

Expand the State DNA Identification Index

The DNA Identification Index is a vital tool for unearthing suspects and reducing wrongful convictions. Expanding the Index to include DNA samples from all suspects at arrest maximizes the utility of the available technology and infrastructure.

The Challenge: Because DNA samples are only taken from convicted felons and select convicted misdemeanants, violent criminals who are brought in for certain crimes pass through the system without being identified as perpetrators of more serious, unsolved crimes.



The Solution: Seasoned criminals commit an array of crimes, from low-level misdemeanors to violent felonies. DNA profiles should be taken for all crimes, not just select offenses, in order to connect criminals to all of the crimes they have committed.

- ✓ The 2006 DNA databank expansion, which added some misdemeanors to the list of eligible offenses for DNA submissions after conviction, led to *1,595 new convictions* as of December 2009.
- ✓ While the DNA database has grown more than 300% since the database expansion, the number of case-to-offender hits through the database has increased more than 970%.
- ✓ Of the new qualifying offenses, very few were violent or sexual in nature.

The Challenge: Fingerprints, which are taken upon arrest, are just one way to identify a criminal. DNA technology has progressed tremendously, but we aren't taking full advantage of available forensic techniques because DNA samples cannot be taken until after conviction.

The Solution: By taking DNA samples at arrest, rather than after conviction, the investigative process becomes more efficient and effective, and innocent people are spared unwarranted investigation and possible incarceration.



- ✓ DNA is the modern-day fingerprint. A DNA profile consists of a uniquely occurring set of numbers derived from a few segments of each person's "junk DNA" – although they are an accurate identifier, they cannot be used to predict anything about a person's health, appearance, or behavioral traits.
- ✓ DNA samples are treated the same as fingerprints. If the charges are dropped or a defendant is found not guilty, the samples will be purged from the system.

Collecting DNA at arrest would give law enforcement a fast, reliable, and cost-effective tool in their search for justice.



New York State Law Enforcement Council

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