a sexual assault kit is submitted to the lab, how often does verbal communication take place between law enforcement personnel and the laboratory Case Manager/Supervisor regarding the following:

	Never	Almost never	Some-times	Usually	Almost always	Always
a. Suspect identification?	<input type="radio"/>					
b. Victim information?	<input type="radio"/>					
c. Whether sexual contact was admitted by the perpetrator?	<input type="radio"/>					
d. Elements of the sexual assault case? (e.g., circumstantial evidence)	<input type="radio"/>					
e. The components of the sexual assault kit that will be tested?	<input type="radio"/>					
f. The estimated turnaround time for the forensic analysis of sexual assault evidence?	<input type="radio"/>					
g. Details regarding the prosecution of a case? (whether the case will move forward and when results are needed)	<input type="radio"/>					
h. A discussion for the disposition of evidence for cases which will not be prosecuted?	<input type="radio"/>					
i. Who receives the results of the analysis?	<input type="radio"/>					
j. Discussion about the chain of custody forms?	<input type="radio"/>					

E5_SPEC. If the information is obtained from another source or agency (e.g., SANE, hospital liaison, prosecutor), please specify:

E6. Do you provide training on sexual assault kit evidence collection to any of the following? Select all that apply.

- 1 Law enforcement personnel
- 2 Prosecutors/legal counsel
- 3 Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners/Sexual Assault Response Teams (SANE/SARTs)
- 4 Other—**Please specify:** _____
- 5 We do not provide training on sexual assault kit evidence collection

E7. When sexual assault evidence is submitted to the lab, how often does verbal communication take place between law enforcement personnel and the DNA analyst regarding the following:

	Never	Almost never	Some-times	Usually	Almost always	Always
a. Suspect identification?	<input type="radio"/>					
b. Victim information?	<input type="radio"/>					
c. Whether sexual contact was admitted by the perpetrator?	<input type="radio"/>					
d. Elements of the sexual assault case? (e.g., circumstantial evidence)	<input type="radio"/>					
e. The components of the sexual assault kit that will be tested?	<input type="radio"/>					
f. The estimated turnaround time for the forensic analysis of sexual assault evidence?	<input type="radio"/>					
g. Details regarding the prosecution of a case? (whether the case will move forward and when results are needed)	<input type="radio"/>					
h. What happens to the evidence for cases that will not be prosecuted?	<input type="radio"/>					
i. Who receives results of the analysis?	<input type="radio"/>					
j. Discussion about the chain of custody forms?	<input type="radio"/>					

E7_SPEC. If the information is obtained from another source or agency (e.g., SANE, hospital liaison, prosecutor), please specify:

E8. How often do requests from prosecutors impact:

	Never	Almost never	Some-times	Usually	Almost always	Always
a. The rate at which sexual assault evidence is processed?	<input type="radio"/>					
b. Which components of a sexual assault kit are analyzed?	<input type="radio"/>					
c. Whether the crime laboratory alters policies to comply with DA requests?	<input type="radio"/>					
d. The prioritization of cases?	<input type="radio"/>					
e. The estimated turnaround time for the forensic analysis of sexual assault evidence?	<input type="radio"/>					

E9. Does your evidence LIMS system track evidence across the following departments within the laboratory? Select all that apply.

- 1 Latent prints
- 2 DNA
- 3 Computer crimes
- 4 Toxicology
- 5 Ballistics
- 6 Crime scene
- 7 Other—**Please specify:** _____
- 8 My laboratory does not have an evidence LIMS system

E10. Do you have an evidence LIMS system that tracks evidence across different agencies in your jurisdiction? If so, please select all the agencies that share the evidence tracking system with your laboratory.

- 1 Law enforcement
- 2 District attorney
- 3 Medical/healthcare sector
- 4 Other—**Please specify:** _____
- 5 My laboratory does not have an evidence LIMS system

E11. In addition to law enforcement officials, does your laboratory accept sexual assault kits from any of the following? Select all that apply.

- 1 Sexual assault nurse examiners / sexual assault response teams
- 2 Other medical personnel (e.g., ER staff, physicians, etc.)
- 3 Victim advocates
- 4 Victims
- 5 Other—**Please specify:** _____
- 6 Our laboratory only accepts sexual assault kits from law enforcement officials.

Part F. Overall

F1. In your experience, what are the most important factors that impact the efficiency with which sexual assault kits are processed in your crime laboratory?

F2. In your experience, what are the most critical factors that impact your DNA laboratory’s coordination and communication with individuals from other agencies (e.g., law enforcement personnel, prosecutors, defense attorneys, SANE/SARTs)?

F3. What are your DNA laboratory’s greatest barriers in processing sexual assault kits?

THANK YOU.

Please place this questionnaire in the return envelope.

*NIJ SAK Efficiency Processing Study
Stakeholder Interview Guide: Law Enforcement
(Estimated Interview Duration: 60-90 minutes)*

A. STUDY BACKGROUND

Insert brief study description and aim of interview.

Interview Questions

B. STAKEHOLDER & AGENCY BACKGROUND

The next questions ask about your agency and your position in that agency as it applies to SAK investigations, SAK arrests, and the collection and processing of SAK evidence.

1. Tell us about your agency, the basic processes for sexual assault evidence, policies that dictate how you handle SAKs and sexual assault evidence, and how your agency is organized to handle SAK cases.

Probes:

- a. Role in investigating sexual assault cases and in collecting and submitting sexual assault evidence.
 - i. Describe trends in sexual assaults (SAs) within your jurisdiction (e.g., number of reported sexual assaults have decreased).
- b. Role in collecting and submitting SAKs.
- c. Any changes in staffing, budget, or resources to investigate SAs?

2. Does your agency have a backlog reduction program in place?

Probes:

- a. If so, what does it consist of and how was that program funded?
- b. If not, are you interested in having one in place in the future?

3. Describe the standard procedures used by your agency for collecting and submitting SAK evidence and SAKs?

Probes:

- a. What forensic laboratory does your agency typically submit SAK evidence and SAKs to?
- b. What is the process for notifying your prosecutor office? When and how?
- c. Describe your agency SOP's for collecting and submitting SAK evidence and SAKs. Are there other specific policies in place that impact which SAK cases are submitted by your agency to a forensic laboratory for analysis?
- d. What agency policy changes would make the collection or submission of SAK evidence and SAKs easier?
- e. Do you talk to the laboratory prior to submitting SAK evidence and SAKs? If so, under what circumstances?
- f. Where does your agency store SAKs?
 - Is your agency experiencing difficulties storing SAK evidence and SAKs? If yes, what are some of those challenges? How has your agency addressed these challenges?

C. INVESTIGATING AND PROCESSING SAK CASES

4. How and when does forensic evidence guide police decision-making when investigating SAK cases?

Probes:

- a. How does having the forensic evidence result impact the investigation process? Does having this evidence make the investigation more efficient?
- b. Are preliminary biological results ever used as leverage to elicit pleas?
- c. Are the results from laboratory analyses ever used prior to the arrest of a suspect? For example, is SAK evidence submitted during an investigation to identify potential suspects (e.g., local database hits, CODIS hits) or to connect the SAKs with other sexual assault cases?

5. Is the investigating officer responsible for deciding if a SAK should be submitted to the laboratory?

Probes:

- a. Is that decision made at a higher level or by another agency (e.g., Prosecutor's Office)?

6. Have any procedural changes or policies been recently implemented to address how sexual assault cases are investigated? Have any procedural changes or policies been implemented to address how SAKs are processed?

Probes:

- a. If yes, are these departmental policies or were they implemented at a higher level (district or state level)?
- b. Can you estimate the impact of these policies on the submission of SAKs?
- c. Other than policies, are there other coordination efforts that enhance or hinder SAK processing (e.g., dedicated point of contact at other agencies, SART, monthly working group or multi-disciplinary team meetings)?

7. In your tenure at the agency, how has the investigation and management of SAKs changed?

Probes:

- a. Can you tell us more about your untested SAKs. Tell us more about your unsubmitted SAKs.
- b. Have there been any policy or procedural changes which are specifically a consequence of unsubmitted or untested SAKs?
 - i. What was the rationale for these changes?
- c. Have these changes resulted in noticeable SAK efficiency improvements?

8. What are the critical issues that impact accumulation of untested SAKs, unsubmitted SAKs, and the investigation process of SAKs?

Probes:

- a. Positive impact.
 - i. What key positive impact would you like to share with other agencies?
- b. Negative impact.

D. COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES AND SYSTEMS

9. Describe your evidence management system, including its benefits and challenges and personnel interaction.

Probes:

- a. Does this system allow for interagency visibility/communication?

10. Do you communicate directly with the laboratory on SAK cases?

Probes:

- a. How would you describe the quality of communication between your agency and the laboratory?
- b. Do you typically talk to laboratory staff before a case is submitted?
- c. Do you only talk with laboratory staff for certain types of sexual assault cases?

11. Do you communicate directly with the prosecutor's office on SAK cases?

Probes:

- a. How would you describe the quality of communication between your agency and the prosecutor's office?
- b. Do you communicate prior to a case being submitted to the laboratory?
- c. Do interactions differ by the type of sexual assault case (e.g., seriousness of case)?

12. Does your agency communicate regularly with victims?

Probes:

- a. How would you describe the quality of communication between your agency and the victim?
- b. Does the quality or frequency of communication vary across the investigation process?
- c. Would additional training improve the quality and frequency of communication between your agency and SA victims?

13. Does your agency communicate regularly with SANEs?

Probes:

- a. How would you describe the quality of communication between your agency and the SANE?
- b. Do you communicate prior to a case being submitted to the laboratory?
- c. Do interactions differ by the type of sexual assault case (e.g., seriousness of case)?

14. Does your agency communicate regularly with victim advocates?

Probes:

- a. How would you describe the quality of communication between your agency and the advocates?
- b. Do you communicate prior to a case being submitted to the laboratory?
- c. Do interactions differ by the type of sexual assault case (e.g., seriousness of case)?

15. Are there any electronic systems in place to facilitate interagency information sharing on SAKs?

Probes:

- a. If yes, please describe.
 - How often do you check it?
 - Does this impact efficiency?
- b. If no, do you see the value in having an electronic interagency information sharing system implemented? Do you think this type of system could increase efficiency?

16. Are there any processes in place to facilitate interagency information sharing on SAKs? For example, monthly multi-disciplinary working group meetings.

Probes:

- a. If yes, please describe. Does this impact efficiency?
- b. If no, do you see the value in implementing such processes? Do you think these types of processes would increase efficiency?

17. What are some of the barriers to interagency communication in your jurisdiction?

Probes:

- a. What are some of the potential solutions to these barriers?
- b. What resources would you need to achieve these solutions?

18. What factors impede the submission of SAKs?

Probes:

- a. Are these factors unique to your agency or do you think they apply to many jurisdictions across the US?
- b. What are some of the possible solutions?
- c. How much will these solutions impact efficiency?

19. Is there anything regarding SAK efficiency you would like to share with us that has not already been covered (e.g., technology such as barcode readers for tracking evidence)?

*NIJ SAK Efficiency Processing Study
Stakeholder Interview Guide: Laboratory
(Estimated Interview Duration: 60-90 minutes)*

A. STAKEHOLDER & LABORATORY BACKGROUND

The next few questions ask about your laboratory and your position as it applies to the processing and analysis of sexual assault kits (SAKs).

1. What best describes the operation of your laboratory in terms of receiving and analyzing sexual assault kits?

Probes:

- a. What is the difference between receiving a SAK and an actual submission of a SAK for testing?
 - i. Is there ever an instance in which you receive a SAK but do not test it?
- b. What are the main types of law enforcement agencies you serve?
 - i. City/municipal; county/Sheriff's Office; city Sheriff's department; state; etc.
 - ii. How many jurisdictions do you serve?
- c. Do you receive SAKs from any other agency outside of law enforcement?
- d. How would you describe the overall process flow of SAK cases in your system including law enforcement, laboratory, and prosecutor's office?
 - i. For instance, you might receive a SAK from law enforcement, test the kit, and complete a report that is submitted to law enforcement and the prosecutor's office.

2. Do you have any direct involvement with the law enforcement officers or prosecutors who are submitting SAKs or using the analysis results of the SAK in court?

Probes:

- a. Is there an open line of communication for special cases? If no, do you see this as problematic? (In other words, if there is not an open line of communication, does this affect how efficient your laboratory is at processing SAKs?)
- b. Regarding SAK processing, are the roles for each agency clearly defined?
 - i. If the roles are not clearly defined, how does this affect how efficient your laboratory is at processing SAKs?
- c. Between the laboratory, the prosecutor's office, and law enforcement, who is the primary decision-maker for which SAKs are processed and which are not?
 - i. Is there ever an instance in which an agency would stop the processing of a SAK? (i.e., it was submitted but not going forward)

3. What is the average annual number of SAKs submitted to your laboratory for biological screening and/or DNA analysis?

4. What is the average amount of time between submission of the SAK and assignment of the analyst?

5. What is the annual number of SAKs processed in your laboratory for biological screening, DNA analysis, and technical and administrative review?

Probes:

- a. What is the average time for a SAK to go through the entire process?
 - i. What are some of the main factors that can extend the length of time it takes a SAK to go through the entire process?

6. Do you have a backlog reduction program in place?

Probes:

- a. If yes, what does it consist of and how was it funded?
 - i. Is it effective for reducing your backlog?
- b. If no, are you interested in having a backlog reduction program in place in the future?

B. PROCEDURES FOR RECEIVING AND ANALYZING SAKs

The next few questions ask about the procedures used in your laboratory for receiving and analyzing SAKs

7. How would you describe the routine analytical process of SAKs in your laboratory from receiving to reporting of results?

Probes:

- a. For clarification, we are referring to the process for biological screening/serology, DNA analysis–extraction, quantification, amplification, data analysis and interpretation, and the completion of a written report?
- b. Does the laboratory use a team approach or a “one examiner to each case” approach?
 - i. What robotics are used?
- c. What type of sampling scheme is used (i.e., protocols for improved efficiency / triage samples within the kit)?

8. What policies or systems are used by your laboratory for analyzing and prioritizing SAKs submitted by law enforcement? What is the benefit of these policies?

Probes:

- a. Considerations related to the severity of the charge or statute of limitations?
- b. Considerations related to whether the suspect is known or unknown?
- c. What is the rationale behind these policies?
- d. Is there a policy to remove a SAK from the queue or stop processing on a SAK?
- e. Do you have a policy for removing SAKs from your queue?
 - i. If so, what do you think is the future of that policy in your laboratory given the national movement towards test-all policies?
- f. Do you have an evidence prioritization policy?
 - i. If not, have you considered implementing one?
- g. Out of your existing policies, which ones were implemented in the last five years?
- h. Of all of the policies you currently have in place, formal or informal, which one do you perceive to be the most effective for improving the efficiency of the laboratory?
- i. Are there any additional policies you do not currently have but are considering implementing in the next few years?

9. Are there specific policies in place that impact which SAKs are submitted by law enforcement to your laboratory for analysis?

Probes:

- a. Are any of these policies external the laboratory (e.g., prosecutor's office determines policies for jurisdiction)?
- b. Considerations related to the severity of the charge or statute of limitations?
- c. Considerations related to whether the suspect is known or unknown?

10. On what basis does your laboratory NOT analyze submitted SAKs?

Probes:

- a. Is there ever an instance in which a SAK is submitted but not processed?

11. Have any procedural changes been implemented in your laboratory to address how SAKs are processed and analyzed due to accumulation of untested kits?

Probes:

- a. Additional training, education, equipment?
- b. Outsourcing of SAKs? If so, what type of laboratory (e.g., private, state lab, other)?
 - i. Discuss the criteria or reasons for why a SAK would be outsourced.
- c. How have these changes affected your laboratory's efficiency and overall ability to process SAKs in a timely manner?

12. Has your laboratory implemented any efficiency measures in the past three years? How have these implementations affected your accumulation of untested SAKs?

Probes:

- a. Robotics implementation?
- b. New policies?
- c. Capacity enhancements? (e.g., more analysts, part-time workers, overtime pay, outsourcing)

13. Do you have a case manager?

Probes:

- a. If yes, what is the benefit of having a case manager?
 - i. How did you get that position funded?
- b. If no, do you wish you had a case manager?
 - i. If not, why not?
 - ii. If so, what benefit do you perceive of having a case manager?

14. What do you think are the most important characteristics or qualities a laboratory can have for improving their productivity or efficiency?

C. COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES AND SYSTEMS

The next few questions ask about procedures and systems in place for communicating across agencies on the status of SAKs.

15. Describe your evidence management system, including its benefits and challenges and personnel interaction.

Probes:

- a. Does this system allow for interagency visibility/communication?

16. How would you describe the current level of communication between the forensic laboratory, law enforcement and prosecutor's offices in your jurisdiction?

Probes:

- a. Is it open-flow communication? Status updates? Inter-agency meetings?
 - i. if there is not an open line of communication, does this affect how efficient your laboratory is at processing SAKs?)
- b. Do law enforcement and Prosecuting Attorneys routinely call to ask that a specific case be expedited or fast tracked?

17. What types of systems or procedures are in place to facilitate the tracking and/or status update of SAKs?

Probes:

- a. What steps are taken to share SAK updates between agencies?
- b. Are there processes in place to ensure that information is shared between agencies as either agreed upon or required?
- c. Are there additional systems or procedures to facilitate the tracking and/or status updates not currently in place but that you think could improve your laboratory's ability to process SAKs?

18. What can or should be done to improve communication regarding SAKs?

Probes:

- a. What are the major barriers regarding communication?
- b. What are some of the major steps that can be taken to achieve better communication?
- c. Which of these would be the most practical and cost-effective steps to take?
- d. Are any of these steps being taken now by any of the agencies in your jurisdiction?

19. What are the critical issues that impact accumulation of untested SAKs, the turnaround time for processing SAKs, and the number SAKs tested within a year?

Probes:

- a. Positive impact.
 - i. What key positive impact would you like to share with other agencies?
- b. Negative impact.

20. What policies or systems would you implement in your laboratory to reduce the accumulation of untested SAKs? What are some recommendations for efficiency improvements to SAK processing?

Probes:

- a. How can turnaround time be reduced?
- b. How can future backlogs be prevented?
- c. Eliminate biological screening?

21. What are the barriers that impact SAK turnaround times in your laboratory?

Probes:

- a. What are some of the major barriers that you have seen?
- b. How were they resolved?
- c. How could they have been resolved better?
- d. How much emphasis is placed on overcoming these barriers by your agency leaders?
- e. Are these unique to your laboratory, or do you think they apply to many laboratories across the U.S.?

22. In your tenure at the laboratory, has the issue of SAK backlogs stayed the same, improved, or worsened?

Probes:

- a. What areas became more efficient and what areas still need to improve?
- b. Did any areas worsen?

23. Does your laboratory use robotic systems for amplification?

Probes:

- a. If yes, do these systems make your laboratory more efficient? Why or why not?
- b. If no, are you interested in acquiring this technology in the future? Why or why not?

24. Would additional technology or equipment, policies, strategies, or analysts improve the SAK backlog issue in your laboratory?

Probes

- a. [If Respondent says "analysts"] How many analysts?
- b. [If Respondent says "technology" or "equipment"] What types of technology or equipment?
- c. [If Respondent says "policies"] What types of policies? A SAK removal policy?
- d. [If Respondent says "strategies"] What type of strategy? For example, what is the value of a strategic backlog reduction plan?

25. What represents the biggest challenge your laboratory faces today?

Probes

- a. Communication channels?
- b. Training needs?
- c. Personnel needs?
- d. Problems with organizational structure or leadership?
- e. Equipment or technology needs?
- f. Space?
- g. Other resources?

26. Is there anything else you would like to bring to our attention regarding SAK efficiency that we have not covered but that you think is important to share?

Probes

- a. Any concerns or enhancements planned/underway for evidence submission.
- b. Any suggestion for other agencies?

*NIJ SAK Efficiency Processing Study
Stakeholder Interview Guide: Prosecution
(Estimated Interview Duration: 60-90 minutes)*

A. STUDY BACKGROUND

Insert brief study description and aim of interview.

Interview Questions

B. STAKEHOLDER & AGENCY BACKGROUND

The next questions ask about your agency and your position in that agency as it applies to SAK investigations, SAK arrests, and the collection and processing of SAK evidence.

- 1. Tell us about your office, your involvement with sexual assault evidence, any policies that dictate your involvement with SAKs and sexual assault evidence, and how your agency is organized to handle sexual assault cases.**

Probes:

- a. Describe trends in sexual assaults (SAs) within your jurisdiction (e.g., number of reported sexual assaults have decreased).
- b. When the last time was your office made changes in staffing, budget, or resources to investigate SAs?

- 2. Describe the standard procedures used by your agency upon notice of a Sexual Assault case?**

Probes:

- a. When and how are you notified about a case of Sexual Assault case?
- b. Is there a victim witness center where the victim can be interviewed and examined in one visit, in your jurisdiction?
- c. Describe the SOP's for participation in the collection and/or submission of SAK evidence and SAKs. Are there other specific policies in place that you know of that impact which SAK cases are submitted by law enforcement to the forensic laboratory for analysis?
- d. At which point in the investigation do you speak with the laboratory?
- e. Where is SAK evidence stored once it has been processed?
 - a. Is your agency experiencing difficulties accessing stored SAK evidence and SAKs information or the SAKs themselves? If yes, what are some of those challenges? How has your agency addressed these challenges?

C. INVESTIGATING AND PROCESSING SAK CASES

3. How and when does forensic evidence guide decision-making when investigating SAK cases?

Probes:

- a. What is the average turnaround time (from submission to testing) to receive results from the laboratory on a SAK?
 - i. Is law enforcement contacted when the results are preliminary and then final?
 - ii. Is the prosecutor of the case contacted when the results are preliminary and then final?
- b. How does having the forensic evidence result impact the investigation process? Does having this evidence make the investigation more efficient?
- c. How often do you meet with the victim prior to receiving the test results?
 - i. How does meeting with the victim affect the outcome of the case?
 - ii. How would you describe the quality of communication between your agency and the victim?
 - iii. Does the quality or frequency of communication vary across the investigation process?
 - iv. Would additional training improve the quality and frequency of communication between your agency and SA victims?
- d. Are preliminary biological results ever used as leverage to elicit pleas?
- e. Are the results from laboratory analyses ever used prior to the arrest of a suspect? For example, is SAK evidence submitted during an investigation to identify potential suspects (e.g., local database hits, CODIS hits) or to connect the SAKs with other sexual assault cases?
 - i. How does this affect the outcome of the case?
- f. Have you prosecuted a case without SAK results, even though you have those results? What prompted this decision?
 - i. In these instances, is this information communicated to the law enforcement agency?
 - ii. Did the agency budget influence this decision?

4. Who is responsible for deciding if a SAK should be submitted to the laboratory?

Probes:

- a. Is the Prosecutor's office involved in the decision to submit a SAK? If so, under what circumstances?

5. Have any procedural changes or policies been implemented to address how sexual assault cases are investigated? Have any procedural changes or policies been implemented to address how SAKs are processed?

Probes:

- a. If yes, are these agency policies or were they implemented at a higher level (district or state level)?
 - i. Can you estimate the impact of these policies on the submission of SAKs?
- b. Other than policies, are there other coordination efforts that enhance or hinder SAK processing (e.g., dedicated point of contact at other agencies, SART, monthly working group or multi-disciplinary team meetings)?
 - i. Can you estimate the impact of these coordination efforts on the submission of SAKs?

6. What are the critical issues that impact the length of time involved in the processing of SAKs?

Probes:

- a. Positive impact.
 - i. What key positive impact would you like to share with other agencies?
- b. Negative impact.

D. COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES AND SYSTEMS

7. Does your agency maintain any SAK evidence?

Probes:

- a. If yes, describe your evidence management system, including its benefits and challenges and personnel interaction.
- b. Does this system help with interagency visibility/communication?

8. Do you communicate directly with the laboratory on SAK cases?

Probes:

- a. If no, why not? Do you think that communicating with the laboratory could positively affect the outcome of the case?
- b. If yes:
 - How would you describe the quality of communication between your agency and the laboratory?
 - Do you typically talk to laboratory staff before a case is submitted?
 - Do you only talk with laboratory staff for certain types of sexual assault cases?
 - In what ways does your communication with the laboratory affect the outcome of the case?

9. At what stage does your agency communicate directly with law enforcement on SAK cases?

Probes:

- a. How would you describe the quality of communication between your law enforcement agencies and your prosecutor's office?
- b. Do you communicate prior to a case being submitted to the laboratory?
- c. Do interactions differ by the type of sexual assault case (e.g., seriousness of case)?
- d. How could communication be improved and what would that mean for case processing?

10. Does your agency communicate regularly with SANEs?

Probes:

- a. How would you describe the quality of communication between your agency and the SANE?
- b. Do you communicate prior to a case being submitted to the laboratory?
- c. Do interactions differ by the type of sexual assault case (e.g., seriousness of case)?
- d. Would additional training improve the quality and frequency of communication between your agency and SANEs?

11. Does your agency communicate regularly with victim advocates?

Probes:

- a. How would you describe the quality of communication between your agency and the advocates?
- b. Do you communicate prior to a case being submitted to the laboratory?
- c. Do interactions differ by the type of sexual assault case (e.g., seriousness of case)?
- d. Would additional training improve the quality and frequency of communication between your agency and victim advocates?

12. Are there any electronic systems in place to facilitate interagency information sharing on SAKs?

Probes:

- a. If yes, please describe.
 - How often do you check it?
 - Does this impact efficiency?
- b. If no, do you see the value in having an electronic interagency information sharing system implemented? Do you think this type of system could increase efficiency?

13. Are there any processes in place to facilitate interagency information sharing on SAKs? For example, monthly multi-disciplinary working group meetings.

Probes:

- a. If yes, please describe. Does this impact efficiency?
- b. If no, do you see the value in implementing such processes? Do you think these types of processes would increase efficiency?

14. Are there any other barriers to interagency communication in your jurisdiction that we have not discussed?

Probes:

- a. What are some of the potential solutions to these barriers?
- b. What resources would you need to achieve these solutions?

15. What factors impede the submission of SAKs?

Probes:

- a. Are these factors unique to your agency or do you think they apply to many jurisdictions across the US?
- b. What are some of the possible solutions?
- c. How much will these solutions impact efficiency?

16. Is there anything regarding SAK efficiency you would like to share with us that has not already been covered?