

Program #40052C - New Medical Examiner- Vehicle Request

3/7/2022

Department: Health Department **Program Contact:**

Program Offer Type: Innovative/New Program **Program Offer Stage:** As Requested

Related Programs:

Program Characteristics: One-Time-Only Request, Out of Target

Executive Summary

The County Medical Examiner's Office (MEO) investigates and determines the cause and manner of deaths which occur under specific circumstances in Multnomah County. Approximately 3,200 of the County's 6,500 yearly deaths fall into this category. MEO activities are highly visible to the public when a questionable death occurs in the community. MEO staff are directly involved with the families, loved ones of deceased individuals, and the emergency response community, (police, fire, mortuary services, accident investigators) on a daily basis. The MEO operates 24/7/365.

Program Summary

The Medical Examiner's Office (MEO) is involved in all deaths, with the exception of natural deaths occurring directly under physician care greater than 24 hours in a hospital or hospice setting. As most deaths investigated by the ME are sudden and unexpected, the ME's Office is in a unique position to identify unusual and emerging causes of death and injury, and to contribute to preventive public health interventions.

Medical Examiner staff work directly with community/family members to investigate deaths that fall under our jurisdiction to provide support and crucial information regarding the cause and manner of death. The Medical Examiner's Office strives to provide in-person investigations, to minimize the number of scenes in which law enforcement is the sole agency present. This provides increased public service, often to those most underserved.

The MEO works diligently with the community and external partners to provide equitable services to the LGBTQ community and those facing mental health crisis and addiction. Investigations conducted by our office provide critical information to inform and shape programs for those experiencing homelessness, addiction and mental health crisis.

Performance Measures

Measure Type	Primary Measure	FY21 Actual	FY22 Budgeted	FY22 Estimate	FY23 Offer
Output	decrease overtime by having addition vehicle available for back to back field investigations	20%	10%	20%	15%
Outcome	purchase additional new vehicle	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Performance Measures Descriptions

Legal / Contractual Obligation

ORS 146 specifies responsibilities and authorities for the Office (i.e. deaths requiring investigation; responsibility for investigation; notification of death; removal of body; authority to enter and secure premises; notification of next of kin; authority to order removal of body fluids; autopsies; disposition of personal property; unidentified human remains). ORS 146 also establishes a hybrid state/county program structure which limits the county's authority over operations, procedures, and technical functions.

Revenue/Expense Detail

	Adopted General Fund	Adopted Other Funds	Requested General Fund	Requested Other Funds
Program Expenses	2022	2022	2023	2023
Internal Services	\$0	\$0	\$27,000	\$0
Total GF/non-GF	\$0	\$0	\$27,000	\$0
Program Total:	\$0		\$27,000	
Program FTE	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Program Revenues				
Total Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Explanation of Revenues

Significant Program Changes

Last Year this program was:

For FY18-FY22, the ME program had a 76% increase in cases requiring an in-person investigation and a 40% increase in total cases investigated, with a 30% increase in caseload over the last two years alone. In 2020, cases requiring an in-person investigation experienced a 36% increase and in 2021, an additional 17%, for an overall increase of 53% in the last two years. The ME currently has three vehicles for scene response. ME investigators are forced to wait for a vehicle to return to the office prior to departing to scene calls, causing delays for our office, law enforcement, EMS/Fire, and families. A fourth vehicle will allow investigators to depart to scene calls without delay, awaiting the return of an available vehicle. The objectives of this proposal are to: 1) Increase scene response time 2) Decrease LE/Fire/EMS time on scene 3) Decrease delays to families awaiting ME response 4) Decreased ME dispatch delays waiting for vehicles to return from other calls.