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NEWS RELEASE

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Fort Worth Police Department Reduces Backlog, Crime Lab Nearly Fully Staffed

Fort Worth, TX - The Fort Worth Police Department significantly reduced the sexual assault kit backlog and hired multiple certified forensic scientists for the Crime Lab.

On Oct. 11, 2024, 898 sexual assault kits were reported overdue for the 90-day state-mandated timeframe for testing and entry into CODIS. Most of these kits had been processed by an outside vendor and were awaiting review and entry into CODIS which compares DNA samples against numerous known and unknown DNA profiles. The FWPD Crime Lab provided the results of tested kits to FWPD detectives while awaiting CODIS entries completion. Before completion, detectives were able to share those reports with victims and proceed with prosecution.

As of Monday, December 23, 2024, the department's backlog of overdue cases had reduced from 898 to 514, or almost half.

Additionally, the department is thankful to report that four out of five forensic scientist positions with the Crime Lab are filled. A fifth vacancy is currently posted [online](#). Once trained, these new employees will help eliminate the remaining backlog and ensure that all new incoming sexual assault kits are processed within state-mandated timelines.

The department has more progress to report to its community, the City Manager's Office, and City Council including:

- The City of Fort Worth is finalizing a contract with the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office to provide testing and CODIS entry for new sexual assault kits as they come in. This will allow current lab staff to focus on backlogged cases without additional cases going overdue.
- Detectives within the FWPD Special Victims section have worked to contact victims with overdue sexual assault kits to provide updates on their cases.
 - Detectives have been and will continue to notify victims whose case experiences any delays.

FWPD currently has a Federal Grant for \$686,000 to test any backlogged kits and is working to add additional vendors for CODIS entry.

The department will continue reporting progress to the City Manager's Office and City Council.

Police Chief Neil Noakes and FWPD remain committed to addressing the sexual assault kits backlog, ensuring the integrity of testing and thorough case completion. The department is on track to meet, if not exceed, the goal of reducing the backlog completely by April 2025.



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