

## ASCLD ACCREDITATION INITIATIVE

Today ASCLD is very pleased to announce the formal launch of one of our most aggressive initiatives ever! The ASCLD Accreditation Initiative (AAI) will provide direct support, mentorship, and resources for laboratories seeking initial accreditation. We invite you to watch the introduction video for this initiative <https://youtu.be/aFVt8x8DiD0> and visit the initiative website at [www.asclد.org/about-us/accreditation-initiative](http://www.asclد.org/about-us/accreditation-initiative)

The ASCLD Accreditation Task Force has worked for the last year with a number of beta test labs to build timelines, draft MOU's, identify resources, negotiate with accreditation bodies, and train mentors. ASCLD has collaborated with the National Institute of Justice and the Forensic Technology Center of Excellence at RTI to help laboratories with a desire to be initially accredited to accomplish that goal. ASCLD Immediate Past-President Ray Wickenheiser and I developed the initial concept for the AAI last year when talking with ASCLD member Mark Mogle and his team at ICITAP. The work Mark and his team are doing on accreditation of international forensic science laboratories is impressive, and we felt that ASCLD should be offering similar resources and support for domestic labs. The ASCLD Board agreed, and ASCLD added the AAI to the work of the new Standards and Accreditation Initiatives under the leadership of Director Erin Forry. I asked Past-President Wickenheiser to chair the initial ASCLD Domestic Accreditation Task Force (ADATF). Ms. Debbie Leben has been working non-stop and full-time for ASCLD on this initiative for nearly a year. We could not have taken this from concept to launch without her help. Debbie has been a prolific writer, negotiator, and help to many labs already. We are starting with just a few labs and mentors this year, and hope to build the program as we show success in partnering accredited labs with those labs seeking initial accreditation. Many of my pioneer ancestors were able to migrate to the western United States due to help of the "perpetual immigration fund." When pioneers were successful in making the journey west, they saved, sacrificed, and contributed to the perpetual immigration fund so that others could also make the journey. As the first beneficiary immigrants arrived in the West, they too would repay what they borrowed, or "pay it forward" for others to make the journey. We build upon this concept as we ask for mentor labs and individuals to reach back and help those that need our assistance. We hope that as the first labs in this program get accredited, they too will reach out to those just starting this journey. The remainder of this message discusses more details of this initiative and some other helps. If your lab is already accredited, we urge you to join as a mentor. If your lab needs assistance for initial accreditation, we encourage you to apply. Accreditation has been a priority to ASCLD from the beginning and we are extremely excited to announce this new resource. ASCLD is clearly committed to advance forensic science through excellence in forensic science leadership and management on this issue.

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## ASCLD ACCREDITATION INITIATIVE DETAILS

The ASCLD Board aligns all initiatives and programs with the ASCLD mission, strategic plan and National Outreach Priorities and Agenda (NOPA). One long-standing priority has been ASCLD's support for mandatory accreditation of forensic science service providers (FSSP).

*"ASCLD believes that accreditation of all FSSPs is essential in that it provides confidence and assurance to a parent organization, the employees, the criminal justice community, and the public that the FSSP can meet comprehensive forensic quality management system requirements."*

In May 2018, ASCLD established a special initiative to partner with the accrediting organizations and trained assessors within the ASCLD community to mentor laboratories pursuing International accreditation.

In order to fully execute this plan, ASCLD has identified resources and instituted the ASCLD Domestic Accreditation Taskforce (ADATF) to assist laboratories prepare for accreditation. The ADATF is comprised of laboratory directors, quality assurance managers, technical experts and accrediting organizations, formed to mentor labs before and throughout the accreditation process and set up systems and training to help achieve and sustain accreditation.

Labs requesting assistance from the ADATF will be required to sign a Memorandum of Agreement. The lab will commit the time, resources, and budget to make initial application within a determined period of time. ADATF will provide mentors to walk through each step of preparing for initial accreditation.

Laboratories interested in requesting assistance or participating as a mentor or mentor lab should contact [office@ascl.org](mailto:office@ascl.org) or [asclldirector@gmail.com](mailto:asclldirector@gmail.com)

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### ACCREDITATION WORKSHOP AT UPCOMING 2019 SYMPOSIUM

#### **You CAN Get Accredited...ASCLD Can Help**

ASCLD has launched a new accreditation initiative, partnering with RTI and NIJ's Forensic Technology Center of Excellence to mentor laboratories through the critical steps of preparing for accreditation. ASCLD President Matthew Gamette and Immediate Past President Ray Wickenheiser launched this initiative and will be coordinating the workshop instruction. Both accrediting organizations, A2LA and ANAB, have agreed to participate with ASCLD in this initiative.

**ASCLD recognizes that many small laboratories lack the resources to prepare for accreditation.**

**ASCLD also recognizes the challenges that exist for all laboratories when pursuing accreditation.**

With this in mind, ASCLD launched a new initiative to make a big change across the country by providing actual help to get labs accredited. This workshop is tailored to fit any laboratory (large or small) at any point of preparing for accreditation, and is especially designed for those labs overwhelmed by the accreditation process.

**ASCLD wants to meet you where you are, and help you to the finish line.**

The session will present talking points to share with leaders in a parent organization about the importance of accreditation, dispel myths about the accreditation process, provide a toolkit and roadmap for navigating the accreditation process, and identify resources that can help you through the process. **The most difficult part of navigating the accreditation process is the fear of the unknown.** Questions about need, cost, scope, application, procedures, and other details will be discussed. The process of accreditation from the very beginning to the signed certificate will be outlined. This workshop will provide testimonials from laboratory leaders and small police agencies that have just completed or will be completing the accreditation process. Learn from their experience and from seasoned mentors supporting labs in this initiative. Representatives from A2LA and ANAB will be presenting in the workshop and can answer questions and resolve concerns.

ASCLD pioneered accreditation in the forensic science enterprise. Implementation of quality management systems and helping labs obtain accreditation is a core mission of ASCLD. Any lab can obtain and sustain accreditation, and ASCLD will provide the tools during this workshop and beyond for participants to be successful in reaching their accreditation goals.

For more information and registration, see <https://www.ascldsymposium.com/>

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