



BUREAU OF FORENSIC SERVICES FACT SHEET

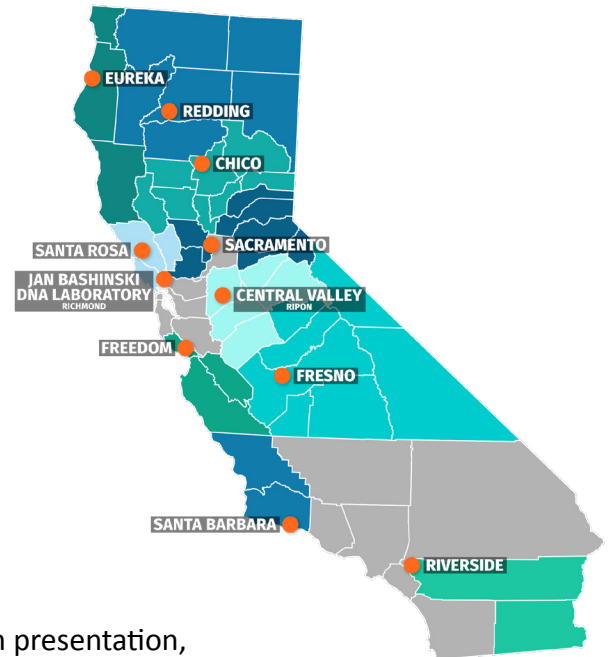
WHAT IS THE BUREAU OF FORENSIC SERVICES?

The Bureau of Forensic Services (BFS) is the forensic science arm of the California Department of Justice. Its dedicated forensic scientists and award-winning laboratory system serve as a powerful resource for law enforcement agencies throughout California in solving crimes, identifying missing persons, cracking cold cases, bringing perpetrators to justice — and, ultimately, in protecting people's lives.

WHO DOES BFS SERVE?

The BFS regional crime laboratory system was originally established in 1972 to provide assistance to local law enforcement agencies that did not have access to local crime laboratory services.

Today, BFS operates 10 regional crime laboratories throughout California that serve the 46 counties in the state that are not served by a local city/county crime laboratory. BFS labs also serve statewide agencies like the California Highway Patrol. In addition, BFS operates a centralized drug toxicology program and the Jan Bashinski DNA Laboratory, which houses the statewide CAL-DNA Data Bank Program and the statewide Missing Persons DNA Program (MPDP).



WHAT DOES BFS DO?

From the initial crime scene investigation to the final courtroom presentation, BFS offers invaluable services at every stage of a criminal investigation/case:

Providing Crime Scene Support – BFS criminalists and latent print analysts provide local law enforcement agencies with on-site investigative support in the form of crime scene reconstruction, analysis of blood spatter patterns, and evidence collection and processing of major crime scenes and clandestine drug labs.

Helping Families Find Closure – The BFS Missing Persons DNA Program (MPDP) is one of only three programs of its kind in the nation. It compares DNA from missing persons and unidentified human remains with DNA from personal articles belonging to reported missing persons and DNA from their relatives. Since its establishment in 2001, the MPDP has identified thousands of missing persons, helping their families, and loved ones find closure.

Cracking Down on Alcohol- and Drug-Related Offenses – The BFS Toxicology Laboratory in Sacramento analyzes blood and urine samples in drug and alcohol-related investigations, including those taken from drivers during roadside DUI enforcement, and from victims of suspected drug-facilitated sexual assault.

Identifying Perpetrators – Each day, state and local law enforcement agencies submit evidence from crime scenes to BFS laboratories, including biological evidence, impression evidence (e.g., shoe prints, fingerprints, and tire tracks), and trace evidence (e.g., hair, fiber, glass, fire debris, paint, and gunshot residue). The laboratories examine and analyze the evidence, and in the case of biological evidence, they work to develop DNA profiles to identify potential perpetrators. BFS has assisted in tens of thousands of criminal investigations and contributed to thousands of convictions of the most violent criminals.

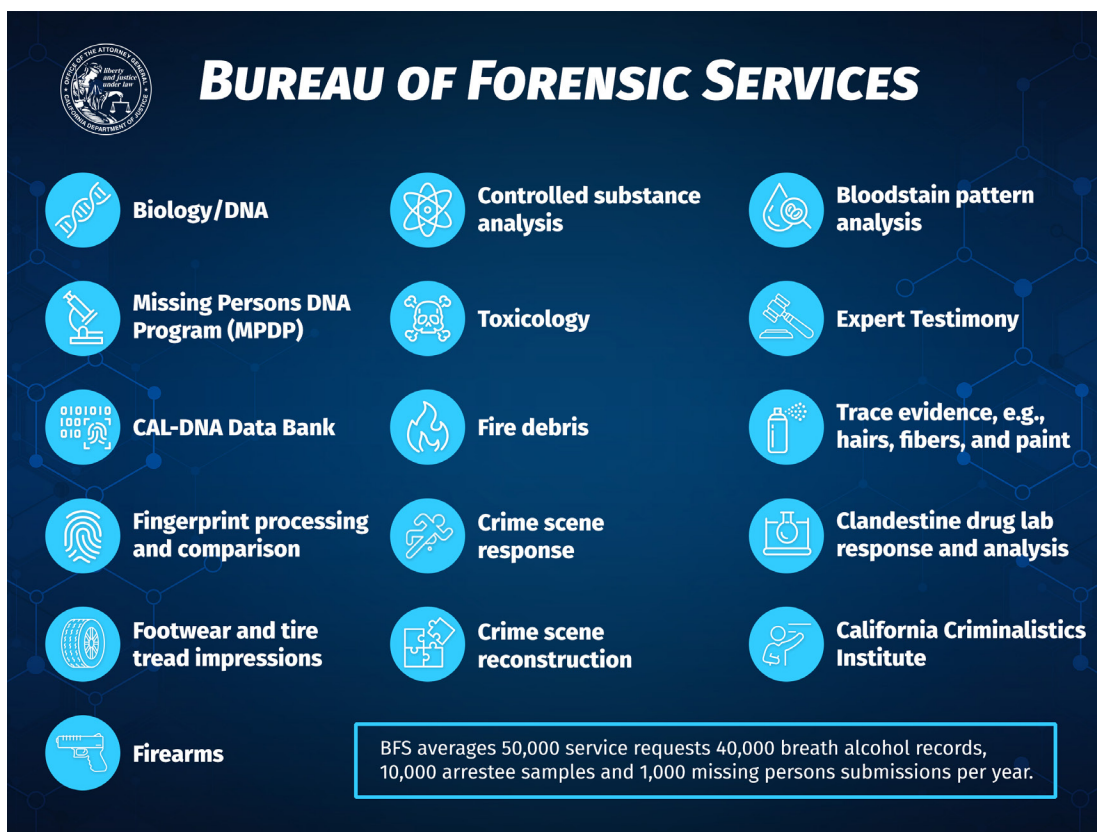


Exonerating the Innocent – The work that BFS laboratories perform provides information that can be used to clear suspects as the perpetrators of crimes. BFS has been involved in cases that absolved wrongly convicted individuals through advances in DNA technology.

Testifying in Court – For BFS, the work continues beyond the crime scene and the laboratory. BFS’s forensic scientists regularly testify as expert witnesses in state and federal criminal trials about their analyses and findings, helping to bring context to evidence and contribute to the justice system.

Advancing forensic science and training the next generation of criminalists – The BFS Jan Bashinski DNA Laboratory in Richmond conducts research and method development to advance forensic DNA analysis technologies and coordinates the development of statewide standards on forensic DNA analysis.

BFS also offers specialized forensic science training to personnel who are practitioners in the field of forensic science, through the California Criminalistics Institute (CCI). Visiting forensic scientists come from around the world to study at CCI. This helps in the incorporation of new and developing forensic technologies for California’s crime laboratories.



RECENT NOTABLE CASES

In April 2023, BFS assisted in the [identification of an unidentified woman](#) whose skeletal remains were found on the side of a rural county road in Madera County in 1987. The skeletal remains were identified as Christine Lester, a Navajo woman who went missing from northern Arizona in 1987.

In 2020, BFS assisted in the [identification of a deceased infant](#) whose skeletonized remains were found in 2007 in an irrigation canal in Yolo County. The infant was identified as Nikko Lee Perez, and his father, Paul Perez, was subsequently charged with Nikko’s murder and the murders of four of Nikko’s siblings.