



**Program #40052 - Medical Examiner** FY 2024 Adopted

**Department:** Health Department **Program Contact:** Jennifer Vines  
**Program Offer Type:** Existing **Program Offer Stage:** Adopted  
**Related Programs:**  
**Program Characteristics:**

**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 and they provide key components of foundational public health data. Operating 24/7/365 MEO staff interface directly with loved ones of the deceased and emergency responders (police, fire, mortuary services, accident investigators) on a daily basis.

**Program Description**

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	FY22 Actual	FY23 Budgeted	FY23 Estimate	FY24 Offer
Output	Number of deaths requiring investigation	3,108	2750	2,700	3,700
Outcome	Deputy Medical Examiner arrives on-scene within one hour for 90% of calls	84%	75%	80%	85%
Outcome	Increase the number of in-person scene responses with a death investigator on scene	1,009	1,200	1,182	1,400

**Performance Measures Descriptions**

Output: Number of deaths in the County that require investigations. Outcome: A Deputy Medical Examiner arrives on-scene in 90% of calls requiring on-scene investigation within one hour of first notification to support public safety, law enforcement, and affected members of the public. Optional Outcome: A death investigator will respond in-person to scene calls to investigate deaths (versus investigation via phone). Provides support to community, ensures deaths are investigated, reduces involvement of law enforcement.

## 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	Adopted General Fund	Adopted Other Funds
Program Expenses	2023	2023	2024	2024
Personnel	\$1,862,431	\$0	\$2,065,588	\$0
Contractual Services	\$108,856	\$0	\$114,298	\$0
Materials & Supplies	\$27,627	\$0	\$24,947	\$0
Internal Services	\$279,859	\$0	\$345,943	\$0
<b>Total GF/non-GF</b>	<b>\$2,278,773</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$2,550,776</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Program Total:</b>	<b>\$2,278,773</b>		<b>\$2,550,776</b>	
<b>Program FTE</b>	14.00	0.00	15.00	0.00

Program Revenues				
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>

## Explanation of Revenues

All County General Funds no additional revenue

## Significant Program Changes

Last Year this program was: FY 2023: 40052A Medical Examiner

Addition of 1.00 FTE death investigator and administrative support approved last fiscal year, establishing minimum staffing levels for a jurisdiction of our size.