

Department of Public Safety
Additional Info for CJPS Committee
Crime Laboratory DNA Test Kits

Increase in Federal Expenditures Fund – Ref # 2313, Page 1

This initiative increases All Other in the Federal Expenditures Fund's baseline by \$65,961. This is to allow for the purchase of DNA test kits with federal grant funds.

The questions were asked of how these grants came about, and why we are not asking for these funds to be budgeted for subsequent years.

In 1997 the Maine State Police Crime Lab built an addition on to the existing Crime Lab facility for the purpose of conducting DNA testing. The process of DNA testing at our lab was barely underway when the value of DNA evidence to help both clear and implicate suspects began to spread in the law enforcement and prosecutorial communities. Law enforcement agencies began bringing in items for testing at a faster rate than the lab could keep up with. This created a backlog that continued to grow over the next several years. Due to the success of DNA being used as a tool to efficiently and effectively further criminal justice, the nation saw a backlog of DNA cases across the country at the same time as we did here in Maine.

In 2004 the Maine State Police started receiving federal formula grant monies for the purpose of reducing that backlog. We continue to receive grant funding to this day for the purposes of reducing the DNA backlog. In addition to purchasing DNA kits with this grant, we currently support a DNA analyst at 30 hours per week and support a forensic chemist working on processing sexual assault cases at 40 hours per week.

- Similar formula or competitive grant funding has also allowed the purchasing of several pieces of equipment for DNA testing. For recent examples:

2018 - \$54,000 on Pipette robot Instruments;

2019 - \$143,000 on Probabilistic Genotyping equipment; and

2020 - \$99,000 on STR Software and \$75,000 to validate instruments in the lab

We reapply for the formula grant each year. The allowable uses of the grant change from time to time and the total funding available changes often making it difficult to predict if we will be able to purchase DNA kits in future years.