



# DNA Backlog Clearance Project

Volume 2, Issue 2: May 2015

## Focus of update:

This newsletter is designed to provide regular updates pertaining to the DNA Backlog Clearance Project. The project will continue until all testing is complete, reports issued by the external vendors, technical reviews finalized, and investigative follow up conducted. This edition will focus on updating stakeholders on progress made thus far on the investigation stage of this project.

### CODIS Entries

CODIS entries to date	<b>2,756**</b>
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\*\* These cases represent those where a profile was developed meeting CODIS guidelines and a CODIS entry has been completed.

### Sexual Assault Awareness Month

At the beginning of April, City Hall was glowing in teal up-lighting to acknowledge sexual assault awareness month. This is a visual symbol demonstrating the City of Houston's commitment to the community response of sexual assault.

In honor of this occasion, the Houston Area Women's Center's residential location hosted a sexual assault awareness month event and asked for Houston PD representation. Senior Police Officer Holly Whillock and advocate intern Alexis Herrera represented the HPD Adult Sex Crimes and Child Sexual Abuse Units for the event. They spoke briefly to the shelter residents about the investigative process and advocacy resources available to victims of sex crimes. Multiple survivors of sexual assault asked questions after the event. These occasions continue to strengthen the working relationship between HAWC and HPD, and bolster the confidence the Houston community has in HPD responding to sex crimes.

In addition to Sexual Assault Awareness Month, April hosts National Crime Victims' Rights Week. Two advocates from the Adult Sex Crimes Unit represented the Special Victims Division at a crime victims' rights week fair sponsored by Legacy Community Clinic and Aid to Victims of Domestic Abuse. They spoke with citizens about access to the investigative division and advocacy options. In addition, they networked and shared information with other agency representatives.

Embracing a community presence allows for increased visual exposure to HPD's Special Victim Division. Knowing that sexual assaults are severely underreported, it is crucial to demonstrate to the Houston community that HPD cares about victims and takes sex crimes seriously.

### Investigative Follow-Up Case Assignment:

	Assigned	Completed
CODIS Matches <sup>1</sup>	1,007	867
CODIS Ineligibles / Negatives <sup>2</sup>	5,019	5,000
CODIS Eligibles <sup>3</sup>	2,314	2,174
<b>Total to Date</b>	<b>8,340</b>	<b>8,041</b>

### Investigative Follow-Up Results:

	False Arrest	Arrest Confirmation	New Charges
<b>Total to Date</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>41</b>

Note: These figures refer exclusively to the City-funded portion of the DNA Backlog Clearance Project.

<sup>1</sup> DNA profile identified through DNA analysis, resulted from either a direct CODIS hit (individual) or linked to another case.

<sup>2</sup> Lab analysis provided no evidentiary leads. Testing complete.

<sup>3</sup> Lab analysis has identified possible DNA evidence. Multiple outcomes possible, including entering unknown profile(s) into CODIS. Testing in-progress.

### A Fond Farewell

Many hands have been involved in the effort to address the previously untested sexual assault kits. Not to be underestimated is the hard work and dedication of the retired officers brought back on a temporary basis, to help review and update cases. These employees were devoted to this work and steadfast in reviewing all cases assigned. They were also an enthusiastic group, consistently greeting everyone with a warm welcome and a smile.

Taking time away from retirement to have their hand in improving the response system of sexual assault in Houston does not go unnoticed. At the celebratory farewell breakfast for these employees, multiple levels of HPD leadership thanked them for their time and service. Our project is truly better because of the devotion of these committed individuals. While there are still a significant number of investigations to work and cases to review, we are in a much better position with this overall project.