



ISP Works with RSM Global through the Lean Six Sigma Analysis Process to Streamline Forensic Lab Functionality

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Springfield, IL – The Illinois State Police (ISP) announces updates on their progress towards streamlining the functionality of the state's Forensic Laboratory system through the well-known management analytic process known as Lean Six Sigma Analysis. This methodology has been successfully deployed in forensic laboratories and private sector companies across the nation. The ISP will use the results of the analysis to increase laboratory efficiency in the Biology section (which includes biological screening and DNA analysis) by removing unnecessary processes and reducing variations, thereby reducing case turnaround times.

Through a state contract with RSM Global, costing \$397,840 for Phase One, the ISP Division of Forensic Services (DFS) has begun working with subject matter experts to examine the processes for Biology evidence analysis. Beginning July 1, 2019, RSM Global subject-matter experts began working with ISP Forensic Scientists to create what is called a "process map." A process map is a tool which tracks all processes associated with evidence, from initial entry into the laboratory, through evidence analysis, and ultimately to the report sent back to the originating agency who submitted the evidence. The map will be used to detect bottlenecks in the process, identify and create system improvements, and improve overall laboratory efficiency.

RSM Global Consultants have already conducted initial assessments at the Joliet, Rockford, Morton, and Metro East Forensic Laboratories, with the Springfield Laboratory to be assessed this week and the Chicago Laboratory by the week of August 12, 2019. Each laboratory will have its own individualized process map where consultants and DFS employees will be able to see process inefficiencies and areas for improvement. Opportunities for statewide improvements across all ISP laboratories will also be identified through this mechanism.

Once all laboratories are process mapped, RSM Global and ISP DFS officials will conduct a thorough review with a targeted completion time of mid-November 2019. This review process will identify specific areas of improvement, anticipated cost benefits of implementing the improvements (time and/or funds), and goals for implementation by the ISP. Needs requiring legislative action will be presented to the General Assembly for action. Phase One will conclude once this review process is complete. ISP anticipates implementing some of the improvements immediately upon the conclusion of Phase One.

Phase Two has a targeted start date of January 1, 2020. During this phase, ISP DFS will begin implementing additional recommendations made by RSM Global and its subcontractor, Illuminative Solutions. Costs for this phase and a timeline for completion are yet to be determined and will be largely dependent upon the findings of Phase One.

“While I am proud of the efforts the ISP is making toward the pursuit of justice for crime victims across Illinois by completing nearly 23,000 case assignments in the second quarter of 2019, there’s still much work to be done,” stated Illinois State Police Acting Director Brendan F. Kelly. He continued, “The recommendations made through the Lean Six Sigma Analysis must be quickly deployed to increase lab efficiency and reduce the current turnaround times.”

Additionally, the ISP has plans to hire 26 Forensic Scientist Trainees in the following disciplines: Drug Chemistry, Biology, Latent Prints, and Toxicology. Of those 26 new hires, 10 will be placed in the Biology section to help improve the testing turnaround time and get analytical results to investigators in a timelier manner. The scientists’ salaries will be paid by General Revenue funds which were requested as part of ISP’s annual budget. The ISP’s goal has been to get to Forensic Scientist staffing levels sufficient to address normal attrition and to improve case turnaround time. The target staffing level is 320 Forensic Scientists, a significant increase from the current 249 scientists. In addition to hiring these 26 Forensic Scientists, the ISP plans two additional rounds of hiring in 2020 and 2021 to reach the minimal staffing goal of 320 Forensic Scientists.

The ISP is committed to implementing effective and efficient measures which will maintain the high quality of work currently produced, assist in decreasing the turnaround times in the labs, and create a highly efficient forensic laboratory system.