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Evidence Management Steering Committee Report: Results of the 2021 National Evidence Handlers Survey

NIST/NIJ Evidence Management Steering Committee

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September 2025

U.S. Department of Commerce
Howard Lutnick, Secretary

National Institute of Standards and Technology
Craig Burkhardt, Acting Under Secretary of Commerce for Standards and Technology and Acting NIST Director

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Abstract

In 2018 in conjunction with the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) assembled a group of multidisciplinary experts, the Evidence Management Steering Committee, to develop a plan to (1) provide recommendations for the retention, preservation, integrity, and disposition of evidence and property and (2) encourage the adoption of practice improvements, through education and engagement, of the broad community of U.S. justice system stakeholders involved in evidence management. The committee oversaw four major activities: an evidence management survey (this document), a review of existing literature in forensic evidence management (NIST SP 1500-33C); a stakeholder workshop; and the dissemination of findings from these activities (NIST SP 1500-33A and https://doi.org/10.18434/mds2-3834, which provides survey data).

Keywords

Evidence; evidence handlers; evidence handling; evidence management; forensic; forensic evidence; forensic science; survey.

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Acknowledgments

The NIST/NIJ Evidence Management Steering Committee was responsible for the survey that generated these results and for preparation of this report. Committee members' names and their affiliations during the time in which the committee was active (2018 – 2022) are provided below.

Due to NIST staff departures, this report and the two that accompany it were prepared but not published during the tenure of the Committee. Vincent Desiderio and Katherine Sharpless, both in NIST's Special Programs Office, updated information where appropriate and finalized the publications.

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1. Survey

The Evidence Management Survey's intended participants were those with a position involving or directly related to handling physical evidence and property items in some capacity. While the specific population of these individuals in the U.S. is uncertain, the following reported statistics provide some insight into the size of each of the targeted respondent populations:

Law Enforcement

According to the most recent Bureau of Justice Statistics' (BJS) Census of State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies, there were 17,541 total state and local law enforcement agencies within the U.S. as of 2018.[1] The census does not provide insight into the number of law enforcement agencies that operate in a non-state or non-local capacity.

Crime/Forensic Laboratories

According to the most recent BJS Census of Publicly Funded Forensic Crime Laboratories, 326 forensic crime laboratories and multi-laboratory systems received federal funding in 2020.[2] This census does not provide insight into the total number of operational forensic laboratories in the U.S. that do not receive federal funds.

Clinic/Healthcare

According to the American Hospital Association's Annual Survey, there were 6,090 hospitals in the U.S. as of 2019.[3] This survey does not provide insight into the number of hospitals providing forensic science services such as sexual assault kit collection.

Court System

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, the federal court system has 94 district courts, 13 circuit courts, and one Supreme Court.[4] Each state has its own court system.[5]

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[1] Gardner, A. and Scott, K. "Census of State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies, 2018" Bureau of Justice Statistics, https://bjs.ojp.gov/library/publications/census-state-and-local-law-enforcement-agencies-2018-statistical-tables, October 2022. Accessed July 1, 2025.
[2] Brooks, C. "Publicly Funded Forensic Crime Laboratories, 2020" Bureau of Justice Statistics, https://bjs.ojp.gov/library/publications/publicly-funded-forensic-crime-laboratories-2020, December 2023. Accessed July 1, 2025.
[3] American Hospital Association, "Fast Facts on U.S. Hospitals, 2021," https://www.aha.org/system/files/media/file/2021/01/Fast-Facts-2021-table-FY19-data-14jan21.pdf, January 202. Accessed July 1, 2025.
[4] Offices of the United States Attorneys, U.S. Department of Justice, "Introduction to the Federal Court System," https://www.justice.gov/usao/justice-101/federal-courts#:~:text=There%20are%2094%20district%20courts%2C%2013%20circuit%20courts%2C,work%20differently%20in%20many%20ways%20than%20state%20courts. Accessed July 1, 2025.
[5] U.S. Courts, "Comparing Federal and State Courts," https://www.uscourts.gov/about-federal-courts/court-role-and-structure/comparing-federal-state-courts. Accessed July 1, 2025.

Medical Examiner/Coroner Office

According to the BJS Special Report on Medical Examiners and Coroners' Offices, approximately 2,040 medical examiners and coroners' offices in the U.S. provided death investigation services as of 2018.[6]

Correctional System

According to a report released by the Prison Policy Initiative in 2020, there were 7,147 total correctional systems in the U.S. as of 2020.[7, 8] This total included federal and state prisons, juvenile correctional facilities, local and Indian Country jails, and immigration detention facilities, each based on the most recent respective census survey data.

Private Industry

The total number of private industry organizations in the U.S. that interact directly or are associated with managing evidence and property items has not been estimated.

The above-referenced surveys did not solicit information related to property and evidence management or identify what portion of each population surveyed were evidence handlers.

As described below, the committee engaged several networks to reach the target population for distributing the survey, including:

1. The Evidence Management Community of Practice (CoP) newsletter
2. The NIST forensic science listserv and the Forensic Technology Center of Excellence (FTCOE) listserv
3. Word-of-mouth advertisement by CoP members, associated non-CoP members, and professionals within their respective disciplines.[9]

1.1. Survey Methodology

The committee began developing the survey at a March 2018 meeting and established a dedicated Survey Subcommittee to continue its work. The committee vetted each survey question presented by the Survey Subcommittee for consideration. To further refine questions,

[6] Brooks, C., "Medical Examiner and Coroner Offices, 2018," November 2021, https://bjs.ojp.gov/library/publications/medical-examiner-and-coroner-offices-2018. Accessed July 1, 2025.
[7] Sawyer, W. and Wagner, P. "Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2020," March 24, 2020, https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2020.html#:~:text=The%20American%20criminal%20justice%20system%20holds%20almost%202.3,psychiatric%20hospitals%2C%20and%20prisons%20in%20the%20U.S.%20territories. Accessed July 1, 2025.
[8] This effort was updated with a new report that was released in 2025, well after the deliberations of the committee had concluded. For reader reference, the updated report can be accessed at: https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2025.html.
[9] The survey did receive responses from non-U.S. participants, but the target population of the survey was U.S.-based evidence handlers. Non-U.S. participation may have been a result of utilizing the NIST and FTCOE listservs, as these contain both U.S. and non-U.S. forensic science professionals.

a pilot survey was conducted among a subset of attendees of the Evidence Management Conference in October 2019[10] and other subject matter experts from various disciplines whose day-to-day work involved handling and managing evidence. Committee members reviewed and discussed all respondent feedback and addressed recommendations as appropriate by incorporating them in the survey.

Before disseminating the survey instrument to potential respondents, the survey was reviewed and approved by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (OMB Control #0693-0031). The project was also submitted to the NIST Research Protections Office (RPO) and was determined to be *exempt human subjects research* as defined in Department of Commerce Regulations, 15 CFR 27, also known as the Common Rule for the Protection of Human Subjects (45 CFR 46, Subpart A).

1.2. Survey Distribution

Beginning on January 8, 2021, access to the survey was provided via a link in an e-mail sent to approximately 450 members who received the newsletter[11] of the Evidence Management Community of Practice (CoP). Reminders were sent in the monthly newsletter, and the survey closed on April 2, 2021.

Additional survey announcements occurred through the NIST forensic science listserv and the FTCOE listserv operated by RTI International through a cooperative agreement held with the NIJ, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. These listservs contain tens of thousands of U.S.-based and international email recipients.

Potential respondents were also identified through professional associations of committee members who volunteered to forward the survey to their colleagues and contacts in professional associations of which they were members. Professional associations included the International Association for Property and Evidence (IAPE), the International Association of Forensic Nurses (IAFN), the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors (ASCLD), the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), and the Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) for Forensic Science.

Convenience sampling of target respondents used snowball sampling, also referred to as the chain-referral sampling technique, due to the target audience's specificity and limited project resources. A benefit of this method is its capacity to reach respondents outside of the researchers' immediate network.[12] Anyone who obtained the survey link was encouraged to

[10] Evidence Management Conference, National Institute of Standards and Technology, October 2-4, 2019, https://www.nist.gov/news-events/events/2019/10/evidence-management-conference. Accessed July 1, 2025.
[11] The newsletter is currently not active; however, archived newsletters can be found at https://www.nist.gov/forensic-science/interdisciplinary-topics/evidence-management/community-practice-newsletter. Accessed July 1, 2025.
[12] Penrod, J., Preston, D.B., Cain, R.E., Starks, M.T. "A Discussion of Chain Referral as a Method of Sampling Hard-to-Reach Populations." J. Transcult. Nurs. 2003 100-107. DOI: 10.1177/1043659602250614. Accessed July 1, 2025.

pass it to their professional networks. This technique's limitation is the lack of guarantee in the representativeness of the sample and the distribution of the survey reaching the target population; therefore, the subsequent actual response rate is unknown. Sampling bias is also a concern with this sampling technique. Subjects with similar backgrounds may recruit each other to complete the survey, resulting in potential over-sampling of one subset of the target audience. Using chain-referral sampling, the committee estimated that approximately 5,000 people could be contacted. The anticipated response rate is about 10%, making the total number of potential respondents estimated at 500.

1.3. Electronic Survey Instrument

The survey instrument (Survey Monkey) included 86 questions (see Appendix) in a combination of multiple-choice and open-ended/text-response formats. The survey requested organization-specific information and demographics; respondent-specific demographics; and evidence management practices including storage, tracking, disposition, retention, inventory, and security of evidentiary items and collected non-investigative property items; respondent-specific education and training along with education and training requirements of organizations; quality assurance (QA) and quality control (QC) practices within organizations; and safety measures employed by organizations related to both evidentiary/property items and employees. Respondents were also asked to identify challenges related to physical evidence management, their interest in educational topics and opportunities, and additional views on the current landscape of evidence management practices.

The anticipated time for respondent completion was approximately 45 minutes, depending on the participant's access to the requested information and the level of detail provided by the respondent in the open-ended/free-response questions. While the survey collected general demographic information about the respondent, such as their position title, and information about the respondent's employing organization, such as locality and size, it did not include questions that would reveal the respondent's identity or place of employment.

1.4. Data Analysis

Written response questions and those with open text "other (please specify)" options were reviewed using the data from the CSV files downloaded unaltered from the survey platform. For all questions with open-text answers, only those responses deemed entirely irrelevant by the Survey Subcommittee (i.e., no relation to the question or random keystrokes) were excluded and noted throughout this report.

Except for Survey Question 3, which asked for organization type, questions with the option to select "Other (please specify)" were not re-coded or collapsed within other options unless the text response exactly matched a listed option. Survey Question 3 responses of "other (please specify)" were reassigned to one of the multiple-choice options where appropriate. Many other open-ended/text-response answers included different or numerous responses that would partially belong to other answer choice options. However, if only one portion of a written reply were re-coded, this could inadvertently inflate response numbers. Additionally, these answers,

which presented multiple themes within one response, could be interpreted differently by different individuals. The final dataset is available through the NIST Science Data Portal.[13]

Potential limitations of the data presented in this report include:

1) Absence of comprehensive re-coding of responses and collapsing responses into related groupings.
2) Lack of a "not applicable" (N/A) answer option. This option was not a presented answer choice for some questions that did include an "other (please specify)" opportunity. The lack of N/A options may have led to inflated or untrue response percentages.
3) Inclusion of a limited number of definitions, which might have limited respondents' understanding of terms and the overall intent/purpose of the question.
4) Potential for different use of terminology based on the respondent's organization type or geographical location (e.g., U.S. or non-U.S. respondents, regional vernacular in the U.S.).
5) Absence of forced choice architecture in the survey, i.e., respondents were permitted to move to a subsequent question without responding to all previous questions. (Note that some questions were intentionally skipped as a result of the skip logic employed in the survey.)

Upon completion of data collection, the Survey Subcommittee reconvened to discuss responses to each question and perform descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, counts, and cross-tabulations). Cross-tabulations involved evidence management practice and policy trends within jurisdiction types, organization types, organization classifications, and organization sizes. Since the survey did not target a randomized sample of responses, the subcommittee did not discuss inferences about the targeted respondent population or perform statistical regression to gauge predicted variables.

[13] Evidence Management Steering Committee, NIST/NIJ (2025), Evidence Management Steering Committee Report: Data, National Institute of Standards and Technology, https://doi.org/10.18434/mds2-3834.

2. Survey Results

There were 1,443 respondents to the Evidence Management Survey upon its closure on April 2, 2021. A tabular breakdown of participants providing various responses (as a percentage and number giving that response), accompanying data insights, and findings from the questions are presented within the topic groupings. (Note that tabulated percentages and those in pie charts

may not total to 100% because of rounding.) Most topic sections also include cross-tabulations that provide insights into evidence management practices and policies according to specific respondent- and organization-based demographics. Additionally, not all variables related to collected organizational demographics were explored when constructing cross-tabulations. Interested readers may conduct further analysis of the published dataset.

Note also that:

- Questions reflecting a "Select all that apply" response allowed respondents to select multiple options applicable to their organization. Therefore, the total number of responses to these questions may exceed the total number of respondents.
- This report does not include responses to open-ended/text-response, which may be found in the public dataset, https://doi.org/10.18434/mds2-3834.

2.1. Organization Demographics (Questions 2-14)

Since multiple criminal justice professionals may handle evidence throughout its lifecycle, it was critical to obtain information about the individual respondent and their organization to understand the practices and policies employed. This section of the report presents responses to survey questions that dealt with organization type and classification, the geographic region of the organization, and the organization size. Results from downstream survey questions were cross-tabulated with this demographic information to provide additional insights into the sampled population. Questions did not require information that could identify a respondent or their place of employment.

Organization Type and Classification.

Q2.[14] Please indicate your primary organization type.

There were 1,443 total respondents and no non-responses.

Please indicate your primary organization type.		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Law Enforcement	51%	742
Crime/Forensic Laboratory	27%	389

[14] Respondents provided their informed consent in Q1.

Medical Examiner/Coroner Office	7%	107
Private Industry	5%	74
Court System	5%	71
Clinic/Healthcare	4%	54
Correctional System	<1%	6
Total	99%	1443

Q3. How would you classify your organization?

Two excluded responses resulted in 1,441 total respondents. The following responses were moved to their respective bins from the "Other" category and subtracted from "Other": 24 "Local," 3 "Private Industry," and 3 "State." There were no non-responses.

How would you classify your organization?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Local	62%	888
State	24%	341
Federal	6%	81
Private Industry	5%	74
Tribal	1%	12
Other (please specify)	3%	45
	101%	1,441

Geographic Region.

Q4. What region is your organization located in?

Two excluded responses resulted in 1,411 total respondents. There were 30 non-responses.

What region is your organization located in?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
South Atlantic (DE, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA, DC, WV)	25%	353
Pacific (AK, CA, HI, OR, WA)	17%	243
Mountain (AZ, CO, ID, MT, NV, NM, UT, WY)	14%	196
East North Central (IL, IN, MI, OH, WI)	12%	166
West North Central (IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD)	8%	117
Mid-Atlantic (NJ, NY, PA)	8%	108
West South Central (AR, LA, OK, TX)	7%	95
New England (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT)	3%	45

East South Central (AL, KY, MS, TN)	2%	30
International (please specify country) [15]	4%	58
	100%	1411

Organization Size.

Q5. How many total individuals are employed by your organization?

There were 1,413 total respondents and 30 non-responses.

How many total individuals are employed by your organization?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
< 10	9%	125
10-25	10%	148
26-49	13%	188
50-99	15%	212
100-499	30%	426
500-999	8%	115
1000-2999	7%	92
> 3000	8%	107
	100%	1413

Personnel Management.

Q6. Does your organization conduct any of the following? (Select all that apply.)

There were 1,384 responses. This question was a select-all-response option, so the total number of responses was greater than the total number of survey respondents. There were 59 non-responses.

[15] Of those 58 "international" respondents, 2 were from Africa, 19 from the Americas, 10 from Asia, 3 from Australia, 22 from Europe, 1 whose organization was worldwide, and 1 from the "entire country." Information provided by these 58 respondents was not removed from the dataset.

Does your organization conduct any of the following? (Select all that apply.)		
Answer Choices	**Response Percentage**	**Number of Responses**
Background check, upon hire	87%	1,209
Background check, routinely after hire	7%	103
Background check, after incident/complaint/concern	7%	101
Background check, upon reassignment	6%	90
Background check, randomly after hire	3%	39
Drug test, upon hire	68%	937
Drug test, randomly after hire	40%	551
Drug test, after incident/complaint/concern	37%	506
Drug test, routinely after hire	4%	56
Drug test, upon reassignment	4%	49
Neither drug tests nor background checks are performed at my organization	5%	68
I don't know	4%	58

Accreditation.

Q7. Are the evidence/property operations of your organization accredited by any of the following? (Select all that apply.)

Two excluded responses resulted in 1,352 total respondents. The "Other" total reflects the removal of 3 unrelated answers. There were 89 non-responses.

Are the evidence/property operations of your organization accredited by any of the following? (Select all that apply.)		
Answer Choices	**Response Percentage**	**Number of Responses**
ANAB [ANSI National Accreditation Board]	22%	296
CALEA [Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies]	17%	226
IAPE [International Association for Property and Evidence]	9%	116
A2LA [American Association for Laboratory Accreditation]	1%	14
The evidence/property operations of my organization are not accredited	44%	589
Other (please specify)	17%	235

Sworn Personnel.

Q8. Are the day-to-day operations and management of evidence/property performed by sworn officers or civilians? (Select all that apply.)

There were 1,338 total respondents. This question was a select-all-response option. There were 105 non-responses.

Are the day-to-day operations and management of evidence/property performed by sworn officers or civilians? (Select all that apply.)				
Answer Choices	**Day-to-day operations**		**Management of evidence/property**	
Civilians	82%	1,080	74%	982
Sworn officers	28%	375	36%	479
N/A	3%	45	3%	43
I don't know	1%	17	1%	16

Evidence/Property Room Staffing.

Q9. How many personnel does your organization have assigned full-time to the Evidence Storage/Property Room(s)/area(s)?

There were 1,313 total respondents and 130 non-responses.

How many personnel does your organization have assigned full-time to the Evidence Storage/Property Room(s)/area(s)?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
0	17%	222
1-5	56%	731
6-10	12%	152
11-30	9%	120
31-50	2%	26
> 50	1%	17
I don't know	3%	45
	100%	1313

For additional insights, demographics and responses to other questions have been cross-tabulated and are shown in pie charts throughout this report, beginning with the responses to the question above regarding evidence/property room personnel.

A Deeper Look: Question 9

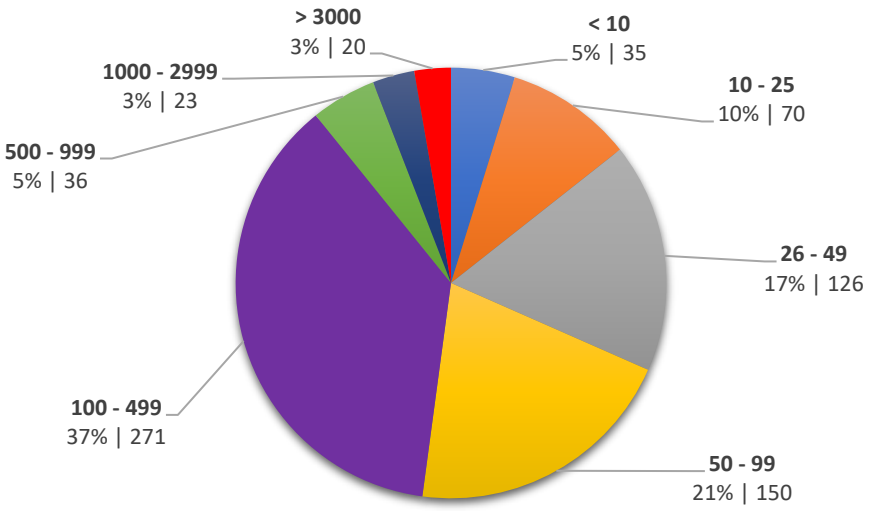

Figure 1. Total employees in the organizations of respondents who indicated that their organization has 1-5 full-time personnel assigned to the evidence storage/property room(s) or area(s).

Q10. Are there personnel responsible for both storing evidence and investigating cases?

There were 1,313 total respondents and 130 non-responses.

Are there personnel responsible for both storing evidence and investigating cases?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Yes	32%	423
No	66%	861
I don't know	2%	29
	100%	1,313

A Deeper Look: Question 10

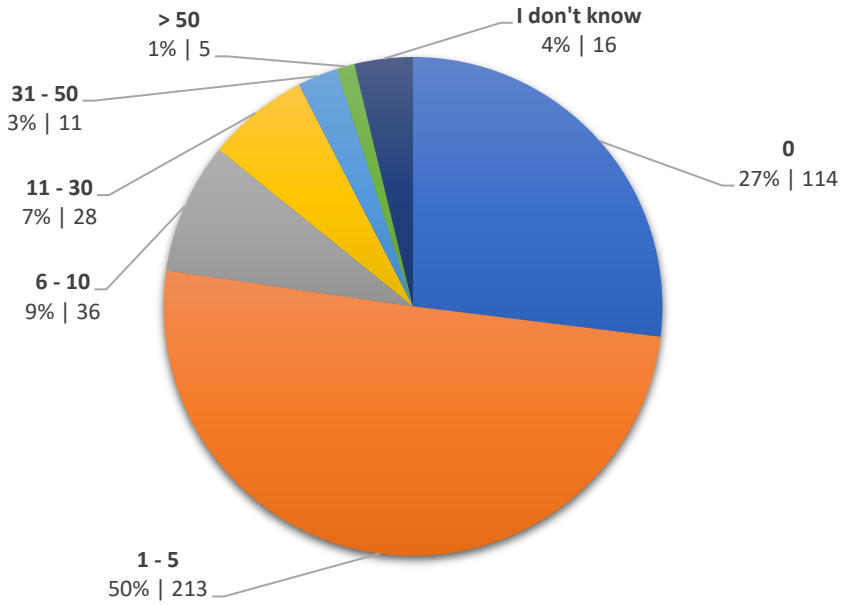

Figure 2. Number of full-time personnel assigned to the evidence storage/property room(s) or area(s) for respondents who indicated that their organization has personnel responsible for storing evidence and investigating cases.

For respondents who indicated that their organization has personnel responsible for storing evidence and investigating cases, the most common number of full-time staff assigned to their organization's evidence storage/property room(s)/area(s) was 1-5. Interestingly, the second most common answer indicated that 27% of respondents in these organizations have no full-time staff assigned to their evidence/property storage areas.

Organizational Duties.

Q11. Which duties related to direct handling of evidence/property are performed by the personnel at your organization? (Select all that apply.)

Removing 3 irrelevant answers from the "Other" category, with 2 respondents selecting 1 answer, resulted in 1,220 individual responses. There were 221 non-responses.

Which duties related to direct handling of evidence/property are performed by the personnel at your organization? (Select all that apply.)		
Answer Choices	**Response Percentage**	**Number of Responses**
Storing	96%	1,171
Receiving	95%	1,163
Securing	92%	1,125
Ensuring all items are properly marked/tagged	91%	1,115

Releasing evidence to officers	89%	1,091
Ensuring all records are accurate including status of item	83%	1,017
Retrieval	83%	1,014
Preparing items for transport (e.g., forensic lab, offsite storage)	83%	1,011
Conducting inventories	80%	973
Indexing or cataloging	80%	972
Disposal	79%	958
Evidence transfer between facilities	77%	942
Testify in court	76%	924
Preparing items for destruction	75%	921
Ensuring agency policy is upheld	73%	894
Releasing property to rightful owner	73%	888
Audits	70%	856
Complete disposition	62%	761
Research for disposition	61%	745
Generate disposition requests	59%	714
Copying media and documents as requested by an investigator, prosecutor, or other appropriate person or agency	56%	685
Processing (opening up packaging, etc.)	56%	680
Response to discovery requests	53%	642
Managing digital evidence	52%	632
Develop policy	50%	613
Conducting inspections	44%	540
Manage/deposit evidentiary funds	42%	508
Forfeited property	41%	502
Auction	37%	449
Response to seal order	28%	346
Prohibitive possession checks	23%	278
Diversion	19%	236
Manage the accounts for evidentiary funds	18%	216
Other (please specify)	4%	48

Interaction with Forensic Patients and Medically Derived Evidence.

Q12. On average, how many medical forensic patients does your organization serve annually?

There were 1,203 total respondents and 240 non-responses.

On average, how many medical forensic patients does your organization serve annually?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
50 or less	6%	73
51-150	2%	23
151-300	2%	23
301-500	1%	14
501-1000	2%	22
More than 1000	4%	43
N/A – my organization does not serve forensic patients	66%	795
I don't know	17%	210
	100%	1,203

A Deeper Look: Question 12

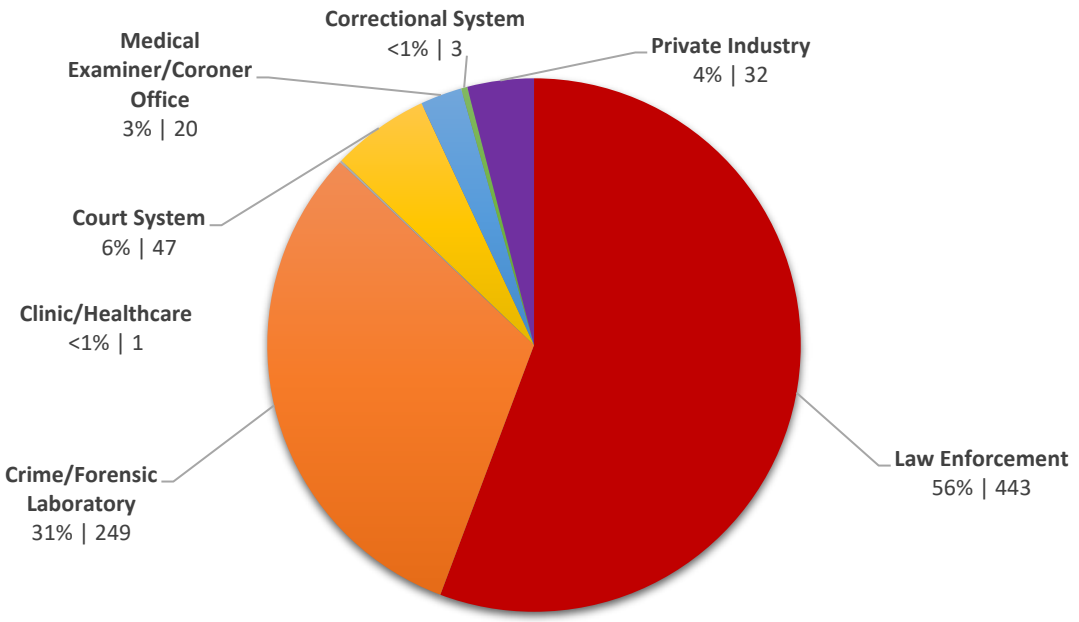

Figure 3. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated that their organization does not serve medical forensic patients.

For those who responded to the most common category, "N/A - my organization does not serve forensic patients," the most common organization type was law enforcement at 56%, followed by crime/forensic laboratory at 31%.

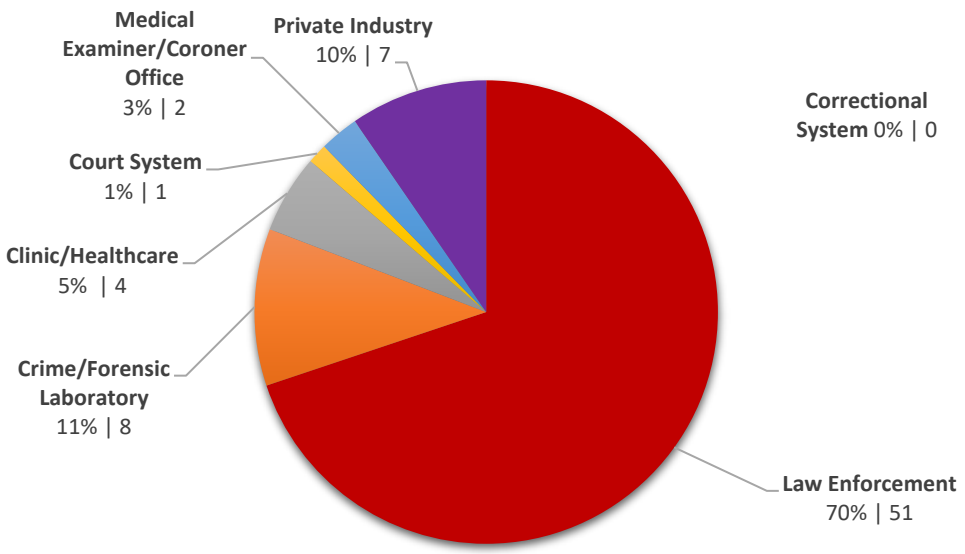

Figure 4. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated that their organization serves 50 or fewer medical forensic patients annually.

Similar to the chart in Figure 3, for those who responded to the second most common category, "50 or less," the most common organization type was law enforcement at 70%, followed by crime/forensic laboratory at 11%. No respondents representing the correctional system selected this answer choice.

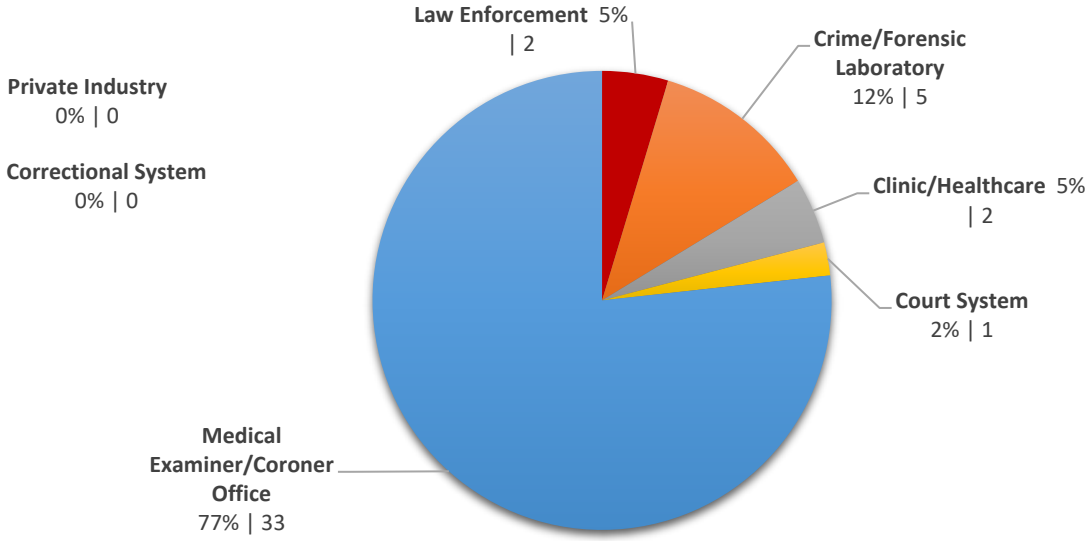

Figure 5. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated that their organization serves more than 1,000 medical forensic patients annually.

For those who responded to the third most common category, "more than 1000," the most common organization type was the medical examiner/coroner office at 77%. No respondents representing the correctional system or private industry sector selected this answer choice.

Q13. What types of medical forensic examinations or evaluations does your organization provide?

There were 1,203 total respondents and 240 non-responses.

What types of medical forensic examinations or evaluations does your organization provide?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
All forms of injury, abuse, neglect, or harm	19%	232
Sexual abuse/neglect/exploitation only	4%	51
Physical abuse/neglect only	<1%	3
N/A – my organization does not provide medical forensic examinations or evaluations	76%	917
	99%	1,203

Grant Funding.

Q14. Has your organization received any grant funding to assist with the management of evidence and property?

There were 1,196 total respondents and 247 non-responses.

Has your organization received any grant funding to assist with the management of evidence and property?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Yes	16%	186
No	84%	1,010
	100%	1,196

A Deeper Look: Question 14

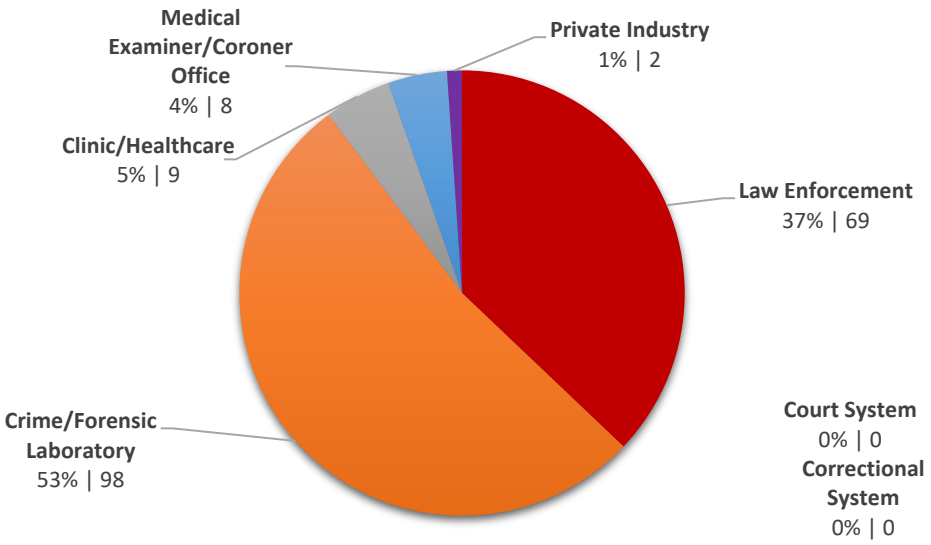

Figure 6. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated that their organization had received grant funding to assist with evidence/property management.

Of respondents who indicated that their organization had received grant funding, over half (53%) are employed by a crime/forensic laboratory, followed by those employed by a law enforcement agency (37%). No respondents representing the correctional system or court system selected this answer choice.

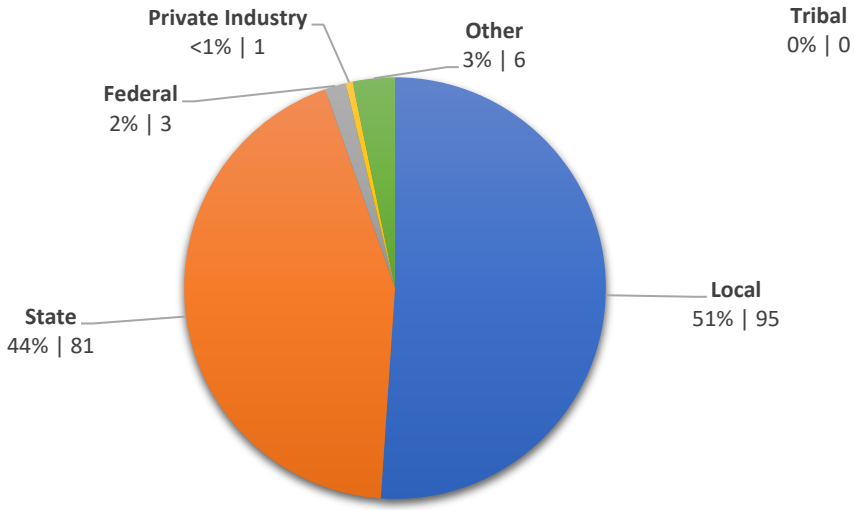

Figure 7. Organization classification for respondents who indicated that their organization had received grant funding to assist with evidence/property management. [16]

[16] Figure 7 required slight additional data cleaning due to 3 of the "other" responses being channeled to the "local" answer choice as this was the appropriate blanket organization classification for these responses.

Of respondents who indicated that their organization had received grant funding to assist with evidence/property management, over half (51%) were a local agency, followed closely by those who indicated that their organization state level (44%). No respondents representing the tribal population selected this answer choice.

2.1.1. Findings

Organization Type and Classification. Given that a proportionality test was outside this project's scope, it is unknown whether the organization types identified by respondents as "evidence handlers" met the overall population's expectation of what that meant – e.g., did collection of evidence constitute evidence handling? Targeted data collection from respondents among various organization types could aid in understanding the distinctions in evidence/property practices among organization types.

Geographic Region. Respondents represented a wide range of geographic regions, with the highest number of responses (25%) representing the South Atlantic region. This response rate could be due to circumstances such as an unequal distribution of potential respondents across each region (for example, the large concentration of federal law enforcement agencies in the South Atlantic region and the presence of states with large state law enforcement/forensic systems [17]). There is no data available to inform an expected outcome response for comparison. Respondents representing additional U.S. and non-U.S. regions allowed for meaningful information from the analysis that incorporates diverse geographic perspectives.

Organization Size. A wide range of organizational sizes is represented, with organizations of 100-499 total employees most frequently sampled (30%). Nearly half (48%) of the respondents indicated that their organization employs fewer than 100 total employees, with 22% indicating that their organization employs more than 500 total employees. While the survey data may reflect the experiences and practices of smaller- to medium-sized organizations more than larger organizations, the typical size of target respondent organizations or the total number of organizations, given the target population and organizational size, is unknown. Whether data collected on this question is an over- or under-sampling for organization size and type cannot be determined.

Personnel Management. Background checks are generally a universal requirement in criminal justice-related organizations; however, data obtained from this survey suggests this may be different for evidence/property management personnel. While most of the respondents' organizations require a background check and drug test in the hiring process or during employment, a few (5%) do not.

Accreditation. Nearly half (44%) of the respondents indicated that their agency was not accredited. Of respondents who indicated that their organization was accredited, the majority

[17] Gardner, A. and Scott, K. "Census of State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies, 2018" Bureau of Justice Statistics, https://bjs.ojp.gov/library/publications/census-state-and-local-law-enforcement-agencies-2018-statistical-tables, October 2022. Accessed July 1, 2025.

identified accreditation by ANAB (22%). However, this may reflect respondents' misunderstanding. ANAB accreditation provides oversight for forensic examination capabilities that are related, but not specific, to the management of evidence/property. Including this option in the question provided a quality check on respondents' understanding of accreditation, as the confusion of operations included under ANAB accreditation has been frequently observed by committee members in practice. This question received many write-in responses, illuminating accreditation options at the state and local levels (see the full dataset), misunderstanding of accreditation, or both. For example, many respondents included certification programs in their responses, as opposed to accreditation programs.

Sworn Personnel. Committee members have spoken about the public perception that evidence/property rooms are staffed by sworn personnel despite their own observations suggesting otherwise. Data regarding this question support their anecdotal experience. The majority (82%) of survey respondents indicated that their organization uses civilian personnel for day-to-day operations. For the management of evidence/property, slightly fewer (74%) respondents indicated that their organization uses civilian personnel, which suggests that a portion of organizations reserve sworn officers for management-level functions in evidence/property.

Evidence/Property Room Staffing. Over half (56%) of the respondents indicated their organization has 1-5 full-time staff assigned to evidence/property rooms or areas. Given the breadth of functions involved in evidence/property management and sometimes large inventories, this data may indicate a resource issue within evidence management. When cross-tabulated with responses to the question of agency size, nearly half (48%) of the respondents have more than 99 total employees within their organization, demonstrating possible understaffing of personnel dedicated to these spaces and accompanying operations.

Organizational Duties. Most respondents to this question identified various evidence/property handling-related duties performed by their organization's employees. The most common duties included storing (96%), receiving (95%), securing (92%), and marking/tagging (91%) evidence/property. The least common duties included the management of evidence-related budgetary accounts (18%) and diversion (19%). The data collected for these various responsibilities will be useful in developing relevant best practices and prioritizing guidance for specific duties across the criminal justice community.

Interaction with Forensic Patients and Medically Derived Evidence. Less than one-quarter (24%) of survey respondents indicated that their organization conducts medical forensic examinations or evaluations. Medical examiners and coroners' offices were found to be the primary recipients of forensic patients,[18] with three-fourths (77%) of respondents from this organization type indicating that they served "more than 1000" forensic patients annually. Law

[18] During the process of reviewing results of this survey it was noted that the term "forensic patients" may have been interpreted by some respondents to mean living individuals involved in forensic medical examinations by medical personnel. This terminology may have resulted in an under enumeration of respondents who perform forensic medical examinations on deceased individuals.

enforcement agencies also accounted for over half (56%) of the responses to the "N/A - My organization does not serve forensic patients." These responses may indicate the variability in the interpretation of this question based on organization type. A small subset of clinic/healthcare representative respondents indicated that they serve either fewer than 50 (<1%) or more than 1,000 (1%) forensic patients.

Grant Funding. Only 16% of respondents reported receiving grant funding for evidence/property operations.

2.2. Evidence/Property Storage (Questions 15-21)

The storage and transfer of evidence/property have both inter- and intra-variations resulting from the multi-faceted nature of evidence management. These variations can be explained in part by (1) the type of organization collecting, transferring, or storing these items, (2) the organization's structure and autonomy status (e.g., sworn, civilian, or hybrid), (3) the operational functions of the organization, (4) capacity and spatial constraints/limitations of the organization, and (5) monetary and support resources available, which can be dependent on the type, classification, or locality of the organization as well as primary funding sources (e.g., public versus private organizations) and staffing considerations (e.g., the total size of the organization). The questions in this section aim to help quantify practices related to evidence/property storage location, storage duration, and multi-/cross-organizational transfer of these items. Specifically, these questions focus on storage spaces, storage duration (i.e., long-term or short-term), commonly encountered challenges of evidence/property transfer, and the intake, storage location, and storage duration for non-report/non-investigative sexual assault kits (SAKs[19]) – as this type of evidence often has additional multi- or cross-organizational considerations.

Dedicated Evidence/Property Storage Space.

Q15. Does your organization have a dedicated location or space for evidence/property storage?

There were 1,188 total respondents and 255 non-responses.

Does your organization have a dedicated location or space for evidence/property storage?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Yes	98%	1,162
No	2%	24
I don't know	<1%	2
	100%	1,188

[19] The acronym NIK was mistakenly provided in the survey instrument; the correct acronym is provided in this report, and the error is explained in the README file that accompanies the public dataset.

A Deeper Look: Question 15

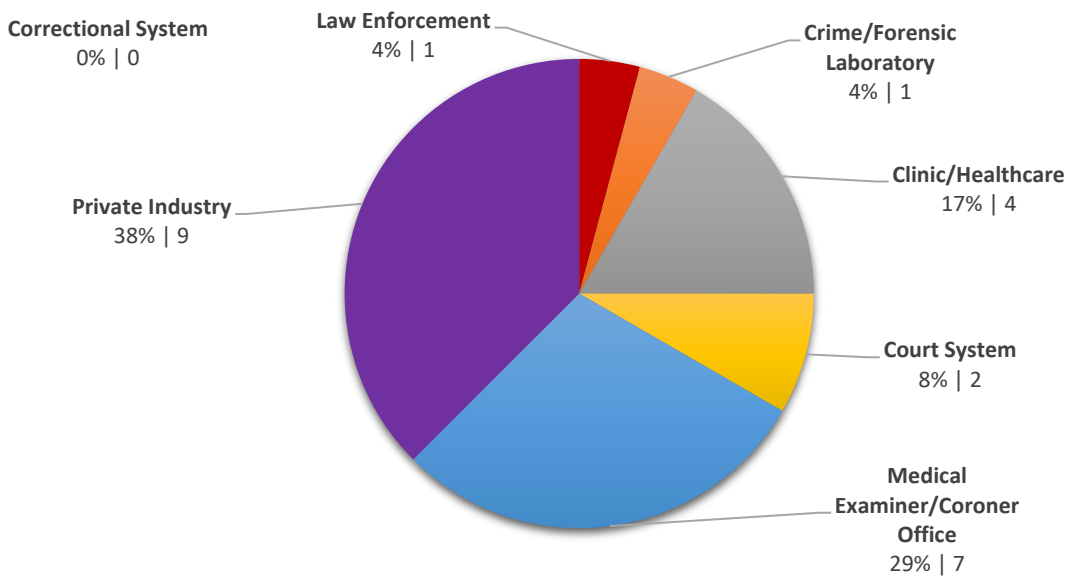

Figure 8. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated that their organization does not have a dedicated evidence/property storage location or space.

Of the small number of respondents who answered "No" to the question about dedicated storage locations for evidence, the most respondents indicated "private industry" as their organization type (38%). Medical examiner/coroners' office (29%) and clinic/healthcare (17%) were the second and third most common categories. No respondents representing the correctional system selected this answer choice.

Evidence/Property Storage Duration.

Q16. Which of the following best applies to your organization?

There were 1,188 total respondents and 255 non-responses.

Which of the following best applies to your organization?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
My organization stores evidence/property items both temporarily and long-term	77%	916
My organization stores evidence/property items long-term	17%	204
My organization temporarily stores evidence/property items (< 72 hours)	3%	35

My organization does not store evidence/property items	2%	26
I don't know	<1%	7
	99%	1,188

Non-Report/Non-Investigative Sexual Assault Kits (SAKs). The following three survey questions pertained to non-report/non-investigative sexual assault kits (SAKs) – i.e., sexual assault kits collected without an official police report, or an investigation conducted without the sexual assault survivor giving their informed consent.

Q17. Does your organization collect non-report/non-investigative sexual assault kits (SAKs)?

There were 1,183 total respondents and 260 non-responses. (The high number of respondents answering "I don't know" may indicate a problem with the survey question itself.)

Does your organization collect non-report/non-investigative sexual assault kits (SAKs)?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Yes	42%	497
No	42%	496
I don't know	16%	190
	100%	1,183

Q18. Who stores SAKs in your jurisdiction?

There were 492 total respondents and 951 non-responses with 686 non-responses due to skip logic.

Who stores SAKs in your jurisdiction?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Law Enforcement	66%	325
Forensic Laboratory	12%	61
Clinical Program	3%	13
Advocacy Organization	<1%	2
I don't know	11%	56
Other (please specify)	7%	35
	99%	492

Q19. How long does your organization store SAKs?

There were 492 total respondents and 951 non-responses with 686 non-responses due to skip logic.

How long does your organization store SAKs?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Less than 30 days	7%	33
30 days to less than 1 year	5%	25
1 year or more	65%	320
I don't know	23%	114
	100%	492

Multi-Organizational Evidence/Property Transfer.

Q20. Do you encounter any challenges transferring evidence/property items between organizations?

There were 1,174 total respondents and 269 non-responses.

Do you encounter any challenges transferring evidence/property items between organizations?		
Answer Choices	Respondent Percentage	Number of Respondents
Yes	20%	238
No	80%	936
	100%	1174

Q21. Please explain your response to Q20.

There were 236 total respondents and 1,207 non-responses with 936 non-responses due to skip logic. The written responses can be viewed as part of the dataset.

2.2.1. Findings

Dedicated Evidence/Property Storage Space. Of the small subset (2%) of respondents who indicated that their organization does not have a dedicated space for evidence/property items, private industry was the most common organization type identified (38%), with the medical examiner/coroner's office being the second most common (29%). While this was a small percentage compared to those who answered affirmatively, it may point to a need for greater emphasis on evidence management within non-law enforcement agencies.

Evidence/Property Storage Duration. A goal of this survey was to examine the differences in operational functions among the various organizations storing evidence/property. The majority (77%) of the respondents indicated that their organization stores evidence/property temporarily and long-term, with respondents representing law enforcement agencies comprising the most common organization type (62%). Notably, respondents representing crime/forensic laboratories (25%) and medical examiner/coroners' offices (7%) also indicated that their organization stores evidence/property for long-term periods. More research is

needed to understand whether these organizations permanently house evidence/property or if the long-term designation applies because relevant analyses typically require storage longer than 72 hours. Short-term storage was not defined in the survey, while temporary storage was defined as <72 hours.

Non-Report/Non-Investigative Sexual Assault Kits (SAKs). Nearly an equal number of respondents indicated that their organization collects SAKs (42%) compared to those who do not (42%). There is considerable variation in who stores collected SAKs and how long they are stored. Slightly less than one-quarter of respondents (23%) indicated they do not know how long collected SAKs are stored. [20]

Multi-Organizational Evidence/Property Transfer. Transferring evidence/property between organizations is a common issue during policy discussions in evidence/property management and related law enforcement functions. [21] While most respondents (80%) indicated no challenges when transferring evidence/property between organizations, 20% responded that they face challenges with such transfers. Question 21 provides additional insights into the challenges encountered, such as difficulty transporting evidence/property with unique requirements (e.g., cold storage); different policies, procedures, and forms among organizations; incompatible electronic systems; and challenges related to collecting or retrieving items. Of the 238 respondents who said they have encountered challenges, 120 use electronic tracking systems, 80 use hybrid electronic/manual systems, 16 use manual systems, 15 did not specify, and 7 use other methods. See the full dataset for written responses to this open-ended/text-response question.

2.3. Respondent Demographics (Questions 22-32)

All organizations presented different practices with respect to those employees who interact with evidence/property in some capacity. These differences are observable in hiring/pre-employment processes and procedures, autonomy status (e.g., civilian, sworn, or hybrid), and whether property custodian positions are separate from other roles and responsibilities within an organization. Equally important to understanding employer demographics, insight into employee qualifications is necessary. Information about respondent education and certifications, job classifications, duration in current position, and the total number of years of experience they possess in handling and interacting with evidence/property (within or outside of an evidence/property room environment) allowed for a view of the landscape of the respondents' backgrounds.

[20] Note that the Bureau of Justice Assistance's Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) provides funding to support the inventory, tracking, and testing of stored SAKs; see https://bja.ojp.gov/program/saki/overview.
[21] For example, see discussions of the former National Commission of Forensic Sciences (NCFS) at https://www.nist.gov/forensic-science/interdisciplinary-topics/national-commission-forensic-science.

Pre-Employment Background Checks.

Q22. Were you required to undergo a background investigation or background check for your current position?

There were 1,154 total respondents and 289 non-responses.

Were you required to undergo a background investigation or background check for your current position?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Yes	85%	971
No	16%	183
	100%	1154

A Deeper Look: Question 22

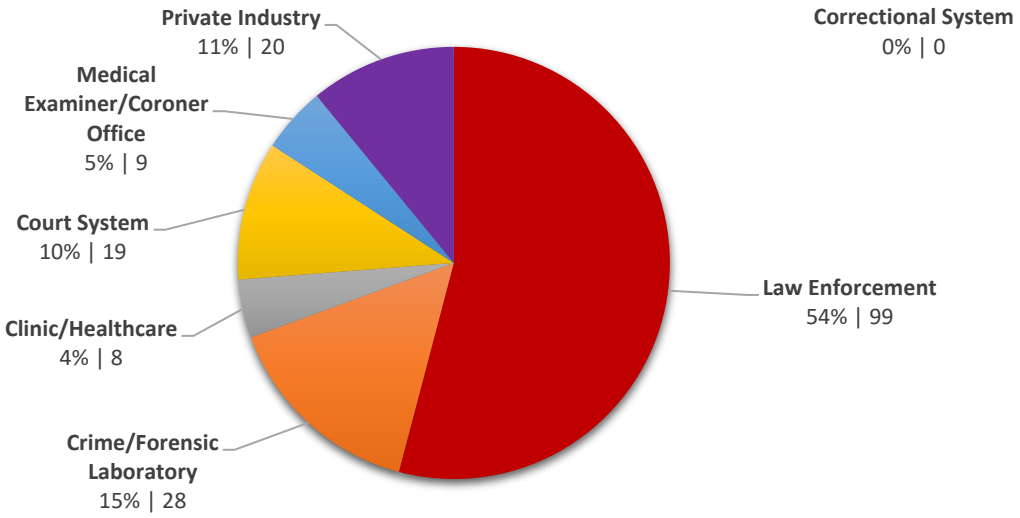

Figure 9. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated that their organization did not require a background check for them to assume their current position.

Respondents who indicated that there is no requirement to undergo a background investigation mainly were from law enforcement agencies (54%). Crime/forensic laboratories (15%) were second most prevalent, private industry (11%) was third, and the court system (10%) ranked fourth in their negative response to this question. No respondents representing the correctional system selected this answer choice.

Q23. What is your current job title?

There were 1,154 total respondents and 289 non-responses. The written responses can be viewed as part of the dataset.

Job Level.

Q24. Which of the following best describes your current job level?

There were 1,152 total respondents and 291 non-responses.

Which of the following best describes your current job level?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Trainee	<1%	8
Entry Level	3%	31
Experienced Employee	48%	553
Supervisor/Manager	32%	369
Director	9%	99
Administrative	4%	46
Other (please specify)	4%	46
	100%	1152

Job Position Ranking.

Q25. Which of the following best describes your current civilian or officer status?

There were 1,152 total respondents and 291 non-responses.

Which of the following best describes your current civilian or officer status?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Civilian	77%	882
Sworn Officer	16%	188
Commissioned Officer	3%	31
N/A	4%	51
	100%	1152

Job Position Duration.

Q26. How long have you been in your current position?

There were 1,152 total respondents and 291 non-responses.

How long have you been in your current position?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
< 1 year	5%	58
1-2 years	9%	99

2-3 years	9%	102
3-5 years	17%	193
5-7 years	14%	160
7-10 years	11%	126
10-15 years	14%	156
15-20 years	10%	111
Over 20 years	13%	147
	102%	1152

Interaction with Evidence/Property.

Q27. Do you have direct contact with items of evidence or property?

There were 1,152 total respondents and 291 non-responses.

Do you have direct contact with items of evidence or property?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Yes	94%	1,082
No	6%	70
	100%	1,152

Evidence/Property Handling Experience

Q28. How many years of experience do you have handling items of evidence or property?

There were 1,081 total respondents and 362 non-responses with 70 non-responses due to skip logic.

How many years of experience do you have handling items of evidence or property?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
No Experience	<1%	5
< 1 year	2%	24
1-2 years	3%	33
2-3 years	5%	57
3-5 years	8%	86
5-7 years	8%	83
7-10 years	11%	120
10-15 years	17%	185
15-20 years	14%	151
Over 20 years	31%	337
	99%	1081

Q29. How many years of experience do you have handling evidence or property inside a property room?

There were 1,081 total respondents and 362 non-responses with 70 non-responses due to skip logic.

How many years of experience do you have handling evidence or property inside a property room?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
No Experience	17%	189
< 1 year	5%	54
1-2 years	5%	59
2-3 years	7%	77
3-5 years	11%	116
5-7 years	10%	111
7-10 years	10%	104
10-15 years	14%	154
15-20 years	8%	90
Over 20 years	12%	127
	99%	1081

Position Roles and Responsibilities.

Q30. Do you function as a property custodian?

There were 1,150 total respondents and 293 non-responses.

Do you function as a property custodian?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Yes	62%	711
No	38%	439
	100%	1150

A Deeper Look: Question 30

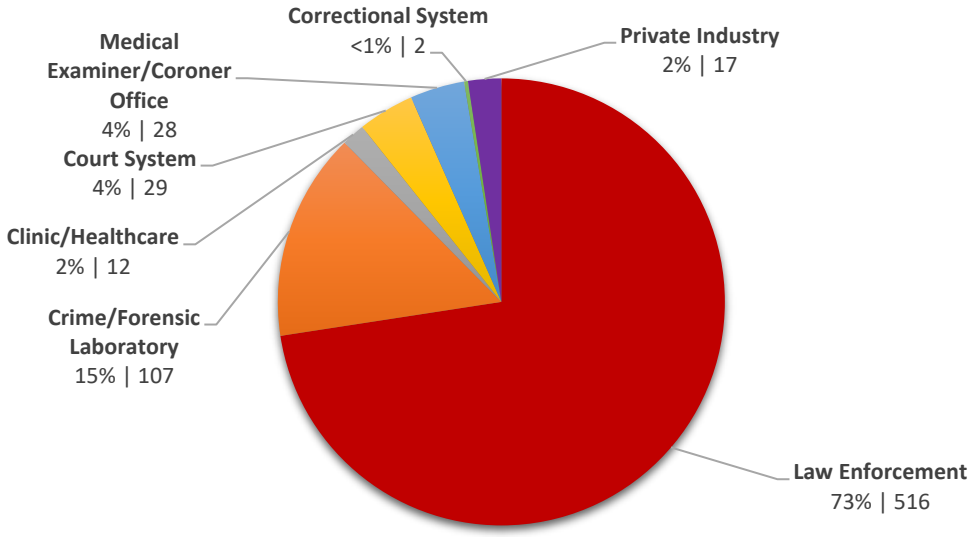

Figure 10. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated they function as a property custodian.

Respondents who answered positively to the question of whether they acted as a property custodian were predominantly from law enforcement agencies (73%), with crime/forensic laboratories respondents being the second most common (15%), and medical examiners/coroner offices (4%) being the third.

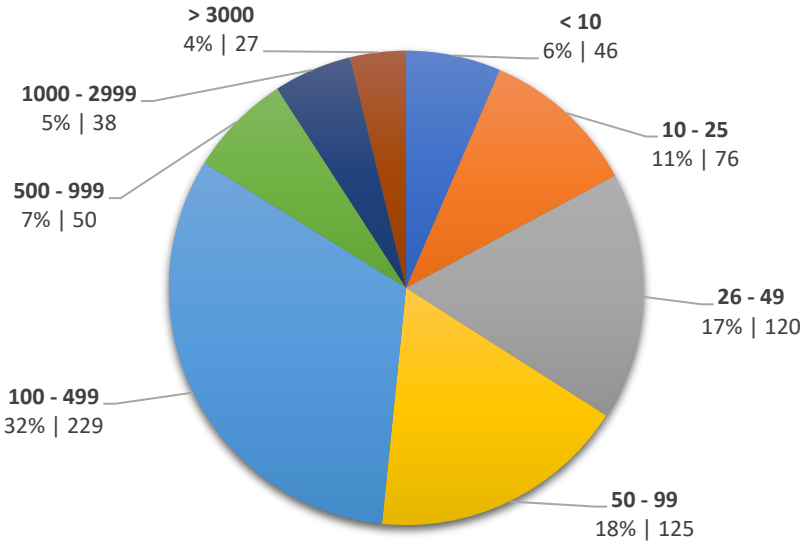

Figure 11. Organization size for respondents who indicated they function as a property custodian.

The organization size for those who indicated that they function as a property custodian ranged across all possible answers, with each option relatively well-represented. The most common organization size was 100-499 total employees (32%), with 50-99 total employees being the second (18%).

Q31. Do you hold any other roles within your agency?

There were 712 total respondents and 731 non-responses with 439 non-responses due to skip logic.

Do you hold any other roles within your agency?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Yes	64%	459
No	36%	253
	100%	712

Q32. Please explain your response to Q31.

There were 454 total respondents and 989 non-responses with 692 non-responses due to skip logic. The written responses can be viewed as part of the dataset.

Education and Certification.

Q33. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

There were 1,144 total respondents and 299 non-responses.

What is the highest level of education you have completed?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Less than high school completion	<1%	2
High school diploma or equivalent (for example, GED, HiSET, TASC)	13%	146
Professional certificate or diploma	8%	90
Associate degree	13%	154
Bachelor's degree	34%	393
Master's degree	22%	254
Ph.D., M.D., J.D., D.N.P., or other high-level professional degree	9%	105
	99%	1144

A Deeper Look: Question 33

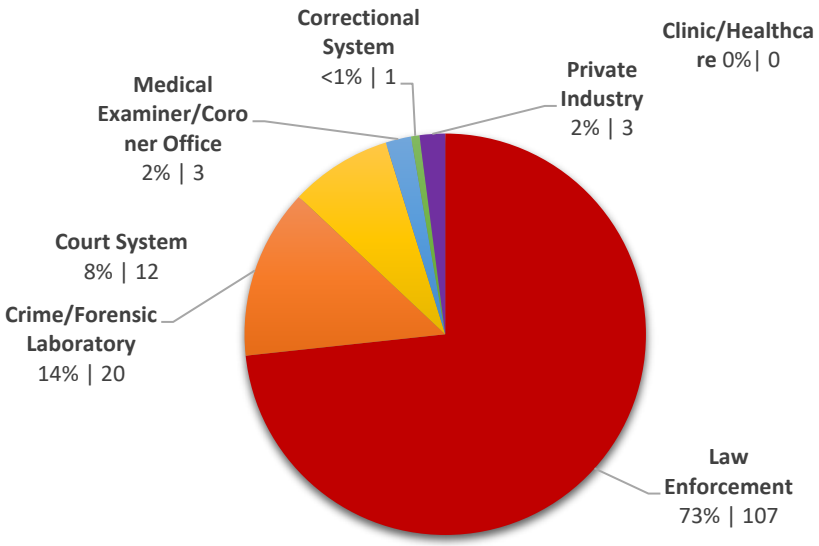

Figure 12. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated that their highest level of completed education is a high school diploma or equivalent

Distributions of the highest levels of education across the employer types are provided below. The two respondents who indicated they held less than a high school diploma or equivalent both selected law enforcement as their employing organization. Because it would consist of a solid circle, no pie chart is provided for respondents who had not completed high school.

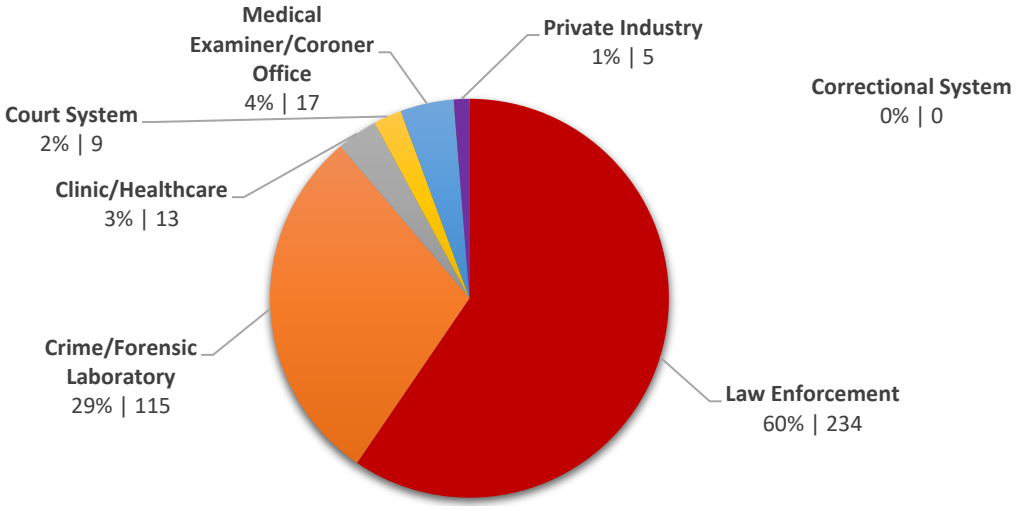

Figure 13. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated that their highest level of completed education is a bachelor's degree.

Of respondents who answered that they have a bachelor's degree, the majority (60%) indicated that a law enforcement agency employs them. The second most represented

employer type is crime/forensic laboratory (29%). No respondents representing the correctional system selected this answer choice.

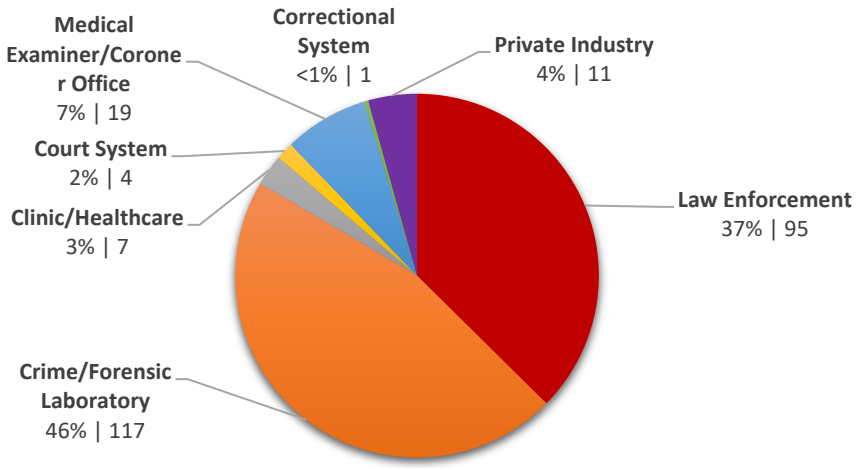

Figure 14. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated that their highest level of completed education is a master's degree.

For respondents who answered that they have a master's degree, the majority (46%) indicated employment by a crime/forensic laboratory. The second most represented organization type is law enforcement agencies (37%).

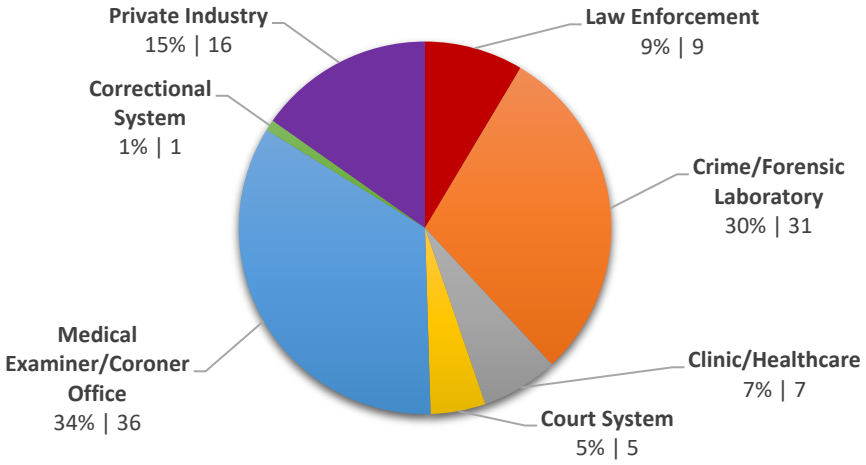

Figure 15. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated that their highest level of completed education is a Ph.D., M.D., J.D., D.N.P, or other high-level professional degree.

For respondents who answered that they hold a high-level professional degree, the majority (34%) indicated that a medical examiner/coroner's office employs them, with the second most represented organization type being crime/forensic laboratories (30%).

Q34. Do you hold any certifications?

There were 1,144 total respondents and 299 non-responses.

Do you hold any certifications?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Yes	60%	682
No	40%	462
	100%	1144

Q35. Please list your certifications.

There were 674 total respondents and 769 non-responses with 462 non-responses due to skip logic. The written responses are provided in the dataset.

2.3.1. Findings

Pre-Employment Background Checks. While most respondents (84%) indicated that their organization required a background check for their current position, background checks are not required for 16% of the respondents. Over half (54%) of the respondents who indicated that a background check was not required were from law enforcement agencies.

Job Level. The majority (97%) of the respondents indicated they were at least an experienced employee, with 32% of those respondents indicating they hold a supervisory/managerial level position and 9% indicating they hold a position as a director. Generally, this suggests that the survey reached the target respondent demographic. This finding also shows that nearly all the respondents have served in a position that directly manages and handles evidence/property for an extended period. As such, respondents to this survey were able to answer questions based on their own experiences in an evidence/property setting. Question 23 provides insight into the job titles held by respondents at the time of this survey. Written responses to open-ended/text-response questions are available in the dataset. Commonly mentioned job titles included Criminalist, Detective, Evidence Custodian, Evidence Technician, Forensic Scientist, Laboratory Director, Property and Evidence Specialist, and Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE).

Job Position Ranking. The majority of respondents (77%) indicated that they hold a civilian status, while 19% indicated they are sworn or commissioned officers. The U.S. Department of Justice found civilians fill many public safety roles to allow more sworn officers to attend to police work. [22]

[22] Davis, R.C., Lombardo, M.B., and Woods, D.J. "Civilian Staff in Policing: An Assessment of the 2009 Byrne Civilian Hiring Program." December 2013. https://nij.ojp.gov/library/publications/civilian-staff-policing-assessment-2009-byrne-civilian-hiring-program-0. Accessed July 1, 2025.

Job Position Duration. The majority of respondents had several years of experience, with only 5% of respondents indicating that they had been in their current position for less than one year. Nearly half of respondents (47%) indicated they had been in their current position for 7-10 years. Similar to the data collected regarding job level, this data suggests that the survey successfully reached the target audience, and respondents could provide answers to survey questions based on their experiences within the evidence/property management fields. Respondents' experience reflected an almost even split between under and over seven years of experience. This range indicates that responses reflect both the views of those newer to the position and those with more experience.

Interaction with Evidence/Property. The vast majority of respondents (94%) indicated that they directly interact with evidence/property items. This information helps support the reliability of the survey findings, which asks specific questions regarding the handling of evidence/property.

Evidence/Property Handling Experience. With respect to general evidence/property handling experience, as the number of years in the answer choices increased, so did the respondent percentages—the most commonly selected answer choice was over 20 years of experience (31%). It is important to note that this same trend was not observed for the following question, which enumerated the respondent's years of experience inside a property room, which exhibited a flatter distribution across the range of experience. This indicates that a majority of evidence handling experience for many of the respondents occurred outside of an evidence/property room.

Position Roles and Responsibilities. A nearly equal percentage of respondents indicated that they function as property custodians (62%) while also filling other roles within their organizations (64%). Based on this data, it is not uncommon for property custodians to serve in different positions, possibly demonstrating the need for additional personnel and increased access to resources to help with essential evidence/property functions. Considering that the most common answer for the number of personnel assigned full-time to the evidence/property room was 1-5 at 56%, individuals serving in other roles may encounter expanded workloads. Question 32 provides insight into some of the other roles held by respondents beyond functioning as a property custodian. Written responses to open-ended/text-response questions are available in the dataset. Commonly mentioned additional agency roles included Crime Scene Investigator/Technician, Detective, Patrol Officer, and Records Custodian.

Education and Certification. Nearly 100% of the respondents have at least a high school diploma or equivalent. The second and third most common levels of education completed were a bachelor's degree (34%) and a master's degree (22%), respectively. The level of education varied depending on the respondent's type of agency. Respondents from crime/forensic laboratories, medical examiner/coroners' offices, and hospital/clinical settings had a higher proportion of education levels beginning at and exceeding a bachelor's degree. Respondents representing law enforcement agencies also included those with bachelor's degrees (60%) and master's degrees (37%).

Additionally, over half (60%) of the respondents indicated that they hold at least one certification. This information helps provide a baseline for questions presented later in this report related to the prevalence of respondents seeking professional development certification versus those required by agency policy. Question 35 provides insight into the types of certifications held by respondents. Written responses to open-ended/text-response questions are available in the dataset. Commonly mentioned certifications included various American Board of Criminalistics (ABC) certifications, Certified Property and Evidence Specialist through the IAPE, Crime Scene Analyst certifications through the International Association of Identification (IAI), and SANE certifications.

2.4. Education and Training (Questions 36-40)

As a result of the 2009 National Academy of Sciences (NAS) Report[23] and the 2016 President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) Report,[24] the discipline of forensic science underwent a paradigm shift with a heavy emphasis on the initial education and training of new hires as well as the importance of continuing education and professional development of forensic science professionals. The following survey questions were intended to evaluate the impact of the emphasis on education and training requirements for individuals entering the workplace and those who are more experienced. These questions gauge employer-mandated education, training, and certification requirements involving positions directly related to handling and managing evidence/property items.

Educational Requirements of Evidence Handler Positions.

Q36. What is the minimum educational requirement for your position?

There were 1,131 total respondents and 312 non-responses.

What is the minimum educational requirement for your position?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Less than high school completion	<1%	7
High school diploma or equivalent (for example, GED, HiSET, TASC)	45%	512
Professional certificate or diploma	5%	61
Associate degree	11%	121
Bachelor's degree	28%	319
Master's degree	5%	56

[23] National Research Council. "Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States: A Path Forward. 2009. https://nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/12589/strengthening-forensic-science-in-the-united-states-a-path-forward. Accessed July 1, 2025.
[24] President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology. "Forensic Science in Criminal Courts: Ensuring Scientific Validity of Feature-Comparison Methods." September 2016. https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/PCAST/pcast_forensic_science_report_final.pdf. Accessed July 1, 2025.

Ph.D., M.D., J.D., D.N.P., or other high-level professional degree	5%	55
	99%	1131

A Deeper Look: Question 36

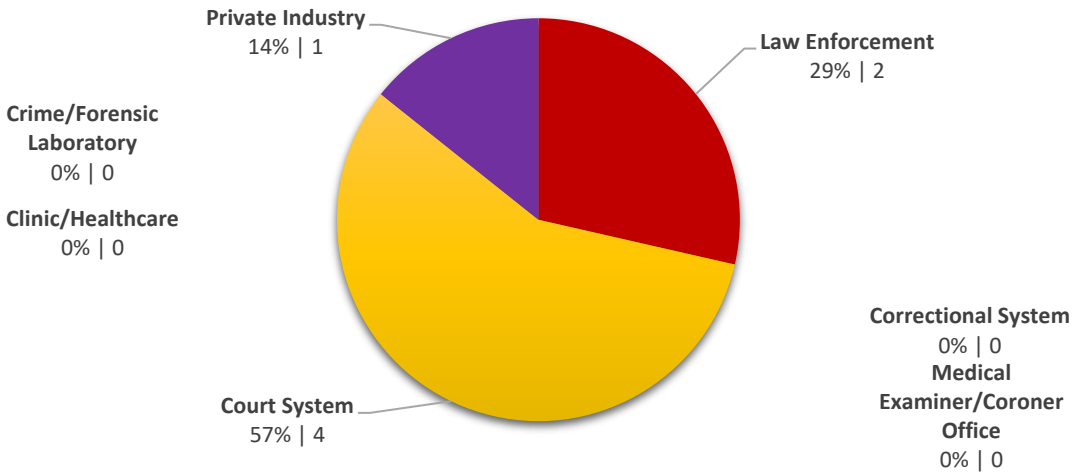

Figure 16. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated the minimum educational requirement for their position is less than high school completion.

Of respondents who indicated that their current position requires less than high school completion, over half (57%) indicated the court system as their organization type. Only two respondents (29%) were from law enforcement agencies. No respondents representing the correctional system, medical examiner/coroner office, crime/forensic laboratory, or clinic/healthcare sector selected this answer choice.

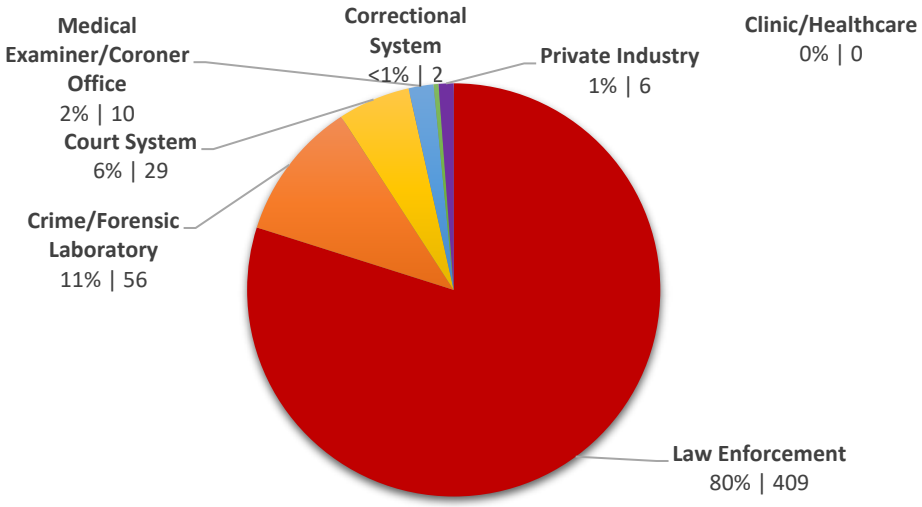

Figure 17. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated the minimum educational requirement for their position is a high school diploma or equivalent.

For respondents who indicated that their current position requires at least a high school diploma or equivalent, the majority (80%) of respondents indicated law enforcement as their organization type. Crime/forensic laboratory was the second most common organization type, with 11% of respondents selecting this option. No respondents representing the clinic/healthcare sector selected this answer choice.

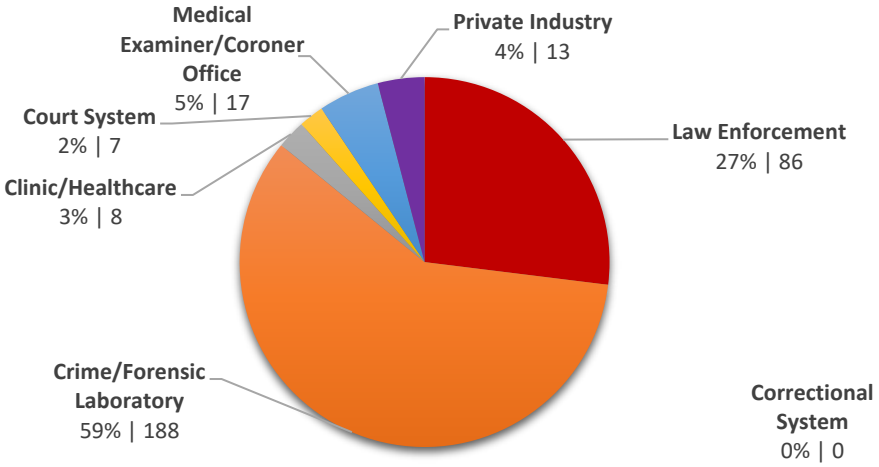

Figure 18. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated the minimum educational requirement for their position is a bachelor's degree.

For respondents who indicated that the minimum requirement for their current position was a bachelor's degree, crime/forensic laboratory was the most common organization type (59%). Law enforcement agencies were the second most common (27%). No respondents representing the correctional system selected this answer choice.

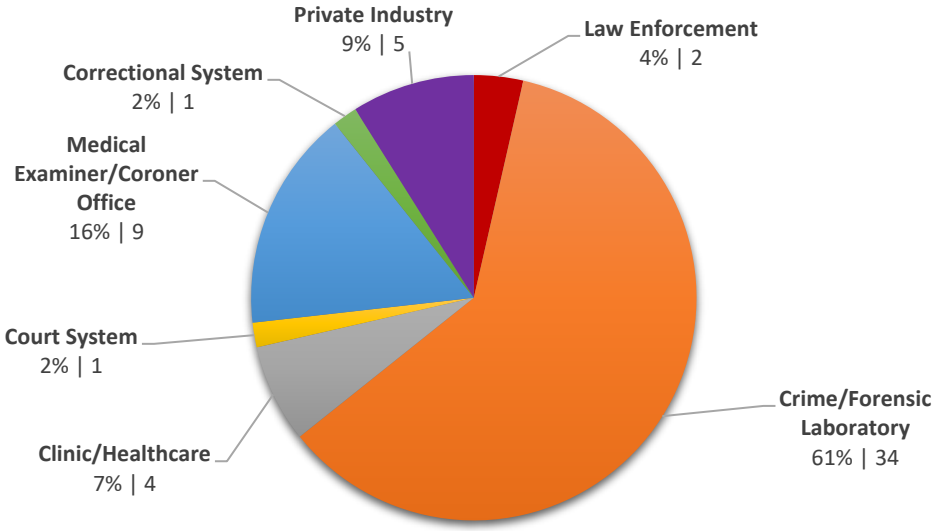

Figure 19. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated the minimum education requirement for their position is a master's degree.

For respondents who indicated a master's degree was the minimum requirement for their current position, the crime/forensic laboratory was the most common organization type (61%). The medical examiner/coroner's office was second most common (16%).

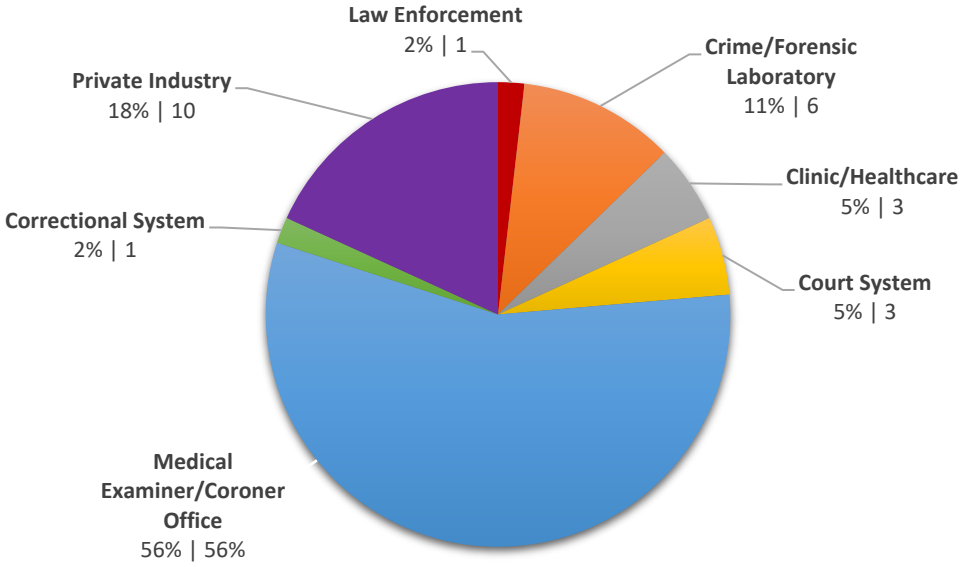

Figure 20. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated the minimum education requirement for their position is a form of a high-level professional degree.

For respondents who indicated that a high-level professional degree (Ph.D., M.D., etc.) was the minimum education requirement for their current position, the medical examiner/coroner's office was the most common agency type (56%), followed by private industry (18%).

Formal Training Requirements Dictated by Organization and Position.

Q37. Does your role require any of the following? (Select all that apply.)

There were 1,131 total respondents. This question was a select-all-response option; therefore, the total number of responses is more than the total number of respondents. There were 312 non-responses.

Does your role require any of the following? (Select all that apply.)		
Answer Choices	**Response Percentage**	**Number of Responses**
Attending formal, specialized training for evidence management	48%	546
Obtaining certification(s) in evidence management	20%	224
Maintaining certification(s) in evidence management	18%	200
None of the above	49%	558

Evidence Handling Training.

Q38. What type of training related to evidence handling did you receive for your position? (Select all that apply.)

There were 1,127 total respondents. This question was a select-all-response option; therefore, the total number of responses is more than the total number of respondents. The results below exclude one irrelevant answer from the "Other" category. There were 316 non-responses.

What type of training related to evidence handling did you receive for your position? (Select all that apply.)		
Answer Choices	**Response Percentage**	**Number of Responses**
On the job training	92%	1,035
Conferences	46%	521
Lectures or presentations without CE credits	36%	408
Self-taught	34%	382
Certificate program	25%	284
Lectures or presentations with CE credits	23%	262
Graduate program including evidence topics	7%	80
Undergraduate level courses related to evidence topics (not part of a degree)	5%	51
Graduate level courses related to evidence topics (not part of a degree)	2%	27
None of these	1%	11
Other type of education/training (please specify)	11%	126

Q39. Is the training documented?

There were 1,127 total respondents and 316 non-responses.

Is the training documented?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Yes	79%	895
No	16%	178
N/A	5%	54
	100%	1127

Q40. Please indicate why the training is documented. (Select all that apply.)

There were 894 total respondents. This question was a select-all-response option; therefore, the total number of responses is more than the total number of respondents. There were 549 non-responses with 232 non-responses due to skip logic.

Please indicate why the training is documented. (Select all that apply.)		
Answer Choices	**Response Percentage**	**Number of Responses**
Employment requirements	54%	481
Organization accreditation	37%	335
Certification, licensure, or related professional requirement	45%	405
Other (please specify)	15%	138

2.4.1. Findings

Educational Requirements of Evidence Handler Positions. While the previous section obtained information on the level of respondents' education, this section inquired about the overarching academic requirements of respondents' job positions. Just under half of the respondents (45%) indicated that a high school diploma or equivalent was required. The second most common answer was a bachelor's degree (28%). When disaggregating the data by organization type, educational requirements varied substantially. For example, a larger proportion of respondents from court systems indicated that their current position requires less than a high school diploma (57%) when compared to law enforcement agencies (29%) and the private industry sector (14%). It is important to note that the answer choice of "less than high school completion" was the least frequently selected of all the answers, with seven respondents responding affirmatively to this option. Respondents from law enforcement agencies most commonly (80%) chose a high school diploma or equivalent as the minimum educational requirement for their positions, while crime/forensic laboratories most frequently selected bachelor's degree (59%) and master's degree (61%) for the minimum educational requirement for their held positions. Respondents from medical examiners/coroners' offices most frequently answered that a high-level professional degree was the minimum requirement (56%).

Formal Training Requirements Mandated by Organization and Position. About half of the respondents (49%) indicated that their organization does not require formal, specialized evidence management training or certifications for their job role. As mentioned in the takeaway above, most positions held by respondents to this survey required a high school diploma or equivalent.

Evidence Handling Training. When asked about the type of training received for their current position, most respondents (92%) indicated that they receive on-the-job training, with the subsequent most common forms of training being conferences (46%), lectures, or presentations without continuing education credits (36%) or being self-taught (34%). Some

training occurs nearly universally, as only 1% of respondents indicated they do not receive any training, but some respondents indicated that training is not documented (16%).

Question 40 follows up on this topic by asking respondents to elaborate on why training is documented. Respondents most commonly answered that training is documented for employment requirements (54%), with certification, licensure, or related professional requirement (45%) ranking second, and accreditation requirements (37%) ranking third. More than 40 of the 138 respondents who selected "other" reasons listed "department policy," "documentation of training," "employee files," and similar phrases that others may have categorized as "employment requirements." Complete responses are provided in the published dataset.

2.5. Quality Control (Questions 41-45)

ISO/IEC 17025:2017 General Requirements for the Competence of Testing and Calibration Laboratories is the main accreditation standard used in forensic science laboratories, requiring them to have a robust quality management system that includes QA/QC measures. In contrast to the DNA discipline, which has nearly universally adopted accreditation to ISO/IEC 17025, the discipline of evidence management does not have a competitive accreditation market or widespread implementation of ISO/IEC 17025, nor is there emphasis on becoming accredited and maintaining accreditation.

Accreditation is a critical aspect of an effective quality management system.[25] The diversity of organizations that employ individuals who interact with evidence/property complicates the ability to create a universal quality management system through an oversight/accreditation body. There are subsets of evidence accreditations such as audit accreditations and state-level requirements; however, these vary by region, organization type, and classification. Evidence/property rooms often rely on internally developed and organization-specific guidance when creating a quality management system, including QA/QC policies, QA/QC organization point of contact, and QA/QC SOPs. This section sought to gain insight into the organization's policies, SOPs, QA/QC staff, and guiding principles or documents to ensure quality management in handling of evidence/property to understand better the extent of an organization's proactive planning to maintain quality within evidence/property management. Respondents were provided with the following definitions of QA and QC:

> Quality assurance: the standardized procedures, methods, or philosophy for collecting, processing, or analyzing data, that is performed on an ongoing basis and aimed at maintaining or improving the appropriateness and reliability of services.

[25] Zarwell, L., Grassel, J., and Pilkington, M.M. "Police Crime Lab Accreditation Initiative." Police Chief Online, January 31, 2024. https://www.policechiefmagazine.org/crime-lab-ascld-accreditation-initiative/. Accessed July 1, 2025.

Quality control: the sum of all the activities that prevent unwanted (e.g., negative) change in quality of services.

Q41. Does your organization have quality assurance/quality control policies?

There were 1,117 total respondents and 326 non-responses.

Does your organization have quality assurance/quality control policies?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Yes	83%	926
No	17%	191
	100%	1117

A Deeper Look: Question 41

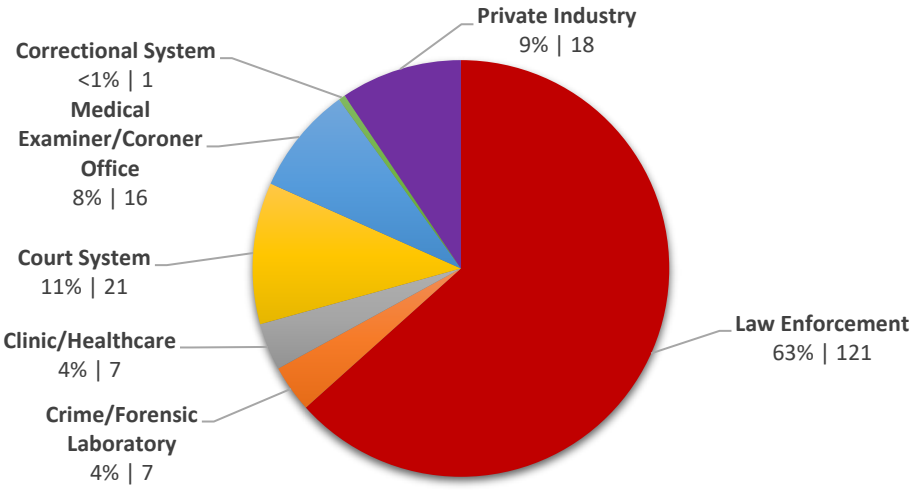

Figure 21. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated that their organization does not have quality assurance or quality control policies.

For respondents who indicated that their organization does not have any QA/QC policies, law enforcement was the most common organization type (63%). Court systems (11%), private industry (9%), and medical examiner/coroners' offices (8%) were the following most common organization types in that order.

Q42. Does your organization have a designated quality control individual and/or team/unit? (Select all that apply.)

There were 1,117 total respondents. This question was a select-all-response option; therefore, the total number of responses is greater than the total number of respondents. There were 326 non-responses.

Does your organization have a designated quality control individual and/or team/unit? (Select all that apply.)		
Answer Choices	**Response Percentage**	**Number of Responses**
QC Individual	33%	365
QC Team/Unit	30%	338
None of the above	44%	495

A Deeper Look: Question 42

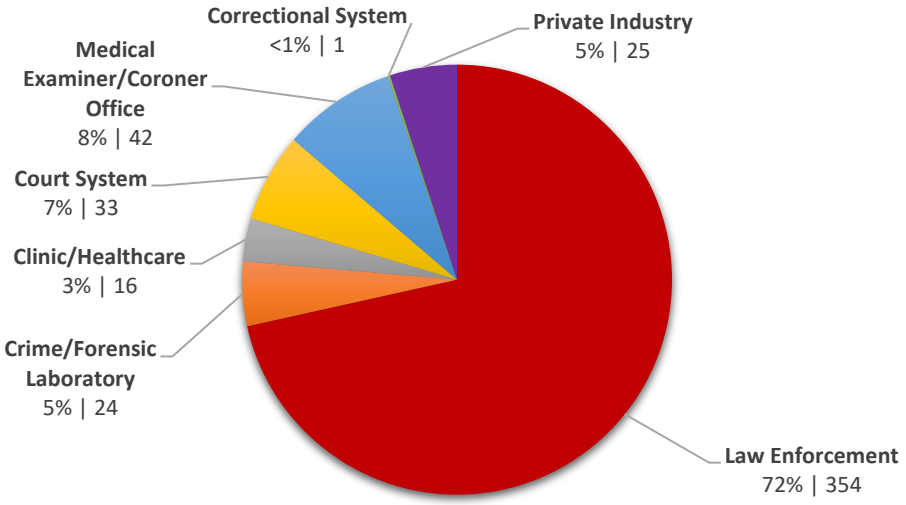

Figure 22. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated that their organization does not have a dedicated quality control individual or team/unit.

For respondents who indicated that their organization does not have a dedicated quality control individual or team/unit, law enforcement was the most common organization type (72%). The second most common organization type was the medical examiner/coroner's office (8%), followed by the third most common organization type being court systems (7%).

Q43. Does your organization have written policies, procedures, protocols, or other related documents related to the following? (Select all that apply.)

There were 1,106 total respondents. This question was a select-all-response option; therefore, the total number of responses is more than the total number of respondents. There were 337 non-responses.

Does your organization have written policies, procedures, protocols, or other related documents related to the following? (Select all that apply.)		
Answer Choices	**Response Percentage**	**Number of Responses**
Evidence Storage	86%	954
Evidence Packaging	85%	945
Evidence Security	83%	916
Evidence Disposition	80%	887
Evidence Tracking	79%	873
Handling of hazardous and biological materials	77%	851
Conducting Audits/Inventories	74%	821
Evidence Destruction	73%	810
Storage to minimize cross-contamination	63%	702
None of the above	5%	54
I don't know	4%	39

A Deeper Look: Question 43

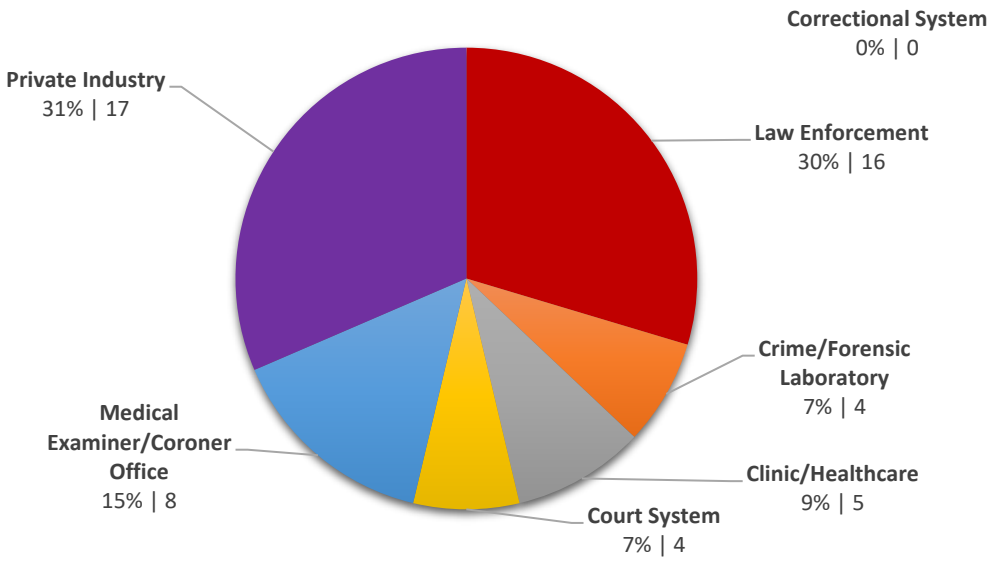

Figure 23. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated that their organization does not have written policies, procedures, protocols, or other related documents.

Of respondents indicating that their organization does not have written documentation related to various evidence/property considerations, private industry was the most common (31%) organization type, followed closely by respondents from law enforcement (30%). No respondents representing the correctional system selected this answer choice.

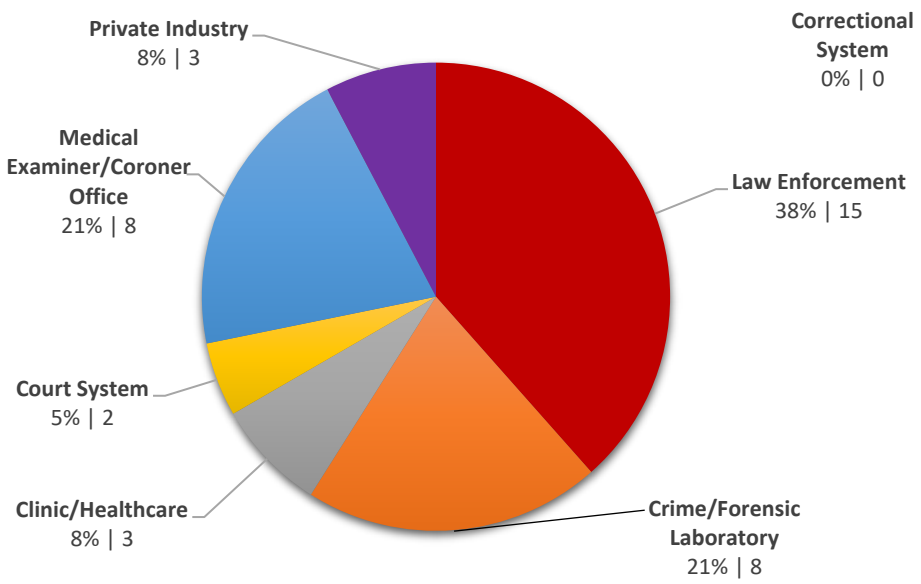

Figure 24. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated they are unsure whether their organization has written policies, procedures, protocols, or other related documents.

For respondents who indicated that they were unsure whether their organization has written documentation related to various evidence/property considerations, law enforcement was the most common (38%) organization. The second and third most common organization was medical examiner/coroner office and crime/forensic laboratory (both with 21%). No respondents representing the correctional system selected this answer choice.

Q44. What type of guiding principles are followed?

There were 52 total respondents. There were 1,391 non-responses with 1,052 non-responses due to skip logic. Written responses to open-ended/text-response questions are available in the dataset.

SOP Review and Revision.

Q45. How often are your organization's standard operating procedures or established procedures concerning evidence management reviewed and/or revised?

There were 1,102 total respondents and 341 non-responses.

How often are your organization's standard operating procedures or established procedures concerning evidence management reviewed and/or revised?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
On a predetermined review schedule	43%	471
As needed	37%	410
Never, once they are established, they are not reviewed again	2%	19
N/A, we do not have SOPs or established procedures	4%	40
I don't know	15%	162
	101%	1102

2.5.1. Findings

Presence of QA/QC Within Organizations. While the majority of the respondents (83%) indicated that their organization has QA/QC policies, 17% of the respondents indicated that there are no developed QA/QC policies within their organization. Of the 17% who indicated that they have none, respondents from law enforcement agencies were the most common respondent type to indicate that their organization does not possess QA/QC policies (63%), with court systems second most common (11%) and the private industry sector third (9%).

Of respondents indicating that their organization has QA/QC policies in place, about a third have a designated individual (33%) or team/unit (30%) to manage QA/QC functions. Because this question allowed respondents to select all options that apply to their organization, even fewer organizations may have a dedicated entity as some organizations may have both an individual and a unit/team to oversee these functions.

Guidance Documentation. The majority of respondents indicated that their organization had written policies, procedures, protocols, or other similar types of documentation related to each of the following evidence/property considerations: evidence storage (86%), evidence packaging (85%), evidence security (83%), evidence disposition (80%), evidence tracking (79%), hazardous and biological material handling (77%), audits/inventories (74%), evidence destruction (73%), and storage considerations to minimize cross-contamination (63%). A small number of respondents (5%) indicated that they do not have any written policies, procedures, protocols, or other documentation in place for evidence/property considerations. Another small number (4%) indicated that they were unsure whether their organization has this type of documentation.

Respondents answered that written policies, procedures, and storage protocols intended to minimize cross-contamination exist within their organization were the least common (63%).

Most organizations store evidentiary and non-evidentiary materials, and all evidence can potentially undergo multiple kinds of forensic examination. Question 44 provides additional insights into some of the other guiding principles indicated by respondents. Written responses to open-ended/text-response questions are available in the dataset. Commonly mentioned guiding principle themes included "general law enforcement principles," "standard practices of the past," and "word of mouth."

SOP Review and Revision. Less than half of the respondents (43%) indicated that reviews of their organizations' SOPs related to evidence management occur on a predetermined schedule. This is a common requirement in quality management systems to meet accreditation requirements. Thirty-seven percent of the respondents review or revise SOPs on an as-needed basis, and 2% of the respondents indicated that their organization never reviews their SOPs after they are established. Another 34% of the respondents indicated that their organization does not have SOPs or established procedures related to evidence management.

2.6. Evidence Tracking (Questions 46-53)

When creating a system that balances the needs of stored evidence/property with incoming evidence/property, the system must correctly track and have the capacity to account for all items. Doing so avoids lost or misplaced inventory, and items can be easily identified if needed in the future (e.g., for final disposition, additional forensic examinations). Additionally, proper evidence/property tracking minimizes errors, mix-ups, and mismatches among the items that belong to each case. The questions within this section serve to understand evidence tracking processes such as the use of electronic tracking systems versus manual tracking systems, whether and to what capacity chain of custody and relevant information is tracked, and evidence/property package labeling practices for identification and reference purposes.

Q46. How is evidence tracked?

There were 1,097 total respondents and 346 non-responses.

How is evidence tracked?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Manual Written Tracking only	7%	80
Electronic Tracking (e.g., computer assisted, computer program) only	61%	669
Hybrid of Manual and Electronic Tracking	29%	322
None of these	1%	8
Other (please specify)	2%	18
	100%	1097

A Deeper Look: Question 46

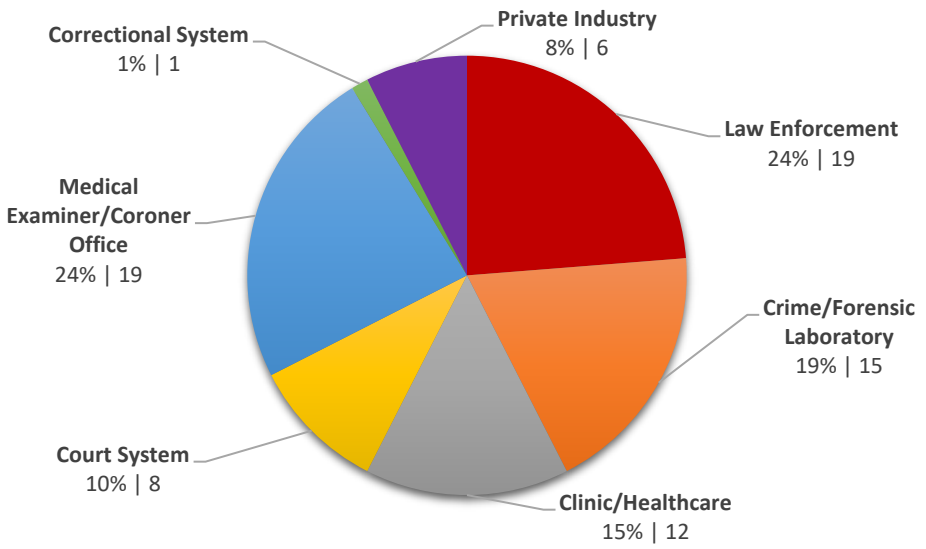

Figure 25. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated that their organization utilizes manual written tracking only.

Of respondents indicating that their organization uses manual written tracking only, representation across organization types was evenly represented: law enforcement (24%), medical/examiner coroner's office (24%), and crime/forensic laboratories (19%).

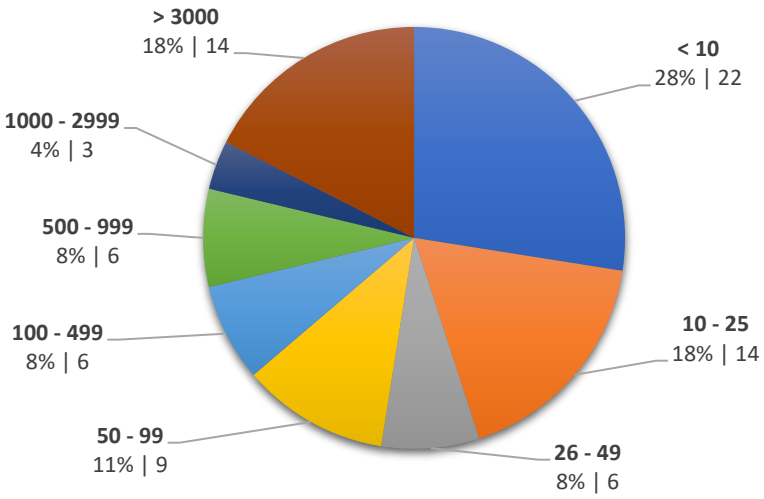

Figure 26. Total individuals employed for respondents indicated their organization utilizes manual written tracking only.

For respondents who indicated that their organization utilizes manual written tracking only, the most common organization size was <10 employees (28%). There was equal representation for 10-25 employees and >3,000 employees (18% each).

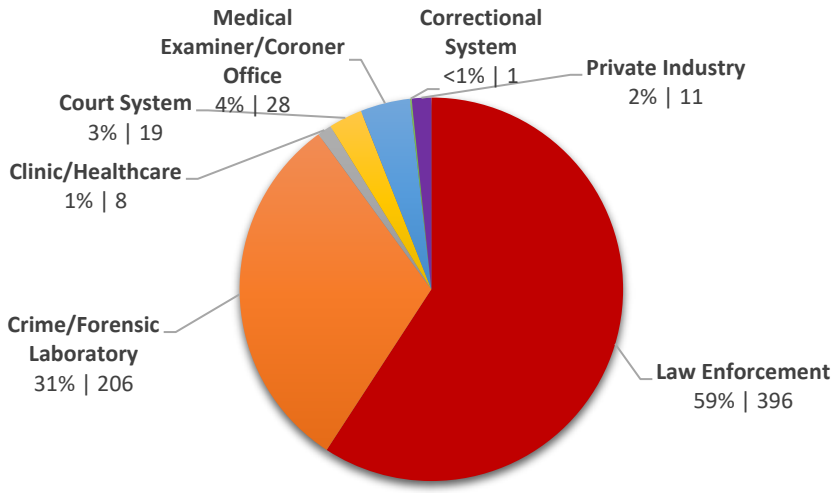

Figure 27. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated that their organization utilizes electronic tracking only.

Of respondents indicating that their organization uses electronic tracking only, the majority (59%) represented law enforcement agencies. The second most common organization type was crime/forensic laboratory (31%).

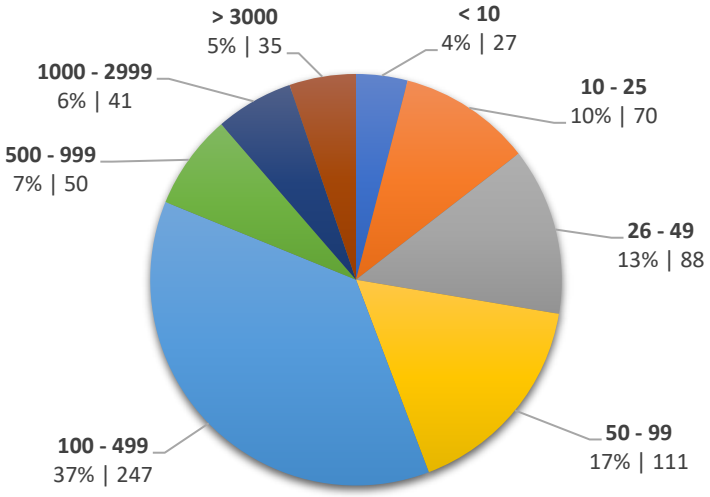

Figure 28. Total individuals employed for respondents indicating that their organization uses electronic tracking only.

For respondents who indicated that their organization utilizes electronic tracking only, the most common organization size was 100-499 employees (37%), with 50-99 employees being the second most common (17%) and 26-49 employees being the third (13%).

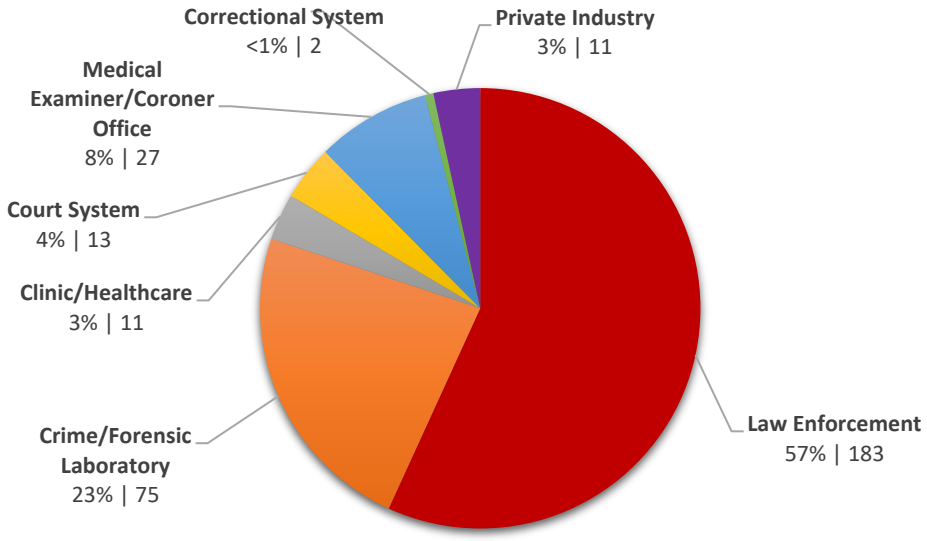

Figure 29. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated that their organization uses manual and electronic hybrid tracking.

Of respondents indicating that their organization uses a hybrid manual and electronic tracking approach, the majority (57%) represented law enforcement agencies, with the second most common organization type being crime/forensic laboratory (23%).

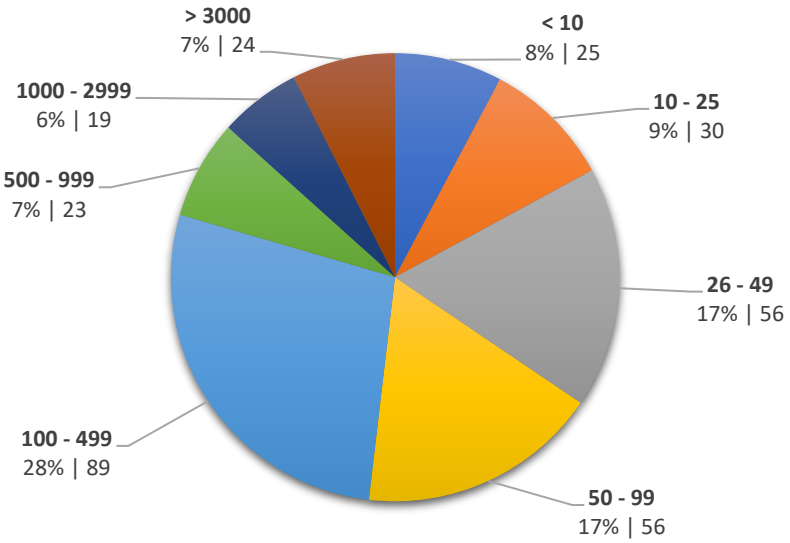

Figure 30. Total individuals employed for respondents who indicated that their organization utilizes a hybrid of manual and electronic tracking.

Of respondents indicating that their organization utilizes a hybrid approach of manual and electronic tracking, the most common organization size was 100-499 employees (28%), followed by 50-99 employees (17%) and 26-49 employees (17%).

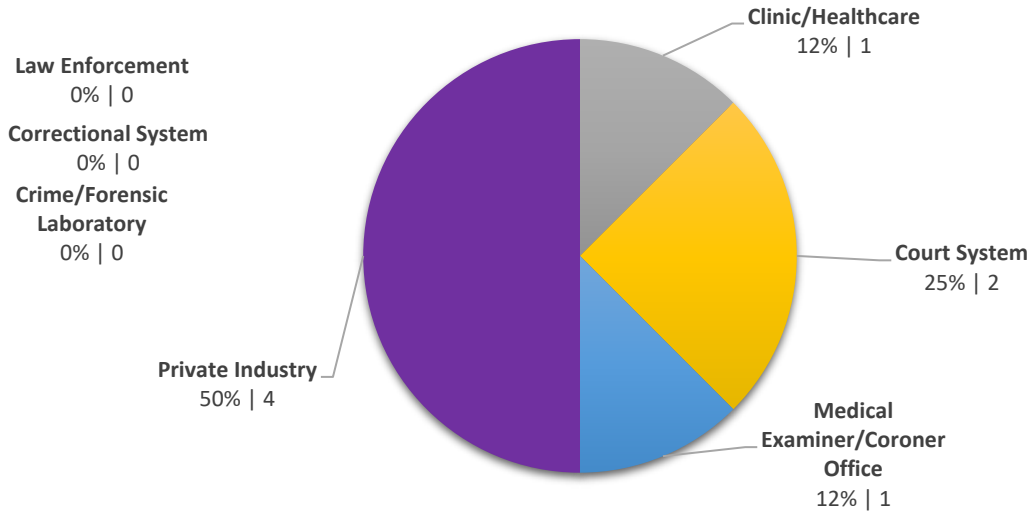

Figure 31. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated that their organization does not utilize manual or electronic tracking.

Of respondents indicating that their organization does not use manual or electronic tracking, half (50%) represented private industry and the remaining half consisted of the court system (25%), clinic/healthcare (12%), and medical examiner/coroner's office (12%). No respondents representing the crime/forensic laboratory, law enforcement, or correction system selected this answer choice.

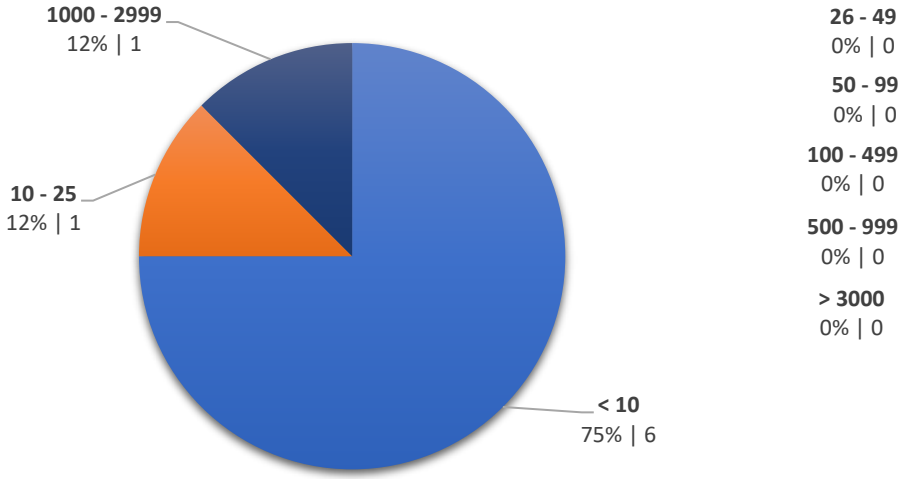

Figure 32. Total individuals employed for respondents indicated their organization does not utilize manual or electronic tracking.

Of respondents indicating that their organization does not use manual or electronic tracking, three-fourths (75%) had fewer than ten employees. The remaining one-quarter consisted of individuals employed at an organization that either employed 10-25 individuals (12%) or

1,000-2,999 individuals (12%). No respondents representing organizations with 50-99, 100-499, 500-999, or >3,000 selected this answer choice.

Q47. Please indicate what type of tracking system is used

There were 990 total respondents and 453 non-responses with 106 non-responses due to skip logic. Written responses to open-ended/text-response questions are available in the dataset

Chain of Custody Tracking.

Q48. Does your agency/organization track the chain of custody?

There were 1,096 total respondents and 347 non-responses.

Does your agency/organization track the chain of custody?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Yes	96%	1,056
No	3%	35
I don't know	<1%	5
	99%	1,096

A Deeper Look: Question 48

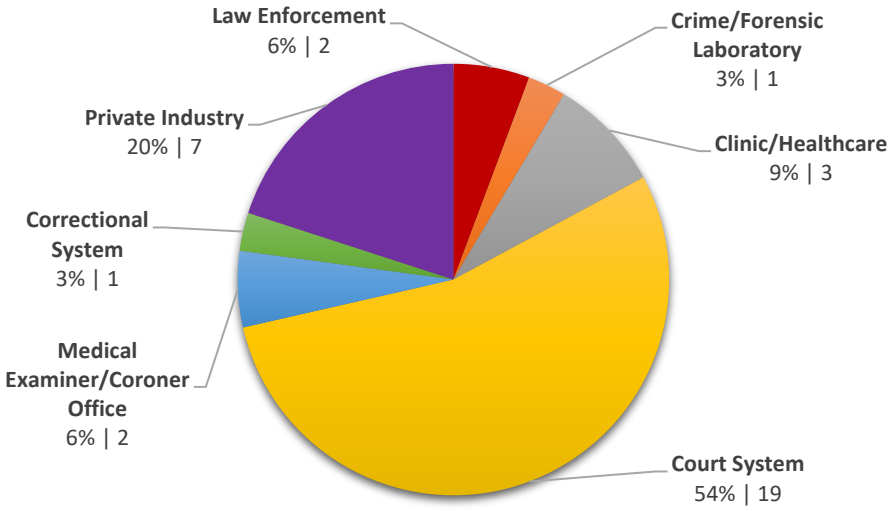

Figure 33. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated that their organization does not track chain of custody.

Of respondents indicating that their organization does not track the chain of custody, over half (54%) represented court systems. The second most common organization type was the private industry sector (20%).

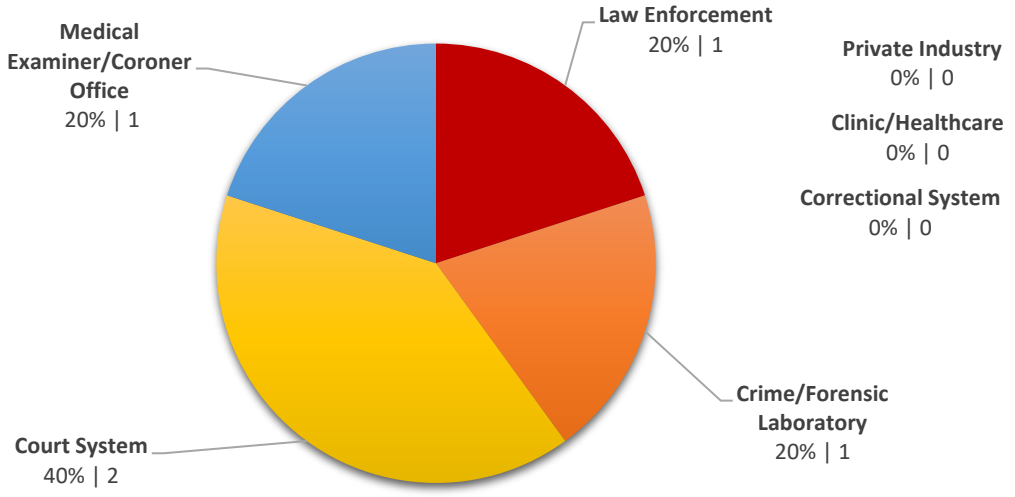

Figure 34. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated they are unsure whether their organization tracks the chain of custody.

Of respondents indicating they were unsure whether their organization tracks the chain of custody, the majority (40%) belonged to the court system. They were followed by law enforcement, medical examiner/coroner's office, and crime/forensic laboratory, each having 20%. No respondents representing the private industry, clinic/healthcare, or correctional system selected this answer choice.

Q49. How does your agency/organization track the chain of custody? (Select all that apply.)

There were 1,055 total respondents. This question was a select-all-response option; therefore, the total number of responses is greater than the total number of respondents. The "Other" category total reflects the exclusion of one irrelevant answer. There were 388 non-responses with 40 non-responses due to skip logic.

How does your agency/organization track the chain of custody? (Select all that apply.)		
Answer Choices	**Response Percentage**	**Number of Responses**
Automated Electronic Tracking (e.g., evidence management system)	74%	838
Manual Written Tracking (e.g., ledger, index cards)	29%	330
Written on evidence package	27%	307
Case report	19%	211
Manual Electronic Tracking (e.g., spreadsheet)	14%	158
Other (please specify)	5%	55

A Deeper Look: Question 49

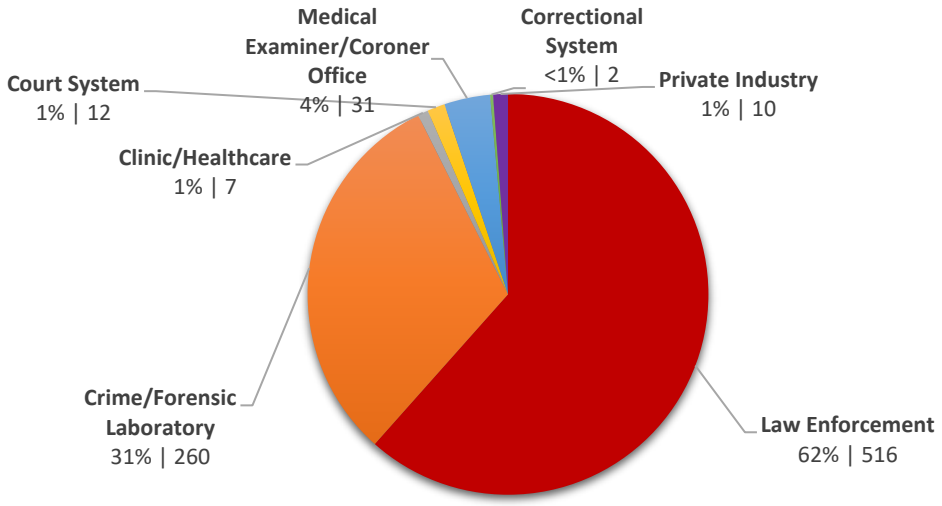

Figure 35. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated that their organization tracks chain of custody using automated electronic tracking.

For respondents who indicated that their organization tracks chain of custody using automated electronic tracking systems, the majority (62%) of the respondents represented law enforcement agencies, followed by crime/forensic laboratory (31%).

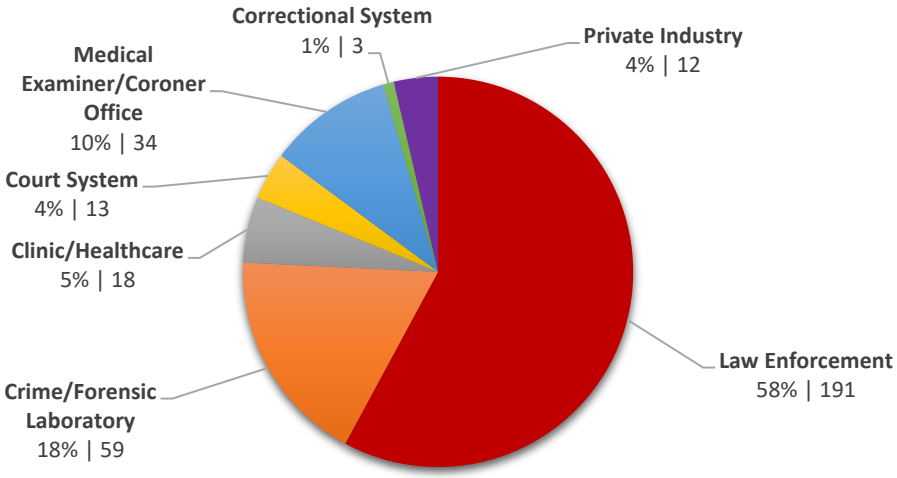

Figure 36. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated that their organization tracks chain of custody using manual written tracking.

Of respondents indicating that their organization tracks chain of custody by using manual written tracking methods, over half (58%) represented law enforcement agencies, followed by crime/forensic laboratory (18%).

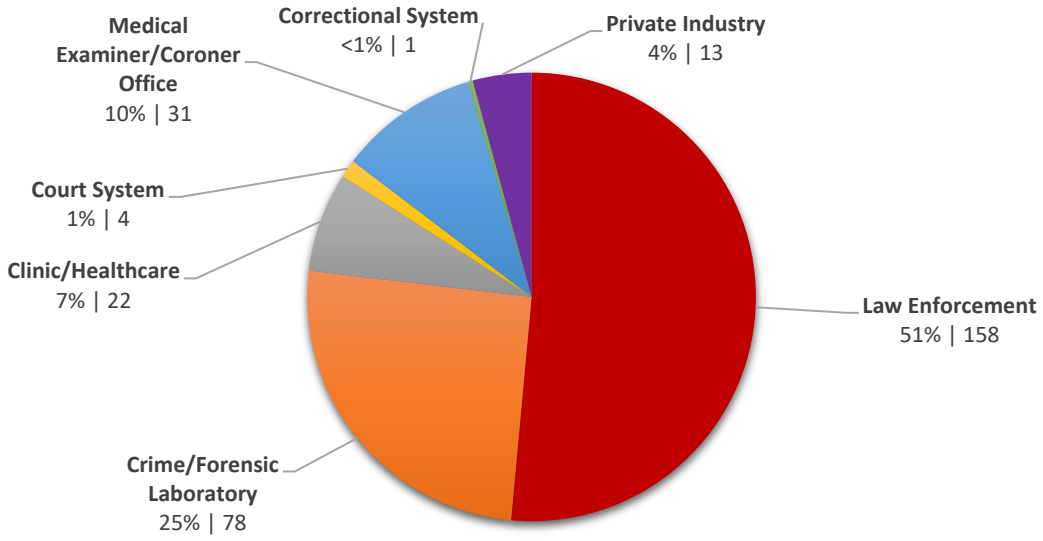

Figure 37. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated that their organization tracks chain of custody by writing on the evidence package.

Of respondents indicating that their organization tracks chain of custody by writing on the evidence package, over half (51%) represented law enforcement agencies, followed by one-quarter (25%) belonging to crime/forensic laboratories.

Tracked Chain of Custody Elements.

Q50. What aspects of the chain of custody does your agency/organization document? (Select all that apply.)

There were 1,055 total respondents. This question was a select-all-response option; therefore, the total number of responses is greater than the total number of respondents. The "Other" category total reflects the exclusion of one irrelevant answer. There were 388 non-responses with 40 non-responses due to skip logic.

What aspects of chain of custody does your agency/organization document? (Select all that apply.)		
Answer Choices	**Response Percentage**	**Number of Responses**
Item movement/transfer	96%	1,013
Item custody/possession	95%	1,003
Date and time stamps	91%	962
Authorizing person	73%	773
Disposition status	72%	756
Reason for movement	66%	691
Other (please specify)	2%	26

Evidence/Property Identification.

Q51. Is a unique identifier issued to each individual evidence/property item?

There were 1,095 total respondents and 348 non-responses.

Is a unique identifier issued to each individual evidence/property item?		
Answer Choices	**Response Percentage**	**Number of Responses**
Yes	92%	1,007
No	7%	73
I don't know	1%	15
	100%	1,095

A Deeper Look: Question 51

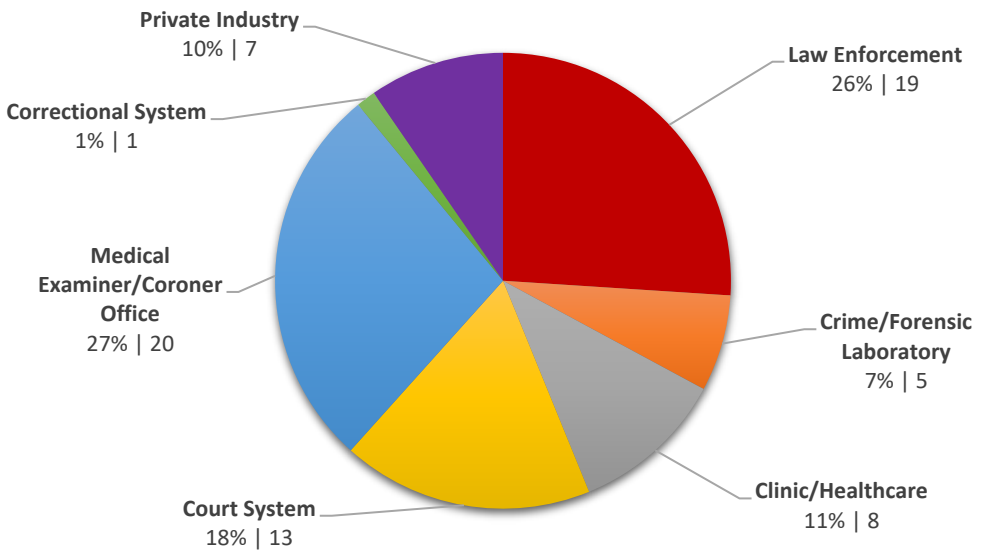

Figure 38. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated that their organization does not issue a unique identifier to each individual evidence/property item.

Of respondents indicating that their organization does not issue a unique identifier to each individual evidence/property item, over one quarter (27%) indicated they belong to a medical examiner/coroner's office, with law enforcement agencies representing the second most common organization type (26%).

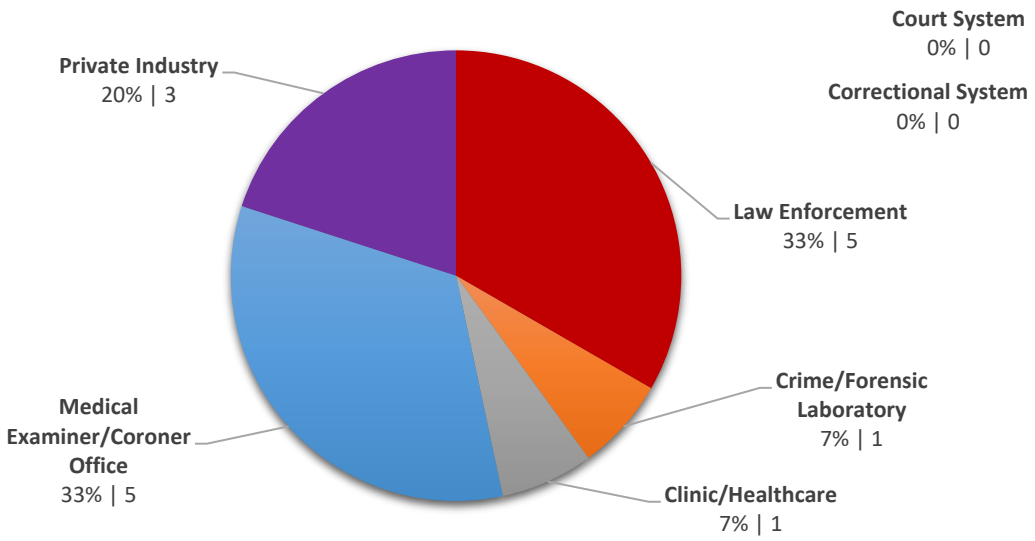

Figure 39. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated they are unsure whether their organization issues a unique identifier to each individual evidence/property item.

Among respondents indicating they are unsure whether their organization issues a unique identifier to each individual evidence/property item, law enforcement agencies and medical examiner/coroner's office were the most common organization type represented with 33% each. The second most common organization type was private industry (20%). No respondents representing court systems or correctional systems selected this answer choice.

Q52. Do you label each individual evidence/property item?

There were 1,009 total respondents and 434 non-responses with 88 non-responses due to skip logic.

Do you label each individual evidence/property item?		
Answer Choices	**Response Percentage**	**Number of Responses**
Yes	97%	979
No	3%	30
I don’t know	0%	0
	100%	1009

A Deeper Look: Question 52

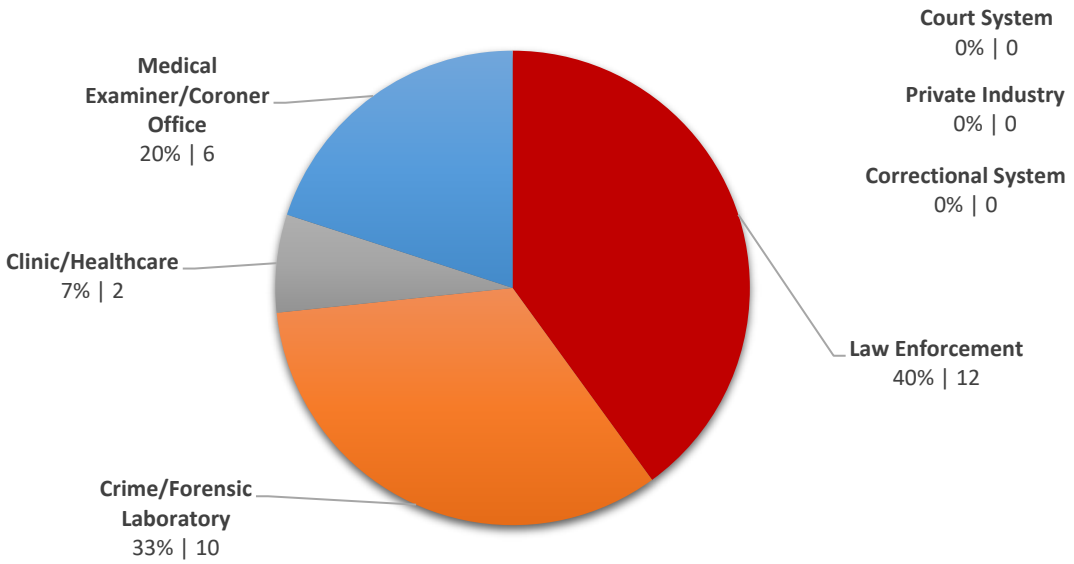

Figure 40. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated that their organization does not label each evidence/property item.

Among respondents indicating that their organization does not label each evidence/property item, most (40%) indicated they belong to a law enforcement agency, with crime/forensic laboratories representing the second most common organization type (33%).

Q53. How are individual evidence/property items identified and referenced?

There were 87 total respondents and 1,356 non-responses with 1,009 non-responses due to skip logic. Written responses to open-ended/text-response questions are available in the dataset.

2.6.1. Findings

Evidence/Property Tracking Systems. Most respondents indicated that their organization utilizes either an electronic (61%) or a hybrid tracking system (29%) to manage evidence/property inventories. Technology is a beneficial and necessary tool in modern organizational systems. The capabilities of electronic devices can significantly reduce administrative errors and labor demands, make it easier to locate specific items upon request, and enhance security if deployed and maintained appropriately. Most organizations managing evidence/property use these tools.

Of the few organizations that use only manual written tracking (7% of total respondents), law enforcement (24%), forensic/crime laboratory (19%), and medical examiner/coroner's offices

(24%) were the most represented organization types. The respondents who indicated that their organizations use manual written tracking methods represent organizations of various size ranges, but the most common had fewer than ten employees (28%). Smaller organizations may have smaller inventories and thus less perceived need for relatively expensive electronic or hybrid tracking systems. However, all organizations can arguably benefit from a technological resource assisting with evidence tracking and management to prevent human error.

Chain of Custody Tracking. The chain of custody is critical in evidence management and should be tracked by all agencies handling evidence. The majority of the respondents (96% or 1,056 respondents) indicated that their organization tracks the chain of custody. Respondents who work in court agencies constituted 54% of the respondents who indicated that their organization does not track the chain of custody, with private industry (20%) and clinic/healthcare (9%) being second and third most represented, respectively. When asked about tracking systems specific to the chain of custody, nearly three-fourths (74%) of the respondents indicated that their organization utilizes an automated tracking system for this use case.

Tracked Chain of Custody Elements. When asked about the type of information documented for an item's chain of custody, movement/transfer (96%) was the most common selection. The least commonly selected was the reason for movement (66%). The range of responses between the selections for Question 50 is an indication that some measures should be considered to increase awareness and/or better standardize the requirements for a robust chain of custody.

Evidence/Property Identification. Most organizations label evidence/property items individually (97%) and use unique identifiers (92%) representing two well-known best practices in evidence management. Of the respondents who indicated unique identifiers are not issued to each evidence/property item (7%) or were unsure whether this was their organization's practice (1%), Question 53 asked these respondents to expand on how individual evidence/property items are identified and referenced. Written responses to open-ended/text-response questions are available in the dataset. Commonly mentioned identification and reference conventions included "case number," "labels," and "report number." Given these responses, it appears that some respondents misunderstood the question.

2.7. Disposition and Retention (Question 54-60)

Disposition and retention policies vary widely by organization type, applicable state statutes or regulations, other law provisions, type of case offense, evidence/property type, case-specific court orders, and the organization's in-house policies. Information on the current landscape of disposition and retention practices throughout the U.S. can provide information about contributing factors for backlogs, especially when employees are unsure of their organization's practices and policies related to the correct manner of disposing of or retaining collected evidence/property.

Basis for Evidence/Property Retention and Disposition.

Q54. Which of the following is retention and disposition of evidence/property based on? (Select all that apply.)

There were 1,093 total respondents. This question was a select-all-response option; therefore, the total number of responses is more than the total number of respondents. The "Other" category total reflects the exclusion of two irrelevant answers. There were 350 non-responses.

Which of the following is retention and disposition of evidence/property based on? (Select all that apply.)		
Answer Choices	**Response Percentage**	**Number of Responses**
State Statutes or Regulations	69%	757
Judge/Court Order	67%	737
Organization Policy	61%	665
Upon authorization of officer/investigator	59%	647
Offense type	55%	602
Blanket Authorization	12%	129
I don't know	8%	84
Other (please specify)	9%	94

Evidence/Property Disposition.

Q55. Who is responsible for determining the disposition of evidence/property? (Select all that apply.)

There were 1,092 total respondents. This question was a select-all-response option; therefore, the total number of responses is more than the total number of respondents. The "Submitting/Case Investigator" and "Judge/Court Order" category totals reflect the exclusion of one irrelevant answer for both property and evidence selections. There were 351 non-responses.

Who is responsible for determining the disposition of evidence/property? (Select all that apply.)				
Answer Choices	**Evidence**		**Property**	
Submitting/Case Investigator	62%	675	45%	488
Judge/Court Order	61%	667	31%	339
Evidence/Property Room Personnel	40%	440	48%	528
Prosecutor	48%	524	20%	219
I don't know	10%	108	9%	99
Other (please specify)	13%	137	10%	109

A Deeper Look: Question 55

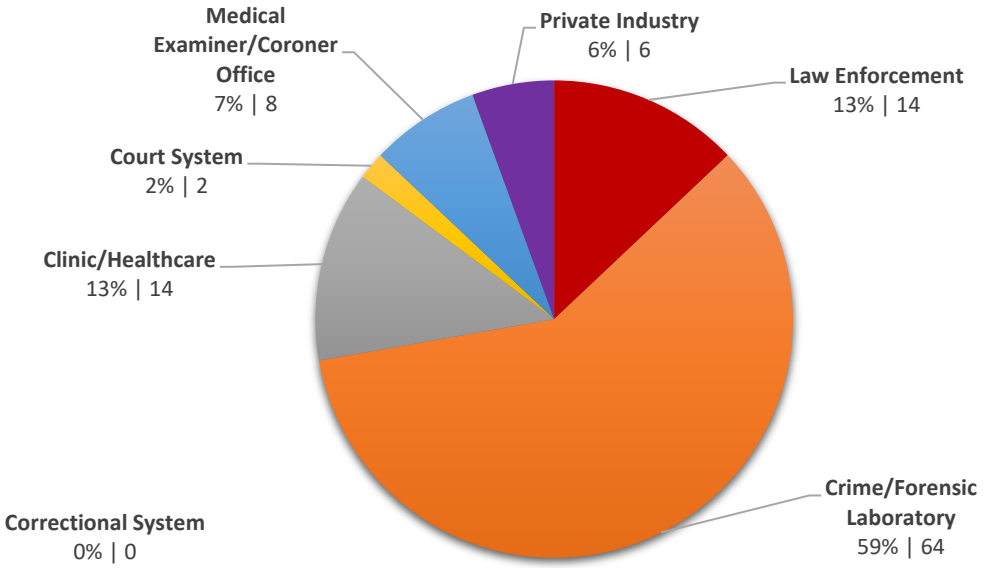

Figure 41. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated they are unsure who is responsible for determining the disposition of evidence.

Among respondents indicating they are unsure who is responsible for determining the disposition of evidence, over half (59%) represented the crime/forensic laboratory organization type. The second most common organization type was an equal split between clinic/healthcare (13%) and law enforcement agencies (13%). No respondents representing the correctional system selected this answer choice.

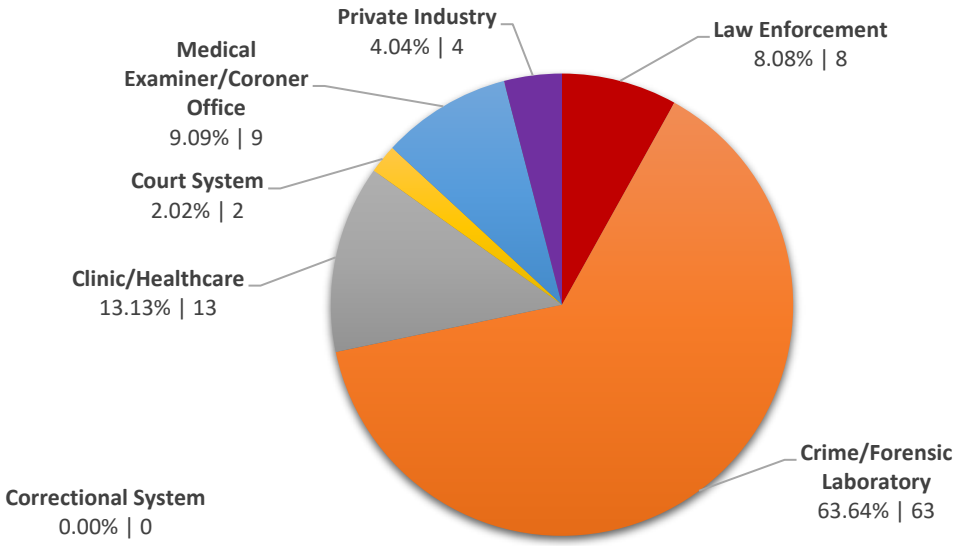

Figure 42. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated they are unsure who is responsible for determining the disposition of property.

Of respondents indicating they are unsure who is responsible for determining the disposition of property, the majority (64%) represented the crime/forensic laboratory organization type. The second most common organization type was clinic/healthcare (13%), followed by law enforcement agencies (8%). No respondents representing the correctional system selected this answer choice.

Q56. What triggers the initiation of the disposition process? (Select all that apply.)

There were 1,090 total respondents. This question was a select-all-response option; therefore, the total number of responses is more than the total number of respondents. There were 353 non-responses.

What triggers the initiation of the disposition process? (Select all that apply.)		
Answer Choices	**Response Percentage**	**Number of Responses**
Judge/Court Order	54%	591
Statutory requirements	49%	533
Organizational policy	49%	529
Need for space	39%	428
Electronic tracking (e.g., computer-assisted, computer program)	34%	370
When my organization has time	22%	239
Only when authorized by leadership/management	10%	105
I don’t know	8%	89
Other (please specify)	12%	132

Deeper Look: Question 56

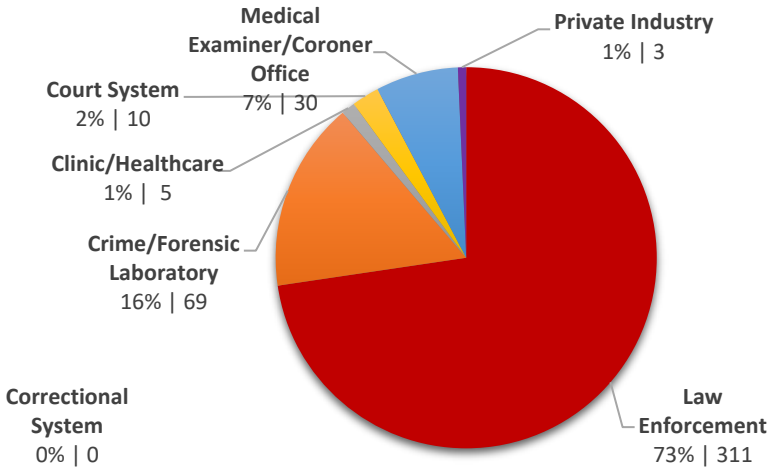

Figure 43. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated the need for space triggers the disposition process.

Among respondents indicating that a need for space triggers the disposition process, nearly three-fourths (73%) represented law enforcement agencies. The second most common organization type represented was crime/forensic laboratory (16%), followed by medical examiner/coroner office (7%). No respondents representing the correctional system selected this answer choice.

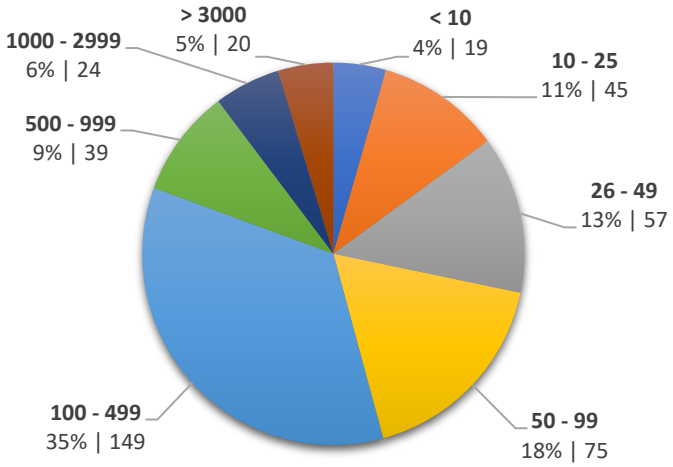

Figure 44. Total individuals employed for respondents who indicated the need for space triggers the disposition process.

Of respondents indicating that a need for space triggers the disposition process, over one-third (35%) indicated their organization employs 100-499 individuals. The second most common organization size represented was 50-99 total employees (18%).

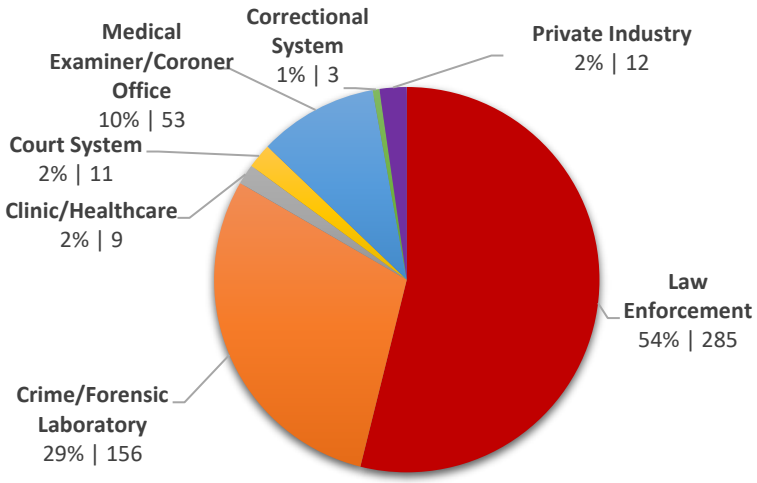

Figure 45. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated that organization policy triggers the disposition process.

Of respondents who indicated that organization policy triggers the disposition process, over half (54%) represented law enforcement agencies. The second most common organization type represented was crime/forensic laboratory (29%), followed by medical examiner/coroner office (10%).

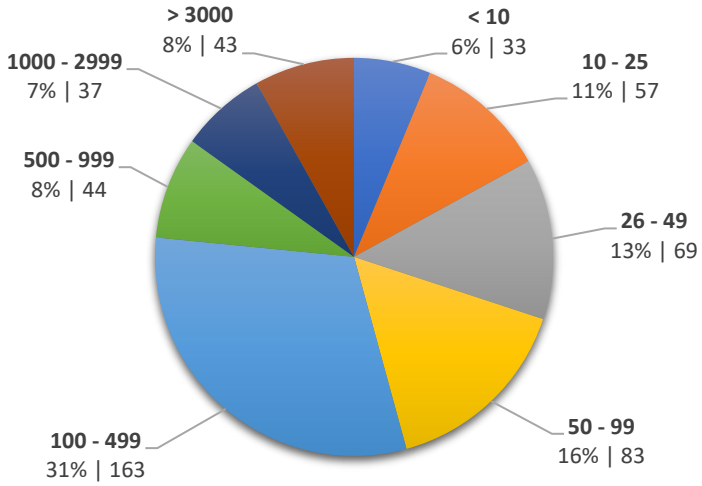

Figure 46. Total individuals employed for respondents indicating organization policy triggers the disposition process.

Of respondents indicating organization policy triggers the disposition process, nearly one-third (31%) of the respondents represented organizations employing 100-499 individuals.

The second most common organization size was 50-99 total employees (16%), followed by organizations with 26-49 employees (13%).

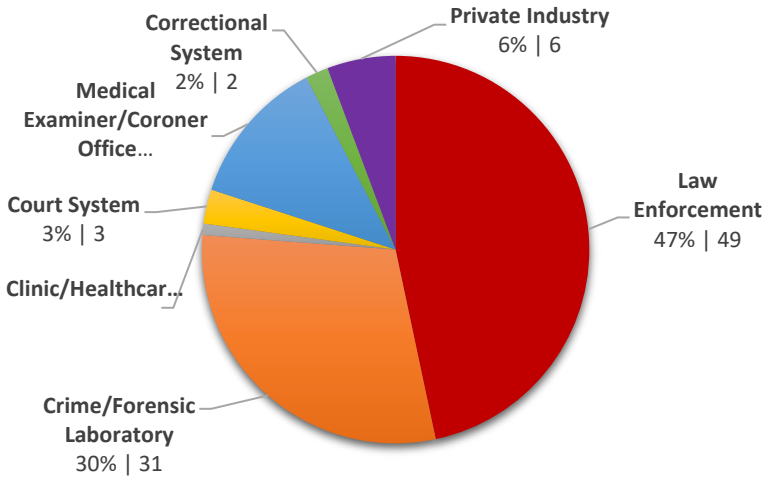

Figure 47. Primary organization type for respondents indicating authorization by leadership/management triggers the disposition process.

Among respondents indicating authorization by leadership/management triggers the disposition process, nearly half (47%) represented law enforcement agencies. The second most common organization type crime/forensic laboratory (30%), followed by the medical examiner/coroner's office (12%).

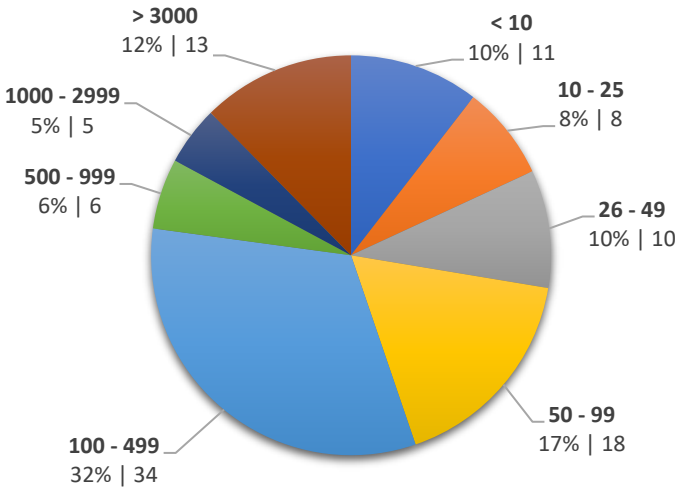

Figure 48. Total individuals employed for respondents who indicated authorization by leadership/management triggers the disposition process.

Of respondents indicating authorization by leadership/management triggers the disposition process, nearly one-third (32%) indicated their organization employs 100-499

individuals. The second most common organization size represented was 50-99 total employees (17%), followed by organizations employing >3,000 employees (12%).

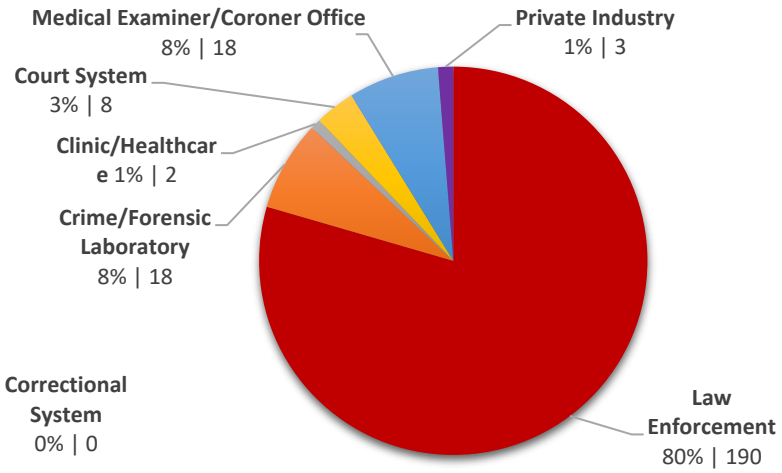

Figure 49. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated that their organization has time triggers for initiating the disposition process.

Of respondents indicating that their organization has time triggers for the disposition process, the majority (80%) represented law enforcement agencies, followed by crime/forensic laboratory (8%) and the medical/examiner coroner's office (8%). No respondents representing the correctional system selected this answer choice.

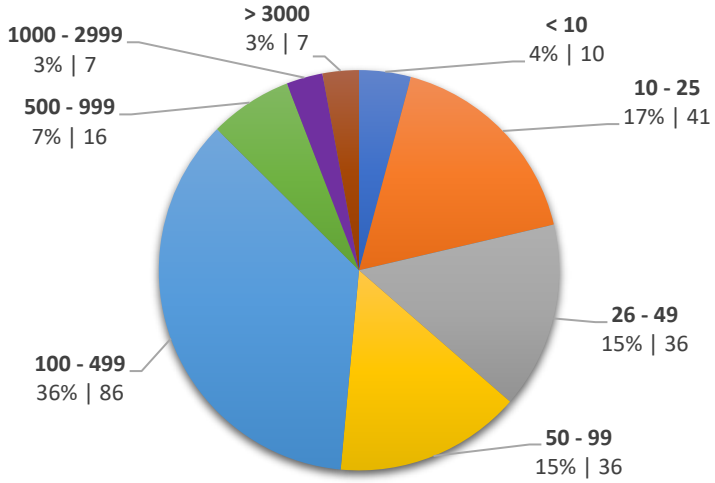

Figure 50. Total individuals employed for respondents who indicated that their organization initiates the disposition process when time is available.

Of respondents indicating that their organization has time triggers for initiating the disposition process, over one-third (36%) indicated their organization employs 100-499

individuals. The second most common organization size represented was 10-25 total employees (17%), followed by organizations employing 50-99 total employees (15%).

Evidence/Property Purging.

Q57. What process does your organization use to purge evidence following disposition? (Select all that apply.)

There were 1,088 total respondents. This question was a select-all-response option; therefore, the total number of responses is more than the total number of respondents. There were 355 non-responses.

What process does your organization use to purge evidence following disposition? (Select all that apply.)		
Answer Choices	**Response Percentage**	**Number of Responses**
Destruction	73%	789
Release to the Owner or Finder	66%	715
Incinerate	57%	616
Release to another organization	48%	520
Departmental/Organizational use	43%	470
Auction	43%	463
Discard	40%	432
Crush/Recycle	35%	384
Charity/Donation	34%	370
Our organization does not purge evidence	11%	115
I don’t know	6%	68
Other (please specify)	5%	58

A Deeper Look: Question 57

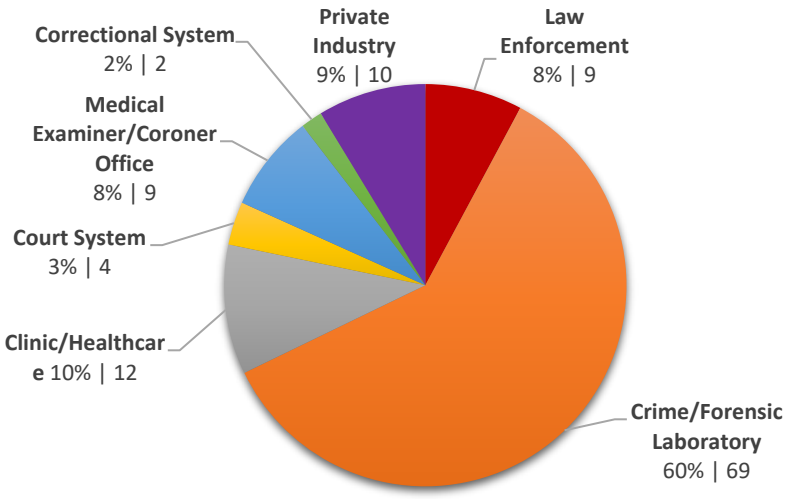

Figure 51. Primary organization type for respondents indicating that their organization does not purge evidence.

Among respondents indicating that their organization does not purge evidence, over half (60%) represented crime/forensic laboratories. The second most common organization type was clinic/healthcare (10%), followed closely by the private industry sector (9%).

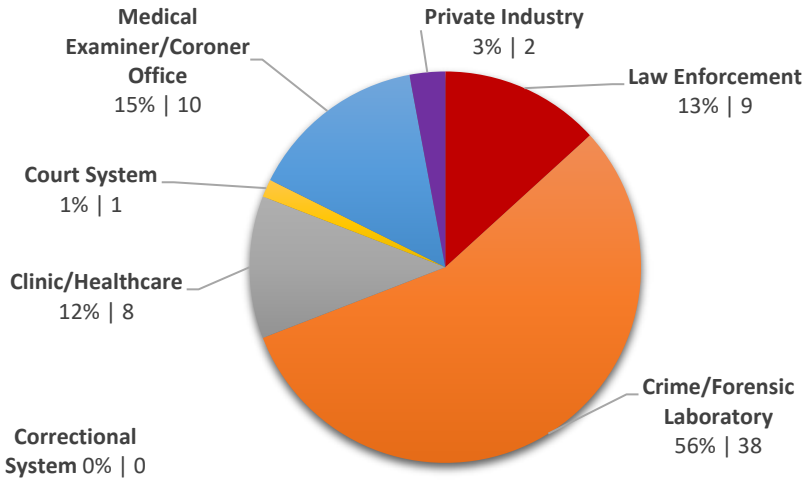

Figure 52. Primary organization type for respondents unsure what process their organization uses to purge evidence following disposition.

Of respondents unsure of the process their organization uses to purge evidence following disposition, over half (56%) represented crime/forensic laboratories. The second most common organization type was the medical examiner/coroner office (15%), followed closely by law enforcement agencies (13%). No respondents representing the correctional system selected this answer choice.

Q58. Does your department have an established schedule/pre-determined inventory goal for purging evidence/property?

There were 912 total respondents and 531 non-responses with 183 non-responses due to skip logic.

Does your department have an established schedule/pre-determined inventory goal for purging evidence/property?		
Answer Choices	**Response Percentage**	**Number of Responses**
Yes	41%	378
No	51%	461
I don't know	8%	73
	100%	912

A Deeper Look: Question 58

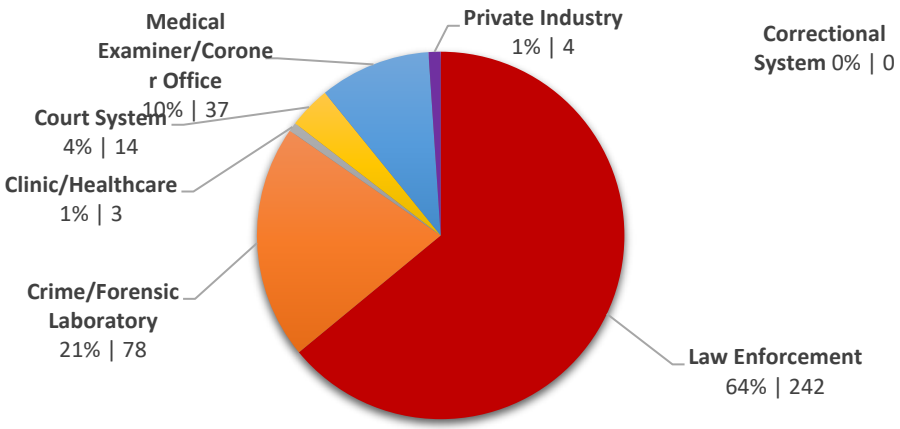

Figure 53. Primary organization type for respondents indicating they were unsure whether their department has an established schedule or pre-determined inventory for evidence/property purging.

For respondents who indicated they were unsure what process their organization uses to purge evidence following disposition, the majority (64%) represented law enforcement organizations. The second most common organization type represented was crime/forensic laboratories (21%), followed by medical examiner/coroner office (10%). No respondents representing the correctional system selected this answer choice.

Routine evidence/property requests.

Q59. Does the Evidence/Property Room routinely send out requests to department members for the disposition of evidence/property?

There were 1,088 total respondents and 355 non-responses.

Does the Evidence/Property Room routinely send out requests to department members for the disposition of evidence/property?				
Answer Choices	**Evidence**		**Property**	
Yes	50%	536	39%	397
No	40%	431	48%	495
I don't know	10%	105	13%	137
	100%	1072	100%	1029

A Deeper Look: Question 59

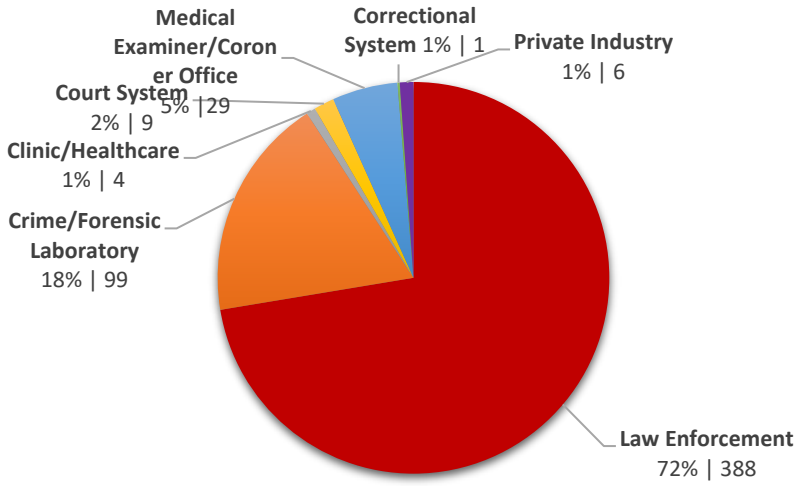

Figure 54. Primary organization type for respondents indicating that their organization's Evidence/Property Room routinely sends out requests to department members for the disposition of evidence.

Among respondents indicating that their organization's Evidence/Property Room routinely send out requests to department members for the disposition of evidence, nearly three-fourths (72%) represented law enforcement organizations. The second most common organization type represented was crime/forensic laboratories (18%), followed by medical examiner/coroner office (5%).

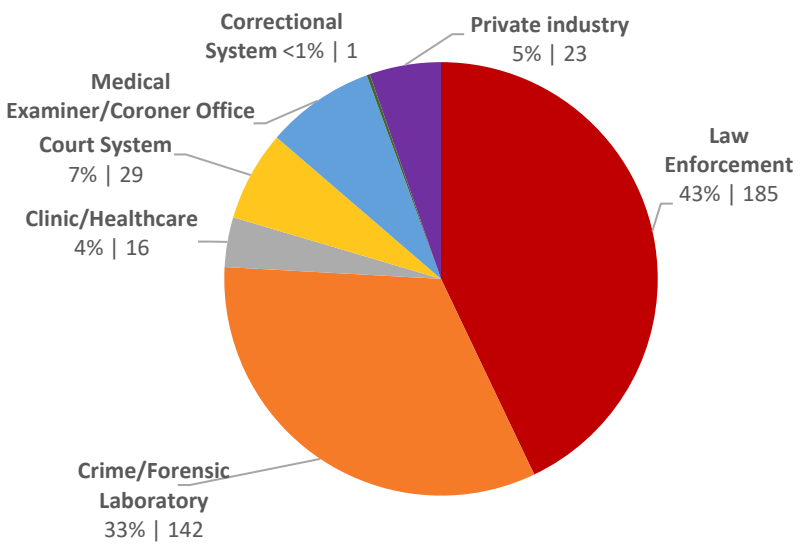

Figure 55. Primary organization type for respondents indicating that their organization's Evidence/Property Room *does not* routinely send out requests to department members for the disposition of evidence.

Among respondents indicating that their organization's Evidence/Property Room does not routinely send out requests to department members for the disposition of evidence, 43% represented law enforcement organizations. The second most common organization type represented was crime/forensic laboratories (33%), followed by medical examiner/coroner office (8%).

Q60. Does the Evidence/Property Room routinely send out requests directly to prosecuting agencies for the disposition of evidence/property?

There were 1,088 total respondents and 355 non-responses.

Does the Evidence/Property Room routinely send out requests directly to prosecuting agencies for the disposition of evidence/property?				
Answer Choices	**Evidence**		**Property**	
Yes	42%	448	24%	242
No	44%	474	60%	604
I don't know	14%	156	16%	167
	100%	1078	100%	1013

2.7.1. Findings

Basis for Evidence/Property Retention and Disposition. In the context of evidence management, disposition refers to the "ongoing process of determining what to do with an

item of evidence." [26] Evidence disposition can include permanent retention, disposal, destruction, auction, diversion, return to the owner, or several other methods to allow for the final removal of the evidence item from an evidence/property room's inventory. The disposition of evidence is a critical element of an evidence management system. If items are not correctly removed from inventory when appropriate, an organization risks the unsustainable growth of its inventory levels. Safely and appropriately removing items no longer required to remain in the property/evidence room's inventory requires strict adherence to protocols, robust and reliable documentation, and clear guidance to ensure that the wrong items are not disposed of or removed. The majority of respondents indicated their organization uses an assortment of factors to determine retention timeframes for evidence/property, including state statutes or regulations (69%), judge/court orders (67%), organization policy (61%), upon authorization of officer/investigator (59%), and offense type (55%).

Evidence/Property Disposition. Respondents indicated most commonly that the submitting/case investigator (62%), judge/court order (61%), and prosecutor (48%) were responsible for determining the disposition of evidentiary items. Disposition of property items yielded different results as evidence/property room personnel (48%), submitting/case investigator (45%), and judge/court order (31%) were the most common responses when identifying who is responsible for this function. This finding suggests a shift in responsibility in the disposition of items deemed to be of evidentiary value versus items held but deemed non-evidentiary. Crime/forensic lab respondents constituted the largest percentage (59%) of those respondents who indicated that they were unsure who was responsible for determining the disposition of evidentiary items. This finding is not unexpected, considering crime/forensic laboratories are primarily responsible for analyzing evidence. Laboratories may return items to their presiding agency's evidence/property room or the submitting agency once the analysis is complete (depending on autonomy status). However, later in the survey, it was observed that a significant number of crime/forensic laboratories do conduct evidence disposition, although some do not. When it comes to initiating evidence disposition, a little over half (54%) of the respondents indicate a judge/court order is responsible for disposition process initiation, with statutory requirements and organizational policy coming in next, both with 49%.

A substantial number of the respondents (39%) selected the need for space as the mechanism that drives the initiation of the disposition process. Another portion of respondents (22%) indicated that the disposition process is triggered "when my organization has time," with 80% of those respondents belonging to law enforcement agencies.

[26] Ballou, S., Kline, M., Stolorow, M., Taylor, M., Williams, S., Bamberger, P., Yvette, B., Brown, L., Jones, C., Keaton, R., Kiley, W., Thiessen, K., LaPorte, G., Latta, J., Ledray, L., Nagy, R., Schwind, L., Stoiloff, S., and Ostrom, B. "The Biological Evidence Preservation Handbook: Best Practices for Evidence Handlers," NIST Interagency/Internal Report (NISTIR) 7928, National Institute of Standards and Technology, Gaithersburg, MD (2013) p. 37. https://doi.org/10.6028/NIST.IR.7928 Accessed July 1, 2025.

Evidence/Property Purging. Organizations utilize various methods to purge evidence items, with "destruction" being the most common (73%). Of the 11% of organizations that do not purge evidence, crime/forensic laboratories constituted 60%.

Routine Evidence/Property Requests. Preventing unsustainable inventory growth requires regularly checking the retention status of inventory items to establish whether retention is required or items have met or exceeded retention duration requirements (i.e., state statutes). Of those respondents who indicated that their organization purged evidence, less than half (41%) indicated that their organization has an established schedule/pre-determined inventory goal for purging evidence/property. Half of the survey respondents (50%) indicated regularly sending out requests to department members for evidence disposition. The responses for non-evidentiary items were lower, with 39% regularly sending disposition requests to department members. Similarly, 42% of the respondents indicated that they routinely send requests to prosecuting agencies for disposition of evidence items, and 24% do the same for non-evidentiary items.

2.8. Inventory (Questions 61-72)

An inventory is a complete list of items within an evidence/property room. Conducting an inventory involves verifying that the list of items purported to be stored in the storage areas matches the actual items located in those areas. Inventories are a vital aspect of controlling the security, integrity, and management of the items held by an organization. The lack of inventories may lead to unsustainable growth if items that the organization no longer needs to keep are never purged appropriately. Not conducting inventories and double-checking items, including the physical location where they are listed to be stored, can have negative consequences. Not ensuring that an item is located where it is supposed to be could cause issues if an item is requested (e.g., cold case investigations). Anecdotally, conducting inventories varies depending on the organization's size and function. Some organizations conduct total inventories at a specific time interval, while others conduct partial or rotational inventories due to labor and time constraints. The questions within this section serve to understand inventory practices currently in use, including set inventory schedules, if and to what capacity inventories are conducted, tracking purged items, inventory turnover, and audit considerations related to inventories. Furthermore, this section aimed to obtain a baseline landscape of the total number of evidence/property items within organizations' inventories.

Full Inventories.

Q61. How often does your organization conduct a 100% inventory on the evidence/property room? (Select all that apply.)

There were 1,085 total respondents. This question was a select-all-response option; therefore, the total number of responses is more than the total number of respondents. There were 358 non-responses.

How often does your organization conduct a 100% inventory on the evidence/property room?(Select all that apply.)		
Answer Choices	**Response Percentage**	**Number of Responses**
Never	13%	138
Multiple times each year	15%	168
Annually	31%	334
Every 1-5 years	12%	127
Upon change of leadership/command	22%	243
Upon change of personnel	25%	273
I don't know	11%	116
Other (please specify)	12%	131

A Deeper Look: Question 61

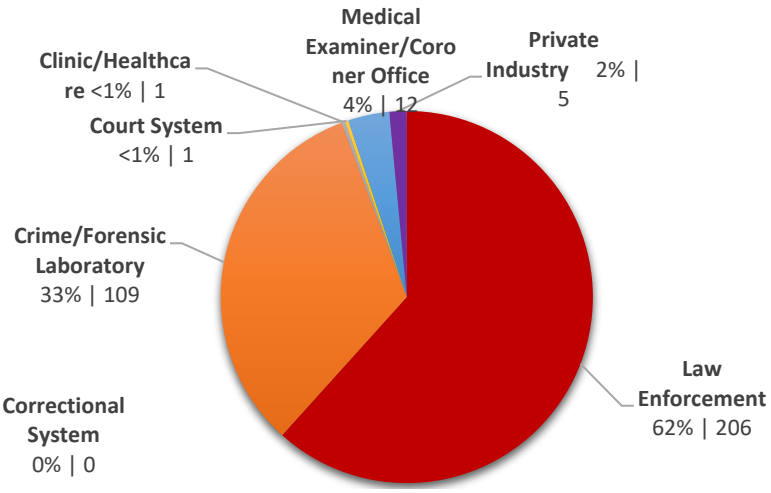

Figure 56. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated that their organization annually conducts a 100% inventory of the evidence/property.

Among respondents indicating that their organization conducts an annual 100% inventory of the evidence/property room, the most represented organization type was law enforcement (62%), followed by crime/forensic laboratory (33%). No respondents representing the correctional system selected this answer choice.

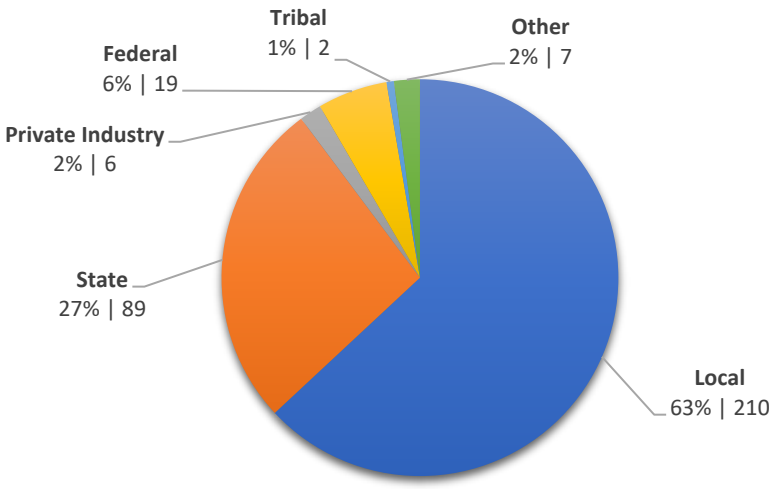

Figure 57. Organization classification for respondents who indicated that their organization conducts an annual 100% inventory of the evidence/property. [27]

Of respondents indicating that their organization conducts a 100% inventory on the evidence/property room annually, over half (63%) represented local organizations, while over one-quarter (27%) represented state organizations.

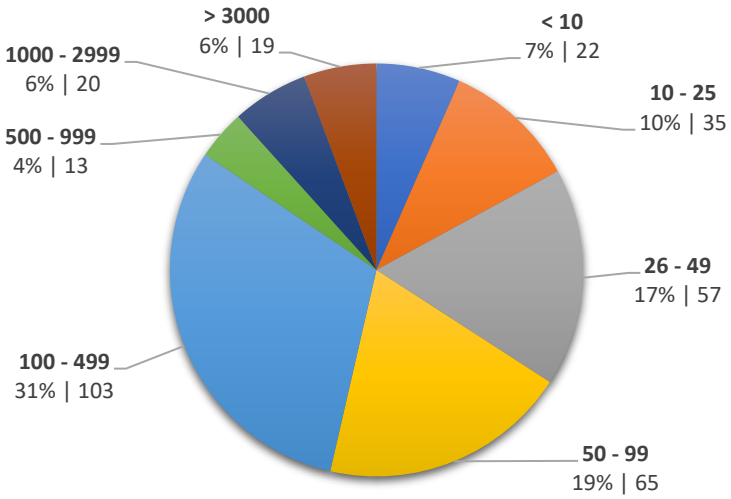

Figure 58. Total individuals employed for respondents indicating that their organization conducts a 100% inventory on the evidence/property room annually.

Among respondents indicating that their organization conducts a 100% inventory on the evidence/property room annually, the majority represented organizations with 100-499

[27] Figure 59 required slight additional data cleaning due to four of the "other" responses being channeled to the "local" answer choice and one of the "other" responses being channeled to the "state" answer choice as these were the appropriate blanket organization classifications for these responses. Additionally, one of the "other" responses was removed from this question as it was deemed irrelevant.

employees (31%), followed by 50-99 total employees (19%) and 26-49 total employees (17%).

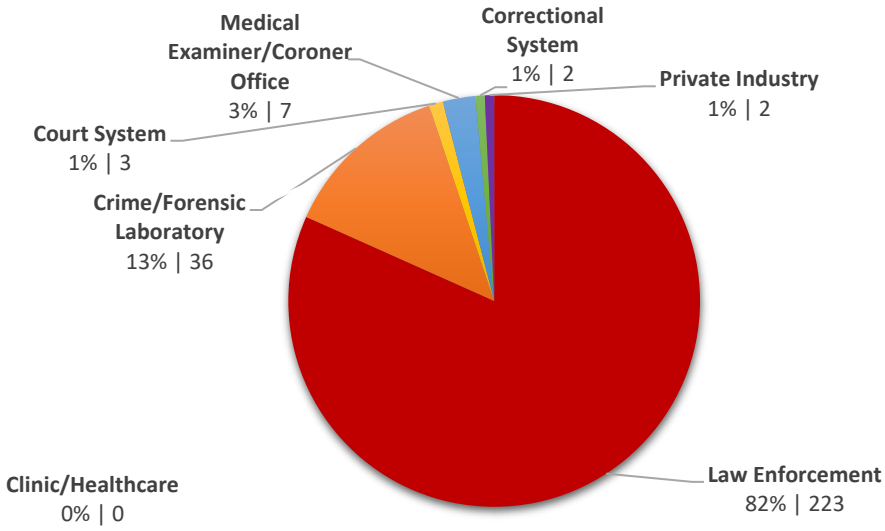

Figure 59. Primary organization type for respondents indicating that their organization conducts a 100% inventory on the evidence/property room upon personnel change.

Of respondents indicating that their organization conducts a 100% inventory on the evidence/property room upon personnel change, the most represented organization type was law enforcement (82%), followed by crime/forensic laboratory (13%). No respondents representing the clinic/healthcare selected this answer choice.

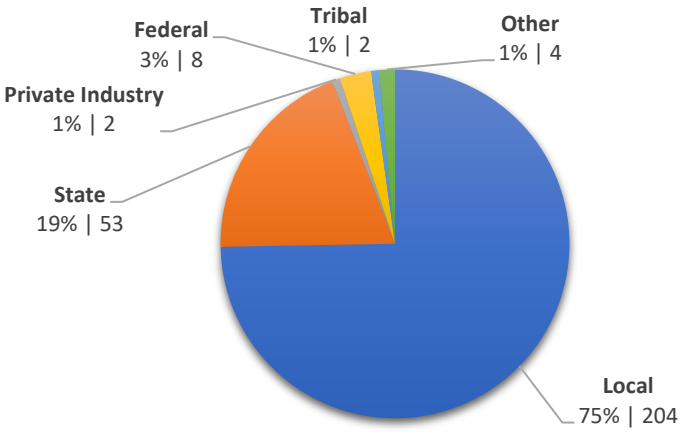

Figure 60. Organization classification for respondents indicating that their organization conducts a 100% inventory on the evidence/property room upon personnel change. [28]

[28] Figure 60 required slight additional data cleaning due to four of the "other" responses being channeled to the "local" answer choice and two of the "other" responses being channeled to the "state" answer choice as these were the appropriate blanket organization classifications for these responses.

Among respondents indicating that their organization conducts a 100% inventory on the evidence/property room upon personnel change, three-fourths (75%) represented local organizations, followed by state organizations (19%).

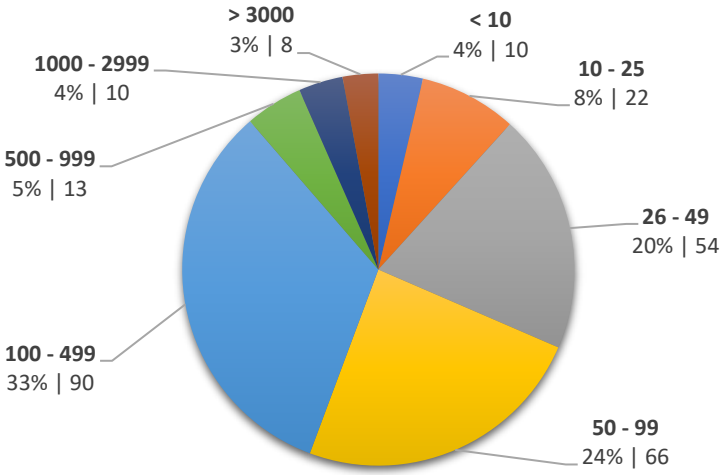

Figure 61. Total individuals employed for respondents indicating that their organization conducts a 100% inventory on the evidence/property room upon personnel change.

Of respondents indicating that their organization conducts a 100% inventory on the evidence/property room upon change of personnel, the majority represented organizations with a total of 100-499 employees (33%), 50-99 employees (24%), and 26-49 employees (20%).

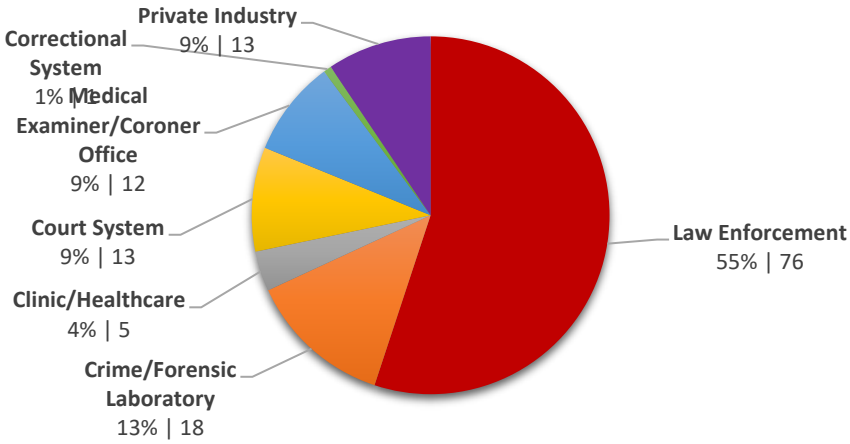

Figure 62. Primary organization for respondents indicating that their organization never conducts a 100% inventory on the evidence/property room.

Among respondents indicating that their organization never conducts a 100% inventory of the evidence/property room, over half represented law enforcement agencies (55%), followed by crime/forensic laboratory (13%).

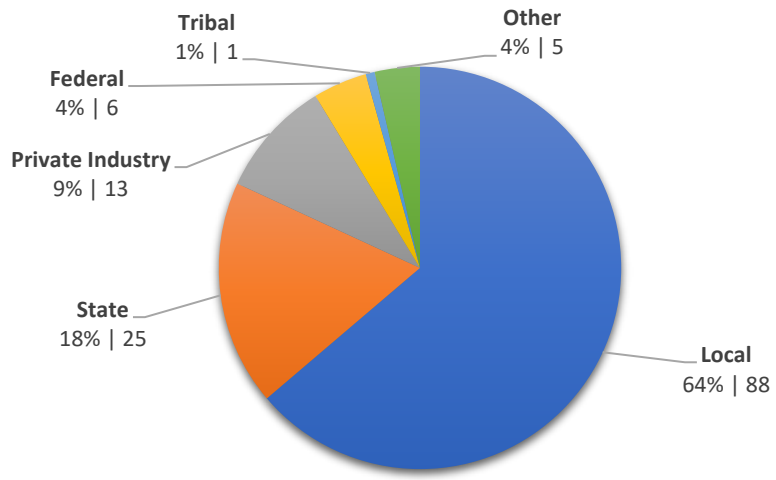

Figure 63. Organization classification for respondents indicating that their organization never conducts a 100% inventory of the evidence/property room. [29]

Of respondents indicating that their organization never conducts a 100% inventory of the evidence/property room, the majority (64%) represented local organizations. The following most common organization classification was state organizations (18%).

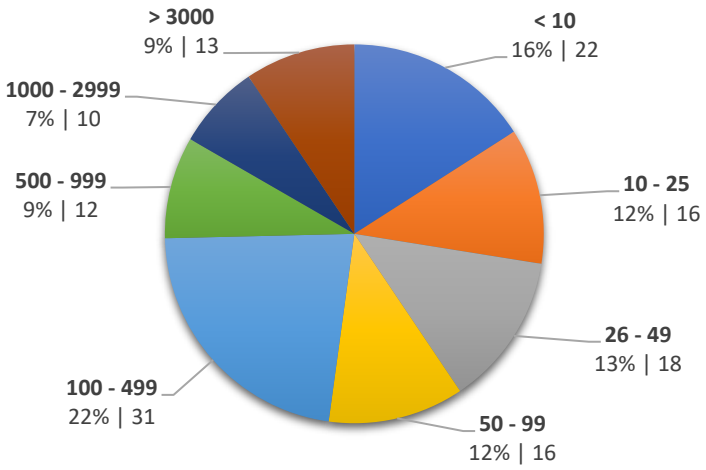

Figure 64. Total individuals employed for respondents indicating that their organization does not conduct 100% evidence/property room inventory.

Of respondents indicating that their organization never conducts a 100% inventory of the evidence/property room, there was relatively even distribution between all organization sizes. The most commonly represented organization size was 100-499 total employees (22%) and those that employ 10-25 total employees (12%).

[29] Figure 63 required slight additional data cleaning due to two of the "other" responses being channeled to the "local" answer choice and one of the "other" responses being channeled to the "private industry' answer choice as these were the appropriate blanket organization classifications for these responses.

Partial Inventories.

Q62. Does your agency conduct partial, rotational, or high-liability inventory?

There were 139 total respondents and 1,304 non-responses with 947 non-responses due to skip logic.

Does your agency conduct partial, rotational, or high-liability inventory?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Yes	45%	62
No	43%	60
I don't know	12%	17
	100%	139

Q63. How often is a partial, rotational, or high-liability inventory conducted?

There were 62 total respondents and 1,381 non-responses with 1,024 non-responses due to skip logic.

How often is a partial, rotational, or high-liability inventory conducted?						
Answer Choices	Partial Inventory		Rotational Inventory		High-Liability Inventory	
Never	5%	3	13%	8	6%	4
Multiple times each year	32%	20	8%	5	44%	27
Annually	26%	16	14%	9	26%	16
Every 1-5 years	10%	6	8%	5	14%	9
Continually	14%	9	14%	9	11%	7
I don't know	3%	2	6%	4	3%	2
Other (please specify)	6%	4	3%	2	6%	4

Inventory Numbers and Tracking.

Q64. Do you maintain a system of tracking to know the number of items received and the number of items purged for each of these time frames?

There were 1,085 total respondents and 358 non-responses.

Do you maintain a system of tracking to know the number of items received and the number of items purged for each of these time frames?						
Answer Choices	**Monthly**		**Annually**		**Across Multiple Years**	
Yes	54%	550	62%	637	56%	544
No	29%	296	23%	238	27%	264
I don't know	16%	167	15%	153	17%	170
	100%	1,013	100%	1,028	100%	978

A Deeper Look: Question 64

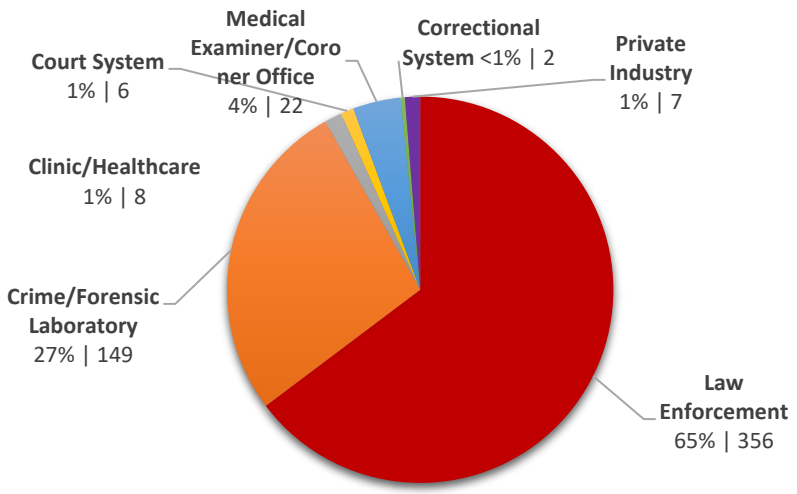

Figure 65. Primary organization type for respondents indicating that their organization maintains a tracking system to know the number of items received and purged monthly.

Among respondents indicating that their organization maintains a tracking system to know the number of items received and the number of items purged monthly, the most represented organization type was law enforcement agencies (65%), followed by crime/forensic laboratory (27%).

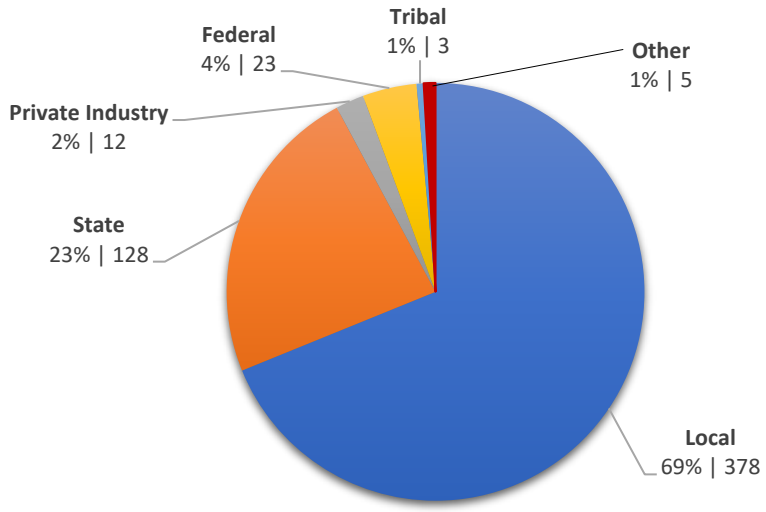

Figure 66. Organization classification for respondents who indicated that their organization maintains a tracking system to know the number of items received and purged monthly. [30]

Of respondents indicating that their organization maintains a tracking system to know the number of items received and the number of items purged monthly, the majority (69%) represented local organizations while slightly under one-quarter (23%) represented state organizations.

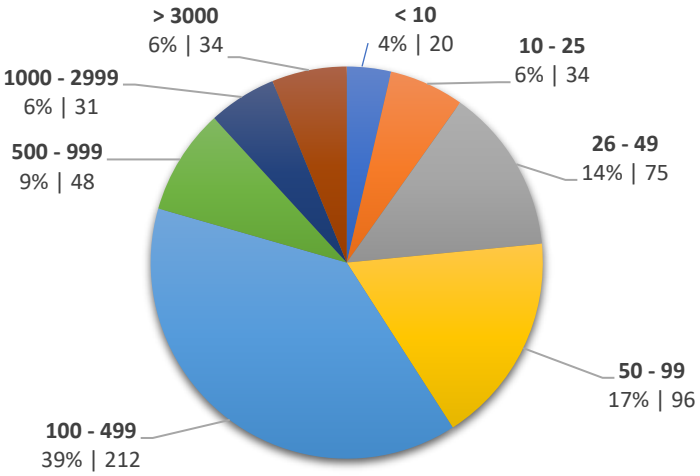

Figure 67. Total individuals employed for respondents who indicated that their organization maintains a tracking system to know the number of items received and the number of items purged monthly.

[30] Figure 72 required slight additional data cleaning due to 11 of the "other" responses being channeled to the "local" answer choice and 2 of the "other" responses being channeled to the "private industry" answer choice as these were the appropriate blanket organization classifications for these responses. Additionally, one of the "other" responses was removed from this question as it was deemed irrelevant.

For respondents who indicated that their organization maintains a system of tracking to know the number of items received and the number of items purged monthly, the majority (39%) of the respondents represented organizations with 100-499 employees. The second and third most common organization sizes represented 50-99 total employees (17%) and 26-49 total employees (14%).

Q65. How many items of evidence/property are currently in your organization's inventory?

There were 1,067 total respondents and 376 non-responses. Written responses to this open-ended/text-response question are available in the dataset.

A Deeper Look: Question 65

Each of the following organization types except the correctional system is presented with an "uncleaned" and "cleaned" tabular visualization presenting the maximum, minimum, median, average, and range of the data input values respondents supplied regarding the number of items of evidence/property currently within their organization's inventory. Data cleaning was necessary for this question as 4 of the input data input values accounted for 91% of the total number of estimated evidence/property items. These four input values included inputs of 999,999,999 items, 728,000,000 items, 500,000,000 items, and 100,000,000 items. While these may be true values, these four input data values were marked as outliers and removed to construct the "cleaned" table visualization. Additionally, the "cleaned" visualizations were constructed by removing all answers of "zero" to provide more accurate insight into each organization type's median and average number of items. The difference between removing the four largest data points and all zeros can be seen when comparing the "uncleaned" data to the "cleaned" data.

Tables 1 and 2: Statistical values provide insight into the number of evidence/property items within private industry organizations' inventories. [31]

Private Industry – Uncleaned	
Maximum	500,000,000
Minimum	0
Range	500,000,000
Median	100
Average	15,153,907

Private Industry – Cleaned	
Maximum	20,000
Minimum	1
Range	19,999
Median	500
Average	2,923

Tables 3 and 4: Statistical values provide insight into the number of evidence/property items within medical examiner/coroner office organizations' inventories. [32]

[31] To achieve the data values presented in the "cleaned" visualization, 5 zeros and 1 of the 4 outliers (500,000,000) were removed.
[32] To achieve the data values presented in the "cleaned" visualization 12 zeros were removed.

Medical Examiner/Coroner Office – Uncleaned	
Maximum	590,134
Minimum	0
Range	590,134
Median	383
Average	23,334

Medical Examiner/Coroner Office – Cleaned	
Maximum	590,134
Minimum	3
Range	590,131
Median	1,000
Average	27,709

Tables 5 and 6: Statistical values provide insight into the number of evidence/property items within law enforcement agencies' inventories. [33]

Law Enforcement – Uncleaned	
Maximum	728,000,000
Minimum	0
Range	728,000,000
Median	15,000
Average	1,468,238

Law Enforcement – Cleaned	
Maximum	40,000,000
Minimum	50
Range	39,999,950
Median	16,000
Average	246,804

Tables 7 and 8: Statistical values provide insight into the number of evidence/property items within crime/forensic laboratory organizations' inventories. [34]

Crime/Forensic Laboratory – Uncleaned	
Maximum	999,999,999
Minimum	0
Range	999,999,999
Median	15,000
Average	4,157,080

Crime/Forensic Laboratory – Cleaned	
Maximum	10,101,010
Minimum	1
Range	10,101,009
Median	20,000
Average	332,423

Tables 9 and 10: Statistical values provide insight into the number of evidence/property items within court system organizations' inventories. [35]

Court System – Uncleaned	
Maximum	1,200,000
Minimum	0
Range	1,200,000
Median	2,000
Average	103,156

Court System – Cleaned	
Maximum	1,200,000
Minimum	80
Range	1,199,920
Median	5,000
Average	122,672

[33] To achieve the data values presented in the "cleaned" visualization, 9 zeros and 1 of the 4 outliers (728,000,000) were removed.
[34] To achieve the data values presented in the "cleaned" visualization, 28 zeros and 2 of the 4 outliers (999,999,999 and 100,000,000) were removed.
[35] To achieve the data values presented in the "cleaned" visualization 7 zeros were removed.

Table 11: Statistical values provide insight into the number of evidence/property items within correctional system organizations' inventories. (No outliers or zeroes were present.)

Correctional System – Uncleaned/Cleaned	
Maximum	100,000
Minimum	20
Range	99,980
Median	9,250
Average	29,630

Tables 12 and 13: Statistical values provide insight into the number of evidence/property items within clinic/healthcare organizations' inventories. [36]

Clinic/Healthcare – Uncleaned	
Maximum	9,000
Minimum	0
Range	9,000
Median	5
Average	388

Clinic/Healthcare – Cleaned	
Maximum	9,000
Minimum	2
Range	8,998
Median	20
Average	572

Q66. Was the number you provided an estimate?

There were 1,067 total respondents and 376 non-responses.

Was the number you provided an estimate?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Yes	75%	801
No	25%	266
	100%	1067

[36] To achieve the data values presented in the "cleaned" visualization 10 zeros were removed.

Inventory turnover.

Q67. Does your agency destroy/dispose of more items than you receive on a yearly basis?

There were 1,067 total respondents and 376 non-responses.

Does your agency destroy/dispose of more items than you receive on a yearly basis?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Yes	14%	148
No	56%	601
My agency does not destroy/dispose of evidence/property	15%	156
I don't know	15%	162
	100%	1067

A Deeper Look: Question 67

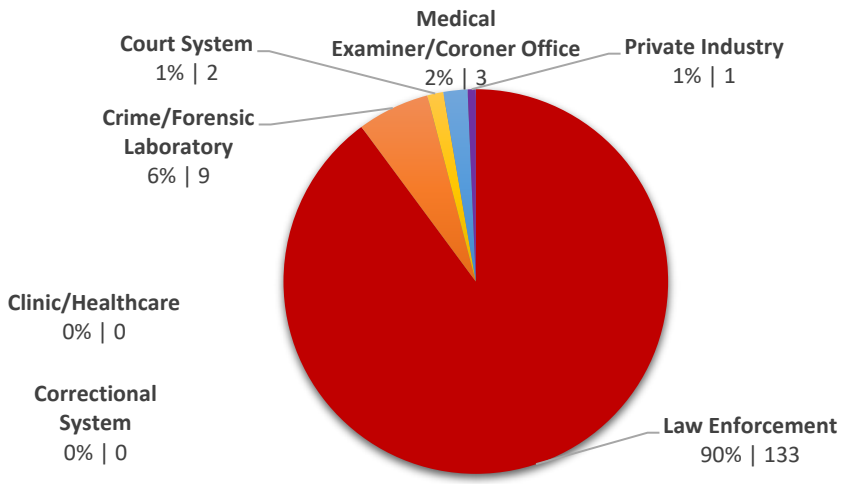

Figure 68. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated that their organization destroys/disposes of more items than is received yearly.

Among respondents indicating that their organization destroys/disposes of more items than received yearly, the most represented organization type was law enforcement agencies (90%), followed by crime/forensic laboratory (6%). No respondents representing the clinic/healthcare or correctional system selected this answer choice.

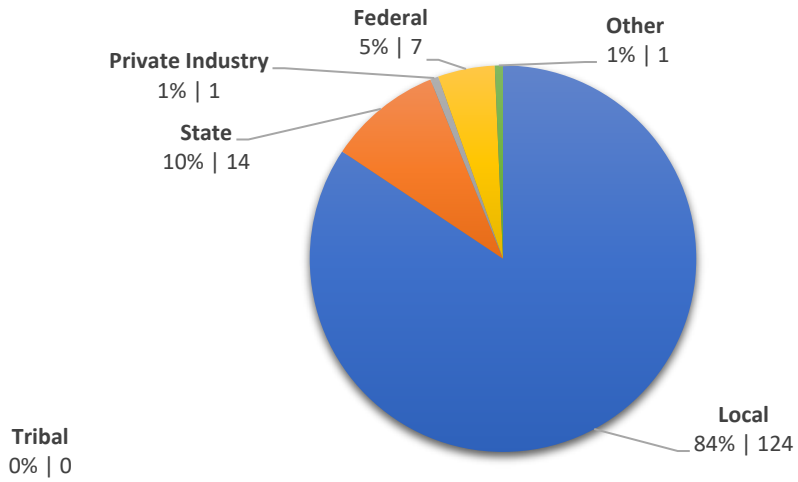

Figure 69. Organization classification for respondents who indicated that their organization destroys/disposes of more items than is received yearly. [37]

Of respondents indicating that their organization destroys/disposes of more items than received yearly, the majority (84%) represented local organizations, while the second most commonly represented were state organizations (10%). No respondents representing tribal organizations selected this answer choice.

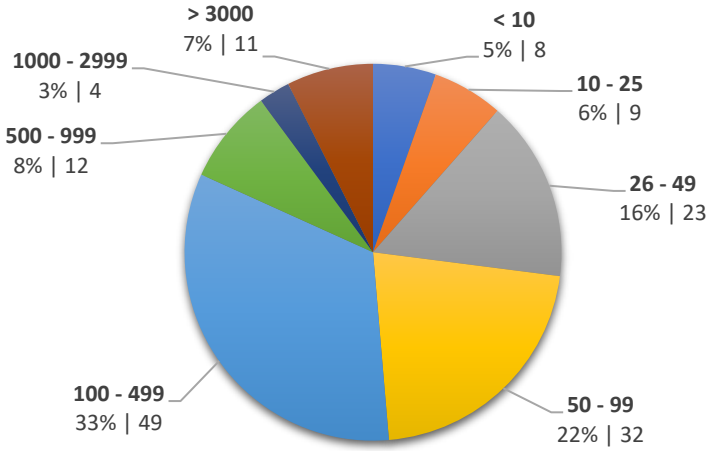

Figure 70. Total individuals employed for respondents indicated their organization destroys/disposes of more items than received yearly.

Among respondents indicating that their organization destroys/disposes of more items than received yearly, the majority represented organizations with 100- 499 employees (33%). The

[37] Figure 75 required slight additional data cleaning due to one of the "other" responses being channeled to the "local" answer choice and one of the "other" responses being channeled to the "state" answer choice as these were the appropriate blanket organization classifications for these responses. Additionally, one of the "other" responses was removed from this question as it was deemed irrelevant.

second most common organization size was 50-99 total employees (22%), followed by 26-49 total employees being the third (16%).

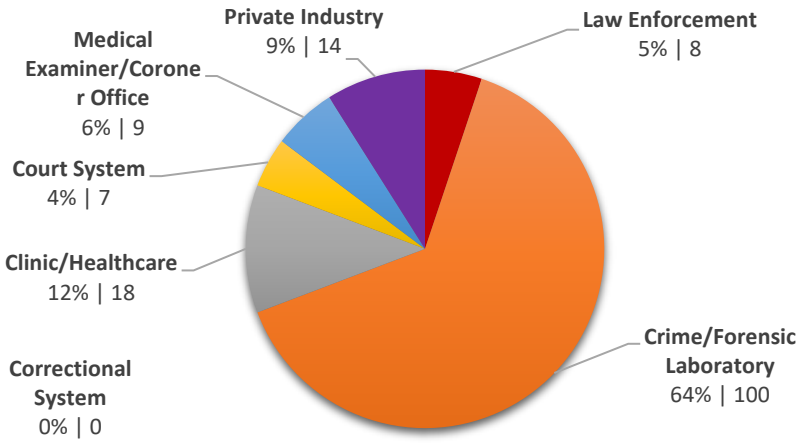

Figure 71. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated that their organization does not destroy/dispose of evidence/property.

Of respondents indicating that their organization does not destroy/dispose of evidence/property, the most represented organization type was crime/forensic laboratories (64%), followed by clinic/healthcare (12%). No respondents representing the correctional system selected this answer choice.

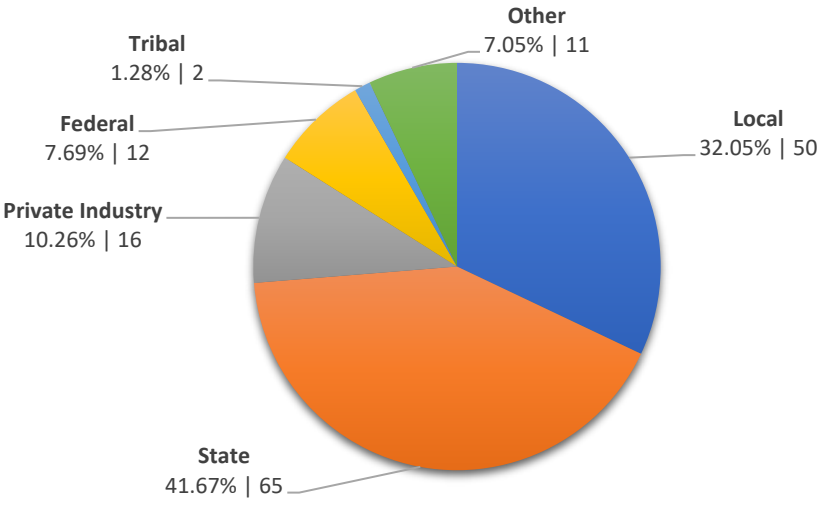

Figure 72. Organization classification for respondents who indicated that their organization does not destroy/dispose of evidence/property. [38]

[38] Figure 78 required slight additional data cleaning due to one of the "other" responses being channeled to the "local" answer choice and one of the "other" responses being channeled to the "private industry" answer choice as these were the appropriate blanket organization classifications for these responses.

Among respondents indicating that their organization does not destroy/dispose of evidence/property, the majority (42%) represented state organizations, while the second most commonly represented were local organizations (32%).

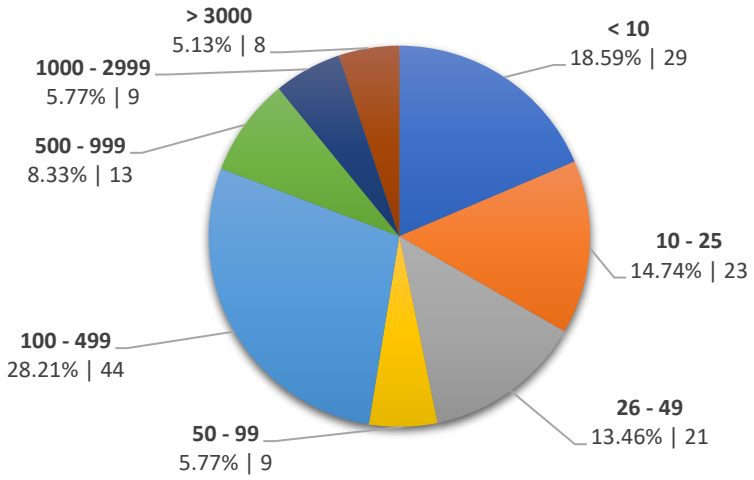

Figure 73. Total individuals employed for respondents indicating that their organization does not destroy/dispose of evidence/property.

Among respondents indicating that their organization does not destroy/dispose of evidence/property, the majority represented organizations with 100-499 employees (28%). The second most common organization size represented was fewer than ten total employees (19%), followed by 10-25 total employees being the third (15%).

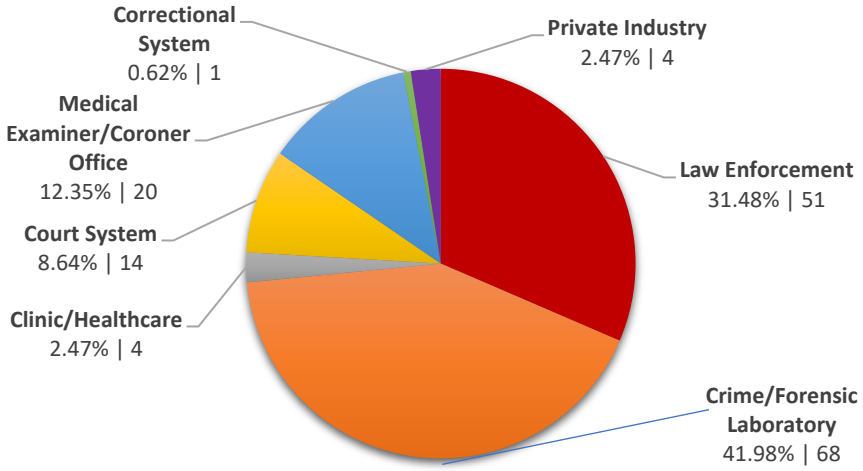

Figure 74. Primary organization type for respondents indicating they are unsure whether their organization destroys/disposes of more items than is received yearly.

Of respondents indicating they are unsure whether their organization destroys/disposes of more items than received yearly, the most represented organization type was crime/forensic laboratories (42%), followed by law enforcement agencies (31%).

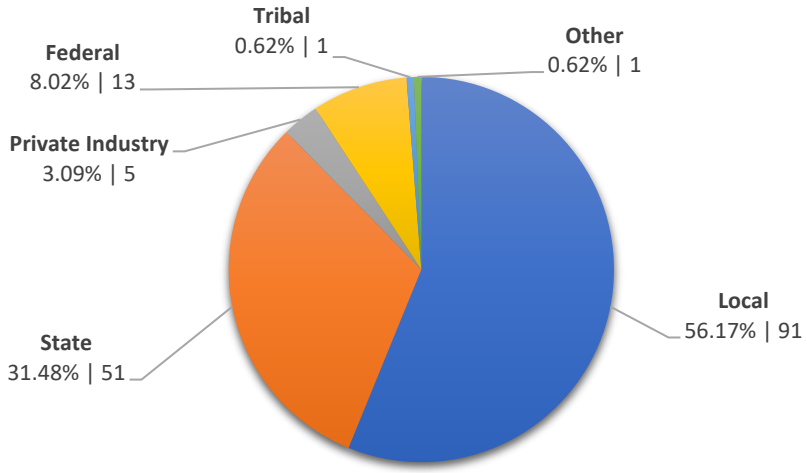

Figure 75. Organization classification for respondents who indicated they are unsure whether their organization destroys/disposes of more items than is received yearly. [39]

Among respondents indicating they are unsure whether their organization destroys/disposes of more items than received yearly, over half (56%) of the respondents represented local organizations and the second most commonly represented were state organizations (31%).

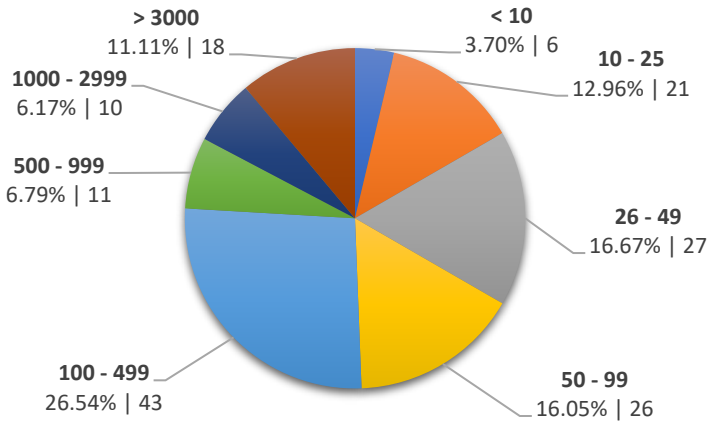

Figure 76. Total individuals employed for respondents indicating they are unsure whether their organization destroys/disposes of more items than are received yearly.

Of respondents indicating they are unsure whether their organization destroys/disposes of more items than is received yearly, over one-fourth represented organizations with 100-499

[39] Figure 81 required slight additional data cleaning due to four of the "other" responses being channeled to the "local" answer choice as these were the appropriate blanket organization classifications for these responses.

employees (27%). The second and third most common organization size represented was 26-49 employees (17%) and 50-99 employees (16%), respectively.

Evidence/Property Room Audits.

Q68. Is your organization's evidence/property room audited?

There were 1,066 total respondents and 377 non-responses.

Is your organization's evidence/property room audited?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Yes	73%	779
No	20%	215
I don't know	7%	72
	100%	1066

A Deeper Look: Question 68

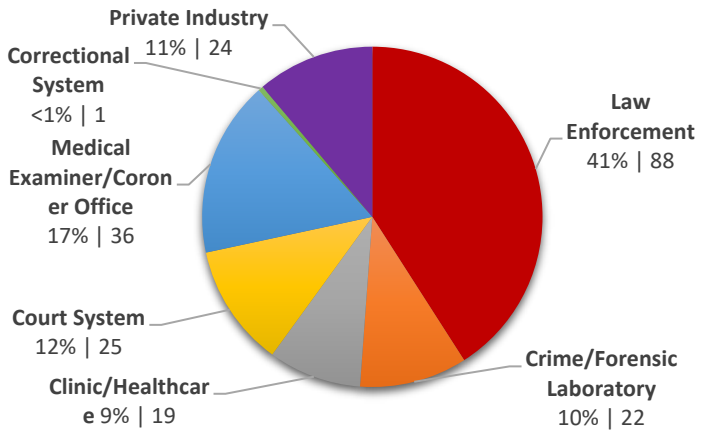

Figure 77. Primary organization type for respondents indicating that their organization does not perform evidence/property room audits.

Among respondents indicating that their organization does not perform evidence/property audits, the most represented organization type was law enforcement agencies (41%), followed by medical examiner/coroner office (17%) and court systems (12%).

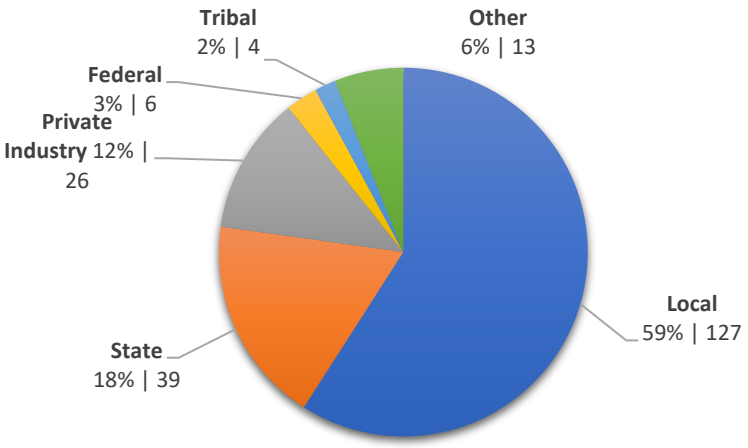

Figure 78. Organization classification for respondents indicating that their organization does not perform evidence/property room audits. [40]

Of respondents indicating that their organization does not perform evidence/property room audits, over half (59%) represented local organizations, with the second most commonly represented were state organizations (18%).

Q69. When was the last time an audit was conducted?

There were 781 total respondents and 662 non-responses with 287 non-responses due to skip logic.

When was the last time an audit was conducted?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Less than 1 year	75%	585
1-2 years	13%	105
2-5 years	5%	40
5-7 years	<1%	3
7-10 years	<1%	1
Over 10 years	<1%	1
I don't know	6%	46
	99%	781

[40] Figure 84 required slight additional data cleaning due to six of the "other" responses being channeled to the "local" answer choice and two of the "other" responses being channeled to the "private industry" answer choice as these were the appropriate blanket organization classifications for these responses.

A Deeper Look: Question 69

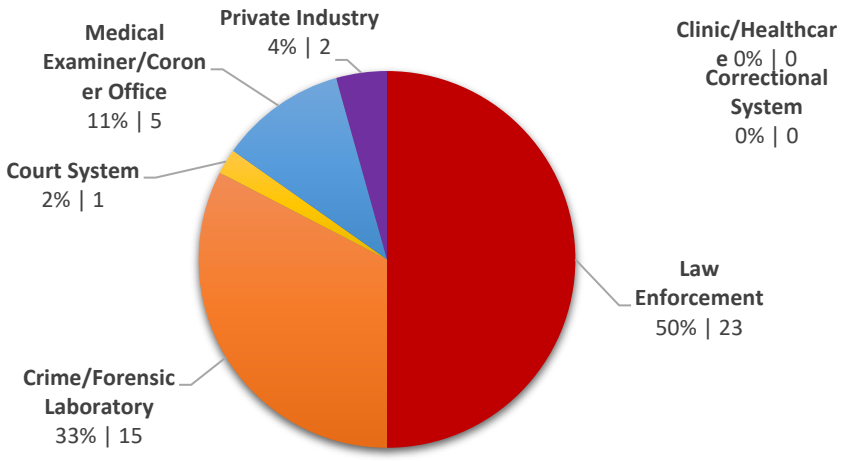

Figure 79. Primary organization type for respondents indicating they are unsure when the most recent audit occurred.

Among respondents indicating they were unsure of when the most recent audit occurred, half of them represented law enforcement agencies (50%), followed by crime/forensic laboratories (33%) and medical examiner/coroner offices (11%).

Q70. Who performs the audit?

There were 781 total respondents and 662 non-responses with 287 non-responses due to skip logic.

Who performs the audit?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Internal or external to the evidence/property room	61%	477
Completed by an evidence/property room leadership	28%	215
External to the organization	11%	89
	100%	781

Audit Evaluations and Resulting Actions.

Q71. What is evaluated during the audit? (Select all that apply.)

There were 777 total respondents. This question was a select-all-response option; therefore, the total number of responses is greater than the total number of respondents. There were 666 non-responses with 287 non-responses due to skip logic.

What is evaluated during the audit? (Select all that apply.)		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Compliance with established policies and procedures	83%	645
Security controls	80%	620
Quality of data entry	71%	555
Written policies and procedures	63%	490
Work environment	54%	416
Evaluation of evidence for disposition eligibility	44%	342
Training records	32%	245
Other (please specify)	11%	82

Q72. Are there corrective actions required based on audit findings?

There were 777 total respondents and 666 non-responses with 287 non-responses due to skip logic.

Are there corrective actions required based on audit findings?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Yes	81%	626
No	7%	53
I don't know	13%	98
	101%	777

2.8.1. Findings

Full Inventories. About one-third of respondents (31%) indicated that they conduct total inventories annually, with 11% disclosing that they do not know and 13% reporting that they never conduct a 100% inventory. Of the respondents indicating that their organization does not perform a 100% inventory, over half of these respondents represented local organizations (64%) and law enforcement agencies (55%), with organization size relatively evenly distributed between those employing fewer than ten employees (16%) to over 3,000 employees (9%).

Partial Inventories. Of respondents who do not conduct complete inventories or are unsure of their organization's inventory practice, 45% conduct partial, rotational, or high-liability inventories, while 43% do not, and 12% are unsure. Of the organizations that do not conduct partial, rotational, or high-liability inventories, law enforcement agencies (32%), local organizations (47%), and organizations employing fewer than a total of 10 employees (30%) were most commonly represented.

Inventory Numbers and Tracking. Of the 54% of respondents who indicated that their organization does maintain a tracking system to know the number of items received and purged monthly, law enforcement agencies (65%) represented the most common organization type, local organizations (69%) represented the most common type of jurisdiction, and organizations employing 100-499 total employees (39%) represented the most common organization size. A percentage of the respondents indicated their organization does not maintain a tracking system to know the number of items received and purged on a monthly (29%), annual (23%), and multi-year basis (27%). Note the prevalence of the absence of this practice with the amount of evidence/property in organizations' inventories when this survey was administered (inputs ranging from 0 items to 999,999,999 total items of evidence/property were observed in respondents' written answers).

Three-quarters of the respondents who input their answers to inventory size disclosed the number they provided was an estimate. Additionally, four input values of 999,999,999 total items, 728,000,000 total items, 500,000,000 total items, and 100,000,000 total items accounted for 91% of the total of all 1,067 responses. There were also many instances of zero input values—removing the four data values and all zero entries allowed for more reliable descriptive statistics and insight.

When broken down by organization type, crime/forensic laboratories averaged 323,423 evidence/property items, while law enforcement agencies averaged 246,804 items. Crime forensic/laboratories' primary task is to conduct forensic analyses on evidentiary items. It is possible that, depending on autonomy status, respondents may have interpreted these questions as items in the inventory of the presiding law enforcement agency and provided an estimate based on that assumption rather than the number of items in possession of the crime/forensic laboratory. An additional consideration includes the definition of "an item." In the field of seized drug analysis, it is common for some organizations to count single pills or bindles of powders as single items for statistical purposes, with some seizures amounting to hundreds or thousands of pills or bindles.

Of additional interest, the average number of evidence/property items in the inventory of correctional systems was 29,630 items. While law enforcement and corrections both fall under the umbrella of the criminal justice system, this value is an indication of the mutual exclusivity of the two, as correctional systems appear to maintain their own evidence/property rooms to safeguard and catalog items collected from those who are incarcerated in their facilities.

Inventory Turnover. Over half of the respondents (56%) indicated that their organization does not destroy/dispose of more items than are received annually. Additionally, 15% of the respondents indicated that their organization does not destroy or dispose of evidence/property at all. In comparison, 15% were unsure of inventory turnover practices, leaving only 14% to answer affirmatively about this practice. As discussed above, it is necessary to purge evidence/property by the correct means (e.g., destruction, release to owner) when appropriate (e.g., exceeding the required retention duration) to offset intake levels. Fewer than one-sixth of the organizations represented by this survey's respondents have this practice in place, thereby

demonstrating that the ability to destroy-dispose of more items than are received may be hard to achieve.

Evidence/Property Room Audits. Nearly three-fourths of the respondents (73%) indicated that their organization performs evidence/property room audits. Of the respondents who indicated that their organization's evidence/property room is not audited (20%), the most represented organization type was law enforcement agencies (41%), and the most represented organization classification was local organizations (59%). Of those respondents who indicated that their organization performs evidence/property room audits, three-quarters reported the last audit occurred less than one year prior to completing the survey. Audits of evidence/property rooms are essential to ensure that organizations effectively and efficiently handle evidence/property receipt, inventory, and purging practices. Furthermore, audits ensure that proper procedures related to evidence-handling and proper recordkeeping procedures (e.g., chain of custody) are being followed.[41]

The majority of respondents (61%) indicated audits are performed by an individual internal or external to the evidence/property room. Just over one-fourth (28%) indicated that audits are completed by evidence/property room leadership personnel, and fewer (11%) indicated they are performed solely by an individual external to the organization.[42] While internal and external audits can benefit organizations that manage evidence/property, internally conducted audits serve as an ongoing, preventative function. External audits may allow for a more impartial review of practices than audits conducted by in-house personnel assigned to the audit team, particularly if this team is composed of members of the evidence/property room.

Audit Evaluations and Resulting Actions. Of respondents indicating that their organization's evidence/property room is audited (73%), the most commonly selected elements evaluated during an audit included compliance with established policies and procedures (83%), security controls (80%), and quality of data entry (71%). The least commonly selected evaluation element was training records with 32% of the respondents indicating such.

The majority (81%) of the respondents indicated that corrective actions are required as a result of audit findings. While corrective actions are essential for identifying elements and practices that are inconsistent with policies and procedures and preventing them from recurring in the future, they must be non-punitive to promote a healthy work environment, which should also be an element evaluated during audits.

2.9. Security (Questions 73-78)

Organizations must be mindful of considerations to ensure both high- and low-liability items are secure. Documenting all access and contact with these items prevents unauthorized handling of

[41] Handbook on Biological Evidence Preservation

[42] In retrospect, this question may have been better framed in the "select all" format as some agencies may include both internal and external audits. This would be especially pertinent for accredited operations that routinely perform internal audits while also being subject to external assessments.

evidence/property and maintains a proper and robust chain of custody. This report section provides insight into the current landscape of security measures for evidence/property storage and access. This section includes secure evidence/property storage for high- and low-liability items, the commonality of logging individuals who access the storage spaces, and the prevalence of other security features organizations utilize in their storage areas. Additionally, this section discusses considerations related to the secure transport of evidence/property items between locations, specifically for those items that require a temperature-controlled environment.

Evidence/Property Room and Item Security.

Q73. How is your evidence/property room secured? (Select all that apply.)

There were 1,064 total respondents. This question was a select-all-response option; therefore, the total number of responses is greater than the total number of respondents. There were 379 non-responses.

How is your evidence/property room secured? (Select all that apply.)		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Key card	69%	734
Video surveillance	55%	587
Steel frame doors	55%	585
Double lock	34%	366
Code lock	30%	321
Biometrics	5%	51
My organization’s evidence/property room is not secure	1%	12
I don’t know	2%	18
Other (please specify)	19%	197

A Deeper Look: Question 73

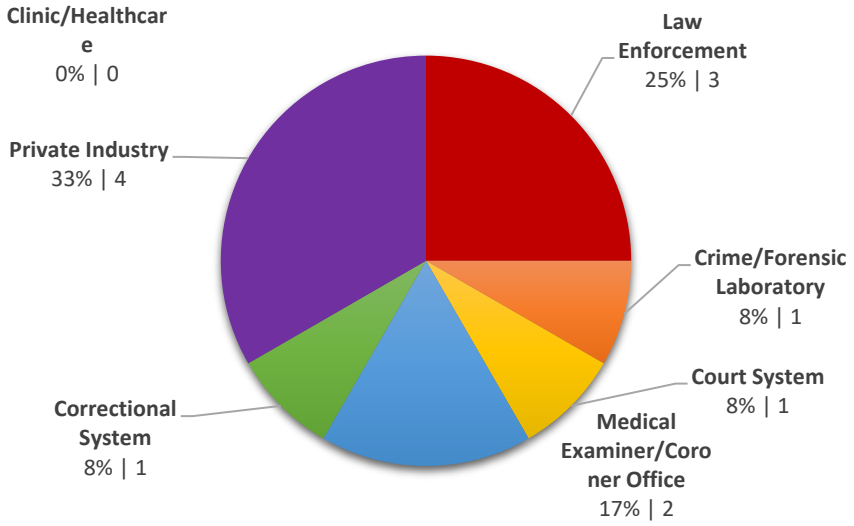

Figure 80. Primary organization type for respondents indicating that their organization's evidence/property room is not secure.

Among respondents indicating that their organization's evidence/property room is not secure, the most represented organization type was private industry (33%), followed by law enforcement agencies (25%). No respondents representing clinic/healthcare selected this answer choice.

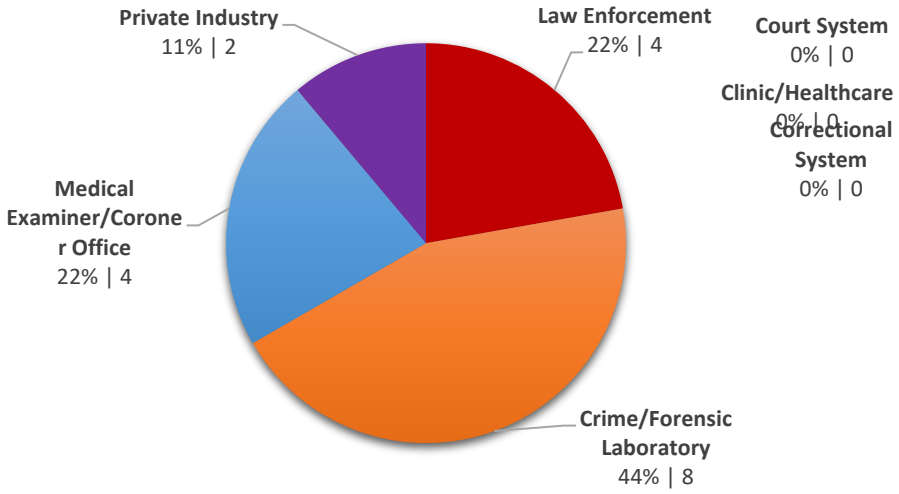

Figure 81. Primary organization type for respondents indicating they are unsure how their organization's evidence/property room is secured.

Of respondents indicating they are unsure how their organization's evidence/property room is secured, the most represented organization type was crime/forensic laboratories (44%), followed by even representation between law enforcement agencies (22%) and medical

examiner/coroner offices (22%). No respondents representing the court systems, clinic/healthcare, or correctional systems selected this answer choice.

Q74. Is there increased security for high-liability items (e.g., drugs, cash, jewelry)?

There were 1,063 total respondents *and 380 non-responses.*

Is there increased security for high-liability items (e.g., drugs, cash, jewelry)?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Yes	70%	740
No	25%	263
I don't know	6%	60
	101%	1063

Evidence/Property Room Logs.

Q75. Do you log who accesses the evidence/property room?

There were 1,063 total respondents and 380 non-responses.

Do you log who accesses the evidence/property room?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Yes	77%	822
No	18%	195
I don't know	4%	46
	99%	1063

A Deeper Look: Question 75

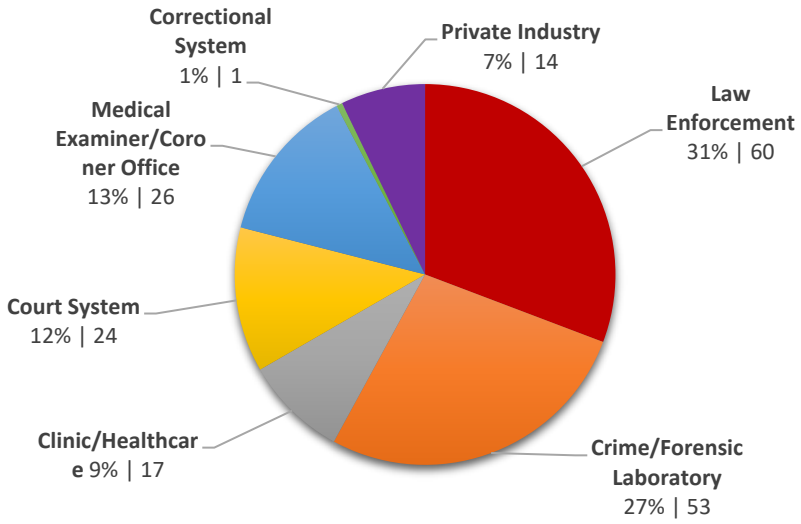

Figure 82. Primary organization type for respondents indicating that their organization does not log who accesses the evidence/property room.

Among respondents indicating that their organization does not log access to the evidence/property room, the most represented organization type was law enforcement agencies (31%), followed by crime/forensic laboratories (27%).

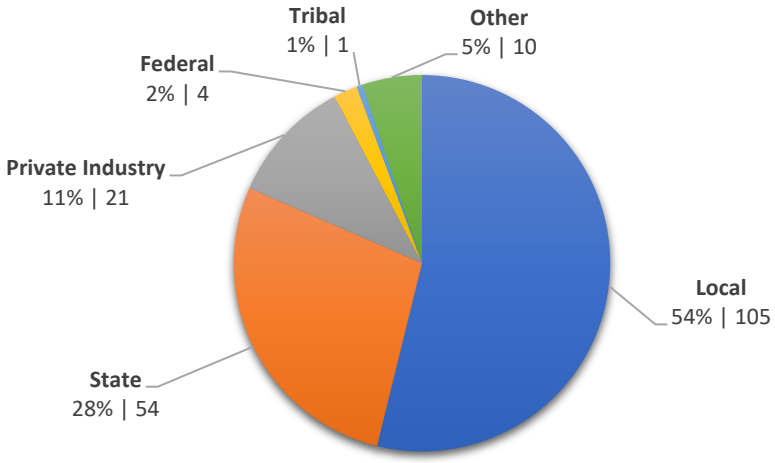

Figure 83. Organization classification for respondents indicating that their organization does not log evidence/property room access. [43]

Of respondents indicating that their organization does not log evidence/property room access, over half (54%) represented local organizations. The second most commonly represented were state organizations (28%).

Q76. Please indicate how you log who accesses the evidence/property room.

There were 823 total respondents. This question was a select-all-response option; therefore, the total number of responses is more than the total number of respondents. There were 620 non-responses with 241 non-responses due to skip logic.

Please indicate how you log who accesses the evidence/property room. (Select all that apply.)		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Manually (e.g., card file, paper logbook)	67%	552
Electronically (e.g., key card, biometrics)	61%	501
Other (please specify)	5%	39

Evidence/Property Room Features.

Q77. Please indicate if your organization's evidence/property areas have the following features. (Select all that apply.)

There were 1,061 total respondents. This question was a select-all-response option; therefore, the total number of responses is more than the total number of respondents. There were 382 non-responses.

Please indicate if your organization's evidence/property areas have the following features. (Select all that apply.)		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Cold storage – refrigerator	78%	828
Temperature controlled	77%	817
Cold storage – freezer	70%	741
Fire suppression (e.g., sprinklers)	67%	709
Humidity controlled	37%	395
Fire safety cabinets	36%	379

[43] Figure 89 required slight additional data cleaning due to five of the "other" responses being channeled to the "local" answer choice and one of the "other" responses being channeled to the "private industry" answer choice as these were the appropriate blanket organization classifications for these responses.

Specialized storage for hazardous materials	34%	365
Specialized storage for explosives/combustible materials	32%	341
Impound lots	32%	338
Pressure controlled (e.g., negative pressure for ventilation)	19%	205
None of the above	4%	44
I don't know	4%	44
Other (please specify)	5%	51

A Deeper Look: Question 77

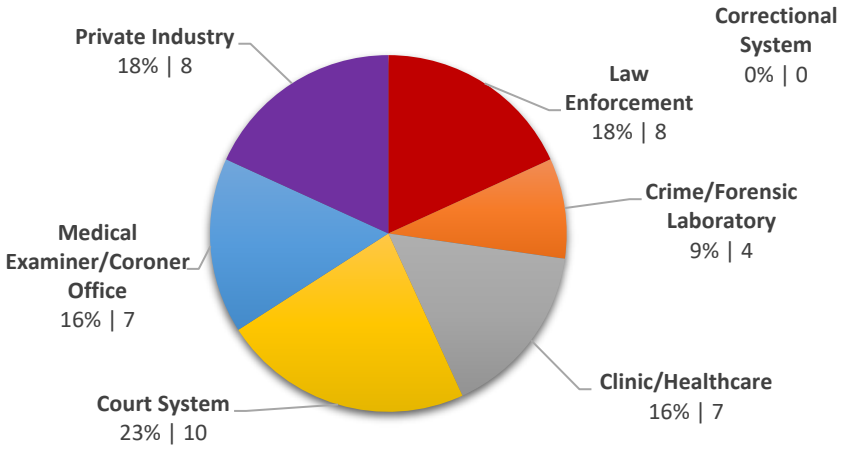

Figure 84. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated that their organization's evidence/property areas do not have any of the feature options.

Among respondents indicating that their organization's evidence/property areas do not have any of the feature options, the most represented organization type was court systems (23%), followed by private industry (18%) and law enforcement agencies (18%). No respondents representing correctional systems selected this answer choice.

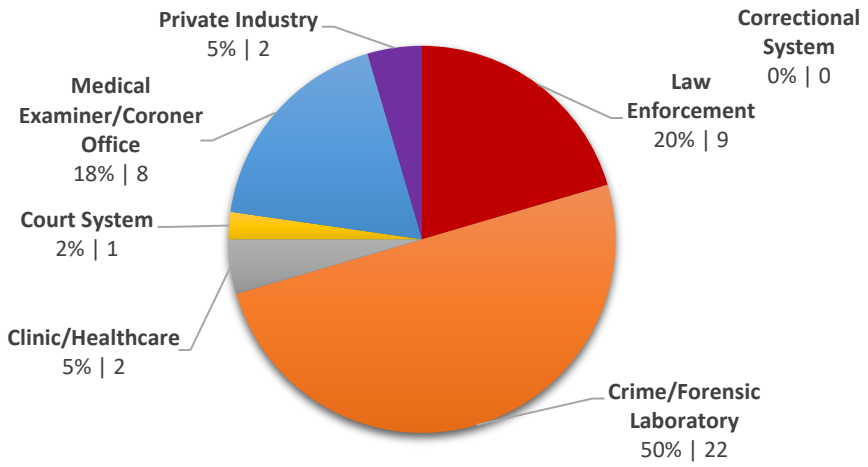

Figure 85. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated they are unsure whether their organization's evidence/property areas have any of the feature options.

Temperature-Controlled Evidence Transportation.

Q78. Does your organization take precautions to maintain cold storage evidence during transportation?

There were 1,061 total respondents and 382 non-responses.

Does your organization take precautions to maintain cold storage evidence during transportation?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Yes	47%	495
No	41%	433
I don't know	13%	133
	101%	1061

Deeper Look: Question 78

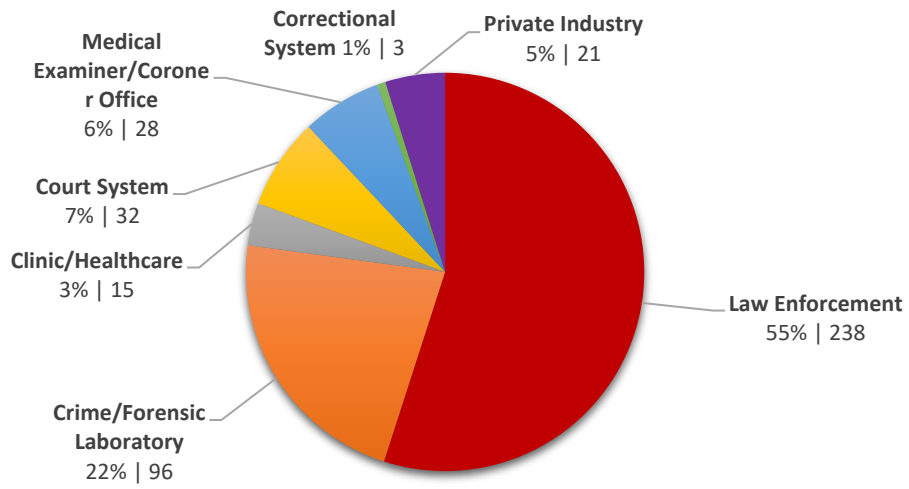

Figure 86. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated that their organization does not take precautions to maintain cold storage evidence during transportation.

Among respondents indicating that their organization does not take precautions to maintain cold storage evidence during transportation, the most represented organization type was law enforcement agencies (55%), followed by crime/forensic laboratories (22%).

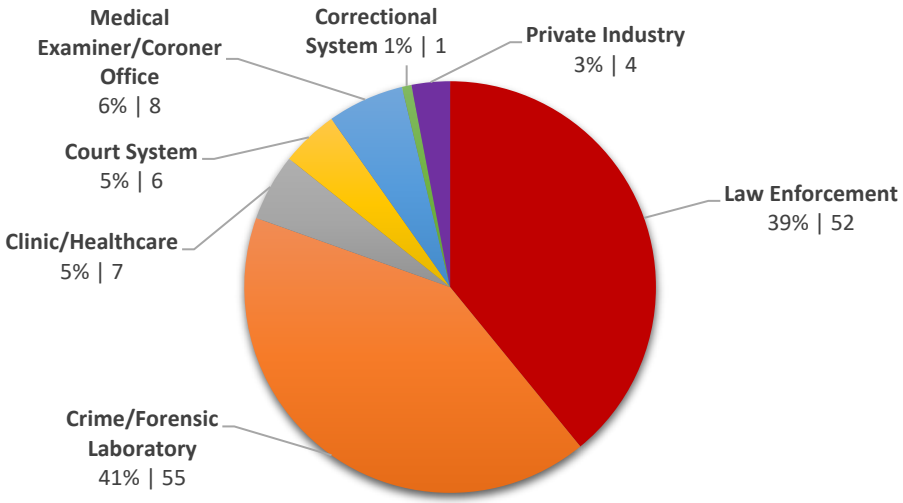

Figure 87. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated they are unsure whether their organization takes precautions to maintain cold storage evidence during transportation.

Of respondents indicating they are unsure whether their organization takes precautions to maintain cold storage evidence during transportation, the most represented organization type was crime/forensic laboratories (41%), followed by law enforcement agencies (39%).

2.9.1. Findings

Evidence/Property Room and Item Security. Survey respondents indicated that security of evidence/property rooms within their organizations includes key-card access (69%), video surveillance (55%), and steel frame doors (55%). A small subset of respondents (1%) indicated their organization's evidence/property room was unsecured, with private industry (33%) and law enforcement (25%) organization types being most represented in this subset. A similar number of respondents (2%) indicated they are unsure of their organization's evidence/property room security features, with crime/forensic laboratories (44%) being the most represented organization type in this subset of respondents. Regarding expressly high-liability items, 70% of the respondents indicated security measures for these item types.

Evidence/Property Room Logs. The majority (77%) of respondents indicated their organization logs individuals who access the evidence/property room. Of the respondents indicating this is not their organization's practice (18%), the most commonly represented organization types were law enforcement (31%) and crime/forensic laboratories (27%), with the most commonly represented organization classification being local (54%). Of those respondents who indicated logging is their organization's practice, 67% reported logged manually, while 61% logged electronically. (Respondents could choose multiple answers.)

Evidence/Property Room Features. Security features in evidence/property rooms are variable, dependent on the organization type, the size of the space dedicated for evidence/property storage, and the availability of funding to invest in more advanced features. Security of evidence/property items is a critical component of evidence management. Many of these security features double as safety precautions to ensure that evidence/property room personnel and the items they manage are safe from potential hazards (e.g., biohazards, drugs, weapons) or emergencies (e.g., fires). Over half of the respondents indicated that refrigerators (78%), temperature-controlled spaces (77%), and freezers (70%) are present in their organization's evidence/property areas. Cold storage and temperature-controlled spaces are fundamental for ensuring evidence items such as blood and bodily fluids are correctly stored. Certain evidence items can degrade and adversely affect forensic analyses without cold storage or temperature-control.

Additionally, only 67% of respondents indicated their evidence/property area has fire-suppression features such as sprinklers. This situation goes beyond the management of evidence/property and could be life-threatening to personnel if a fire occurs. The fact that some storage facilities might hose flammable, combustible, and explosive materials adds to this threat. Interestingly, the lack of evidence/property room feature options presented in this survey question was not specific to any organization type, thereby demonstrating the non-specific prevalence of the lack of these basic security and safety features.

Temperature-Controlled Evidence Transportation. Slightly less than half (47%) of the respondents indicated their organization takes precautions to maintain evidence requiring cold storage duration transportation. Of those who indicated this type of precaution is not taken (41%), law enforcement agencies (55%) and crime/forensic laboratories (22%) were the most

represented organization types. Likewise, of those respondents who indicated that they are unsure of their organization's practice (12%), crime/forensic laboratories (41%) and law enforcement agencies (39%) were the most represented organization types.

As stated previously, certain types of evidence may require cold storage to prevent degradation. A number of respondents from crime/forensic laboratories reported either not having this practice in place or not knowing their organization's transportation practices. These individuals are responsible for conducting forensic analyses on evidentiary items and have a working knowledge of the threat of not correctly storing evidence items that require cold storage; perhaps they are not responsible for the transport of evidence. Regardless, those responsible for transporting evidence should have resources for cold storage.

2.10. Safety (Questions 79-82)

Handlers frequently interact with evidence/property of unknown origin if unaccompanied by proper documentation detailing the collection location. The evidence/property items themselves may be of hazardous nature (e.g., narcotics, biological fluids, weapons), which could directly impact the health and safety of the handler. Regardless of the item type or where it originated, all evidence/property should be handled with extreme care and caution to avoid potential exposure to hazardous materials and to protect the safety of the handler and other colleagues who may be in the vicinity(i.e., universal precautions). This section of the report covers access evidence/property handlers have to personal protective equipment (PPE) for general evidence/property handling and emergency treatment medications for exposure to a narcotic such as fentanyl. This section also provides information regarding the prevalence and frequency of safety training that organizations require and supply to those handling evidence/property items.

Personal Protective Equipment and Emergency Treatment Medications.

Q79. Does your organization have the proper personal protective equipment available for your evidence handlers?

There were 1,061 total respondents and 382 non-responses.

Does your organization have the proper personal protective equipment available for your evidence handlers?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Yes	90%	958
No	7%	76
I don't know	3%	27
	100%	1061

A Deeper Look: Question 79

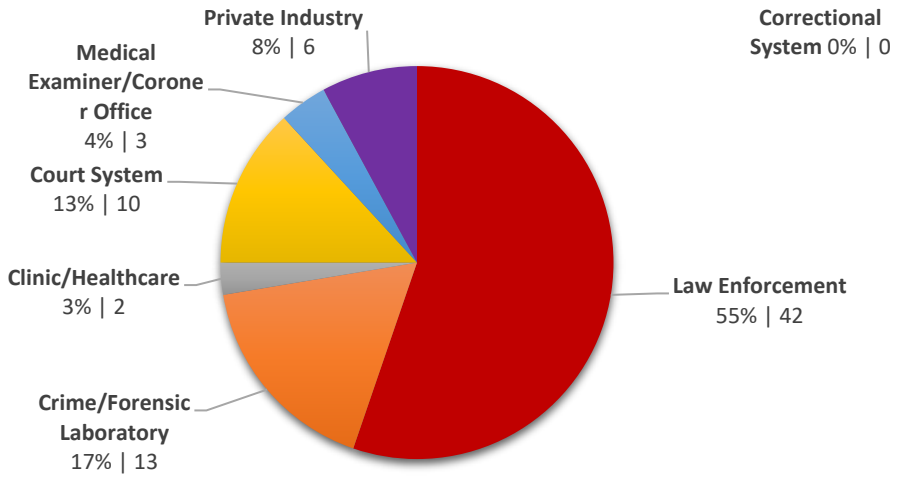

Figure 88. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated that their organization does not have the proper PPE available for their evidence handlers.

Q80. Are naloxone products (e.g., Narcan) available for use in evidence/property areas storing illicit substances?

There were 1,061 total respondents and 382 non-responses.

Are naloxone products (e.g., Narcan) available for use in evidence/property areas storing illicit substances?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Yes	68%	718
No	25%	267
I don't know	7%	76
	100%	1061

A Deeper Look: Question 80

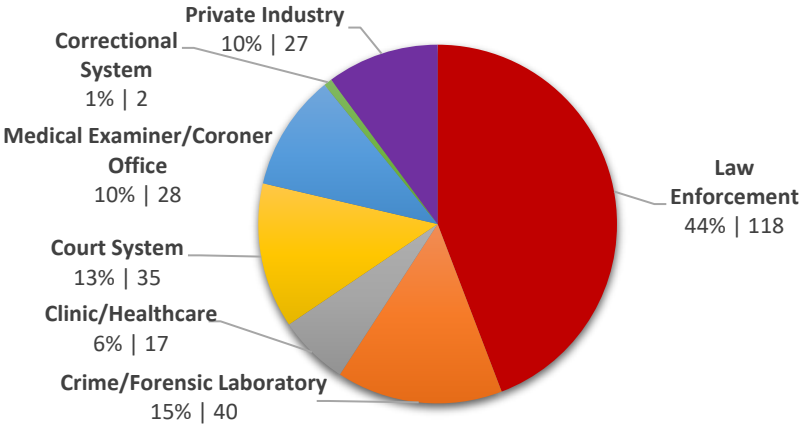

Figure 89. Primary organization type for respondents who indicated that naloxone products are not available for use in their organization's evidence/property areas storing illicit substances.

Of respondents indicating that naloxone products are not available for use in their organization's evidence/property areas storing illicit substances, the most represented organization type was law enforcement agencies (44%), followed by crime/forensic laboratories (15%).

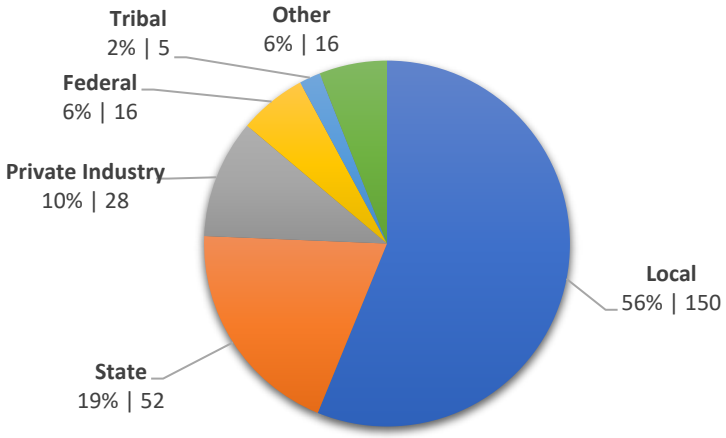

Figure 90. Organization classification for respondents who indicated naloxone products are not available for use in their organization's evidence/property areas storing illicit substances. [44]

Among respondents indicating naloxone products are not available for use in their organization's evidence/property areas storing illicit substances, over half (56%) represented

[44] Figure 96 required slight additional data cleaning due to three of the "other" responses being channeled to the "local" answer choice and two of the "other" responses being channeled to the "private industry" answer choice as these were the appropriate blanket organization classifications for these responses.

local organizations, with the second most commonly represented were state organizations (19%).

Organization Safety Training.

Q81. Does your organization require safety training?

There were 1,061 total respondents and 382 non-responses.

Does your organization require safety training?		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Yes	76%	802
No	21%	221
I don't know	4%	38
	101%	1061

A Deeper Look: Question 81

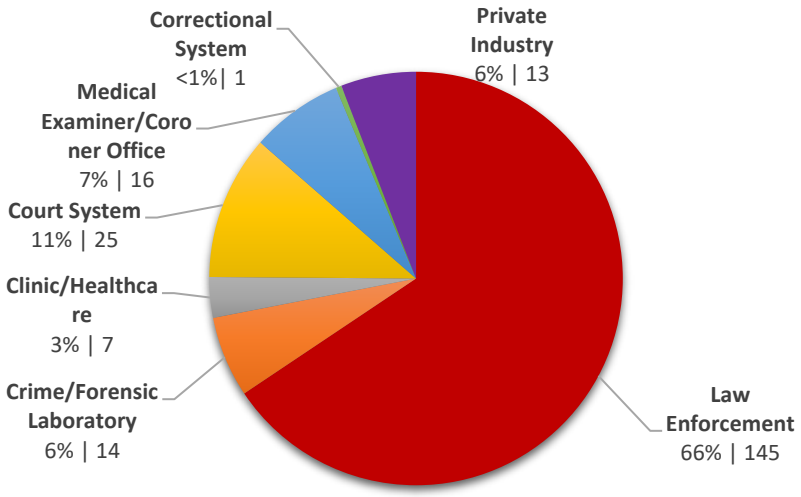

Figure 91. Primary organization type for respondents indicating that their organization does not require safety training.

Among respondents indicating that their organization does not require safety training, the most represented organization type was law enforcement agencies (66%), followed by court systems (11%).

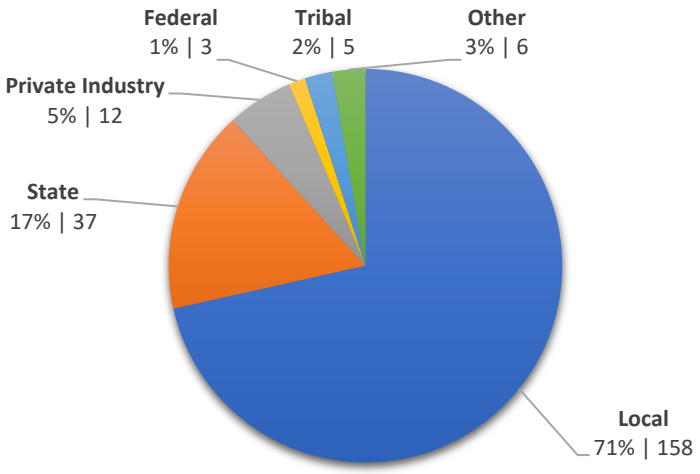

Figure 92. Organization classification for respondents indicating that their organization does not require safety training. [45]

Of respondents indicating that their organization does not require safety training, nearly three-fourths (71%) represented local organizations. The second most commonly represented were state organizations, with 17% of the respondents belonging to this category.

Q82. Please indicate when the safety training occurs.

The "Other" category total reflects excluding one irrelevant answer, resulting in 801 respondents. There were 641 non-responses with 259 non-responses due to skip logic.

Please indicate when the safety training occurs.		
Answer Choices	**Respondent Percentage**	**Number of Respondents**
Annually for all employees	74%	591
Only upon hire	15%	119
Other (please specify)	11%	91
	100%	801

2.10.1. Findings

Personal Protective Equipment and Emergency Treatment Medications. While the majority (90%) of the respondents indicated their organization supplies the proper PPE for evidence handlers, 7% of the respondents indicated that PPE is not provided. The remaining 3% are

[45] Figure 98 required slight additional data cleaning due to five of the "other" responses being channeled to the "local" answer choice and one of the "other" responses being channeled to the "private industry" answer choice as these were the appropriate blanket organization classifications for these responses.

unsure whether this PPE is supplied. Of the 7% of respondents who answered negatively to this question, over half (55%) represented law enforcement agencies.

Less prevalent is ensuring naloxone is available for use in evidence/property areas that store illicit substances, with 68% indicating that their organization follows this practice. Of those respondents who indicated that their organization does not supply naloxone in evidence/property areas storing illicit substances (25%), law enforcement agencies (44%) and local organizations (56%) were the most represented organization type and classification.

Organization Safety Training. Three-fourths of the respondents (74%) indicated that their organization requires safety training annually for all employees or upon hire (15%). Of those respondents who indicated that their organization does not require safety training (21%), 66% of those respondents represented law enforcement agencies.

2.11. Final Thoughts/Open-Ended Questions (Questions 83-86)

Q83. What are the biggest challenges you encounter in retaining and disposition of evidence/property?

There were 852 total respondents and 591 non-responses.

Q84. What type of educational topics related to evidence management are of interest to you?

There were 718 total respondents and 725 non-responses. About 10% of respondents who provided answers said they were interested in any or all training, and another 10% mentioned best practices.

Q85. Please comment on the current landscape of evidence handling and retention practices.

There were 641 total respondents and 802 non-responses.

Q86. Is there anything else you would like us to know regarding evidence management?

There were 250 total responses and 893 non-responses.

2.12. Survey Data

Data in Excel and csv formats are available through NIST's Science Data Portal at https://doi.org/10.18434/mds2-3834.

3. Discussion

3.1. Summary of Findings

The findings in this report indicate a need for additional resources, best practices guides, more training, and standardization in physical evidence management. Many organizations that employ individuals responsible for handling evidence lack staff, funding, and quality management infrastructure to preserve the integrity of evidence – a critical asset in the administration of justice. The accompanying report on evidence management (NIST SP 1500-33A) provides guidance to organizations and evidence handlers to improve their processes at each step in the evidence management lifecycle.

3.2. Opportunities for Further Research

This survey has served as an essential first step in gathering data regarding the current landscape of evidence management. The community could benefit from further in-depth analysis utilizing the survey dataset; such analysis is outside the scope of the current effort. Future research projects can use the dataset to perform more in-depth investigations to identify additional gaps in the information regarding allied criminal justice professionals, evidence handlers, and the policies and practices related to physical evidence/property management. Responses to the four open-ended questions could be used to identify and prioritize topics for guidance documents and training.

While the data obtained through this survey provides an overview of practices and procedures for evidence management across multiple organization types and sizes, more research is needed to understand forensic evidence management in the criminal justice system. Three opportunities for further work were identified.

- While it is a given that evidence is a critical component of organizations within the criminal justice system, there is no known data on how often evidence is used or its impact on the criminal justice system and broader public safety.
- The evidence management community would benefit from additional research into the size of evidence inventories, the challenges faced in maintaining them, and the resources expended in maintenance. More work could be done to understand the policies and processes organizations follow to determine which items should be kept and which can be purged to make inventory space available. This information could inform the development of standardized guidance to supplement statutes and regulations to help organizations achieve sustainable inventory levels.
- Not at all organizations have adopted technology to aid in evidence management functions such as chain of custody tracking or logging individuals into evidence/property rooms. While many electronic systems exist, the evidence management community could benefit from low-cost, easy-to-use, interoperable technological tools, software, and documentation to manage evidence electronically. Such tools would also reduce the potential for human error when utilizing manual methods.

Appendix. Survey Questions

The following table presents the 86 survey questions and associated answer options for each question, separated by section headers to provide a high-level topic statement relevant to questions in the respective section. Where applicable to specific survey questions, the table includes the following information: instances of "Other (please specify)" answer options, answers that allowed respondents to select all answer options which applied, questions with accompanying definitions, questions with embedded skip logic, and questions which with a single text box rather than multiple-choice options, fill-in-the-blank text box, or a hybrid of both.

#	Question	Answer Options
Informed Consent		
1	Informed Consent	a. I accept
Organization Demographics		
2	Please indicate your primary organization type.	a. Law Enforcement b. Crime/Forensic Laboratory c. Clinic/Healthcare d. Court System e. Medical Examiner/Coroner Office f. Correctional System g. Private Industry
3	How would you classify your organization?	a. Local b. State c. Federal d. Tribal e. Private Industry a. Other (please specify): _____
4	What region is your organization located in?	b. New England (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT) c. Mid-Atlantic (NJ, NY, PA) d. East North Central (IL, IN, MI, OH, WI) e. West North Central (IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD) f. South Atlantic (DE, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA, DC, WV) g. East South Central (AL, KY, MS, TN) h. West South Central (AR, LA, OK, TX) i. Mountain (AZ, CO, ID, MT, NV, NM, UT, WY) j. Pacific (AK, CA, HI, OR, WA)
5	How many total individuals are employed by your organization?	a. < 10 b. 10-25

#	Question	Answer Options
		c. 26-49 d. 50-99 e. 100-499 f. 500-999 g. 1000-2999 h. > 3000
6	Does your organization conduct any of the following?	*(Select all that apply.)* a. Drug test, upon hire b. Drug test, routinely after hire c. Drug test, randomly after hire d. Drug test, upon reassignment e. Drug test, after incident/complaint/concern f. Background check, upon hire g. Background check, routinely after hire h. Background check, randomly after hire i. Background check, upon reassignment j. Background check, after incident/complaint/concern k. Neither drug tests nor background checks are performed at my organization l. I don't know
7	Are the evidence/property operations of your organization accredited by any of the following?	*(Select all that apply.)* a. ANAB b. A2LA c. CALEA d. IAPE e. The evidence/property operations of my organization are not accredited f. Other (please specify): _____
8	Are the day-to-day operations and management of evidence/property performed by sworn officers or civilians?	*(Select all that apply.)* a. N/A b. Sworn officers c. Civilians d. I don't know
9	How many personnel does your organization have assigned full-time to the Evidence Storage/Property Room(s)/area(s)?	a. 0 b. 1-5 c. 6-10 d. 11-30 e. 31-50 f. > 50 g. I don't know

#	Question	Answer Options
10	Are there personnel responsible for **both** storing evidence **and** investigating cases?	a. Yes b. No c. I don't know
11	Which duties related to direct handling of evidence/property are performed by the personnel at your organization? *Definitions for this question:* • *Inventory: the process of accounting for all or a specified portion of the property/evidence items in the custody of an agency.* • *Audit: a review of the policies, procedures, and processes of the property/evidence functions of the agency to determine whether or not they meet the recognized standards, best practices, and comply with applicable statutes and codes.* • *Disposition: the authorization process for the release or disposal of evidence/property.* • *Destruction: the act of breaking apart, melting, crushing, or making an item of property/evidence unusable before discarding.* • *Forfeited property: property seized by the government from a private individual or entity by court order, civil action, or due to statutory requirements*.	*(Select all that apply.)* a. Receiving b. Storing c. Indexing or cataloging d. Securing e. Retrieval f. Disposal g. Research for disposition h. Generate disposition requests i. Complete disposition j. Processing (opening up packaging, etc.) k. Ensuring all items are properly marked/tagged l. Ensuring all records are accurate including status of item m. Releasing property to rightful owner n. Releasing evidence to officers o. Managing digital evidence p. Copying media and documents as requested by an investigator, prosecutor, or other appropriate person or agency q. Conducting inspections r. Conducting inventories s. Audits t. Preparing items for transport (e.g., forensic lab, offsite storage) u. Preparing items for destruction v. Auction w. Diversion x. Ensuring agency policy is upheld y. Prohibitive possession checks z. Response to seal order aa. Response to discovery requests bb. Evidence transfer between facilities cc. Develop policy dd. Testify in court ee. Manage evidentiary deposited funds ff. Forfeited property gg. Other (please specify): _____

#	Question	Answer Options
12	On average, how many medical forensic patients does your organization serve annually?	a. N/A – my organization does not serve forensic patients b. 50 or less c. 51 – 150 d. 151 – 300 e. 301 – 500 f. 501 – 1000 g. More than 1000 h. I don't know
13	What types of medical forensic examinations or evaluations does your organization provide?	a. N/A – my organization does not provide medical forensic examinations or evaluations b. All forms of injury, abuse, neglect or harm c. Physical abuse/neglect only d. Sexual abuse/neglect/exploitation only
14	Has your organization received any grant funding to assist with the management of evidence and property?	a. Yes b. No
Evidence/Property Storage		
15	Does your organization have a dedicated location or space for evidence/property storage?	a. Yes b. No c. I don't know
16	Which of the following best applies to your organization?	a. My organization temporarily stores evidence/property items (< 72 hours) b. My organization stores evidence/property items long-term c. My organization stores evidence/property items both temporarily and long-term d. My organization does not store evidence/property items e. I don't know
17	Does your organization collect non-report/non-investigative sexual assault kits (NIKs [sic] [46])?	a. Yes b. No c. I don't know
18	Who stores NIKs [sic] in your jurisdiction?	a. Clinical Program b. Advocacy Organization c. Law Enforcement

[46] The acronym NIK was mistakenly provided in the survey instrument to mean Sexual Assault Kit; the correct acronym is provided in the report and is noted here. 'NIK' was retained in the dataset, with this note added to the README file as a caveat.

#	Question	Answer Options
	Note: display question if answer to Q17 is "yes" (enforced skip logic)	d. Forensic Laboratory e. I don't know f. Other (please specify): _____
19	How long does your organization store NIKs [sic]? ***Note:*** *display question if answer to Q17 is "yes" (enforced skip logic)*	a. Less than 30 days b. 30 days to less than 1 year c. 1 year or more d. I don't know
20	Do you encounter any challenges transferring evidence/property items between organizations?	a. Yes b. No
21	Please explain. ***Note:*** *display question if answer to Q20 is "yes" (enforced skip logic)*	Comment Box: _____
Respondent Demographics		
22	Were you required to undergo a background investigation or background check for your current position?	a. Yes b. No
23	What is your current job title?	Single Text Box: _____
24	Which of the following best describes your current job level?	a. Trainee b. Entry Level c. Experienced Employee d. Supervisor/Manager e. Director f. Administrative g. Other (please specify): _____
25	Which of the following best describes your current civilian or officer status?	a. N/A b. Sworn Officer c. Commissioned Officer d. Civilian
26	How long have you been in your current position?	a. < 1 year b. 1-2 years c. 2-3 years d. 3-5 years e. 5-7 years f. 7-10 years g. 10-15 years h. 15-20 years i. Over 20 years

#	Question	Answer Options
27	Do you have direct contact with items of evidence or property?	a. Yes b. No
28	How many years of experience do you have handling items of evidence or property? ***Note:*** *display item if answer to Q27 is "yes" (enforced skip logic)*	a. No experience b. < 1 year c. 1-2 years d. 2-3 years e. 3-5 years f. 5-7 years g. 7-10 years h. 10-15 years i. 15-20 years j. Over 20 years
29	How many years of experience do you have handling evidence or property **inside** a property room? ***Note:*** *display question if answer to Q27 is "yes" (enforced skip logic)*	a. No experience b. < 1 year c. 1-2 years d. 2-3 years e. 3-5 years f. 5-7 years g. 7-10 years h. 10-15 years i. 15-20 years j. Over 20 years
30	Do you function as a property custodian?	a. Yes b. No
31	Do you hold any other roles within your agency? ***Note:*** *display question if answer to Q30 is "yes" (enforced skip logic)*	a. Yes b. No
32	Please explain. ***Note:*** *display question if answer to Q31 is "yes" (enforced skip logic)*	Comment Box: _____
33	What is the highest level of education you have completed?	a. Less than high school completion b. High school diploma or equivalent (for example, GED, HiSET, TASC) c. Professional certificate or diploma d. Associate degree e. Bachelor's degree f. Master's degree

#	Question	Answer Options
		g. Ph.D., M.D., J.D., D.N.P., or other high-level professional degree
34	Do you hold any certifications?	a. Yes b. No
35	Please list your certifications. ***Note:*** *display question if answer to Q34 is "yes" (enforced skip logic)*	Comment Box: _____
Education and Training		
36	What is the minimum educational requirement for your position?	a. Less than high school completion b. High school diploma or equivalent (for example, GED, HiSET, TASC) c. Professional certificate or diploma d. Associate degree e. Bachelor's degree f. Master's degree g. Ph.D., M.D., J.D., D.N.P., or other high-level professional degree
37	Does your role require any of the following?	*(Select all that apply.)* a. Attending formal, specialized training for evidence management b. Obtaining certification(s) in evidence management c. Maintaining certification(s) in evidence management d. None of the above
38	What type of training related to evidence handling did you receive for your position?	*(Select all that apply.)* a. Self-taught b. On the job training c. Lectures or presentations without CE credits d. Lectures or presentations with CE credits e. Conferences f. Certificate program g. Undergraduate level courses related to evidence topics (not part of a degree) h. Graduate level courses related to evidence topics (not part of a degree) i. Graduate program including evidence topics j. None of these k. Other type of education/training (please specify): _____

#	Question	Answer Options
39	Is the training documented?	a. Yes b. No c. N/A
40	Please indicate why the training is documented. ***Note:*** *display question if answer to Q39 is "yes" (enforced skip logic)*	*(Select all that apply.)* a. Employment requirements b. Certification, licensure, or related professional requirement c. Organization accreditation d. Other (please specify): _____
Quality Control		
41	Does your organization have quality assurance/quality control policies? *Definitions for this question:* • *Quality Assurance: the standardized procedures, methods, or philosophy for collecting, processing, or analyzing data, that is performed on an ongoing basis and aimed at maintaining or improving the appropriateness and reliability of services.* • *Quality Control: the sum of all the activities that prevent unwanted (e.g., negative) change in quality of services.*	a. Yes b. No
42	Does your organization have a designated quality control individual and/or team/unit?	*(Select all that apply.)* a. QC Individual b. QC Team/Unit c. None of the above
43	Does your organization have written policies, procedures, protocols, or other related documents related to the following? *Definitions for this question:* • *Audit: a review of the policies, procedures, and processes of the property/evidence functions of the*	*(Select all that apply.)* a. Evidence Packaging b. Evidence Storage c. Evidence Tracking d. Evidence Security e. Evidence Disposition f. Evidence Destruction g. Conducting Audits/Inventories h. Handling of hazardous and biological materials

#	Question	Answer Options
	agency to determine whether or not they meet the recognized standards, best practices, and comply with applicable statutes and codes. • *Inventory: the process of accounting for all or a specified portion of the property/evidence items in the custody of an agency.* • *Disposition: the authorization process for the release or disposal of evidence/property.* • *Destruction: the act of breaking apart, melting, crushing, or making an item of property/evidence unusable before discarding.*	i. Storage to minimize cross contamination j. None of the above k. I don't know
44	What type of guiding principles are followed? ***Note:*** *display question if answer to Q43 is "None of the above" (enforced skip logic)*	Comment Box: _____
45	How often are your organization's standard operating procedures or established procedures concerning evidence management reviewed and/or revised?	a. N/A, we do not have SOPs or established procedures b. Never, once they are established, they are not reviewed again c. On a predetermined review schedule d. I don't know e. As needed
Evidence Tracking		
46	How is evidence tracked?	a. Manual Written Tracking only b. Electronic Tracking (e.g., computer assisted, computer program) only c. Hybrid of Manual and Electronic Tracking d. None of these e. Other (please specify): _____
47	Please indicate what type of tracking system is used.	Single Text Box: _____

#	Question	Answer Options
	Note: *display question if answer to Q46 is (b) or (c) (enforced skip logic)*	
48	Does your agency/organization track chain of custody? *Definition for this question:* • *Chain of custody: the chronological documentation of the collection, custody, control, transfer (temporary or permanent), and disposition of evidence, either physical or electronic.*	a. Yes b. No c. I don't know
49	How does your agency/organization track chain of custody? ***Note:*** *display question if answer to Q48 is "Yes" (enforced skip logic)*	*(Select all that apply.)* a. Manual Written Tracking (e.g., ledger, index cards) b. Written on evidence package c. Manual Electronic Tracking, (e.g., spreadsheet) d. Automated Electronic Tracking (e.g., evidence management system) e. Case report f. Other (please specify): _____
50	What aspects of chain of custody does your agency/organization document? ***Note:*** *display question if answer to Q48 is "Yes" (enforced skip logic)*	*(Select all that apply.)* a. Item movement/transfer b. Reason for movement c. Item custody/possession d. Authorizing person e. Disposition status f. Date and time stamps g. Other (please specify): _____
51	Is a unique identifier issued to each individual evidence/property item?	a. Yes b. No c. I don't know
52	Do you label each individual evidence/property item? ***Note:*** *display question if answer to Q51 is "Yes" (enforced skip logic)*	a. Yes b. No c. I don't know
53	How are individual evidence/property items identified and referenced?	Comment Box: _____

#	Question	Answer Options
	Note: *display question if answer to Q51 is "No" or "I don't know" (enforced skip logic)*	
54	Which of the following is retention and disposition of evidence/property based on?	*(Select all that apply.)* a. Offense type b. State Statutes or Regulations c. Organization Policy d. Blanket Authorization e. Upon authorization of officer/investigator f. Judge/Court Order g. I don't know h. Other (please specify): _____
55	Who is responsible for determining the disposition of evidence/property?	*(Select all that apply.)* a. Submitting/Case Investigator b. Evidence/Property Room Personnel c. Prosecutor d. Judge/Court Order e. Other (please specify below) f. I don't know Please specify for any "Other" chosen above: _____
56	What triggers the initiation of the disposition process?	*(Select all that apply.)* a. Judge/Court Order b. Electronic tracking (e.g., computer assisted, computer program) c. Need for space d. Statutory requirements e. Organizational policy f. Only when authorized by leadership/management g. When my organization has time h. I don't know i. Other (please specify): _____
57	What process does your organization use to purge evidence following disposition?	*(Select all that apply.)* a. Our organization does not purge evidence b. Release to the Owner or Finder c. Release to another organization d. Auction e. Destruction

#	Question	Answer Options
		f. Charity/Donation g. Discard h. Crush/Recycle i. Incinerate j. Departmental/Organizational Use k. I don't know l. Other (please specify): _____
58	Does your department have an established schedule/pre-determined inventory threshold for purging evidence/property? ***Note:*** *display question if answer to Q57 is (b) through (j) or (l) (enforced skip logic)*	a. Yes b. No *c.* I don't know
59	Does the Evidence/Property Room routinely send out requests to **department members** for the disposition of evidence/property?	a. Yes b. No c. I don't know
60	Does the Evidence/Property Room routinely send out requests directly to **prosecuting agencies** for the disposition of evidence/property?	a. Yes b. No c. I don't know
Inventory *Definition for this section:* • *Inventory: the process of accounting for all or a specified portion of the property/evidence items in the custody of an agency.*		
61	How often does your organization conduct a 100% inventory on the evidence/property room?	*Select all that apply.* a. Never b. Multiple times each year c. Annually d. Every 1-5 years e. Upon change of leadership/command f. Upon change of personnel g. I don't know h. Other (please specify): _____
62	Does your agency conduct partial, rotational, or high-liability inventory? ***Note:*** *display question if answer to Q61 is "Never" (enforced skip logic)*	a. Yes b. No c. I don't know

#	Question	Answer Options
63	How often is a partial, rotational, or high-liability inventory conducted? ***Note:*** *display question if answer to Q62 is "Yes" (enforced skip logic)*	a. Never b. Multiple times each year c. Annually d. Every 1-5 years e. Continually f. I don't know g. Other (please specify below) Please specify for any "Other" chosen above: _____
64	Do you maintain a system of tracking to know the number of items received and the number of items purged for each of these time frames? Monthly, Annually, Across Multiple Years	a. Yes b. No c. I don't know
65	How many items of evidence/property are currently in your organization's inventory? (Write out number without commas, e.g., 1200000)	Single Text Box: _____
66	Was the number you provided an estimate?	a. Yes b. No
67	Does your agency destroy/dispose of more items than you receive on a yearly basis?	c. Yes d. No e. My agency does not destroy/dispose of evidence/property f. I don't know
Audits *Definition for this section:* • *Audit: a review of the policies, procedures, and processes of the property/evidence functions of the agency to determine whether or not they meet the recognized standards, best practices, and comply with applicable statutes and codes.*		
68	Is your organization's evidence/property room audited?	a. Yes b. No c. I don't know
69	When was the last time an audit was conducted?	a. Less than 2 years b. 2-5 years c. 5-7 years d. 7-10 years

#	Question	Answer Options
	Note: *display question if answer to Q68 is "Yes" (enforced skip logic)*	e. Over 10 years f. I don't know
70	Who performs the audit? ***Note:*** *display question if answer to Q68 is "Yes" (enforced skip logic)*	a. Completed by an evidence/property room leadership b. Internal or external to the evidence/property room c. External to the organization
71	What is evaluated during the audit? ***Note:*** *display question if answer to Q68 is "Yes" (enforced skip logic)*	*(Select all that apply.)* a. Quality of data entry b. Security controls c. Work environment d. Training records e. Evaluation of evidence for disposition eligibility f. Written policies and procedures g. Compliance with established policies and procedures d. Other (please specify): _____
72	Are there corrective actions required based on audit findings? ***Note:*** *display question if answer to Q68 is "Yes" (enforced skip logic)*	a. Yes b. No c. I don't know
Security		
73	How is your evidence/property room secured?	*(Select all that apply.)* a. My organization's evidence/property room is not secure b. Key card c. Biometrics d. Code lock e. Double lock f. Video surveillance g. Steel frame doors h. I don't know i. Other (please specify): _____
74	Is there increased security for high-liability items (e.g., drugs, cash, jewelry)?	a. Yes b. No c. I don't know
75	Do you log who accesses the evidence/property room?	a. Yes b. No c. I don't know

#	Question	Answer Options
76	Please indicate how you log who accesses the evidence/property room. ***Note:*** *display question if answer to Q75 is "Yes" (enforced skip logic)*	a. Electronically (e.g., key card, biometrics) b. Manually (e.g., card file, paper log book) c. Other (please specify): _____
Storage Conditions		
77	Please indicate if your organization's evidence/property areas have the following features.	*(Select all that apply.)* a. Temperature controlled b. Humidity controlled c. Pressure controlled (e.g., negative pressure for ventilation) d. Fire suppression (e.g., sprinklers) e. Cold storage – refrigerator f. Cold storage – freezer g. Fire safety cabinets h. Specialized storage for explosive/combustible materials i. Specialized storage for hazardous materials j. Impound lots k. None of the above l. I don't know m. Other (please specify): _____
78	Does your organization take precautions to maintain cold storage evidence during transportation?	a. Yes b. No c. I don't know
Safety		
79	Does your organization have the proper personal protective equipment available for your evidence handlers?	a. Yes b. No c. I don't know
80	Are naloxone products (e.g., Narcan) available for use in evidence/property areas storing illicit substances?	a. Yes b. No c. I don't know
81	Does your organization require safety training?	a. Yes b. No c. I don't know
82	Please indicate when the safety training occurs. ***Note:*** *display question if answer to Q81 is "Yes" (enforced skip logic)*	a. Annually for all employees b. Only upon hire c. Other (please specify): _____

#	Question	Answer Options
Final Thoughts		
83	What are the biggest challenges you encounter in retaining and disposition of evidence/property? ***Note:*** *this question does not require an answer*	Comment Box: _____
84	What type of educational topics related to evidence management are of interest to you? ***Note:*** *this question does not require an answer*	Comment Box: _____
85	Please comment on the current landscape of evidence handling and retention practices. ***Note:*** *this question does not require an answer*	Comment Box: _____
86	Is there anything else you would like us to know regarding evidence management? ***Note:*** *this question does not require an answer*	Comment Box: _____