The Palo Alto Veterans Institute for Research FACS Facility provides instrumentation and support necessary for cell analysis and sorting. The resource occupies roughly 300 square feet on the 4th level of Building 101, Room B4-115, at the VA Palo Alto Health Care System (VAPAHCS) campus in Palo Alto, CA.  The facility is primarily intended to house and provide access to cell sorters and benchtop analyzers with additional dedicated bench space for wet chemistry and storage space for temperature-controlled reagents.  The director, Brandon Carter, offers support in the form of project planning, sample prep protocol optimization, FACS-based panel design, instrument operations and training, downstream analysis of data, and interpretation of results.  Users of the facility are charged only for reagents and disposables used in the collection of data.  Time on the instruments and experimental support is provided at no charge.

The facility maintains four fluorescence activated cell sorters. Three of the cell sorters are Becton Dickinson (BD) FACS Aria III cell sorters with the last being a BD FACS Aria IIu cell sorter. These instruments are equipped with between 3 and 5 lasers allowing the detection of between 11 and 18 colors. Three of these cell sorters have been equipped to handle BSL2 level cell sorting and all four cell sorters can sort cells into vessels ranging from single tubes to 384 well plates.

The facility also houses two bench top analyzer cytometers, a BD LSR II and a BD LSR Fortessa. Equiped with either 4 or 5 lasers, these instruments can detect between 16 and 18 colors.  Each is capable of sampling from single-tubes or from 96-well plates using a High Throughput Samplers (HTS).

Data storage and temporary archiving of data files generated from facility instruments is housed and maintained by the Information Resource & Technology (IRT) department in association with the Stanford University School of Medicine on the VAPAHSC campus.  Data is distributed via a networked computer system providing all investigators immediate access to their data. A data management infrastructure is in place to handle data generated by the facility. In addition, the flow cytometry facility supports and provides introductory training for a variety of downstream data analysis software.