

Nearly 9 in 10 (88%) of the nation's 409 publicly funded forensic crime laboratories were accredited by a professional science organization in 2014, which was up from 82% in 2009 and 70% in 2002. State crime labs (99%) were more likely than federal (89%), county (85%), and municipal (67%) labs to be accredited.

## Accreditation and certification

Larger labs were more likely to be accredited than smaller labs. More than 98% of crime labs employing 25 or more full-time employees were accredited in 2014. In comparison, 90% of crime labs employing between 10 and 24 full-time personnel and 70% of crime labs employing nine or fewer personnel were accredited during the same year.

In 2014, 83% of crime labs held an international accreditation. Of those, 73% were accredited by the American Society of Crime Lab Directors/Laboratory Accreditation Board, International (ASCLD/LAB, International) and 10% were accredited by Forensic Quality Services, International (FQS-International).

During 2014, 72% of crime labs employed one or more analysts with external certification, up from 60% in 2009. About 9 in 10 crime labs with 50 or more employees employed one or more analysts with external certification, compared to 45% of labs with 9 or fewer employees. Crime labs with professional accreditation were more likely than crime labs without accreditation to employ at least one externally certified analyst.

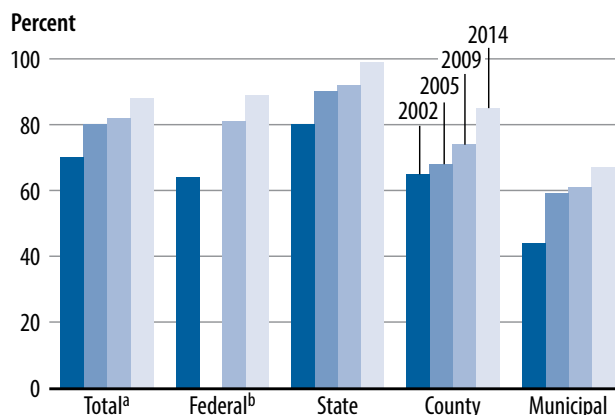
## Lab performance

Almost all (98%) crime labs conducted proficiency testing in 2014, which was similar to 2009 (97%) and 2002 (97%). In 2014, 35% of crime labs conducted random case reanalysis, which was similar to 2009 (34%) but down from 2002 (54%). One in 10 crime labs conducted blind examinations in both 2009 and 2014, which was down from more than a quarter (27%) of labs in 2002. In 2014, federal crime labs were more likely to test the proficiency of employees through blind examinations and conduct random case reanalysis than labs operated by other jurisdictions.

## Other quality assurances

Three-quarters (75%) of crime labs had written standards for performance in 2014, up from 72% in 2009. Written standards established a threshold for employee performance and ensured that performance measures were applied

**Percent of publicly funded forensic crime labs accredited by a professional forensic science organization, by type of jurisdiction, 2002, 2005, 2009, and 2014**



<sup>a</sup>Percentage for 2005 includes federal labs.

<sup>b</sup>Percentage not presented for federal labs in 2005 due to low response rate.  
Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Census of Publicly Funded Forensic Crime Laboratories, 2002, 2005, 2009, and 2014.

consistently for employees with similar roles. Federal crime labs (97%) were more likely than state (83%), municipal (75%), and county (51%) labs to have written standards for performance in 2014. Between 2009 and 2014, the proportion of municipal labs with written standards for performance increased from 59% to 75%. During that same period, the proportion of county crime labs with written standards of performance declined from 59% to 51%.

Labs create or adopt ethical codes to improve the quality of forensic findings, as the codes guide behaviors to ensure analysts work within the confines of their expertise, provide objective findings and testimony, and avoid conflicts of interest and outside influences. An estimated 94% of crime labs had a written code of ethics in 2014, and state crime labs (98%) were more likely than county (94%), municipal (87%), and federal (85%) crime labs to have an ethical code.

Additionally, the proportion of crime labs that dedicated resources to forensic science research doubled from 7% in 2009 to 14% in 2014. Research included experimentation aimed at the discovery and interpretation of facts, the revision of accepted methods, or practical application of new or revised methods or technologies.

The full report (*Publicly Funded Forensic Crime Laboratories: Quality Assurance Practices, 2014*, NCJ 250152), related documents, and additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics can be found at [www.bjs.gov](http://www.bjs.gov).