

Forensic Case Study

King County Regional AFIS



American Association for Laboratory Accreditation

King County Regional AFIS Laboratory

transferring accreditation

Case Study

The King County Regional Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) in Seattle, Washington is a public program that offers fingerprint identification services, as well as other forensic collection services, to criminal justice agencies throughout the county.

“The entire program is about 100 employees, including 17 laboratory examiners,” said Michele Triplett, Forensic Operations Manager at King County Region AFIS. “We’re much larger than most forensic labs, with 8 units in total and staff at different jails taking prints.”

The program has been funded by a homeowners levy since 1986, which gives the AFIS program directors’ autonomy to conduct testing activities without bias towards prosecutions.

King County Regional AFIS had been accredited with another accreditation body for many years, but its services did not meet King County’s expectations.

“We didn’t feel like we were being heard,” said Triplett. “Some of their supplemental requirements were not producing quality and ended up just bogging down the agency. Because of that, we decided to look at other options.”

The Transfer Process

Triplett and her team did a great deal of research when looking for a new accrediting body to work with, including talking to other forensic agencies to hear their experiences. When they heard the positive feedback regarding A2LA from other accredited agencies, the King County AFIS made their decision.

“Switching accreditation bodies was a big deal for us. We were worried that we could be jumping into something worse, but we were quickly made to feel at ease,” said Triplett. “I was expecting it to be like we were starting over, but it was super easy. I’ve been working in forensics for 30 years, yet I didn’t know how simple it was to switch.”



The Benefits to Transferring Your Organization's Accreditation

When transferring accreditation to A2LA, the agency maintained its ISO/IEC 17020:2012 accreditation. The agency also stayed in its current accreditation cycle and the fees were prorated so they weren't paying more than they had to.

"The staff at A2LA have been amazingly accommodating. They always take my concerns seriously," said Triplett. When Triplett voiced her concerns regarding a part of the standard that required additional documentation for training records, the staff at A2LA listened.

"The extra documentation was something that was slowing us down, without providing any real value," said Triplett. "I never expected A2LA to do anything about it. That's just how I felt."

After several conversations with Triplett, A2LA advocated for the requirement to be removed. Since it was removed from the requirements document, labs like Triplett's can spend time on what truly matters: providing accurate, high-quality results for the criminal justice system.

Why Transfer to A2LA?

Established in 1978, A2LA maintains a 97% retention rate among its customers, largely in part due to its knowledgeable customer service representatives and expert accreditation services staff. A team of customer care representatives is available during extended business hours to address any issues, and the leadership team consistently strives for improvement within the accreditation industry.

"We're more than happy working with A2LA," said Triplett. "We've gotten more out of it than we ever expected."



Start The Accreditation Process

Want to learn more about laboratory accreditation for your forensic laboratory? Scan the QR code to visit our [Forensic Examination Accreditation Program](#) page at [A2LA.org](#). Then, be sure to fill out the "Accreditation Estimate Request Form" at the top.

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301.644.3248 | [A2LA.org](#) | [info@A2LA.org](#)

