

LEAN Ohio

Breakthrough improvements at the crime lab:

CRIME FIGHTERS TO GET FINDINGS ON DNA AND OTHER EVIDENCE IN DAYS RATHER THAN MONTHS

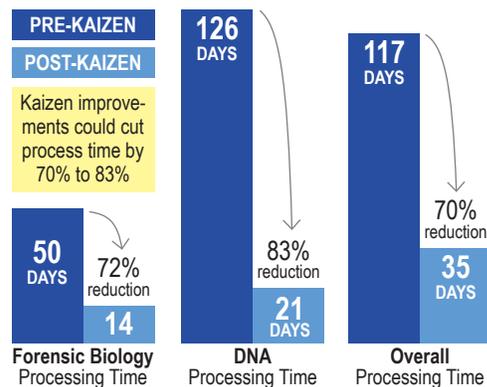
IN BRIEF: Ohio's crime labs analyze evidence and DNA for police departments and county sheriffs. It's crucial work that needs to be done right and done quickly. A Kaizen event has prompted major improvements that maximize efficiency.

STANDARDIZATION: Three processes at three labs have been turned into one.

GREATER EFFICIENCY: The new process involves 103 fewer steps, reducing the time from submission of evidence to final report by as much as 83% once all the improvements are in place. See the chart on the right for more metrics.

SAVINGS: The switch to online reporting will save \$57,000 per year.

Projected processing time in average number of days:



DETAILS:

Ohio is working smart in the fight against crime. Thanks to big improvements at the state's three crime labs, law enforcement agencies will get faster findings regarding their submissions of forensic evidence and DNA samples.

Projections show that once the improvements are fully in place, forensic testing could take as few as 14 calendar days from receipt of evidence to issuance of a findings report (72% faster). With DNA testing, the average time could go as low as 21 days (83% faster). And when evidence includes forensic and DNA components, the projected average time could drop to 35 days (70% faster).

The faster processing is good news for Ohio's crime fighters. It will speed up investigations and help prosecutors move more quickly to build their cases and put criminals behind bars. But

most of all, it does right by the victims of crime by ensuring that justice is brought about sooner rather than later.

The improvements were developed at the Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation (BCI). A team of 15 people began by creating detailed flow charts of the three different processes used by labs in London (main office), Richfield, and Bowling Green. The team then turned the three workflows into one, developing a single streamlined process for all locations that maintains high quality with 55% fewer steps and 50% fewer handoffs.

One of the key improvements is at the front end of the new process. Easy checks are being put in place to ensure that forensic samples and all required information are complete when first submitted by law enforcement agencies. This prevents loopbacks,



Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine launched the Kaizen event on a Monday morning – then returned on Friday to meet again with team members, review the improvements in a detailed briefing, and encourage implementation.

rework, and resulting delays.

Another key improvement is at the end of the new process. Final reports from BCI will increasingly be provided in electronic format, replacing the hard-copy versions with all their paper, postage, and extra handling. Savings of \$57,000 are expected each year with the paperless approach.

Also, the team's analysis found that scientists were spending too much time on activities that could be done by technicians and office assistants – such as cleaning the work areas and mixing chemicals. Staff duties have been adjusted so that lab scientists can focus on work that calls for their specialized skills. This is allowing them to process cases more quickly, and it adds up to a wiser use of payroll dollars.

Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine met with the team during its Monday morning launch to affirm his support and underscore the project's importance. He returned on Friday for a briefing by team members that went into detail on their analysis, improvements, and results.

The week was filled with nonstop work involving a team of leaders from BCI, scientists and other staff from all three locations, a former detective and deputy sheriff who is now a special agent in the crime scene unit, an assistant attorney general with prosecutorial experience, and others. BCI Superintendent Tom Stickrath filled a key role, meeting with the team several times each day to get updates, provide input, and eliminate roadblocks on the spot. Staff from IT, purchasing, and elsewhere were brought in to answer questions specific to their functions.

The five-day format is known as a Kaizen event. It uses methodologies and tools for achieving big gains in efficiency, savings, and customer satisfaction. Kaizen is used extensively at successful private-sector companies throughout the world. In Ohio state government, it is among the tools that are a part of the Lean Ohio improvement effort. Staff from the Lean Ohio Program Office facilitated the BCI Kaizen event.



ABOUT A KAIZEN EVENT: TEAM MEMBER PERSPECTIVE

"I was skeptical of the process in the beginning. I thought, *there's no way we're going to be able to do this in a week*. But by the second day, I was starting to realize, *we're getting it done!* It's amazing. We did it in four days."

BRENDA GERARDI
DNA Forensic Scientist, BCI-Richfield

