DEPARTMENT OF FORENSIC SCIENCES

FY 2026 PERFORMANCE PLAN

NOVEMBER 26, 2025

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR

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1 INTRODUCTION

This document is the Fiscal Year 2026 Performance Plan for the Department of Forensic Sciences.

This Performance Plan is the first of two agency performance documents published each year. The Performance Plan is published twice annually – preliminarily when the Mayor's budget proposal is delivered, and again at the start of the fiscal year when budget decisions have been finalized. A companion document, the Performance Accountability Report (PAR), is published annually in January following the end of the fiscal year. Each PAR assesses agency performance relative to its annual Performance Plan.

Performance Plan Structure: Performance plans are comprised of agency Objectives, Administrative Structures (such as Divisions, Administrations, and Offices), Activities, Projects and related performance measures. The following describes these plan components, and the types of performance measures agencies use to assess their performance.

Objectives: Objectives are statements of the desired benefits that are expected from the performance of an agency's mission. They describe the goals of the agency.

Administrative Structures: Administrative Structures represent the organizational units of an agency, such as Departments, Divisions, or Offices.

Activities: Activities represent the programs and services an agency provides. They reflect what an agency does on a regular basis (e.g., processing permits).

Projects: Projects are planned efforts that end once a particular outcome or goal is achieved.

Measures: Performance Measures may be associated with any plan component, or with the agency overall. Performance Measures can answer broad questions about an agency's overall performance or the performance of an organizational unit, a program or service, or the implementation of a major project. Measures can answer questions like "How much did we do?", "How well did we do it?", "How quickly did we do it?", and "Is anyone better off?" as described in the table below.

Measures are printed in the Performance Plan along with the Objective, Administrative Structure, Activity, or Project that they measure.

Measure Type	Measure Description	Example
Quantity	Quantity measures assess the volume of work an agency performs. These measures can describe the inputs (e.g., requests or cases) that an agency receives or the work that an agency completes (e.g., licenses issued or cases closed). Quantity measures often start with the phrase "Number of...".	"Number of public art projects completed"
Quality	Quality measures assess how well an agency's work meets standards, specifications, resident needs, or resident expectations. These measures can directly describe the quality of decisions or products or they can assess resident feelings, like satisfaction.	"Percent of citations issued that were appealed"
Efficiency	Efficiency measures assess the resources an agency used to perform its work and the speed with which that work was performed. Efficiency measures can assess the unit cost to deliver a product or service, but typically these measures assess describe completion rates, processing times, and backlog.	"Percent of claims processed within 10 business days"

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Measure Type	Measure Description	Example
Outcome	Outcome measures assess the results or impact of an agency's work. These measures describe the intended ultimate benefits associated with a program or service.	"Percent of families returning to homelessness within 6-12 months"
Context	Context measures describe the circumstances or environment that the agency operates in. These measures are typically outside of the agency's direct control.	"Recidivism rate for 18-24 year-olds"
District-wide Indicators	District-wide indicators describe demographic, economic, and environmental trends in the District of Columbia that are relevant to the agency's work, but are not in the control of a single agency.	"Area median income"

Targets: Agencies set targets for most performance measures before the start of the fiscal year. Targets may represent goals, requirements, or national standards for a performance measure. Agencies strive to achieve targets each year, and agencies provide explanations for targets that are not met at the end of the fiscal year in the subsequent Performance Accountability Report.

Not all measures are associated with a target. Newly added measures do not require targets for the first year, as agencies determine a data-informed benchmark. Changes in some measures may not indicate better or worse performance. They may be "neutral" measures of demand or input or outside of the agency's direct control. In some cases, the relative improvement of a measure over a prior period is a more meaningful indicator than meeting or exceeding a particular numerical goal, so a target is not set.

2 DEPARTMENT OF FORENSIC SCIENCES OVERVIEW

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

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

Objectives:

1. High-Quality Forensic and Public Health Analysis
2. Comprehensive Administrative, Training and Risk Management Supports
3. Efficient, Transparent, and Responsive Government

3 OBJECTIVES

3.1 HIGH-QUALITY FORENSIC AND PUBLIC HEALTH ANALYSIS

Provide high-quality forensic science and public health laboratory analysis to stakeholders so they can execute their own core services to the public in a timely manner. Our three overarching core services are: crime scene evidence collection, forensic science analysis, and public health laboratory diagnostic, analytical, and emergency response testing

Measure Type	Measure	Directionality	FY2024	FY2025 Target	FY2025	FY2026 Target
Quantity	Percent of priority cases completed in less than 60 days	Up is Better	92.86%	90%	93.47%	**93%**
Efficiency	Percent of Core Labratory Response Network for Chemical Threats (LRN-C) methods within the Clinical Toxicology Unit (CTU) that are evaluated as competent by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) LRN-C Program (competence is defined as successful score of >80% in two-out-of-three testing events, per method)	Up is Better	89.69%	100%	95%	**100%**
Efficiency	Percent of Crime Scene Reports completed within 14 calendar days	Up is Better	75.77%	95%	89.66%	**95%**
Efficiency	Percent of OCME samples ordered in microbiology that are tested and reported within 12 business days of receipt in the laboratory	Up is Better	93.47%	90%	88.96%	**90%**
Efficiency	Percent of all drugs that are transferred to Evidence Control Branch (ECB) within 30 days after all forensic testing is completed	Up is Better	98.81%	90%	100%	**90%**
Efficiency	Percent of all firearms that are transferred to the Evidence Control Branch (ECB) within 21 days after all forensic tests are completed	Up is Better	96.98%	90%	97.49%	**90%**
Efficiency	Percent of all jewelry received that are transferred to Evidence Control Branch (ECB) within 14 days	Up is Better	96.59%	90%	100%	**90%**

(continued)

Measure Type	Measure	Directionality	FY2024	FY2025 Target	FY2025	FY2026 Target
Efficiency	Percent of all rabies STAT specimen with human exposure that are tested and reported to the Zoonotic Disease Epidemiologist within 24 hours or 1 business day of receipt in the laboratory	Up is Better	89.35%	95%	79.6%	**95%**
Efficiency	Percent of biological terrorism and chemical terrorism samples with preliminary results reported within one business day	Up is Better	75.03%	90%	100%	**90%**
Efficiency	Percent of cases received in the Forensic Chemistry Unit that are tested and reported within 60 days of receipt in the laboratory	Up is Better	94.57%	90%	100%	**90%**
Efficiency	Percent of homicide cases completed in less than 60 days	Up is Better	49.63%	90%	92.42%	**90%**
Efficiency	Percent of samples ordered in molecular diagnostics that are tested and reported within 72 hours or three (3) business days of receipt in the laboratory	Up is Better	100%	90%	92.05%	**90%**

3.2 COMPREHENSIVE ADMINISTRATIVE, TRAINING AND RISK MANAGEMENT SUPPORTS

Provide administrative support, training and risk management oversight to our laboratory and technical units by ensuring compliance with the legal mandate to make analysis documents available. The science lab units will each have administrative support services to maintain operational capacity in the form of training, continuing education, safety, risk management, quality and legal support

Measure Type	Measure	Directionality	FY2024	FY2025 Target	FY2025	FY2026 Target
Outcome	Percent of scientists meeting technical competency requirements	Up is Better	99.79%	95%	86.3%	**95%**
Efficiency	Percent of FOIA responses returned on time (15 business days)	Up is Better	100%	100%	100%	**100%**
Efficiency	Percent of QCAR situation and root cause analysis sections completed within 30 business days	Up is Better	46.67%	100%	24.43%	**100%**

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Measure Type	Measure	Directionality	FY2024	FY2025 Target	FY2025	FY2026 Target
Efficiency	Percent of safety incident reports submitted to DFS Safety Officer within two (2) business days	Up is Better	100%	100%	100%	**100%**

3.3 EFFICIENT, TRANSPARENT, AND RESPONSIVE GOVERNMENT

Create and maintain a highly efficient, transparent, and responsive District government.

Measure Type	Measure	Directionality	FY2024	FY2025 Target	FY2025	FY2026 Target
Outcome	Percent of agency staff who were employed as Management Supervisory Service (MSS) employees prior to 4/1 of the fiscal year that had completed an Advancing Racial Equity (AE204) training facilitated by ORE within the past two years	Up is Better	93.75%	Target not required	100%	**Target not required**
Outcome	Percent of employees that are District residents	Up is Better	20.97%	Target not required	22.7%	**Target not required**
Outcome	Percent of new hires that are District residents (Peoplesoft)	Up is Better	20%	Target not required	35.29%	**Target not required**
Outcome	Percent of new hires that are current District residents and received a high school diploma from a DCPS or a District Public Charter School, or received an equivalent credential from the District of Columbia (eRecruit)	Up is Better	9.09%	Target not required	12.5%	**Target not required**
Outcome	Percent of required contractor evaluations submitted to the Office of Contracting and Procurement on time	Up is Better	40%	Target not required	66.67%	**Target not required**

4 ACTIVITIES

4.1 OVERSEE LABORATORY ENVIRONMENT FOR STAFF SAFETY AND HEALTH

Establish, manage and ensure compliance of federal, district, and local regulations and policy; and provide medical surveillance to staff, mandates safety training for all staff members, and audits laboratory facilities to ensure a safe work environment

Measure Type	Measure	Directionality	FY2024	FY2025 Target	FY2025	FY2026 Target
Quantity	Number of safety incidents reported	Neutral	9	Target not required	8	**Target not required**

4.2 OFFER TRAINING CURRICULUM FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provide a training curriculum to DFS employees to ensure they maintain skill sets, meet standards of excellence, and deliver high quality, accurate, and reliable services

Measure Type	Measure	Directionality	FY2024	FY2025 Target	FY2025	FY2026 Target
Quantity	Number of training hours completed by employees	Neutral	2,485.25	Target not required	2,730	**Target not required**

4.3 EFFICIENTLY PROCURE VITAL SERVICES AND RESOURCES

Proactively procure the necessary services, supplies, and equipment for the laboratories to meet the daily needs of scientists and agency personnel

Measure Type	Measure	Directionality	FY2024	FY2025 Target	FY2025	FY2026 Target
Quantity	Number of requisitions submitted into PASS	Neutral	109	Target not required	253	**Target not required**

4.4 STRATEGICALLY FORECAST, ANALYZE, AND PRESENT AGENCY DATA TO DETERMINE LEVELS OF RESOURCE EFFICIENCY AND GOAL ATTAINMENT

Analyze raw data and present graphical visuals of real-time workload from data obtained from LIMS, and other databases to better inform strategic leadership decisions to enhance laboratory services

No Related Measures

4.5 IMPROVE LABORATORY EFFICIENCY THROUGH TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES

DFS will continue to expand its capabilities as a top tier forensic and public health laboratory by implementing new scientific programs and investing in laboratory equipment infrastructure.

No Related Measures

4.6 MONITOR QUALITY COMPLIANCE WITH CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Assurance that DFS produces products that are fit for stakeholders' purposes by maintaining ISO 17025 accreditation for the agency, maintains Clinical Laboratory Improvement Act (CLIA) certification, as well as, compliance with applicable federal regulations such as the Division of Select Agents and Toxins (DSAT)

Measure Type	Measure	Directionality	FY2024	FY2025 Target	FY2025	FY2026 Target
Quantity	Number of internal audits	Neutral	15	Target not required	9	**Target not required**
Quantity	Number of Quality Corrective Action Requests opened	Neutral	71	Target not required	53	**Target not required**
Quantity	Number of stakeholder complaints received	Neutral	0	Target not required	1	**Target not required**

4.7 RESPONSIBLE FOR HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT AND RECRUITMENT FOR DFS AND SERVES AS LIAISON TO EXTERNAL ENTITIES

Supports the hiring of new employees and provides employee data on residency, on-board time, and performance plan completion from data pulled from PeopleSoft

Measure Type	Measure	Directionality	FY2024	FY2025 Target	FY2025	FY2026 Target
Quantity	Number of employees on-boarded	Neutral	45	Target not required	20	**Target not required**

4.8 EDUCATION AND GRIEF COUNSELING SERVICES

Education and Grief Counseling Services

No Related Measures

4.9 PROVIDE TIMELY TESTING OF PATHOGENS OF PUBLIC HEALTH SIGNIFICANCE

The Public Health Laboratory will provide diagnostic, analytical and emergency response testing for biological pathogens and chemical agents from clinical, environmental, or food sources.

Measure Type	Measure	Directionality	FY2024	FY2025 Target	FY2025	FY2026 Target
Quantity	Number of Proficiency Tests performed	Neutral	208	Target not required	219	**Target not required**
Quantity	Number of tests performed for each recieved public health sample	Neutral	15,031	Target not required	14,919	**Target not required**
Quantity	Number of verification/validation efforts performed	Up is Better	17	Target not required	9	**Target not required**

4.10 PROVIDE LEGAL ADVICE TO THE AGENCY AND FACILITATE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Facilitate stakeholder engagement, legally advise director level decision-making, train scientists for court testimony and presentation of scientific expertise, draft contracts and agreements with government and private organizations, and process discovery requests

Measure Type	Measure	Directionality	FY2024	FY2025 Target	FY2025	FY2026 Target
Quantity	Number of discovery requests received	Neutral	955	Target not required	1,090	**Target not required**
Quantity	Number of FOIA requests received	Neutral	21	Target not required	34	**Target not required**
Quantity	Number of MOA/MOUs the agency enters into with other agencies	Neutral	20	Target not required	22	**Target not required**

4.11 ENSURES ALL IT SYSTEMS AND DATABASES ARE OPERATIONAL AND SECURE FOR SCIENTISTS AND AGENCY PERSONNEL TO DELIVER REPORTS AND SERVICES TO STAKEHOLDERS

Promote and facilitate the effective integration of technology into the DFS divisions by developing, supporting, and maintaining a highly effective, reliable, secure, and innovative information systems to support agency needs

Measure Type	Measure	Directionality	FY2024	FY2025 Target	FY2025	FY2026 Target
Quantity	Number of IT service requests received	Neutral	1,481	Target not required	1,375	**Target not required**

4.12 CONDUCT PROFESSIONAL AND EXPEDIENT CRIME SCENE RESPONSES, COLLECTION, AND STORAGE OF EVIDENCE

The Crime Scene Sciences Division will serve as stewards of evidence by maintaining custody of evidence from collection to storage at DFS.

Measure Type	Measure	Directionality	FY2024	FY2025 Target	FY2025	FY2026 Target
Quantity	Number of crime scenes processed	Neutral	7,299	Target not required	4,854	**Target not required**
Quantity	Number of evidence items received	Neutral	72,292	Target not required	50,332	**Target not required**

4.13 CONDUCT TIMELY FORENSIC ANALYSIS

The Forensic Science Laboratory division will conduct coordinated and timely forensic analysis in accordance with industry standards and accreditation guidelines.

Measure Type	Measure	Directionality	FY2024	FY2025 Target	FY2025	FY2026 Target
Efficiency	Number of AFIS database hits	Up is Better	520	Target not required	297	**Target not required**
Efficiency	Number of CODIS database hits	Up is Better	505	Target not required	460	**Target not required**
Quantity	Number of AFIS database entries	Neutral	2,398	Target not required	440	**Target not required**
Quantity	Number of CODIS database entries	Up is Better	1,079	Target not required	883	**Target not required**
Quantity	Number of samples processed (Syringe Surveillance)	Neutral	2,644	Target not required	1,028	**Target not required**
Quantity	Number of service requests from stakeholders	Neutral	4,151	Target not required	3,248	**Target not required**

5 PROJECTS

5.1 REFERENCE TESTING PROGRAM: PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY

Proposed Completion Date: September 30, 2029

The Public Health Laboratory (PHL) will work to establish a fee-based referral testing program that offers high-quality laboratory services to District agencies and healthcare partners. With the FY25 and FY26 budget enhancement, this initiative aims to create a dependable and consistent source of revenue for the agency while meeting the testing needs of various stakeholders in the community.

5.2 IMPLEMENT NEW TECHNOLOGIES WITHIN FORENSIC SCIENCE LABORATORY

Proposed Completion Date: March 31, 2027

The field of forensic science is continually developing new technologies that increase testing efficacy and efficiency. DFS needs to acquire and implement new technologies to stay current with the field and to best serve the District. Thus, with this FY25 and FY26 budget enhancement, the Forensic Sciences Laboratory (FSL) intends to implement the following technological advancements:
1, The Forensic Biology Unit (FBU} will purchase and validate the latest version of STRmix software to deconvolute multiple person mixtures and Increase sensitivity and automation in DNA analysis.
2, The Forensic Chemistry Unit (FCU) will validate and implement a recently acquired Quadrupole Time-of-Flight (QToF) mass spectrometer to assist in identifying and properly classifying complex structures of new substances that pose risks to public health
These technological advancements aim to keep the forensic science department current with the field and improve its service to the District.

5.3 RECONSTITUTE THE FIREARM EXAMINATION UNIT

Proposed Completion Date: December 31, 2028

The loss of accreditation in 2021 was attributed to the mishandling of Firearm Examination Unit (FEU) analyses, and FEU was dissolved later that year. Considering this history, DFS needs to rebuild firearm examination testing protocols following field-wide best practices. For DFS to offer firearm examination of evidence, it must rebuild the unit. In 2020, the FEU received 254 firearm analysis requests. Based on national data, six (6) full-time analysts are needed to process an annual caseload of 254 requests. In addition to the analysts, the unit requires a manager and a technical leader for full functionality.

5.4 QUALITY ASSURANCE

Proposed Completion Date: March 31, 2027

This multi-year initiative aims to maintain and expand the agency's accreditations and licenses. The focus for FY25 will be on reaccrediting the Latent Fingerprint Unit (LFU) and investigating accreditation requirements for the Crime Scene Sciences Unit (CSSU).
During the FY26 budget process, the agency plans to request additional funding to:

1. Support quality assurance resources for expanding accreditation to include the CSSU
2. Reinstate the Firearms Examinations Unit (FEU)
3. Resume in-house evidence processing
4. Enhance the Quality Assurance Unit's (QAU) capacity by expanding personnel to adequately support the unit's technical and operational components
5. Implement new technologies across forensic science laboratories

This comprehensive approach will strengthen the agency's forensic capabilities and ensure compliance with industry standards.

5.5 REDUCTION IN RELIANCE ON OUTSOURCING: FORENSIC SCIENCE LABORATORY

Proposed Completion Date: September 30, 2028

The Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) experienced a significant setback when it lost its accreditation in May 2021. However, in December 2023, the laboratory successfully regained accreditation in two key areas: forensic biology (FBU) and forensic chemistry (FCU). During the period of non-accreditation, the FSL was forced to rely entirely on external vendor laboratories for forensic analyses of seized drugs, latent prints, and biological evidence. This challenging time also saw a considerable loss of personnel.
Looking ahead, the FSL aims to rebuild its capacity and bring all routine casework back in-house. To achieve this goal, the laboratory plans to request additional full-time employees (FTEs) during the fiscal year 2026 budget process. This staffing increase is deemed essential based on current industry data and forensic testing request rates. The expansion of the workforce will be a crucial step in restoring the FSL's ability to handle 100% of its routine casework internally.

5.6 SUSTAINABILITY OF PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY

Proposed Completion Date: September 30, 2026

The Public Health Laboratory (PHL) will continue to build and maintain a team of highly qualified and diverse laboratory and support staff. This FY25 and FY26 budget enhancement provides a critical need for sustaining the program's ability to conduct routine testing and respond effectively to emergencies. By focusing on hiring and conversion of temporary grant-funded positions to permanent FTEs, the goal is to maximize capability and sustain testing capacity and operations, even during crises.