



NEWS RELEASE

Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts

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Federal Judiciary Begins Collecting Samples for DNA Testing

Federal probation officers have begun collecting blood samples for DNA testing of certain offenders now on probation, parole or supervised release.

About 6,000 of the more than 100,000 federal offenders in the system, which is a part of the federal Judiciary, have committed crimes that require DNA collection. Qualifying offenses under the DNA Analysis Backlog Elimination Act of 2000 include murder, voluntary manslaughter, enslavement, kidnapping, robbery, burglary, incest and arson.

The requirement is aimed at expanding the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS), an FBI-maintained national database of DNA profiles of convicted offenders, unsolved crimes and missing persons. Two-thirds of the states have been constructing a similar DNA database.

The law's impact will be felt primarily by the Bureau of Prisons, which is required to test certain inmates. But probation offices have become involved because some offenders covered by the 2000 law already have left prison and are being supervised in the community while on parole or supervised release.

Leonidas Ralph Mecham, director of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts, asked all chief probation officers to begin collecting DNA samples. Each of the federal probation offices in 93 judicial districts nationwide was asked to identify offenders to be tested and to proceed with the testing.

Some probation offices, such as those in Hawaii and the Eastern District of New York, got an early start. Others are joining them by securing the services of contractors to collect the blood samples and send them to the FBI, which conducts the analysis and puts the data into the national database. The FBI also requires that offenders' fingerprints be taken when their blood is drawn. Probation officers have been told to give priority to getting blood samples from those offenders whose terms of supervision expire in the next few months.

An offender's failure to cooperate is punishable by a sentence of one year in prison and fines up to \$100,000.

The U.S. Probation and Pretrial Services System's mission is to serve the federal courts by investigating and supervising defendants and offenders charged with or convicted of federal crimes.

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