



# Laboratory Staffing Alternative Approaches

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Executive Director Clinical Laboratory Operations*

# Key Agenda Topics

1. Attracting Quality Lab Members
2. Non-Certified Tech Program
3. Apprenticeship Program
4. Training Commitment and Resources
5. Medical Laboratory Assistant Program



**“With the projected increases in the need for medical laboratory professionals, and the current high vacancy rates,**

**the profession is suffering from a workforce shortage that is approaching crisis levels for medical laboratory technicians, medical laboratory scientists, histotechnicians, and histotechnologists.”**

<https://ascls.org/addressing-the-clinical-laboratory-workforce-shortage/>



# Attracting Qualified Lab Team Members

## Certified Clinical Lab Tech Programs

### 1. Candidates Meet CLIA Requirements

- a. Science Bachelors Degree
- b. Transcript Verification

### 2. On-the-Job Experience in Clinical Lab

### 3. Provide Education in the Laboratory

### 4. Achieve ASCP Certification

## Churn is the New Norm

*We needed to brainstorm innovative training solutions to address our growing staffing needs and meet our high volume demands*



# ASCLS House of Delegates statement:

**“ASCLS believes that clinical laboratory training is an essential part of educating medical laboratory professionals, and innovative ways to provide this clinical laboratory experience should be explored.”**

<https://ascls.org/addressing-the-clinical-laboratory-workforce-shortage/>



# Develop Non-Certified Tech (NCT) Program



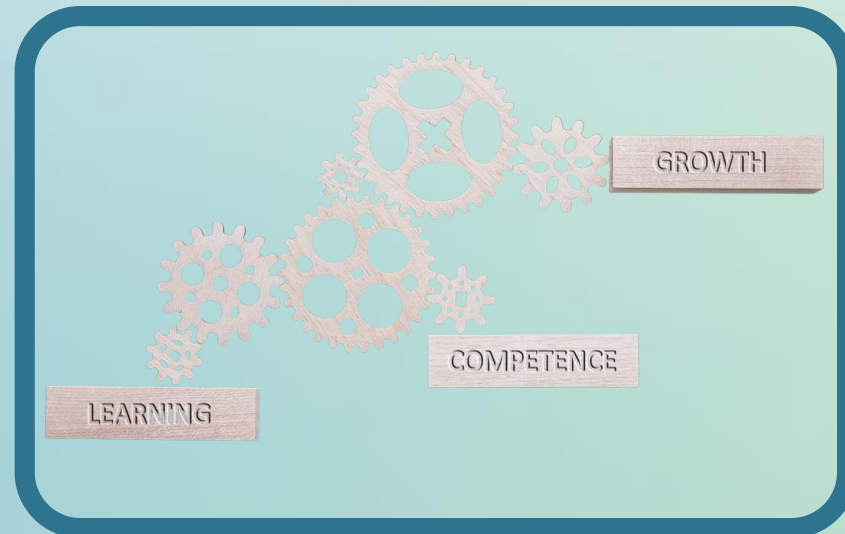
## Recruiting Graduates

Bachelor Degree meeting CLIA Requirements



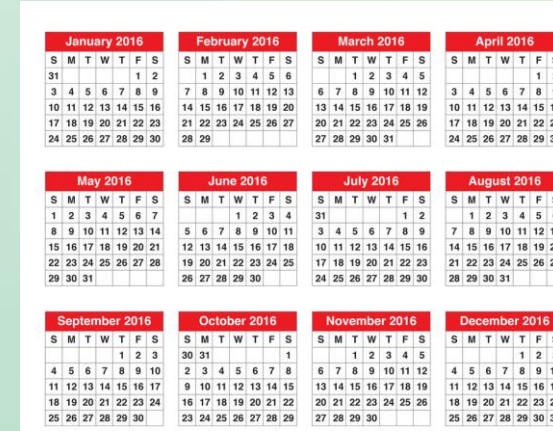
## Paying the Candidate

Role Non-Certified Tech



## Training the Candidate

- a. On-the-Job training & competency
- b. Classroom instruction
- c. Certification support



## ASCP Certification Eligible

1 year



## Expectation

Gain ASCP Certification by 30 months

# NCT – PROs & CONs

- Noting a good candidate pool – select the best from many
- Candidate education background facilitates quick learning
- Entry pay until achieve certification
- Noting good success with transition into clinical laboratory



- Not produce generalist, focus on one or two specialties
- No guarantee candidate will stay after training is complete

# NCT Program vs. Apprentice Program

Development of a NCT Program	Medical Laboratory Technologist Apprentice Program
Provide In Lab Classroom Instruction for NCT-Lab Trainer Role	Supported through your State Apprentice Programs
Classroom Instruction can follow along with the on-the-job experience	Partnership with local college for classroom instruction (MATC)
Candidate is eligible for ASCP Certification after one year	Candidate can complete classroom instruction over two college semesters
Pay candidate for time in classroom (expect studying after hours at times)	Pay candidate tuition, books, and parking fees





# Apprentice Program – PROs & CONs



- Classroom instruction by college supports on-the-job (OJT) training
- Laboratories can get monies from state for participating (up to \$3,500 to offset tuition costs)
- Limited class start times – beginning of school semester schedule
- School training less flexible and not necessarily follows along with OJT

# Development of NCT Program



## Benefits

- Allow lab to fill ranks quickly – immediately fill staff shortages
- Training can focus on your specific lab needs
- Much flexibility with training time and meet operational needs
- Can begin in Pre-Analytical processing area to gain knowledge of LIS specimen types and specimen requirements

## Drawbacks

- Much time to dedicate to classroom instruction
- Need to identify and dedicate an Instructor for classroom instruction
- Initial acceptance of current lab team members



# Development of Classroom Instruction

Carolyn Hager & Caitlyn Bright – WDL Lab Clinical Trainers

- Instruction for Chemistry, Hematology, Microbiology and Molecular Biology
- Develop instruction outline and topics to cover
- Development of classroom presentations
- Select supporting text books and other resource materials
- Schedule and conduct classroom instruction
- Supporting student needs with competing responsibilities
- Rotating in new NCT candidates

# NCT Program - Candidate Perspectives

## Pros

- Obtaining employment in a career field that will have many career opportunities
- Gaining job satisfaction with helping patients

## Cons

- Initial difficulty understanding laboratory unique verbiage
- Encountering technical staff frustration with need to go into more details with instruction/learning process

# NCT Program - Dept. Manager Perspective

Pearl Albright - WDL Chemistry/Toxicology Manager



## Pros

- Helped fill long-standing open positions
- Hands on training provide from experienced technical staff
- Provides support to theoretical learning
- Less need to mandate technical staff due to staffing shortage

## Cons

- Initially NCT unfamiliar with clinical terminology
- NCT required extra attention from technical trainers
- Concern of burn out from tech trainers with continuous training of students and extended NCT training





# Any Questions

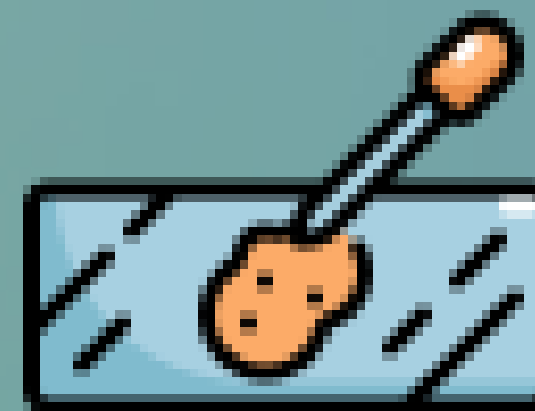




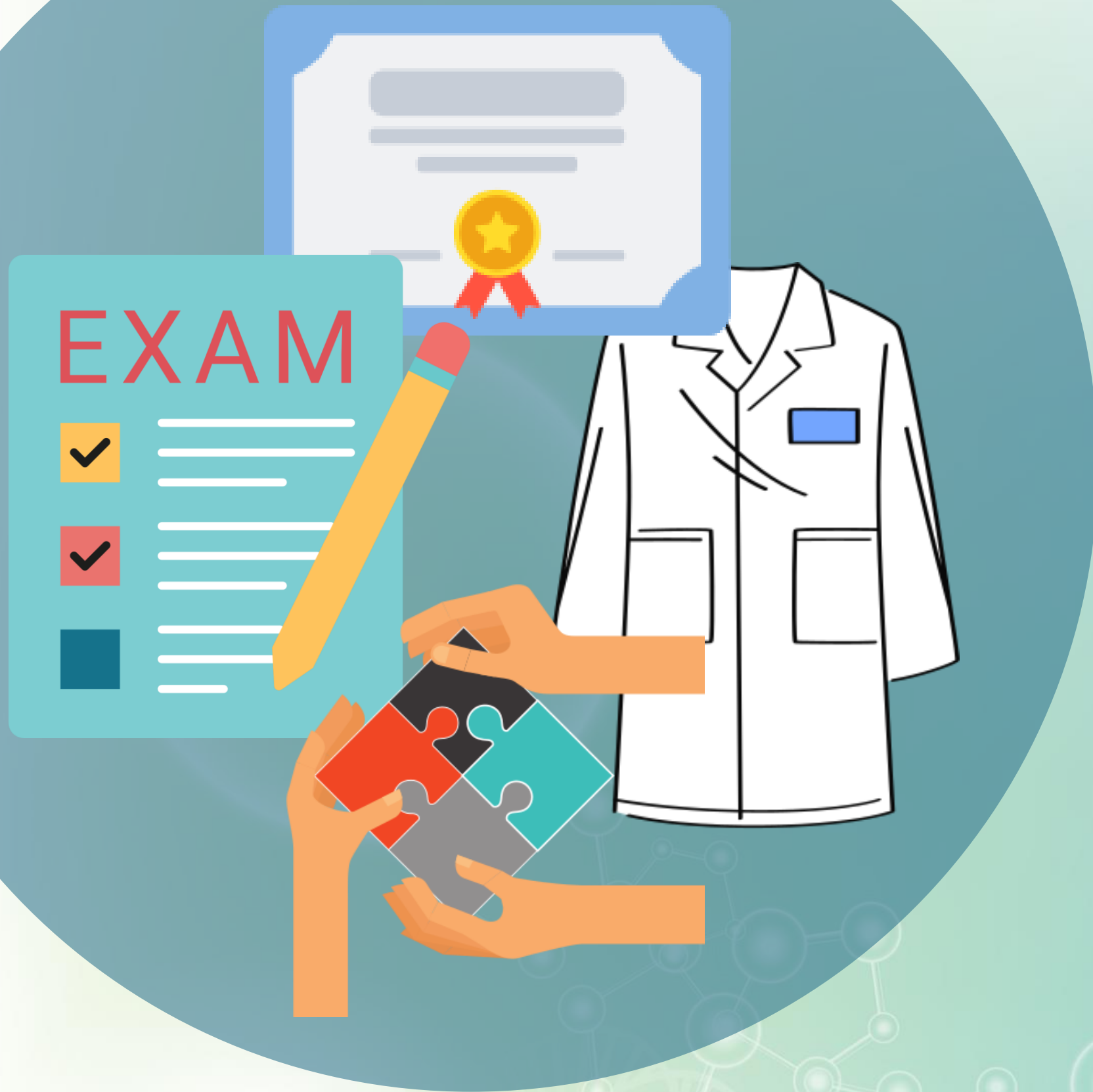
WISCONSIN  
DIAGNOSTIC  
LABORATORIES

ISO 15189  
**CAP**  
ACCREDITED  
COLLEGE of AMERICAN PATHOLOGISTS

# *Optimizing* Medical Laboratory Assistants



# Content Outline



- MLA EXAM

- Certification Support

- Benefits

- Responsibilities

- Prospects



# MLA Exam Eligibility Requirements:



High School Diploma  
*or equivalent*

+

*Work experience*

## Optional:

Accredited Educational Program: MLA or CLA

- 200 didactic hours
- 120 hours clinical experience

Associate's degree

- 6 semester hours chemistry
- 6 semester hours biology

Military laboratory training course

- 50 Weeks

# MLA Exam Eligibility Requirements



## Work Experience

**Min: Six Months**  
**Max: 2 Years**



## Required Areas

- Specimen preparation and processing
- Support for clinical testing
- Laboratory operations



## Accredited Clinical Laboratory

- CMS CLIA certificate
- DoD CLIP certificate
- JCI accreditation
- ISO 15189

# Exam Content

## Pre-Analytical Considerations



## Analytical Considerations



## Laboratory Operations



Patient Registration

Specimen Collection

Specimen Processing  
and Preparation

Support for Clinical  
Testing

Waived and POC  
Testing

Laboratory Safety

Quality

Patient Test  
Management

# Certification Support



Classroom  
Instruction



Rotation



Resources  
(Study Materials)



Continuing  
Education

# Successful Exam

**AMT:**

**200 Questions**

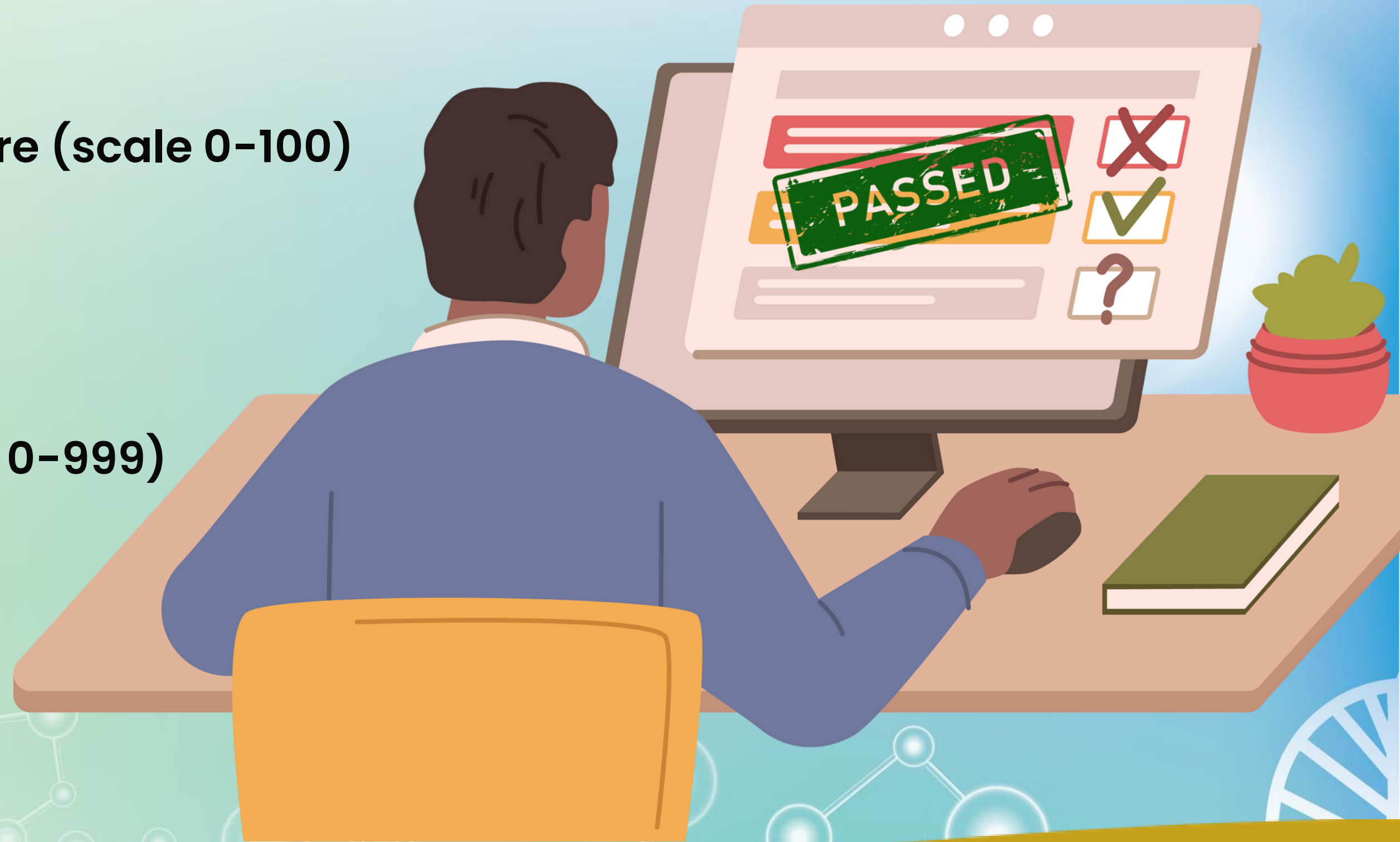
**Minimum Passing: 70/100 Score (scale 0-100)**

**ASCP:**

**Computer Adaptive Testing**

**100 Questions**

**Minimum passing: 400 (scale 0-999)**



# Maintaining & Renewing Certification



**Three Year Cycle**



**Fees**  
(Vary by agency)



**Continuing Education**  
(Vary by agency)

# Benefits to MLA Program

*Technical Manager: Jo Mentzer*



Select from qualified team members



Free up technical team



Encourages further development



# MLA Responsibilities



## Specimen Management

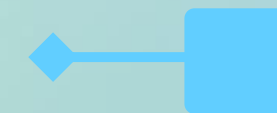
- Sample Loading
- Validations and/or lot comparisons



## Micro Culture Setup



## Slide Preparation and Staining



## Supply Management

- Ordering
- Rotating



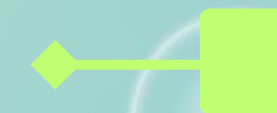
## Instrument Inventory

- Reagent
- Supplies



## Kit Testing

- Waived



## Maintenance

- Cleaning
- Temperature Monitoring
- Waste Removal



# MLA Prospects

*Preanalytical Services Manager:  
Jonathan Smith*



## Prefer prior lab experience

- **Current Staff**
  - **Processing**
  - **Phlebotomy**
- **MLT or MLS Students**

## Impact to department

- **Staffing**
- **Workload**



# Laboratory Assistant Program



- Requires High School Education - prefer prior lab experience
- Develop Classroom Instruction to teach basic lab skills
- Immediate help in lab & candidate gain pay as a Lab Assistant
- Can pick up many lab duties to free up technical team members
- Lab will require less Technical team members to support lab operations
- Program goal is for candidate to gain Lab Assistant Certification, classroom instruction to support this team member with this goal
- Encourage further development and additional education



# Presentation Summary

- Attracting Quality Lab Members
- Non-Certified Tech Program
- Apprenticeship Program
- Training Commitment and Resources
- Laboratory Assistant Program





Any  
Questions





**THANK YOU**