Considerations for CODIS Laboratories Implementing Forensic Rapid DNA Programs with Partner Agencies

CODIS laboratories must determine what type or types of Forensic Rapid DNA Programs will be implemented.

- Laboratory Implementation (Forensic Quality Assurance Standard (QAS) 18):
    - Laboratory operation of Rapid DNA instruments/Systems in the laboratory.
    - Laboratory operation of Rapid DNA instruments/Systems in locations outside of the DNA laboratory space but under physical control of the laboratory (e.g., in a secure room in the DNA laboratory's building, secure room outside the laboratory building, or a regional laboratory location)
    - Laboratory operation of Rapid DNA instruments/Systems in mobile/temporary capacity.
- Laboratory – Partner Agency Implementation (Forensic QAS Standard 19):
    - Operation of a Forensic Rapid DNA Program in conjunction with a Rapid DNA Partner Agency and the partner agency location(s).
    - Operation of a Forensic Rapid DNA Program with a Rapid DNA Partner Agency operating a mobile/temporary capacity.

A forensic sample processed in a Rapid DNA instrument must meet the following criteria prior to upload or search in CODIS:

1. Location/mobile component must be covered under the scope of accreditation of the CODIS laboratory at time of processing
2. Processed in accordance with the 2025 Forensic QAS on or after July 1, 2025
3. Processed using an NDIS approved Rapid DNA cartridge/chip specifically for forensic samples
4. Data must undergo DNA analyst interpretation and review
5. Meet all CODIS eligibility requirements

CODIS Laboratory Coordination with Partner Agencies:

- The CODIS Laboratory must take the leadership role for implementation of a Forensic Rapid DNA Program with partner agency(ies).
    - A *Rapid DNA Partner Agency* is a criminal justice agency, such as a law enforcement agency or medical examiner's office, which is operating a Rapid DNA instrument/System in conjunction with a laboratory and under that laboratory's scope of accreditation and is contributing the DNA data to the laboratory's Forensic Rapid DNA Program. This definition also applies to the laboratory's primary/parent agency when developing a Forensic Rapid DNA Program for use of Rapid DNA instruments by the parent agency outside of the DNA analysis facilities of operation. CODIS access is limited to the CODIS Laboratory; the partner agency does not have direct access to CODIS. Rapid DNA data and case information must be transferred to the CODIS laboratory for CODIS eligibility, profile determination to upload/search CODIS and reporting.
- Formation of a Forensic Rapid DNA Task Force with all relevant stakeholders is recommended prior to execution of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The development of a Forensic Rapid DNA Program takes considerable planning to include expansion of the Laboratory's scope of accreditation to potential partner agency locations, training, documentation requirements, and secure transfer of data to the Laboratory.
    - Stakeholders include but may not be limited to CODIS laboratory personnel such as laboratory management, quality assurance manager, CODIS administrator, technical leader and IT personnel. Partner agency personnel may include management, evidence control, crime scene response personnel, technical personnel, and IT personnel.
- Stakeholders must understand the commitment, cooperation, coordination, resources (see below), and need to maintain regular communication that is necessary for the successful implementation of a Forensic Rapid DNA Program which is in compliance with the FBI's Forensic DNA Quality Assurance Standards for Rapid DNA.

Laboratory is required to establish an MOU defining the roles, responsibilities, information technology requirements, and sample acceptance with each agency planning to establish a Forensic Rapid DNA Program with the CODIS agency.

Resources:

- Identify sustainable funding sources for the purchase of Rapid DNA instruments, reagents, and maintenance agreements. The laboratory may need additional personnel to support a Forensic Rapid DNA Program. CODIS laboratories may require partner agencies to fund their own participation in a Forensic Rapid DNA Program.
- Implementation of a Forensic Rapid DNA Program with partner agencies will require a *Laboratory Rapid DNA Administrator* (same qualifications as the casework CODIS Administrator) to oversee Rapid operations at partner locations.
    - Partner Agency requires a Lead Rapid DNA Operator who is the main POC for the CODIS Laboratory.
- The CODIS laboratory will be responsible for developing and implementing the following key elements:
    - An expansion of the laboratory's ISO 17025 accreditation scope to include each partner agency location where a Forensic Rapid DNA instrument will be located.
        - Scope expansion requires planning and support from both the CODIS and partner agency.
            - Consider whether a regional concept is appropriate.
                - Multiple partner agencies sharing one location.
    - A Memorandum of Understanding with partner agencies outlining the responsibilities of each.
    - A secure electronic data transfer mechanism to facilitate the transfer of critical case documentation and quality assurance documentation to the laboratory.
        - Rapid DNA data and case information must be securely transferred to the CODIS laboratory for CODIS eligibility, profile determination to upload/search CODIS, and reporting.
        - Potential integration of Rapid DNA Data into the Laboratory LIMS system.
    - Forensic Rapid DNA policies and procedures that are in compliance with Rapid DNA requirements outlined in the FBI's 2025 Forensic QAS and NDIS Operational Procedures.
        - 2025 Forensic QAS are effective July 1, 2025, and shall not be applied retroactively.
        - All data in CODIS is the responsibility of the CODIS laboratory
    - A training program for partner agency personnel.
        - Appropriate sample type(s) for Rapid DNA is a critical component.
    - A validated modified Rapid DNA analysis (analyst interpretation and review) workflow for forensic samples.
        - Complexity of internal modified Rapid DNA analysis validation for a Forensic Rapid DNA Program is dependent on:
            - The number of sample types allowed for forensic Rapid DNA processing (blood, saliva, tissue, bone, semen, etc.)
            - Inclusion of mixture interpretation (binary or probabilistic genotyping)
        - Procedures for efficient reporting of hit information
            - Local hits, state offender hits vs national offender hits
- Important documents to assist with requirements for implementation will be published on le.fbi.gov as they are approved and/or effective. These documents include:
    - Guide to All Things Rapid DNA
    - Crime Scene Rapid DNA Requirements for CODIS developed by the CJIS Advisory Policy Board's Rapid DNA Task Force
    - Forensic Rapid DNA specific Quality Assurance Standards incorporated into the Quality Assurance Standards for Forensic DNA Testing Laboratories available at SWGDAM.org
    - 2025 Quality Assurance Standards Guidance Document available at SWGDAM.org
    - Forensic Rapid DNA specific NDIS Operational Procedures incorporated into the NDIS Operational Procedure Manual (anticipated mid 2025)

For more information, please visit https://le.fbi.gov/science-and-lab/biometrics-and-fingerprints/codis/rapid-dna.