Forensic scientists, sometimes, called crime laboratory analysts, provide scientific information and expert opinions to judges, juries, and lawyers.

**Trends**
Employment of forensic scientists is projected to grow by 6% through 2022, which is slower than average for all fields. A growing interest in forensic science has led to increased competition for jobs in the field.

Forensic scientists can expect more competition for jobs at the Departments of Justice, Treasury, and other federal law enforcement agencies. Job opportunities will be best for crime lab professionals who have an advanced degree or certification in a forensic specialty.

**Education & Training**
The minimum education required is a bachelor’s degree in a physical or applied science, such as clinical laboratory science, biology, or chemistry. However, advanced degrees are desirable. Following employment, training is available from many agencies including DEA, FBI, and at Regional Societies’ meetings. Active participation in professional organizations and continuing education is highly recommended. Certification in specialized areas is highly desirable. Some crime scene investigators are police officers who have specialized training.

**Tips for Breaking In**
- Forensic scientists work in the justice system. If you have a criminal record, you have virtually no chance of getting a job as a forensic scientist.
- Make the most of your math and science courses.
- Develop your public speaking skills by joining the debate team or the drama club. You’ll need them in the courtroom.
- Practice taking organized notes during class lectures.
- Scan newspapers to learn about legal cases requiring input from forensic scientists.
- Do your best on English papers and lab reports. You’ll need strong writing skills to draft reports throughout your career.
- Read science magazines to stay on top of new discoveries.

**Licenses & Certifications**
While there is no universal certification in forensic science, there are available certifications from the American Board of Criminalistics and the International Crime Scene Investigators Association. State and federal employers often have require certification. Certification in specialty areas of forensic science are also available. Many certifications are earned on the job and are not typically necessary for entry-level positions.

**Earnings**
Earnings depend on employer, location, specialty, and other factors. The average salary (2014) for forensic scientists was $55,360.

**Types of Employers**
- Medical Examiner’s Office
- Police Departments
- Investigative Agencies
- Intelligence Agencies
- State and Local Government
- Crime Labs

**Example Employers**
- Torres AES
- Harris County Medical Examiner’s Office
- UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine
- DC Metropolitan Police Department
- Project Time & Cost, Inc.
- US Army Criminal Investigation Laboratory
- FBI

**Desirable Qualities, Interests, and Skills**
- Interest in science and desire to fight for justice
- Ability to keep precise records; strong detail orientation
- Desire to serve as an expert witness in court
- Ability to keep up with the latest advances in your area
- Determination to discover the truth – no matter whom it hurts or helps
- Enjoys projects requiring a step-by-step approach

**Websites**
- American Academy of Forensic Sciences | [www.aafs.org](http://www.aafs.org)
- American Board of Criminalistics | [www.criminalistics.org/ABC](http://www.criminalistics.org/ABC)
- American Board of Forensic Anthropology | [www.theabfde.org](http://www.theabfde.org)
- American Board of Forensic Toxicology | [www.abfte.org](http://www.abfte.org)
- Forensic Science Foundation | [www.fsf.aafs.org](http://www.fsf.aafs.org)
- Crime Scene Investigator Network | [www.crime-scene-investigator.net](http://www.crime-scene-investigator.net)
- International Association for Identification | [www.theiai.org](http://www.theiai.org)

**Sample Job Titles**
- Mitochondria DNA Analyses
- Forensic Autopsy Technician
- Forensic Chemist
- Forensic Scientist I
- Assistant Chief Toxicologist
- Laboratory Database Technician
- Fire Investigator
- Cyber Technologist
- Forensics Financial Analyst
- Criminal Case Consultant
- Forensic Consultant
- Special Agent
- Professional Researcher
- Digital Forensics Technician
- Biologist (DNA-Forensic Examiner)
- Forensic Processing Tech
- Vehicle Accident Reconstructionist
- Environmental Chemist

Job market, salary, and other information on the How to Get a Job In… series is from O*Net Online and the Bureau of Labor Statistics’s Occupational Outlook Handbook.