

Department: Health Department **Program Contact:** Jennifer Vines

Program Offer Type: Existing Operating Program **Program Offer Stage:** As Proposed

Related Programs:
Program Characteristics:

Executive Summary

The County Medical Examiner's Office (MEO) operates 24/7/365 under ORS Chapter 146 to determine the cause and manner of approximately 1 in 3 deaths in Multnomah County every year. The MEO contribute directly to the County's understanding of specific types of death, helping to inform county level responses related to suicide, violent deaths, COVID-19, overdoses and other leading causes of death. The MEO staff's ability to arrive on scene quickly directly affects the experience of loved ones who are otherwise alone with the deceased and law enforcement. This is a core public service that contributes to our fundamental understanding of disparities in morbidity and mortality among Multnomah County residents.

Program Summary

The MEO is involved in all deaths, with the exception of natural deaths occurring directly under physician care within certain timeframes and settings. As the majority of deaths investigated by the MEO are sudden and unexpected, they are uniquely positioned to help identify unusual and emerging causes of death and injury.

With a 25% increase in scene investigations in 2020, the MEO works directly and compassionately with loved ones to provide timely information regarding the cause and manner of death. Their work directly informs public health data used by the County and external partners to better serve, for example, the LGBTQ community, those experiencing homelessness and those facing mental health crisis and addiction.

Performance Measures

Measure Type	Primary Measure	FY20 Actual	FY21 Budgeted	FY21 Estimate	FY22 Offer
Output	Number of deaths requiring investigation	2,631	2,500	2,700	2,750
Outcome	Deputy Medical Examiner arrives on-scene within one hour for 90% of calls	63%	80%	63%	75%
Outcome	Increase the number of in-person scene responses with a death investigator on scene	771	850	1009	1200

Performance Measures Descriptions

Output: Number of deaths in Multnomah County that require investigations. Census data regarding deaths are tracked at the calendar year level; this data is based on calendar years.

Outcome: A Deputy Medical Examiner arrives on-scene in 90% of calls requiring on-scene investigation within one hour of first notification in order 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

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	Proposed General Fund	Proposed Other Funds
Program Expenses	2021	2021	2022	2022
Personnel	\$1,464,418	\$15,993	\$1,525,186	\$0
Contractual Services	\$62,555	\$0	\$96,814	\$0
Materials & Supplies	\$60,487	\$7	\$31,390	\$0
Internal Services	\$266,827	\$1,872	\$219,351	\$0
Total GF/non-GF	\$1,854,287	\$17,872	\$1,872,741	\$0
Program Total:	\$1,872,159		\$1,872,741	
Program FTE	11.00	0.00	11.50	0.00

Program Revenues				
Intergovernmental	\$0	\$17,872	\$0	\$0
Total Revenue	\$0	\$17,872	\$0	\$0

Explanation of Revenues

Significant Program Changes

Last Year this program was: FY 2021: 40052 Medical Examiner

COVID-19: The MEO has expanded families' and the County's understanding of COVID-19 related deaths and individuals' health-seeking behavior during the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has also increased costs associated with providing all staff appropriate PPE to conduct scene investigations and meetings with families.

Contractual Changes: Until Dec 2019, the MEO had been housed for decades with the State Medical Examiner's Office located in Clackamas County. The move to the new McCoy building shortened response times but has increased budget needs related to employee travel for daily intake at the State facility, overnight storage with our transportation company and overall increased transportation costs. Work is ongoing to minimize staff conducting intake and update a contract with the State Medical Examiner that accurately reflects each agency's contribution to this vital service.