

Department: Health Department **Program Contact:** Kathryn Richer
Program Offer Type: Existing Operating Program **Program Offer Stage:** As Requested
Related Programs: Medical Examiner Office
Program Characteristics: Out of Target

Executive Summary

The County Medical Examiner's Office (ME) investigates and determines the cause and manner of deaths which occur under specific circumstances in Multnomah County. Their activities are highly visible to the public, provide critical support to law enforcement and work with the families/loved ones of deceased individuals and the emergency response community (fire, mortuary services, accident investigators) on a 24/7/365 basis. This request would add a Chief Deputy Medical Examiner to provide on-site leadership and supervision.

Program Summary

Under ORS Chapter 146, the County is required to have a Medical Examiner (ME) Office investigate deaths that occur under specific circumstances. These include deaths a) that are apparently homicidal, suicidal or occurring under suspicious circumstances, b) resulting from unlawful use of controlled substances or toxic agents, c) following an accident or injury, d) occurring under incarceration or police custody, and e) during or arising from employment. They also include deaths that are sudden, unexpected or that are unattended by a physician.

The objective of this proposal is to reinstate a Chief Deputy Medical Examiner (CDME) which was in place from the early 1970s until 2005. When the position was vacated in 2005, a Lead Deputy Medical Examiner replaced the Chief Deputy position. This created a gap in service capacity and supervision. There was no longer on-site administrative/technical oversight; adequate 24/7 staffing to respond to death investigations; personnel oversight, adherence to safety standards, and formalized program procedures were compromised.

Reinstating the Chief Deputy Medical Examiner will result in 1) on-site leadership/supervision; 2) increased personnel available to respond; 3) improvement of program operations/efficiency; and 4) enhanced relationships with first responders.

Performance Measures

Measure Type	Primary Measure	FY14 Actual	FY15 Purchased	FY15 Estimate	FY16 Offer
Output	Number of deaths requiring investigation	0	0	0	2380
Outcome	Deputy Medical Examiner arrives on-scene within one hour	0	0	0	90%

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

	Proposed General Fund	Proposed Other Funds	Proposed General Fund	Proposed Other Funds
Program Expenses	2015	2015	2016	2016
Personnel	\$0	\$0	\$118,483	\$0
Total GF/non-GF	\$0	\$0	\$118,483	\$0
Program Total:	\$0		\$118,483	
Program FTE	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00

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

Explanation of Revenues

Significant Program Changes

Last Year this program was:

While Oregon and Multnomah County populations have increased 9% since 2003 (with corresponding deaths), ME staff levels have been reduced by 2.5 FTE, and evening/weekend answering services discontinued. The objective of this proposal is to reinstate a Chief Deputy Medical Examiner which was in place from the early 1970s until 2005, in order to: 1) provide on-site leadership and supervision for the 9 permanent and 7 on-call personnel that has been absent for 10 years; 2) increase the number of personnel available to respond to death notifications and associated activities in a timely manner; 3) assess and improve program operations and efficiency; 4) reduce County liability due to improved personnel safety.