Georgia Bureau of Investigation
December Monthly Report
FY2024

Presented to the Board of Public Safety
February 8, 2024

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Director

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Noteworthy Cases & Operational Support

- Region 8 – Cleveland Field Office – On January 9, 2024, the GBI arrested and charged Brandon Scott Hicks, age 37, of Mineral Bluff, GA, and Breanna Micaela Rodriguez, age 28, of Andrews, NC, with felony murder, possession of a controlled substance with the intent to distribute and possession of a controlled substance, in Fannin County, GA.

  On December 12, 2023, the Fannin County Sheriff's Office requested the GBI to investigate the death of Joshua Darrin Hughes, age 41, of Blue Ridge, GA. Hughes was an inmate at the Fannin County Detention Center and was found unresponsive at the detention center on December 12, 2023. Hughes was taken to Fannin Regional Hospital where he was pronounced dead. He was then taken to the GBI Crime Lab for an autopsy. Preliminary information from the autopsy and the investigation revealed that Hughes died of a fentanyl overdose. During the investigation, GBI agents discovered that Rodriguez brought fentanyl into the detention center and provided fentanyl to Hicks, while both were inmates at the detention center. The investigation further indicated that Hicks provided the fentanyl to Hughes before Hughes was found unconscious at the detention center. Hicks and Rodriguez remain in custody at the Fannin County Detention Center. When the investigation is complete, it will be given to the Fannin County District Attorney's Office for prosecution.

- Southwestern Regional Drug Enforcement Office (SWRDEO) – The GBI, the Albany Dougherty County Drug Unit (ADDU), the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) conducted a joint investigation into a conspiracy to traffic drugs and firearms throughout Albany, GA, resulting in the arrest of ten individuals. Charges included conspiracy to traffic methamphetamine; trafficking in cocaine, illegal drugs, marijuana, or methamphetamine; possession of a firearm during the commission of certain crimes; and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. Two additional people are wanted with active arrest warrants in this investigation. On December 7, 2023, the GBI, DEA, Georgia State Patrol, Lee County Sheriff's Office, Colquitt County Sheriff's Office, and ADDU executed search warrants on North Slappey Boulevard, Albany, Dougherty County, GA. Police executed several arrest warrants throughout Albany, GA. During this 6-month joint investigation, 27 firearms, including shotguns, handguns, and rifles were seized, several of the firearms were fully automatic weapons. Over 1,830 grams of suspected methamphetamine, 2.3 grams of suspected heroin, and numerous suspected oxycodone pills were seized.

- Southwestern Regional Drug Enforcement Office (SWRDEO) – The GBI arrested and charged Juan Antonious Boone, age 35, of Americus, GA, following a joint, month-long drug investigation by the GBI SWRDEO and the Americus Police Department (PD). On January 8, 2024, Boone was charged with probation violation, two counts of theft by receiving stolen property, three counts of possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, three counts of possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony, two counts of trafficking cocaine, one count of trafficking methamphetamine, obstruction, and aggravated assault against a police officer. Americus PD officers conducted a traffic stop on Boone to arrest him for an outstanding warrant. During the traffic stop, Boone initially tried to drive away to avoid arrest, but was successfully apprehended. Police recovered a little less than 3,000 grams of suspected marijuana, 120 grams of suspected methamphetamine, 165 grams of suspected crack cocaine, 200 grams of suspected powder cocaine, 2 grams of suspected fentanyl, 3 handguns, and over $12,400. Boone was booked at the Sumter County Jail.

- Human Exploitation and Trafficking (HEAT) Unit – January 24-26, 2024, the GBI, Bryan County Sheriff's Office, Richmond Hill Police Department, and the Georgia Department of Public Safety's Motor Carrier Compliance Division conducted "Operation Not for Sale," a proactive operation targeting sex traffickers and sex buyers in the Bryan County area. The operation resulted in 10 potential human trafficking victims being contacted and offered advocate, shelter, and medical services. Fourteen arrests were made for pandering, and three arrests for pimping. Additional charges and arrests may follow. The arrestees, ranging in age from 21 to 49, traveled from areas around Bryan County, GA with the intent to purchase sex or sell sex. The goal of "Operation Not for Sale" was to draw in sex buyers for demand reduction and draw in sex workers to offer services. The objective was to identify and arrest pimps and human traffickers through this two-fold approach. The Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) also assisted in providing resources to the victims.

- Office of Special Investigations (OSI) - Cold Case Unit (CCU) – The Coleman-Baker Act (CBA) request webform has been on the GBI website Home page since June 30, 2023. Twenty-three (23) cold cases are being reviewed at this time. Seven (7) were requests from designated family members and sixteen (16) were self-initiated.

- From January 1 to January 31, 2024, the GBI investigated a total of five (5) Officer Involved Shootings (OIS). OIS number five (5) was on January 30, 2024. GBI's Region 10 – Atlanta Regional Field Office was requested by Cobb County Police Department (PD). Cobb County 911 began receiving calls of a person firing shots in a residential area. Officers responded to Columns Drive in Marietta and located Thomas Yarborough, age 83, of Marietta, GA, outside the front door of a home. Yarborough was armed with a handgun. Officers gave Yarborough commands to drop the gun, but Yarborough fired the gun. Officers returned fire, hitting Yarborough. Yarborough received medical aid and was taken to a local hospital for treatment where he is in critical condition. The GBI will conduct an independent investigation. Once complete, the case file will be given to the Cobb County District Attorney's Office for review.

Trainings and Projects

Legal Division

- GBI's Senior Managing Attorney and Special Prosecutor attended the 9th Annual Savannah Traffick Jam, "Fight for Freedom: United Against Human Trafficking," held January 26-27, 2024, giving a presentation on GBI's Georgia Criminal Street Gang Database, and working a booth at the Public Safety and Public Service Job Fair.

Division of Forensic Sciences

- On January 5, 2024, an Associate Medical Examiner and two Medical Examiner Fellows gave a presentation to Banks County High School forensic students, discussing what a medical examiner is, what they do, and why they're so needed. 11Alive News covered the presentation.

Personnel Matters

- Three additional Division of Forensic Sciences Toxicology Crime Lab Scientists and one Firearms Crime Lab Scientist began full-time employment in January 2024.

- One additional Georgia Crime Information Center Criminal Justice Information Specialist began full-time employment in January 2024.

- On January 31, 2024, Special Agent in Charge Jason Seacrist and Assistant Special Agent in Charge Richard Dial received the William French Smith Award for Outstanding Contributions to Cooperative Law Enforcement from Attorney General Merrick B. Garland for their work in the investigation into Ahmaud Arbery's murder in 2020. This award recognizes state and local law enforcement officials who have made significant contributions to cooperative law enforcement endeavors.

Promotions Effective January 2024

- Catherine Jordan was promoted to the Division of Forensic Sciences Central Regional Crime Lab Assistant Manager, effective January 16, 2024.

Facilities Update

- Macon Morgue renovations will be completed in the first week of February.

- GBI 77 – New Region 1 Calhoun Office – Grading operations continue.

- HQ Main Building Automation Replacement project continues.

- HQ Fire Alarm System Replacement to begin in mid-February.

- HQ Glazing Replacement has resumed.

GBI Vacancies
FY2024

	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
DOFS	61	61	61	58	60	59						
Scientist Positions	18	19	18	19	19	38						
Investigative Division	43	46	48	52	55	46						
Sworn Agent Positions	29	32	33	36	36	30						
GCIC	2	4	4	5	4	4						
Admin	9	8	6	5	5	5						

GBI Administration

Office of Privacy & Compliance/Open Records

	December 2023	Total FY 2024
Open Records Requests	400	2,644
Archives Requests	23	117

Investigative Division

Investigative Hours Expended - YTD FY2024
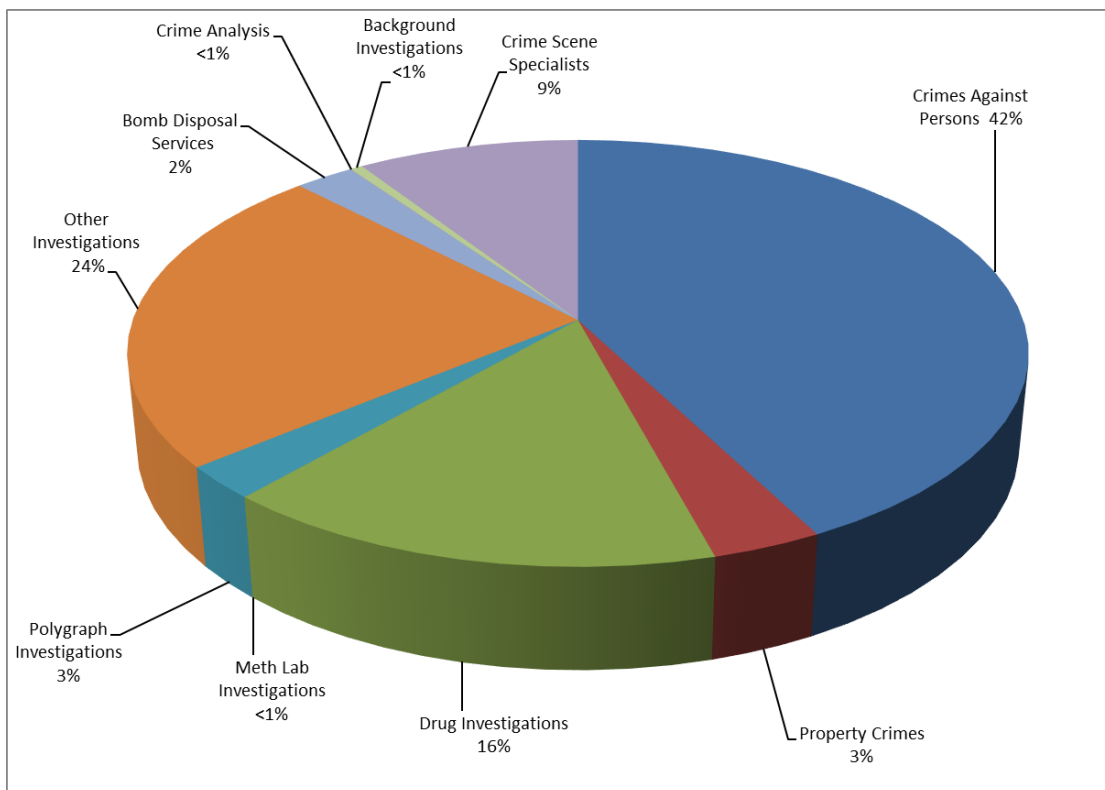
Crime Lab

Medical Examiners (includes all laboratories)

	December 2023	FY2024 YTD
Autopsies	493	2,356
Consultations	144	1,037
Total ME Cases Managed	**637**	**3,393**

Percentage of Cases Released in 90 days: 58.1%

Medical Examiner Activity, FY2024

Consultations 31%

Autopsies 69%
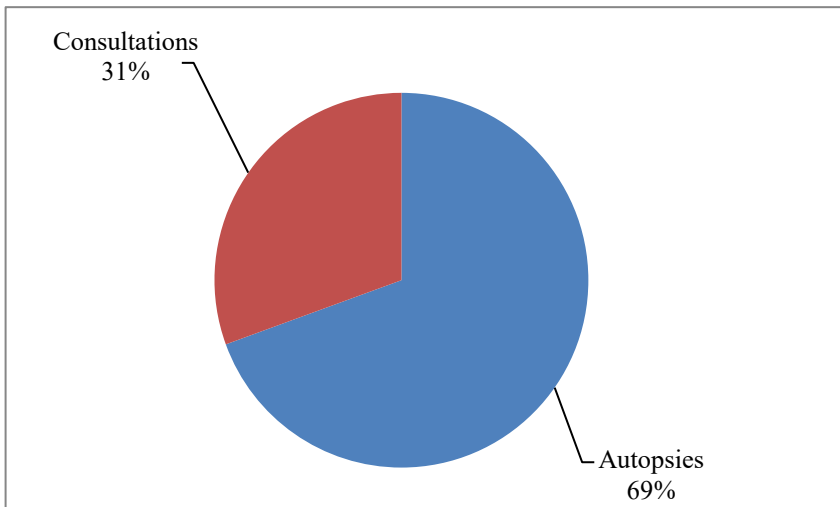
Confirmed CODIS Hits for December 2023

State Offender Hits	74
State Forensic Hits	4
National Offender Hits	23
National Forensic Hits	0
Total	101

Samples entered CODIS for December 2023 – 1,047

Profiles in CODIS

Forensic Casework Profiles	30,078
Convicted Offender Profiles	438,264
Missing Person/Unidentified Human Remain Profiles	12
Staff/QC File	634
Total	468,988

Report Turnaround for December 2023

	# Released in 45 Days	Total Released	% Released in 45 Days
Laboratory			
Headquarters - Atlanta	2,918	5,119	57%
Central Regional - Macon	12	309	4%
Coastal Regional - Savannah	319	992	32%
Eastern Regional - Augusta	238	423	56%
Northeastern Regional	790	1,153	69%
Southwestern Regional - Moultrie	45	120	38%
Western Regional - Columbus	32	134	24%
System-wide Totals	**4,354**	**8,250**	**53%**

Note: 65.5% Casework Reports were released within 90 days.

Report Turnaround for Year-to-Date, FY2024

	# Released in 45 Days	Total Released	% Released in 45 Days
Laboratory			
Headquarters - Atlanta	18,119	35,319	51%
Central Regional - Macon	32	799	4%
Coastal Regional - Savannah	2,144	5,617	38%
Eastern Regional - Augusta	2,159	3,374	64%
Northeastern Regional	3,894	10,472	37%
Southwestern Regional - Moultrie	270	885	31%
Western Regional - Columbus	259	1,198	22%
System-wide Totals	**26,877**	**57,664**	**47%**

Crime Lab Reports Processed for December 2023

Department	Requested	Total Released
Chemistry (includes Drug ID)	2,456	3,546
Firearms	360	240
Forensic Biology	1,603	1,697
Impressions	1	1
Latent Prints	123	140
Medical Examiners	551	637
Operations Support	0	0
Toxicology	2,424	2,542
Trace Evidence	72	84
Total	**7,590**	**8,887**

Crime Lab Reports Processed FY2024

Department	Requested	Total Released
Chemistry (includes Drug ID)	17,958	23,106
Firearms	2,200	1,645
Forensic Biology	13,634	14,403
Impressions	11	10
Latent Prints	1,007	941
Medical Examiners	3,360	3,401
Operations Support	0	0
Toxicology	16,434	16,966
Trace Evidence	557	593
Total	**55,161**	**61,065**

DOFS Backlog Chart – FY 2024
Unworked Reports over 30 Days Old

Discipline	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Chemistry	33,667	32,688	32,438	31,932	31,448	30,272						
Data Conversion	0	0	0	0	0	0						
Firearms	2,933	2,914	2,999	3,075	3,125	3,125						
Forensic Biology	3,804	3,047	2,646	1,672	2,558	3,427						
Impressions	10	12	12	12	11	11						
Latent Prints	85	125	89	106	178	181						
Misc. Services	0	0	0	0	0	0						
Operations Support	0	0	0	0	0	0						
Toxicology	1,061	981	823	865	1,072	920						
Trace Evidence	394	387	357	303	338	334						
Total	**41,954**	**40,154**	**39,364**	**37,965**	**38,730**	**38,270**						

MEO Backlog Chart - FY2024
(Medical Examiner data is calculated as >90 days from the date of examination in accordance with National Association of Medical Examiner accreditation standards.)

Discipline	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Medical Examiners	979	969	1,006	1,081	1,096	1,012						

	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Total DOFS & MEO	**42,933**	**41,123**	**40,370**	**39,046**	**39,826**	**39,282**						

Georgia Crime Information Center

December 2023

NCIC SERVICES

System Uptime: 100%
Messages Processed: 83,232,582

CJIS Operations

1. Sex Offender Registry

	Month	FY2024	Database Totals
Records Added	97	720	38,122

2. Protection Order Registry

	Month	FY2024	Database Totals
Records Added	2,138	15,943	166,828

3. Off-Line Search Requests

Type of Request	Month	FY2024
Administrative (Criminal Justice Agency)	9	80
Open Records	0	1
Subpoena	0	0
Media	0	0
Possible CJIS Security Violations	3	20

CJIS Audits

	Month	FY2024
CJIS Audits	31	213
Total for Audit Cycle 2022-2025		560

NOTE: Upon review, duplicate audits were included in the previous number. These numbers have been removed to reflect the correct audit number.

INFORMATION SERVICES
Criminal History Identification Services

1. Criminal Fingerprint Transactions Received

	Month	FY2024
Submissions	35,610	228,274
Submissions w/Palms	15,594	97,754
Submissions w/Photos	11,694	73,491

Transactions processed within 2 hours of receipt: 95%

2. Applicant Fingerprint Transactions Received

	Month	FY2024
Submissions	32,563	246,527

Transactions processed with 24 hours of receipt: 100%

3. Final Dispositions Received

	Month	FY2024
Local Agency	57,940	420,021
GCIC	223	2,484
TOTAL	58,163	422,505

4. Rapid Identification (Rapid ID) Transactions

	Month	FY2024
Submissions	1,531	8,383
AFIS Hits	48%	51%
NCIC Hits	50%	52%
FBI RISC Hits	12%	14%

5. Non-Criminal Justice Audits, Visits and Trainings

	Month	FY2024
In Compliance	23	171
Out of Compliance	18	99
TOTAL AUDITS	41	270
Agency Visits	7	57
Training Attendees	2	589
Trainings	2	33

6. Rap Back Activity

	Month	FY2024
Subscriptions Created	4,537	32,053
Triggering Events	687	4,157

7. Latent Print AFIS Activities

	Month	FY2024
Latent Hits	17	143

PLANS AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

AUTOMATED FINGERPRINT IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM (AFIS)

Project Description - The Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) requires upgrade of its current Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS). The Georgia AFIS utilizes biometric identification technology to obtain, store, and analyze arrest fingerprints, palmprints, latent prints, civil fingerprints, and mugshots to provide criminal identification and arrest information to criminal justice and employment/licensing agencies both in Georgia and nationwide. Georgia and Federal law require the GCIC and specifically AFIS to be operational. At this point in time, the Georgia AFIS is unsupported and no longer receiving software patches or security updates. Therefore, GBI must upgrade the current AFIS for the Lifecycles of all the GBI AFIS hardware have exceeded end-of-service-life (ESOL)status.

Monthly Update - Weekly calls are scheduled to discuss the project plan, business requirements, connectivity, and interface requirements. Also, calls are arranged with external vendors that connect to AFIS (CCH, SORT, GAPS, Finance, Rapid-ID, Live Scan) to discuss changes that will be forthcoming with the new Multimodal Biometric Identification System (MBIS).

CUSTOMER SUPPORT & TRAINING

Project Description - The Customer Support Training group provides training in GCIC programs, GCIC applications, and GCIC/FBI compliance to criminal justice agencies across the State of Georgia.

CJ Training Tasks

Training Staff Tasks	Month	FY 2024
Emails	1,034	8,942
Phone Calls	250	2,081
Agency Visits	0	0
Virtual/Classroom Trainings	3	18
Individuals Trained	104	758

GBI Learning Management System (LMS)

Course	Month	FY 2024
Georgia Criminal Street Gang Database	0	65
CJIS Security Policy Awareness and Training/Awareness Statement	3448	29,052
CJIS Network Operator Certification	1390	10,901

GEORGIA APPLICANT PROCESSING SERVICE (GAPS) PROJECT

Project Description - The Information Services section of GCIC is seeking to obtain the services of a qualified and experienced vendor to provide an applicant fingerprinting solution that will electronically capture and submit applicant fingerprints to the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) and provide Rap Back services. The selected vendor shall also handle receiving fingerprint search results and disseminating results to the requestor.

Monthly Update - GAPS/Rap Back is operational; however, biweekly project calls continue between GBI and Fieldprint regarding maintenance requests.

GEORGIA LAW ENFORCEMENT MESSAGE SWITCH (GLEMS)

Project Description - The message switch provides a means of communication between federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies throughout the state of Georgia, the United States, and other countries, and to take advantage of new features and advances in technology. GCIC is looking to upgrade or replace this system.

Monthly Update - GCIC continues to work on GLEMS training.

NATIONAL SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY (NSOR) NOTIFICATION PROJECT

Project Description - The NSOR project will provide Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) the ability to receive NSOR responses as a part of the criminal history background check, in compliance with Federal, state, and local laws to make complete/accurate fitness determinations.

Monthly Update - The NSOR project is moving forward. The MOU was completed and the GTA-DECAL-GBI SOW was signed by the GCIC Director.

RAP BACK PROJECT

Project Description - The Rap Back (RB) project will provide the ability to receive ongoing status notifications of criminal history activity reported on individuals holding positions of trust. Georgia's Rap Back System will include the retention of applicant fingerprints, the implementation of an FBI Rap Back Subscription on such prints, and the creation of a validation process for authorized entities to manage such subscriptions. The Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) is requesting proposals for the Georgia Applicant Processing Service (GAPS) with the Federal Rap Back Subscription Service. The objective of this procurement is to obtain the services of a qualified and experienced vendor to provide real-time, end -to-end, on-line submission of fingerprint images and data, designed to ensure high performance combined with high availability and reliability to the GBI Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS).

Monthly Update - The GAPS kick-off meeting was held with Idemia.