



Technology Transition Workshop | *David L. Sylvester*

Field Investigation Drug Officer Program History

Statistical Facts

- Over 19,000 law enforcement agencies submit controlled substance cases for analysis to forensic laboratories
- National Forensic Laboratory Information System (NFLIS) statistics show that 80% of all controlled substance submissions are in one of four categories: Heroin, Cocaine, Methamphetamine, or Marijuana

Statistical Facts (Continued)

- 2005 Consensus of Public Funded Crime Laboratories revealed that controlled substance identification amounted to almost half of all backlogged requests for service
- There were over 774,000 requests for controlled substance analysis in 2005

Program Concept

- The critical concern for drug-related backlogged cases prompted the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) to address the issue through a focus group initiative

Initial Program Steps

- Development of the Drug Detection Technology Focus Group in late 2002
- Focus Group included representatives from NIJ, DEA, NLECTC, forensic science organizations, judicial community, crime laboratory community, academic institutions, and law enforcement

Initial Program Steps (Continued)

- Focus group initial meetings were held in Phoenix, San Diego and Washington, D.C.
- National Forensic Science Technology Center (NFSTC) assumed the project management role for FIDO at the Phoenix meeting in June 2003
- NFSTC partnered with Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) and Rural Law Enforcement Technology Center (RULETC) for content development, technology testing, and program pilot testing sites deployment

Focus Group Discussion Topics

- Legal acceptability
- Program flexibility and adaptability
- Program monitoring
- Quality assurance and control
- Capturing statistical data
- Future technology

Program Mission Statement

- The development of a Field Investigation Drug Officer (FIDO) Recommended Practice Guide that can be utilized and provide benefits to law enforcement, the judiciary, and the forensic laboratory community

Program Objectives

- Provide a recommended practice guide of standardized methodology for field testing of controlled substances
- Provide a program which allows an agency the capability to certify officers that have received comprehensive training

Program Objectives (Continued)

- Provide a program which instills a level of confidence in drug field testing for law enforcement, prosecution, and the courts
- Provide a program which has the potential to significantly reduce controlled substance case backlogs within the crime laboratory
- Provide a program which is adaptable as new technology is tested and validated

Program Model

- Phoenix Police Department
 - Two-day training course for officer certification
- Certified officers perform tests for non-certified officers
- Annual recertification required
- Simple possession cases

Program Development

- Beginning in June 2003 through October 2006 the program was designed and developed
- Several subject matter experts were utilized and contributed to the development of the program materials
- As with most government-sponsored projects, the program progressed through many alterations and change requests

Program Development (Continued)

- The program was designed with sufficient flexibility to enable adaptation based on agency-specific needs and resources
- The program is intended to be flexible enough for individual officer testing or for utilization by a specialized department unit capable of providing jurisdiction-wide service

Program Development (Continued)

- The program is structured to provide the ability to be partially adopted for testing of a specific controlled substance
- The program is comprised of a comprehensive training program and quality assurance system that provides law enforcement personnel with the resources necessary to perform preliminary identification of controlled substances

Program Development (Continued)

- It is imperative to understand and remember that individual departmental policies and jurisdictional legal requirements should be closely reviewed for their impact on different aspects of the program

Pilot Programs

- Initial pilot site training program conducted November 1 – 2, 2006
- Participants included:
 - Utah Bureau of Forensic Science
 - Philadelphia Police Department and District Attorney
 - Oregon State Police and Ontario Oregon Police Department
 - Michigan State Police

Pilot Programs (Continued)

- Utah and Philadelphia are the only two original pilot sites that have continued to utilize the program
 - Utah has experienced considerable success
 - Philadelphia has had some measure of success, but took their program in a different, unintended direction of being confirmatory in nature

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