



Medical Examiner Department Business Plan

Fiscal Years: 2025 and 2026*
(10/1/2024 through 9/30/2026)

Approved by:

A black ink signature of Dr. Kenneth Hutchins, written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Kenneth Hutchins, Department Director

May 27, 2025
Date

A blue ink signature of James Reyes, written over a horizontal line.

James Reyes, Chief of Public Safety

7/8/2025
Date

Plan Date: May 27, 2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW	Page 2
Departmental Vision and Mission	
Department Description	
Table of Organization	
Our Customers	
Strategic Alignment	
Recent Accomplishments	
 KEY ISSUES	 Page 7
 PRIORITY INITIATIVES	 Page 12
 FUTURE OUTLOOK	 Page 13
 ATTACHMENT 1	 Page 14
BUSINESS PLAN REPORT	



DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

Department Vision and Mission

The vision of the Medical Examiner Department (Department) is to be the premier institution of forensic death investigative services in the world.

The mission of the Department is to provide accurate, timely, dignified, compassionate, and professional forensic pathological death investigative services for the residents of Miami-Dade County (County), together with education, consultation, and research for local and national medical, legal, academic, and law enforcement communities.

Department Description

The Department exists to provide statutorily mandated medicolegal death investigative services for the residents of the County. The work of the Department focuses on what is generally termed "forensic pathology". This field of work combines the efforts of legal and law enforcement investigations with those of medicine and science to ascertain the facts surrounding deaths, particularly the cause and manner of death, as defined in Florida Statute, Chapter 406. This mandate translates into a workload of investigating nearly 16,000 deaths annually. Forensic medical and toxicological consultation services, education, and research further define the department's mission. Apart from our core mission, the Department directs the County's Indigent Cremation Services (ICS). The County's ICS provides low-cost disposition for abandoned, unclaimed human remains and for deceased members of indigent County families.

The Department interrelates with many local, state, and federal agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), State Attorney's and Public Defender's Offices, Life Alliance Organ Procurement, Legacy Donor Services Foundation, Florida Lions Eye Bank, law enforcement agencies, medical offices and hospitals, funeral homes, and the media. The Department has 95 full-time positions that work within various bureaus. A complete list of the bureaus and their responsibilities are outlined below.

- **Director/Medical Examiner** – The Medical Examiner has the statutory responsibility to provide medicolegal investigation of death, formulate plans and policies, and provide for overall management and coordination of all Departmental functions.
 - **Fellowship Pathology Fellowship Program** – The Department offers a one-year, Forensic Pathology Training Program, accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) for medical doctors (Forensic Pathology Fellows) who have completed a residency in anatomic or anatomic and clinical pathology. High quality training is received in the field of forensic pathology and in medicolegal investigation of death.
- **Deputy Chief/Director of Forensic Pathology Services** – The Deputy Chief is responsible to direct, supervise, and coordinate the functions of the Pathology, Histology, and Toxicology bureaus; coordinate and execute Departmental policies and directives;



and in the absence of the Medical Examiner, assume command and exercise authority commensurate with the responsibilities.

- **Pathology Bureau** – Consists of licensed physicians that subspecialize in forensic pathology responsible for investigating scenes of death and performing autopsies to determine cause and manner of death, prioritizing the health and safety of the community; teaching medical, paramedical, legal, law enforcement personnel, and other professional groups; testifying in court; and providing expert consultation on injured living victims.
 - **Anthropology** – Consists of a contracted forensic anthropologist who provides on-site anthropological analysis of human skeletal remains and provides hands-on training for the Forensic Pathology Fellows and resident pathologists.
 - **Odontology** – Consists of a contracted forensic odontologist team who assists in the identification of bodies by comparison of the antemortem and postmortem dental records and or photographs; and conducts individual and group training in dental autopsy techniques and bite mark analysis.
- **Histology Bureau** – Consists of a Histopathology Technician responsible for processing tissue from autopsies including, embedment, microtomy, mounting, staining, and labeling for analysis by the pathologists in determining cause and manner of death.
- **Toxicology Bureau** - The Director of Laboratory is responsible to direct, supervise, and coordinate the functions of the Toxicology Bureau. Nationally accredited by the ANSI National Accreditation Board (ANAB), the Toxicology Laboratory provides quality analytical testing services to identify and measure drugs and poisons in biological samples; assists the Medical Examiner in determining the cause and manner of death by determining the presence or absence of toxic substances in specimens; issues a final report with interpretation of the findings; and provides expert testimony in a court of law.
- **Deputy Director, ME** – The Deputy Director is responsible to direct, supervise, and coordinate the functions of the bureaus within the Operations and Administration Divisions, as well as coordinate and execute Departmental policies and directives.
- **Operations Division** – The Director of Operations is responsible to direct, supervise, and coordinate the following bureaus.
 - **Forensic Imaging Bureau** – Consists of a team of forensic photographers certified by the International Association for Identification that utilize high-tech equipment, including a high-speed gun range to provide still and motion photography to document vital evidence used in determining cause of death.



Departmental Business Plan and Outlook

Department Name: Medical Examiner

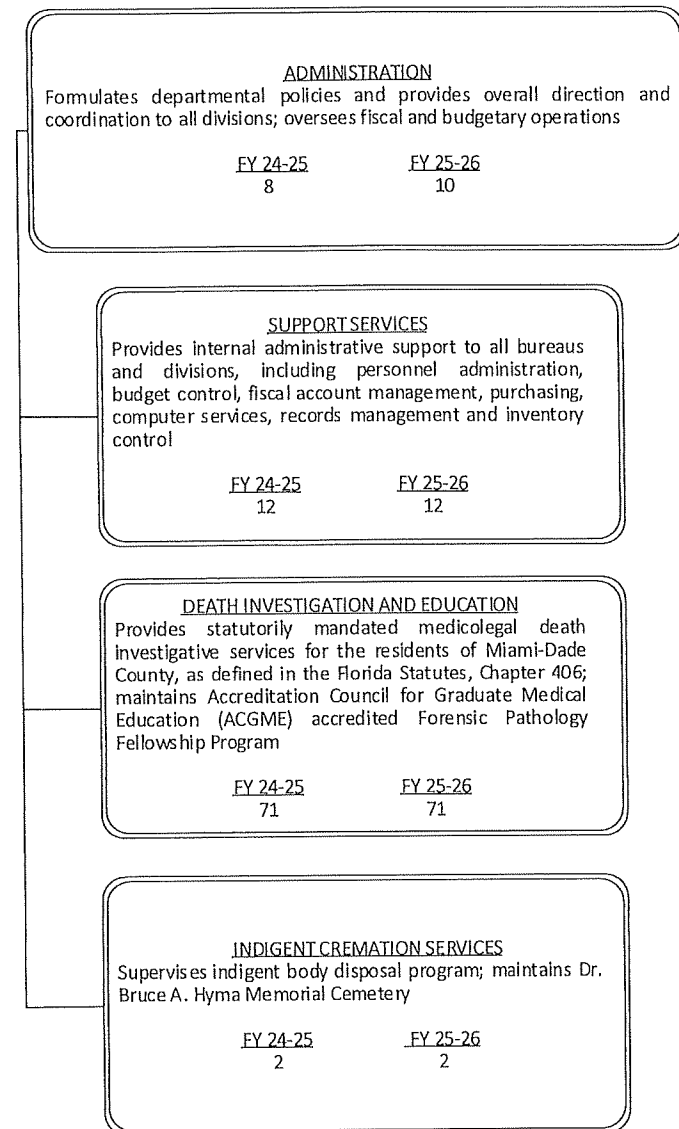
FY2024-25 & FY2025-26

- **Morgue Bureau** – Consists of a team of professional forensic autopsy technicians that assist the pathologists in conducting forensic autopsies, processing x-rays, fingerprinting, releasing evidence, and assisting funeral homes.
- **Investigations Bureau** – Consists of a team of investigators, accredited by the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators (ABMDI) that provides general and specialized investigative services to assist pathologists in determining whether a death falls under the jurisdiction of the Department, identification of unknown human remains, and locating family members.
- **Forensic Evidence Recovery Bureau** – Consists of a team of forensic evidence technicians responsible to photograph scenes, recover and transport decedents, medical records, and evidence to the Department, process x-rays, fingerprint, and release decedents to the funeral homes.
- **ICS Bureau** – Responsible for providing final disposition for those who cannot afford a private funeral for deaths that occurred in the County.
- **Administration Division** – The Division Director of ME Administrative Services is responsible to direct, supervise, and coordinate the following bureaus.
 - **Budget and Finance Bureau** – Supervises the fiscal, budget, and grants management functions of the department; act as responsible stewards of public dollars by cutting red tape and identifying efficiencies that maximize resources and results.
 - **Information Technology Bureau** – Consists of a team of professional software developers responsible for maintaining all departmental technology systems, performing electronic discovery, new application development, and enforcing safety standards.
 - **Human Resources Bureau** - Responsible for supervising and planning department-wide personnel administration activities to include, but not be limited to recruitment, labor relations, compensation, employee benefits, payroll, Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), and Leave of Absences (LOA).
 - **Procurement Bureau** – Responsible for supervising and planning department-wide procurement of goods and services necessary for medicolegal death investigative services, as well as capital inventory.
 - **Records Bureau** – Consists of a team of forensic records technicians responsible for maintaining all records and case files produced by the Department and coordinating the release of information and documents in accordance with the Florida Statute.



Departmental Business Plan and Outlook
 Department Name: Medical Examiner
 FY2024-25 & FY2025-26

Table of Organization



Our Customers

The Department provides statutorily mandated medicolegal death investigative services for County residents. In cooperation with various local law enforcement agencies, the Department uses the tools of medicine and science to ascertain the facts surrounding deaths to determine the cause and manner of death as defined in Florida Statute, Chapter 406.

The specialized nature of the Department's work guarantees a restricted and specialized customer/market base. Since death is not bound by social, economic, political, or legal parameters, the department serves a diverse group of customers with various expectations.



Departmental Business Plan and Outlook

Department Name: Medical Examiner

FY2024-25 & FY2025-26

For the most part, our customers are drawn to us by virtue of the decedents who are brought to our facility for investigation and certification. The most personal services are those provided to bereaved next-of-kin who call and visit the department daily to seek information and assistance. Each decedent draws an investigating police agency contingent on the jurisdiction in which the death occurs, and each decedent will be followed by family members. The Medical Examiner Department serves a variety of internal stakeholders including the Office of the Mayor, the Board of County Commissioners, other elected officials, county departments, and agencies. As a government agency established by state statute and funded by public dollars, we have a clearly defined external customer base that we engage:

External Customers	Needs and Requirements
Bereaved families	Prompt release of remains, sensitivity, professionalism
Funeral homes	Prompt release of remains; clear, accurate death certificate
Law enforcement	Prompt response to crime scenes, professional cooperation
Judicial System	Accurate death investigative information
Private Industry and Media	Prompt release of public records information
Federal, State, and County Governments	Adherence to County ordinances, rules, regulations, and directives
Hospitals, nursing homes, and assisted living facilities	Prompt response, professional cooperation

Each year, the Department hosts forensic seminars, such as the Medicolegal Death Investigation and International Forensic Photography Workshops. These seminars draw professionals and students from across the country and abroad.

Every three years, the Florida Medical Examiner Commission conducts a customer satisfaction survey of all the customers listed above and provides feedback to the Chief Medical Examiner.

The Department services the residents of the County, many local, state, and federal agencies, including the FBI, NTSB, FAA, State Attorney's and Public Defender's Offices, Life Alliance Organ Procurement, Legacy Donor Services Foundation, Florida Lions Eye Bank, insurance companies, private not-for-profit organizations, law enforcement departments, medical offices, hospitals, funeral homes, and the media.

Strategic Alignment

The Department primarily supports the following goals and objectives from the Public Safety portion of the County Strategic Plan Goals:

PS1-2: Solve crimes quickly, accurately, and in a fair manner

PS-2-1: Reduce response time

The Department's programs and initiatives support the following objectives from the General Government portion of the County's Strategic Plan:



Departmental Business Plan and Outlook

Department Name: Medical Examiner

FY2024-25 & FY2025-26

GG1-1	Provide easy access to information and services
GG2-1	Attract and hire new talent
GG2-2	Promote employee development and leadership
GG4-2	Effectively allocate and utilize resources to meet current and future operating and capital needs

Recent Accomplishments

Achievements for the Department for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 are as follows:

- First Medical Examiner Toxicology lab in the State of Florida to receive ISO/IEC 17025:2017 accreditation by the ANSI National Accreditation Board (ANAB) for both Forensic Testing and American Board of Forensic Toxicology components.
- Renewed accreditation with the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education for the Forensic Pathology Fellowship Training program.
- Successfully trained four qualified pathologists for the ACGME-accredited Forensic Pathology Fellowship program and hired the new four fellow pathologists who are currently undergoing training.
- Conducted a salary analysis in coordination with the Peoples and Internal Operations Department (PIOD) for the department's classifications resulting in salary increases.
- The ICS bureau joined MIAP (Missing in America Project) that aims to identify and bury unclaimed cremated remains of American Veterans in the Veterans National Cemetery. Through this joint effort, our ICS team Identified nine unclaimed veterans that this department handled. A service was held at the National Veterans Cemetery where the remains were claimed and buried.
- The Investigations Bureau, in collaboration with the Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office (formerly the Miami-Dade Police Department), other law enforcement agencies, and the decedent's family, led to the identification of the woman who had been missing for 39 years, enabling her three children to claim her remains.

KEY ISSUES

1. Critical to the Department's mission is the ability to attract and retain talent, and procure the necessary equipment and services, to maintain and enhance service delivery. The Department's total number of budgeted positions is no longer adequate to meet current and future demand for services. Over the last seven years, due to the increase in population growth, tourism, emerging designer drugs, regulatory changes, etc., the number of deaths investigated by the Department, along with the level of investigation and toxicological testing required have increased, necessitating additional medical examiner resources, both human and capital.
 - a. **Hiring** - The Department has experienced challenges for the past three years in recruiting and retaining qualified professionals in the field of forensic pathology,



Departmental Business Plan and Outlook

Department Name: Medical Examiner

FY2024-25 & FY2025-26

investigations, and toxicology. Contributing factors are the cost of housing to relocate, salary competition with other medical examiner offices and law enforcement agencies, and budgetary constraints. Recruitment for positions critical to the Department's operations (two pathologists, two senior forensic autopsy technicians, one forensic records technician, and two executive secretaries) were postponed.

- i. The Department conducts and/or participates in workshops and seminars in the field of forensic investigations, photography, toxicology, and other special forensic topics. Pathologists and toxicologists are often called upon to provide education to the public, community action agencies, and students in local schools on medicolegal death investigative methodologies or the most prevalent substances identified in casework, the toxicological effects of the drugs, and marketing tactics utilized to encourage drug use among young children and teens. In addition, the Department lacks sufficient staffing to perform round-the-clock scene investigation. As such, the Department relies upon law enforcement personnel to perform routine scene investigations including collection of evidence, gathering of information, and photo documentation. Many of the largest law enforcement departments including the Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office, City of Miami Police Department, and City of Miami Gardens Police Department have experienced numerous retirements of experienced personnel and have onboarded new detectives who need comprehensive training from the perspective of the Medical Examiner. The workshops targeted toward law enforcement are critical to providing necessary education to homicide detectives. Without this training, the detectives are unable to effectively meet the Department's needs and has led to numerous downstream consequences. These include delays or an inability to accurately certify deaths, insufficient photo documentation, law enforcement having to revisit scenes (when feasible) to gather more evidence and information, and delays in fulfilling records requests. Due to budget constraints resulting in frozen personnel positions that are required to host such workshops and seminars as well as challenges in sourcing vendors to provide audio-visual upgrades, the Department has indefinitely postponed these critically important workshops.
- ii. The scope of laboratory testing services has expanded due to in-house development of testing protocols for a broader range of substances including newly approved prescription medications, emerging designer drugs, and novel psychoactive substances. The laboratory's ability to continuously track and detect emerging drugs of abuse in medical examiner cases offers valuable insight into the prevalence of substances impacting the community. The laboratory has become a crucial resource of data and information that local, state, and federal agencies and non-government organizations depend on to address and combat substance use and abuse. This includes providing local detention facilities with data on the drugs of abuse identified in deceased prisoners which can be utilized to facilitate appropriate actions to mitigate risk to inmates and prison staff. A robust toxicology laboratory capable of thorough testing with quick turnaround time is critical to meeting required timeframes for case completion as required by the accrediting authority (NAME). In addition to completing case work, toxicologists are required to perform scholarly research, which provides limitless opportunities for Forensic Pathology Fellows to satisfy the ACGME requirements for scholarly research.



Departmental Business Plan and Outlook

Department Name: Medical Examiner

FY2024-25 & FY2025-26

Maintaining the Department's workforce is vital to effective operations. In addition, expansion of the workforce in the investigations, toxicology, and photography bureaus is necessary to enhance service delivery and maintain accreditation by the NAME and ACGME. These additional positions have been presented to the County for funding consideration.

- b. **Facilities and Infrastructure Improvement** – As part of the Countywide Capital Infrastructure Investment Program (CIIP), the Department coordinated with PIOD to move forward with the architectural design plans for the renovation and upgrade of the histology, morgue, and toxicology areas to address the increasing demands and the department's need for additional space because of the County's growing population. These renovations are also necessary to ensure compliance with the latest laws, rules, and regulations to meet our statutory obligations to the County residents, law enforcement, the judiciary, the State of Florida, private industry, and the medical and legal communities, and to utilize office space efficiently to meet current and future operational, investigative, toxicological, and histology needs to address continuous, emerging investigative challenges.
- c. **Accreditation** - Meet and maintain NAME, ACGME, ABMDI, and ANAB accreditation and certification standards.
 - i. The Department is a nationally recognized and accredited scientific research and training facility. As such, ACGME requires that the Department assign resources dedicated to fellow curriculum development, implementation of a patient safety program, and scholarly research. The next ACGME inspection is anticipated for Fiscal Year 2025-26 and non-compliance with the requirements set forth in the 2023 inspection may result in a labeling of "provisionally accreditation" or loss of accreditation, depending on the severity of the violation, which will negatively impact service delivery. While the program is in substantial compliance with institutional requirements, there are several outstanding citations that have yet to be remedied due to budget constraints. These citations must be remedied to retain continued accreditation. To remain in compliance, the Department requires budgetary funding to provide electronic access to medical literature databases with full-text capabilities, training for faculty (staff pathologists) professional development, administrative support provided by the frozen executive secretary positions, and competitive salaries to ensure all pathologist positions are occupied.
 - ii. The Department is accredited by NAME which has a list of requirements to maintain full accreditation. Failure to adhere to NAME standards will result in demotion to "provisional accreditation" or loss of accreditation depending on the severity of the violation. NAME performs quadrennial inspections and annual follow ups. The annual follow up in 2024 yielded phase violations due to non-adherence to the requirements that 90% of toxicology examinations are completed within 60 calendar days and 90% of reports of all postmortem examinations be completed within 60 calendar days from the time of autopsy. The more concerning metric is that pathologists are currently



Departmental Business Plan and Outlook

Department Name: Medical Examiner

FY2024-25 & FY2025-26

barely meeting the essential NAME requirement that 90% of cases be certified within 90 days. Failure to comply with this metric will lead to the revocation of full accreditation. The challenges faced by the Department in meeting accreditation requirements stem from a persistent shortage of toxicologists, morgue technicians, executive secretaries, investigation personnel, histology specialists, and pathologists. When a cause of death relies on a toxicology report, the finalization of that report cannot occur until the necessary testing is complete and the results are available. A lack of morgue technicians forces pathologists to dedicate more time to conducting autopsies and external examinations, which takes time away from follow-up investigations and administrative duties needed to officially certify deaths and generate reports. The frozen executive secretary position(s) compel pathologists to handle time-intensive clerical work, detracting from their ability to complete cases and results in an inability to host workshops that would provide valuable training to law enforcement that would reduce the time to certify. Training law enforcement colleagues is essential for shortening the duration of death investigations. When the investigating detectives understand the Medical Examiner's requirements from the outset, it minimizes the need for further investigation after-the-fact.

The Investigations Bureau has ten employees who have been in their roles for less than one year. These employees require intensive ongoing training and supervision while still attempting to adhere to casework deadlines. In addition to the significant amount of time pathologists devote to teaching and training investigators, the pathologists frequently perform the duties of the investigators themselves to reduce delays in case completion. The Histology Bureau has one histotechnician which is insufficient to perform all the required tasks of maintaining a laboratory and producing high quality glass slides for microscopic examination. Since many cases require microscopic examination prior to certification, delays in turnaround time of glass slides further impacts the inability of the Department to adhere to the requirements for postmortem report completion.

The Department requires a sufficient number of pathologists to meet the reporting requirements while still performing all the duties expected of them. In addition to performing autopsies, pathologists spend significant amounts of time responding to scenes, testifying in deposition and court, speaking with bereaved family members, identifying unknown remains, meeting with homicide detectives, teaching and supervising fellows and residents in accordance with ACGME requirements, training support staff, working with support staff to improve workflow, engaging in required continuing education activities, and performing offsite lectures to community and hospital physicians, law enforcement, and students.

- iii. The Department intends to pursue College of American Pathologist (CAP) accreditation for the histology lab to 1) ensure accurate, reliable, and timely results, 2) align with ACGME requirements related to fellow training, and 3) reduce time to certify cases to comply with NAME standards. Many cases require microscopic examination of glass slides prior to certification. Delays in slide production and quality-control issues result in delays in certification, hindering the ability to comply



Departmental Business Plan and Outlook

Department Name: Medical Examiner

FY2024-25 & FY2025-26

with NAME-mandated deadlines. ACGME requires forensic pathology fellows to perform histopathologic/microscopic examinations on assigned cases as part of their training program. A forensic pathologist uses histopathology in the process of the routine death investigation including determination of range of gunfire including soot and stippling, evaluation of sharp injuries, evidence of chronicity of drug abuse, dating of injuries, evaluating for potential evidence of child abuse, diagnosis of natural disease, determining mechanism of death, and confirming/refuting gross anatomic diagnoses. Due to increased volume and lack of sufficient number of staffing, fellows that recently participated in the program were only able to review slides from approximately 50% of their cases. Exit interviews conducted with each of the recent fellows in June 2024 elucidated numerous complaints regarding delays in turnaround time and poor glass slide quality. Pursuing CAP accreditation for the histology laboratory will not only result in compliance with ACGME and NAME requirements but will serve as external validation that production glass slides is accurate, efficient, timely, and high quality.

- d. **Records Management** - For Fiscal Year 2024-25, the Department received approval for digital certification of its records. Due to the significant number of historical records housed on-site and off-site, the Department requires additional resources to assist in the project to digitize all physical medical examiner case records with the established secure and efficient archiving solution.
- e. **System and Equipment Upgrades and Enhancements** – To provide the most efficient and effective services to the County's communities, it is imperative that mission-critical and everyday operating systems and equipment is maintained and updated to optimal levels. Equipment assessments and replacement plans are included as part of the Department's operating budget. Major equipment replacement projects currently underway are digital camera equipment, microscopes, and morgue trays. The Department is currently not in full compliance with NAME and ACGME requirements for microscopes. Equipping each pathologist's office with an appropriate microscope and required accessories is considered an essential requirement for ACGME and NAME. Failure to adhere to any essential requirement will result in loss of full accreditation by NAME.

Technology initiatives funded in FY 2023-24 include replacing the Coroners' Medical Examiner system with a Case Management Enterprise system and coordinating with the Strategic Procurement Department to issue a Request for Proposal to replace the laboratory information software with a Laboratory Information Management system to include security, connectivity, and compatibility with the County network infrastructure.

To address the complexities of detecting new substances in complex specimens, appropriate technology is required that meets the specific needs of a functioning postmortem toxicology laboratory. At this time, the laboratory is relying upon aging, out-of-date instruments that will soon be unserviceable by the manufacturer. In particular, the laboratory is utilizing a liquid chromatograph mass spectrometer (LCMS), crucial for the confirmation of novel designer drugs, that is more than ten



Departmental Business Plan and Outlook

Department Name: Medical Examiner

FY2024-25 & FY2025-26

years old and will no longer be supported or serviced by the manufacturer in the next two to three years. The laboratory needs to procure a newer updated model LCMS instrument. Once purchased, the new technology will require a lengthy period of setup and evaluation prior to its implementation in the testing process. Consequently, purchasing the instrument immediately, while the current instrument is still active and in service would be the most prudent strategy.

- f. **Ongoing Fleet Replacement:** Over the next four years, the Department is planning to replace four specialized decedent removal vans and two scene cars. The fleet replacement plan will provide operational savings to the Department in the long-term as it will reduce maintenance costs, fuel consumption, and overtime due to equipment failure. The Department's FY 2024-25 Adopted Budget and Multi-Year Capital Plan includes the purchase of 2 vans. Without the proper and timely replacement of vehicles, the ability to provide service timely will be impacted and have other effects such as longer wait times for law enforcement officers and other agencies.

PRIORITY INITIATIVES

To address these key issues and serve our customers, the Department will undertake the following priority initiatives:

- **Hiring** - For FY 2024-25 and 2025-26, the Department will continue to coordinate with PIOD's Human Resources Division to conclude the salary analysis and ensure competitive salaries for hiring is sufficient to meet current and future operational demand. The Department has submitted as part of its budget submittal, a list of personnel required as an unmet need.
- **Facilities and Infrastructure Improvements** - For FY 2024-25 and 2025-26, the Department will continue to collaborate with PIOD to implement the CIIP facility improvements for our facility for the below projects, ensuring structural integrity, employee and visitor safety, improve sustainability, and incorporate environmentally friendly elements where feasible.
 - Histology Lab System Upgrade and Renovations - Renovation and reconfiguration of the Histology Lab.
 - Morgue System Upgrade and Renovations - Renovation and reconfiguration of systems' upgrade for the morgue.
 - Toxicology Lab Electrical System Upgrade and Renovations - Renovation, reconfiguration, and electrical systems' upgrade of the Toxicology Lab.
- **Accreditation** - For FY 2025-26, based on funding availability, the Department anticipates resuming scheduling of onsite workshops and trainings to maintain accreditation and certification by NAME, ACGME, ABMDI, and ABFT.
- **College of American Pathologist (CAP) Accreditation** – In FY 2025-26, the Department plans to undertake the preparatory actions required to submit the accreditation application by the conclusion of FY 2026-27.



Departmental Business Plan and Outlook

Department Name: Medical Examiner

FY2024-25 & FY2025-26

- **Records Management** – For Fiscal Year 2025-26, the Department will hire contracted personnel to convert all existing Medical Examiner case files into a state certified, digital database by the conclusion of FY 2026-27.
- **Systems and Equipment Upgrades and Enhancement**
 - For FY 2024-25, the Department will continue working with contracted personnel to replace the existing Coroners' Medical Examiner system by the conclusion of FY 2025-26.
 - For FY 2024-25, the Department will continue coordinating with the Strategic Procurement Department (SPD) to issue a Request for Proposal to contract to replace the laboratory information management system software by the conclusion of FY 2025-26.
 - For FY 2025-26, the Department will coordinate with SPD to procure a Liquid Chromatograph Mass Spectrometer to be installed by the conclusion of FY 2026-27, for use in the Toxicology Laboratory to isolate, purify, and subsequently identify substances in complex biological matrices.
 - For FY 2025-26, the Department will procure the remaining quantity of microscopes and accessories needed to comply with NAME and ACGME requirements.
- **Ongoing Fleet Replacement** - For FY 2024-25 and FY 2025-26, the Department will continue to coordinate with SPD and PIOD to repair our existing vehicles or replace four of the aging vehicles to ensure response capability for forensic evidence recovery and investigative services.

FUTURE OUTLOOK

The top priority of the Department is to maintain personnel and operating funding sources to provide the proper service levels. As the state Medical Examiner Commission mandates, the Department will complete the review and processing of all County unidentified decedents through the Federal DNA Initiative and maintain current data in the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (www.NamUs.org). Disaster and mass casualty preparedness will be a continuing challenge as we recruit and train staff while moving forward with integrating data management software through Florida Emergency Mortuary Operations Response System (FEMORS). As time and our limited budget permits, the Department desires to accomplish the following in the next three to five years:

- a. Focus on identifying and expanding opportunities for the community to educate the public about death investigative services. This will be achieved through planning and managed growth to include a review of the Department's business processes, acquiring new technologies, expanding social media presence, and redistributing functions within the Department.



Departmental Business Plan and Outlook

Department Name: Medical Examiner

FY2024-25 & FY2025-26

- b. Renew and maintain accreditation and certification by NAME, ACGME, ABMDI, and ANAB.
- c. Obtain CAP accreditation for the histology laboratory.
- d. Increase operational staff to further develop the Fellowship Program, implement a patient safety program, and increase scholarly research, as well as effectively manage the increased workload brought on by external factors (increased volume of residents and visitors).
- e. Continue a multi-year plan to convert all existing Medical Examiner case files into a state certified, digital database.
- f. Replace the Department's aging fleet to ensure response capability for forensic evidence recovery and investigative services.
- g. Develop long-term, sustainable solution to ensure and enhance the current enterprise Information Technology (IT)/Coroner/Medical Examiner Data System is fully compatible with the INFORMs project and that it provides tailored, dependable support to operations amidst changing trends in IT security and interoperability.
- h. Continue to develop and implement IT solutions to streamline business operations and improve our service to the County, our partners, and our customers.
- i. Replace the audio-visual system to hold national workshops, trainings, and seminars with our local partners and law enforcement agencies.
- j. Renovate the toxicology, histology, and morgue suites to better align with service demands, instrument workflow, and hazardous material safety storage requirements.
- k. Modernize and beautify the Medical Examiner facility. The facility is 37 years old and most of its décor (carpet, flooring, furniture, wall covering, etc.) has not been replaced in nearly two decades.

BUSINESS PLAN REPORT (ATTACHMENT 1)



Business Plan Report

Scorecard: Medical Examiner Department

As Of: 07/15/2025

Perspective Name	Objective Name	Grand Parent Objective Name	Parent Objective Name	Measure Name	Last Period Updated		Actual	Target	FY2024-25 Annualized Target	FY2025-26 Annualized Target
Customer	Maintain contingency space for mass fatality scenario	PS3: Effective emergency and disaster management	PS3-1: Increase countywide preparedness and community awareness	Body count in refrigerated storage	Jul '25	🔴	140	125	125	125
	Maintain all available certifications in order to provide professional service in support of Statutory Mandate (FS Chapter 406)	PS1: Safe community for all	PS1-2: Provide forensic and medical investigations quickly, accurately, and in an unbiased manner	Percent of staff doctors meeting case load (NAME Accreditation) guidelines	2024 FY	🔴	50%	100%	100%	100%
				Percent Staff Pathologist Meeting Florida Association of Medical Examiners Autopsy Case Load Guidelines	2024 FY	🟢	67%	100%	n/a	n/a
				Percentage of all death investigations performed by the department that are certified as to cause and manner of death within 90 days	Jun '25	🟢	92%	90%	90%	90%
				Death investigations completed within 60 days	Jun '25	🟡	86%	90%	90%	90%
				Autopsies performed within 72 hours	Jun '25	🟡	98%	90%	90%	90%
				National Association of Medical Examiners - Performance Measure: 90% of autopsies and external examinations performed within 48 hours from the time that medical examiner jurisdiction is accepted or coroner's authorization is granted, or within 48 hours of receipt of the decedent if an externally referred autopsy.	Jun '25	🟢	95	90	90	n/a
	Provide accurate service in support of Statutory Mandate (FS Chapter 406)	PS1: Safe community for all	PS1-2: Provide forensic and medical investigations quickly, accurately, and in an unbiased manner	Number of Medicolegal Scene Calls per Month	Jun '25	🔴	4	11	132	n/a
				Toxicology case turnaround time (in days)	Jun '25	🟢	22	35	35	35
				Indigent cremation service cases processed annually	2025 FY	🔴	206	860	860	860
				Crime scene investigations conducted by Medical Examiners	2018 FY	🔴	174	144	101	101
		PS2: Prevention of avoidable death, injury and property loss	PS2-1: Minimize response time	Number of Medicolegal Scene Calls per Month	Jun '25	🔴	4	11	132	n/a
				Toxicology case turnaround time (in days)	Jun '25	🟢	22	35	35	35
				Indigent cremation service cases processed annually	2025 FY	🔴	206	860	860	860
				Crime scene investigations conducted by Medical Examiners	2018 FY	🔴	174	144	101	101
	Provide timely service to meet certification standards and/or support Statutory Mandate (FS Chapter 406)	PS1: Safe community for all	PS1-2: Provide forensic and medical investigations quickly, accurately, and in an unbiased manner	Autopsy protocol preparation time (calendar days)	Jun '25	🟢	6	14	14	n/a
				Forensic Evidence Recovery Team - Average Arrival Response Time (Minutes)	Jun '25	🔴	62	60	n/a	n/a
				Number of decedents released to funeral homes within 90 days from the date of receipt to the Medical Examiner Department	Feb '25	🟢	5	90	90	90
				90 % of autopsies or external examinations performed with religious objections within twenty-four hours (Engagement)	Jun '25	🔴	65	90	90	90
				Forensic Evidence Recovery Team (FERT) 60-minute response rate	Jun '25	🔴	37 %	90 %	90 %	90 %
		PS2: Prevention of avoidable death, injury and property loss	PS2-1: Minimize response time	Autopsy protocol preparation time (calendar days)	Jun '25	🟢	6	14	14	n/a
				Forensic Evidence Recovery Team - Average Arrival Response Time (Minutes)	Jun '25	🔴	62	60	n/a	n/a
				Number of decedents released to funeral homes within 90 days from the date of receipt to the Medical Examiner Department	Feb '25	🟢	5	90	90	90
				90 % of autopsies or external examinations performed with religious objections within twenty-four hours (Engagement)	Jun '25	🔴	65	90	90	90
				Forensic Evidence Recovery Team (FERT) 60-minute response rate	Jun '25	🔴	37 %	90 %	90 %	90 %
Financial	Meet Budget Targets (Medical Examiner)			Expen: Total (Medical Examiner)	'25 FQ2	🟢	\$4,266K	\$4,496K	\$17,986K	n/a
				Revenue: Total (Medical Examiner)	'25 FQ2	🔴	\$249K	\$4,496K	\$17,986K	n/a
				Positions: Full-Time Filled (ME)	'25 FQ2	🔴	86	93	n/a	n/a
Internal	Accurately monitor current activity and estimate future service demand	PS1: Safe community for all	PS1-2: Provide forensic and medical investigations quickly, accurately, and in an unbiased manner	Toxicology Case Requests Processed (ME District 11, Miami-Dade)	Jun '25	🟢	254	220	2,640	2,640
				Deaths Certified Annually (Autopsies, External Examinations, Skeletal Examinations and Telephone Cases)	2025 FY	🟢	1,178	2,663	2,663	n/a
				Body Disposition Requests Processed /Approved per Florida Statute	2025 FY	🔴	6,405	12,178	12,178	n/a
				Death investigations conducted	2024 FY	🟢	15,757	17,000	17,000	17,000
				Autopsies Performed Annually (Fiscal)	2024 FY	🟢	1,750	1,793	1,793	n/a
				Toxicology tests (assays) performed	2024 FY	🟢	18,759	13,000	13,000	13,000

Legend:  : Key Initiative  : Featured Objective

* : This measure has been annualized to match the fiscal year-to-date total for this report. This year-to-date measure is configured based on the calendar year.

Initiatives for Measures

There are no Initiatives associated to the Measures.

Initiatives for Objectives

Objective Name	Initiative	As Of	Status	Budget	Timing	Owners
Maintain all available certifications in order to provide professional service in support of Statutory Mandate (FS Chapter 406)	Training Activities for Medical Examiner Department	2/7/2025	Complete			Rivera-Morales, Jorge (ME)

Initiatives for Scorecards

Initiative	As Of	Status	Budget	Timing	Owners
Morgue Renovation	02/07/2025	In Progress			Hutchins, Kenneth (ME)
Digital Camera Kits	05/14/2025	In Progress			Wolf, Leonard (ME)
Case Management and Laboratory Information Software System	01/31/2025	In Progress			Rivera-Morales, Jorge (ME)
Histology Renovation	02/07/2025	In Progress			Hutchins, Kenneth (ME)
Training Activities for Medical Examiner Department	02/07/2025	Complete			Rivera-Morales, Jorge (ME)
Morgue Cooler - Autopsy Tray Replacement	05/14/2025	In Progress			Garner, LaTishia (ME)
Toxicology Renovation	02/07/2025	In Progress			Hutchins, Kenneth (ME)
Audio Visual System	01/28/2025	In Progress			Rivera-Morales, Jorge (ME)