

# AG Kaul: Advocates for Crime Labs, invites legislators to tour

Posted on Thursday, Mar 28, 2019

**>> WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

MILWAUKEE, Wis. – Attorney General Josh Kaul today hosted legislators at the Milwaukee and Madison locations of the Wisconsin State Crime Laboratories (WSCL) and advocated for the states crime labs to be adequately funded. The WSCL at the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) are the only full service criminal laboratories in Wisconsin, and provides testing and analysis of evidence for every community in the state.

“Staff at the state crime labs analyze evidence and respond to crime scenes across the state. Failing to adequately fund the crime labs can result in backlogs and delay justice,” said Attorney General Kaul. “I hope there’s broad support for DOJ’s request for increased funding for the crime labs.”

“Experience has taught us how important it is to analyze evidence and process scenes effectively. I am confident that the addition of the attorney general’s request, if passed, will enhance our ability to solve crime and address the challenges of the future. Attorney General Kaul can see the issues needing attention – we as Sheriff’s support his request,” said President of Badger State Sheriff’s Association and Green Lake County Sheriff Mark Podoll.

The WSCL tests evidence submitted by law enforcement agencies, coroners, medical examiners, district attorneys, wardens or superintendents of any state prison, state agency heads, the attorney general, or the governor, at no charge to the submitting official. The crime labs also conduct analysis upon request of a defendant in a felony action that is approved by the presiding judge. The crime labs provide the following services: crime scene response, toxicology, drug identification, DNA analysis including the DNA Databank, trace evidence analysis, firearms and tool marks analysis, fingerprint and footwear analysis, ten print comparison, photo

work, and forensic imaging.

“There is great value in addressing criminal justice resource needs at the system level, and the crime lab is a good example of the ways that funding the criminal justice system is interrelated. Appropriate resources for the crime lab reduces the potential for error and allows for the most efficient testing of evidence. A lack of trained analysts delays justice for both victims and defendants when evidence isn’t processed in a timely manner,” said State Public Defender Kelli Thompson.

The lab is staffed by approximately 180 managers, forensic scientists, and technicians at facilities in Madison, Milwaukee, and Wausau. The Madison lab serves 24 southern counties, the Milwaukee lab services eight counties in the metro area, and the Wausau lab serves 40 northern Wisconsin counties.

“The Wisconsin State Crime Laboratory plays an essential role assisting law enforcement with the investigation of prosecution of criminal matters,” said Brown County District Attorney David Lasee. “The crime lab’s ability to timely and effectively respond to crime scenes and conduct DNA and other types of analyses has been instrumental in solving significant crimes and holding offenders accountable.”

In September 2018, the National Forensic Science Technology Center (NFSTC) released a [comprehensive report](#) to improve the productivity and efficiency of analytical operations at the three state crime laboratories in order to address backlogs of evidence to be tested and increasing turnaround times. The recommendations are based on a detailed analysis of workflows and assessments of substantiated observations. The compensation and staffing recommendations require legislative action, via DOJ’s budget request, to implement.

DOJ’s budget requests pay progression to address pay disparities, pay compression, and inequity with comparable crime laboratories in the region, at a cost of \$1,899,500 of additional funding in Fiscal Year 2021.

The budget also includes 15 new positions for \$1,807,700 GPR over the biennium:

- Three crime scene response staff members, one for each laboratory.
- Six DNA technicians, three for each DNA unit.
- Three chemistry technicians, one for each lab.

- One evidence technician for the Madison lab.
- Two firearms analyst positions, in order to reopen the firearms and tool marks unit in Madison.

<https://www.doj.state.wi.us/news-releases/ag-kaul-advocates-crime-labs-invites--legislators-tour>