

## FACT SHEET

### Placer County Forensic Science Laboratory

*A Joint Placer County – California State University, Sacramento Public Safety Investment*

**Purpose:** The Placer County Forensic Science Laboratory is envisioned as a joint County – University crime lab that houses a state-of-the-art, working laboratory for forensic science professionals and instructional space for teaching and scholarship in the field of forensic science. The facility would immediately address persistent forensic backlogs that delay the pursuit of justice for victims, families and the accused. The new facility will provide comprehensive forensic analysis of physical evidence submitted by law enforcement agencies throughout Placer County and potentially outlying counties on a fee-for-service basis, as well as support science-based career pathways and applied instruction through Sacramento State, using a teaching-hospital-style model that integrates live casework, supervised training, and continuous improvement of forensic practice.

#### **Project Overview:**

- Facility Size: 30,000 to 35,000 gross square feet (GSF)
  - The California State University (CSU) RFQ describes a new ~30,000 GSF laboratory building for forensic casework, in addition to academic and administrative space for both the University and Placer County
  - Independent forensic programming identified by the Placer County District Attorney and modeled by McClaren, Wilson & Lawrie (MWL) architects for Placer County identifies ~32,500 GSF to support the full range of proposed forensic services over a 30-year planning horizon, including growth capacity
- Delivery Model: Collaborative Design-Build managed and delivered by the CSU real estate team, allowing cost control, programming validation, and phased delivery while ensuring early and sustained alignment between forensic operations, academic instruction, and workforce training requirements
- Location: “*Sacramento State Placer,*” a 301-acre entitled site with completed Master Plan and EIR, in western Placer County 18 miles northeast of Sacramento, adjacent to Sunset Boulevard and strategically positioned near other current and planned local, regional and federal public safety facilities

#### **Forensic Capabilities (Scalable, Tiered Design):**

##### **Tier 1 – Priority Forensic Services (Initial Build)**

- Toxicology & Blood Alcohol
- Controlled Substances (Drug Chemistry)
- Biology / DNA
- Firearms and Gun Shot Residue (GSR)
- Evidence Control & Secure Storage
- Vehicle Examination Bay

These disciplines are supported by purpose-built laboratory spaces, evidence intake and control areas, and secure back-of-house functions.

##### **Tier 2 – Advanced / Expandable Services (As Need & Funding Allow)**

- Firearms Laboratory, including:
  - Projectile Recovery Tank (PRT) with remote firing device
  - 50-foot indoor firing range
  - Cadre Forensics Topmatch 3D Virtual Comparison Microscopy System

- NIBIN room
- 2,000-gun reference collection (modeled on Sacramento County)
- Additional advanced DNA capabilities (e.g., Rapid DNA and possibly Genetic Genealogy)

The facility is intentionally designed to scale, allowing Tier 2 services to come online as caseloads, staffing, and funding justify expansion. The design also consciously integrates supervised student engagement, practitioner mentoring, and applied research, similar to a clinical teaching environment, without compromising chain-of-custody, evidentiary integrity, or case throughput.

**Public Safety Need & Risk Context:**

- Current Risk: Placer County relies heavily on California DOJ laboratories, which face persistent backlogs and delayed turnaround times creating downstream impacts on charging decisions, trial readiness, and public confidence
- Structural Pressure: California population analysis projects Placer County growth of ~16.9% by 2050, increasing forensic demand and compounding existing delays if local capacity is not established.
- Data Constraint: DOJ caseload data for Placer County remains limited, requiring conservative planning assumptions and reinforcing the need for local control and transparency in forensic services.

**Leveraging the County DA / University Partnership:**

- Sacramento State’s Forensic Science program will occupy academic labs, classrooms, and administrative space for students and faculty within the shared facility enabling applied, supervised learning alongside practicing forensic professionals, reinforcing national standards, continuous improvement, and evidence-based practice that prepares students for entry into public safety and forensic science careers under real-world conditions. A Bachelor of Science in Forensic Science will be the first degree offered at Sacramento State Placer. The degree will be unique, available only to Sacramento State Placer students.

**Budget, Funding, and Approval Strategy:**

- Direct Construction Cost: estimated to be >\$29.5 million
  - Represents construction only (facility shell, core, and specialized lab build-out)
  - Does not include lab equipment or ongoing operational costs
- The project is structured to leverage future state and federal grant augmentation, including staff costs, equipment, specialized instrumentation, and Tier 2 service activation.
- The project will need to be analyzed to determine consistency with prior environmental approvals prior to approval and will need final approval from the CSU and County to move forward.

**Why Federal Participation Matters:**

- Strengthens regional public safety infrastructure in a high-growth corridor
- Reduces local justice system risk by shortening forensic turnaround times at state labs
- Creates new service capacity for rural counties in California’s Central Valley and Far North
- Supports a teaching-hospital-style forensic model that improves quality, reduces system risk, and creates a durable pipeline of forensic professionals aligned with national standards
- Creates a replicable county–university model for forensic capacity building, workforce training, and applied research
- Aligns with current federal justice priorities, public safety readiness, and intergovernmental collaboration

*Prepared for legislative advocacy purposes. All technical assumptions and space requirements are grounded in CSU RFQ documentation, MWL forensic needs analysis, and multi-agency programming meetings.*