



Program #40052B - Medical Examiner State Backfill FY 2024 Adopted

Department: Health Department **Program Contact:** Kimberly DiLeo
Program Offer Type: New **Program Offer Stage:** Adopted
Related Programs: 40052
Program Characteristics: Backfill State/Federal/Grant

Executive Summary

The State Medical Examiner announced February 13th, 2023 that they will turn over the majority of death certification to counties. County Medical Examiner Offices will now be responsible for employing a physician to act as the County Medical Examiner, signing death certificates on all cases corresponding to record reviews and death investigation results. The State Medical Examiner will continue to perform autopsies on homicides, child deaths and cases that are particularly complex on a case by case basis. This program offer is for the initial work of a on call physician to sign the approximate 1200 death certificates the State Medical Examiners office has traditionally done. This offer does not address external examinations, which will also be the responsibility of the county beginning July 1, 2023.

Program Description

The State currently provides Multnomah County with the following services, approximating:

- Signing 1,200 death certificates per year, including 500 extensive medical record reviews
- Performing 380 autopsies
- Providing 600 external exams

With this change, effective July 1, 2023, autopsy services may be dramatically reduced. Multnomah County may be responsible for taking over any autopsies that the State cannot and will not perform, the majority of external examinations, and the signing of death certificates. This change will impact timely and accurate reporting of deaths in our County, as current Oregon statute states that in the absence of an appointed Medical Examiner, the Health Officer shall assume these duties. Health Officers across the state and country are already stretched, and most including our Multnomah County Health Officers are not trained to perform autopsies. This change will also affect families of the deceased, should death certifications be delayed.

This program offer contains budget for a on call physician to sign the death certificates the State Medical Examiner's Office has traditionally performed. The on call physician will be a County employee and this program offer includes \$125,000 that is estimated up to 14 hours of time per week to take on this new work of signing death certificates.

Performance Measures

Measure Type	Primary Measure	FY22 Actual	FY23 Budgeted	FY23 Estimate	FY24 Offer
Output	County shall employ a physician for the purpose of signing death certificates	0	0	0	1200
Outcome	Hours to research, review and appropriately determine cause of death for signing of death certificates	0	0	0	757

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. ORS 146.065 states that in each county there shall be a Medical Examiner to certify the cause and manner of deaths for cases requiring investigation.

Revenue/Expense Detail

	Adopted General Fund	Adopted Other Funds	Adopted General Fund	Adopted Other Funds
Program Expenses	2023	2023	2024	2024
Personnel	\$0	\$0	\$125,000	\$0
Total GF/non-GF	\$0	\$0	\$125,000	\$0
Program Total:	\$0		\$125,000	
Program FTE	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

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

Explanation of Revenues

All County General Funds no additional revenue

Significant Program Changes

Last Year this program was:

The State Medical Examiners Office has announced a defunding and reduced support of several aspects of death investigation work. This will shift almost all of the unfunded and uncovered work from the State Office to the Local County.