



Criminalistics Section – 2006

B58 Why the Forensic Sciences Need Public Policy Analysis

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The goal of this presentation is to introduce public policy analysis and discuss the current trends and impacts to forensic science.

This presentation will impact the forensic community and/or humanity by providing an overview of the public policy analysis process by a forensic scientist and public policy analyst. The presentation concludes with starting-point recommendations for the forensic science community. The presentation is timely and applicable based upon several national presentations melding forensic science and public policy analysis.

Public policy analysts create several types of documents, develop the supporting data, to create and/or justify policies and programs. The documents are divided into three major areas: comprehensive planning; policy/program development and implementation; and policy/program evaluations. The documents are used by public officials at all levels of government, federal, state, and local, to publicly support and fund the policies and programs. The supporting data are developed by an array of specific methodologies in the policy analyst's toolkit.

Comprehensive planning is a long-range (six to nine years) plan in a specific format. From a policy analyst's viewpoint, the recent 180-day report to Congress is the forensic sciences' comprehensive plan.

Policy and program development and implementation are a multi-step process in the rationale planning model. Four main criteria are used in the development and selection of policies and programs.

Public policy and program evaluations are the creation of evidence-based policies and practices. Recently, the National Institute for Justice (NIJ) is advocating the use of evidence-based policies and practices. Specifically, the NIJ is seeking cost orientated evaluation approaches and measurement of benefits in non-scientific terms. The NIJ suggests using cost effectiveness and cost efficiency methodologies.

The forensic community needs to embrace and understand the public policy analysis discipline and incorporate this discipline in current and future projects, such as the National Forensic Science Commission. The inclusion of this discipline will further support the forensic sciences at all levels of government.

The presentation will provide further information on the melding of forensic science to public policy analysis. The presentation will discuss the four (4) main criteria for development and selection of policies and programs. The four (4) types of public policy evaluations are reviewed. The presentation concludes with starting-point recommendations for the forensic science community.

Public Policy Analysis, Comprehensive Planning, Policy/Program Development and Implementation