

Forensic Scientist Professionals

Probation Officers & 911 Telecommunicators Pension Plans Work Group

Who We Represent

Forensic scientists, forensic science supervisors, managers, directors, and other closely related forensic professionals from across Minnesota at all levels of government. We provide objective, science-based information to law enforcement agencies and the courts.

Noteworthy Perspectives To Consider

High Stakes, High Stress Nature of Work	Forensic scientist professionals operate in high-pressure environments where their findings can directly influence the outcome of criminal cases. They face unwavering demand for absolute accuracy in addition to the same emotional and psychological toll mirrored by other public safety personnel that currently have enhanced pension plans.
Civilian Roles with Public Safety Impact	Most forensic professionals are civilian employees who often work side by side sworn personnel (often performing the exact same duties), yet there is inequity in pension benefits.
Long Training Period & Delayed Workforce Entry	Forensic scientists are highly educated and undergo extensive training (including continuous training to maintain certifications in their respective sector). Many individuals enter the workforce in their late 20s or early 30s, and a retirement age of 65 and older is often not feasible, nor reflective of a career in the field.
Recruitment & Retention	Many labs face a difficult challenge of recruiting and retaining qualified individuals especially due to federal and neighboring agencies offering more favorable pensions. An unreduced benefit at age 60 would strengthen recruitment and retention across Minnesota.
Promotion Doesn't Eliminate Pressure	Many supervisors, technical leaders, quality assurance managers, and laboratory managers/directors started their careers as bench-level scientists. Upon promotion, the pressures, stresses, and long-term effects of the field does not end.
Size of the Workforce	With fewer than 350 forensic scientist professionals employed statewide, the fiscal impact of expanding eligibility is minimal, and only strengthens the potential new plans. Return on investment through improved morale, fairness, and workforce stability would be substantial.

Our Priorities for New or Modified Plans

- Ensure all relevant forensic science job classifications are included (from bench-level scientists to laboratory directors), as every laboratory in the state has different job titles for roles that complete the same or similar work.
- Determine an appropriate unreduced (60 or below) and reduced retirement benefit age to appropriately reflect the significant challenges forensic scientists face just like their other public safety counterparts.
- Ensure that all forensic scientists, regardless of start date, are eligible for retroactive inclusion as failing to do so would create two classes of employees performing the same work, with vastly different retirement incomes; essentially penalizing more tenured employees.