



Prosecuting Attorney - Coroner
00100.843.

Mission Statement

To accurately determine the cause, manner, and mechanism of death for all cases that fall under the jurisdiction of the coroner by conducting the highest level of professional medicolegal death investigation services.

Function

The Coroner is responsible for investigating and certifying the manner and cause of death for certain types of death occurring within the county. The Coroner relies on assistance from law enforcement, doctors, medical staff, hospice workers, forensic pathologists, forensic anthropologists, forensic odontologists, regional medical examiners, investigators, family members, biohazard and crime scene clean up companies, and next of kin to accomplish this work.

Trends/Events

Trends

- As the county's population increases, there have been more calls for service on an annual basis.
- Overdose deaths increased in 2020 and we are on track in 2021 to exceed our 10 year peak (2016).
- Suicides deaths also increased in 2020 but are still below the 10 year peak in 2018.
- Accidental deaths are on track in 2021 to greatly exceed the 10 year peak in 2018.
- Increasingly complex death scenes are requiring more time spent out of the office and on scene assisting with death investigations.
- State law now requires most county coroner offices to be accredited by 2025. In addition, coroners office employees are required to complete Death Investigator Certification.
- With increased frequency, we are seeing a need for additional expertise and sending human remains to the King County Medical Examiner's Office for examination.

Events (first six months of 2021)

- Coordinated 23 autopsies hosted at a local funeral home.
- Coordinated 10 autopsies with the King County Medical Examiner's Office.
- Coordinated two autopsies with Seattle Children's Hospital.
- Participated in at least six County Emergency Management meetings.
- Participated in six Washington State Coroner/Medical Examiner COVID meetings.

- Continued COVID testing on deceased individuals with possible COVID-19 symptoms or exposure prior to death.
- Continued to published monthly updates reflecting the rates of accidental, overdose, and suicide deaths in our county to the Prosecuting Attorney's Office website.

Goals

- Improve the professional development of all staff through training that comports with the requirements of the law.
- Collaborate with community stake holders to identify and respond to issues and concerns related to death investigations.
- Continue improving processes for monitoring and reporting statistics using MDI Log.
- Complete Death Investigator Certification for at least six staff as part of the continued effort to provide coroner services at a higher level to our community.
- Participate in all county-led Emergency Management Meetings that implicate the work of the Coroner's Office.
- Purchase supplies, assemble emergency kits, and distribute the same across the county by no later than June 2022.
- Update policies and procedures as necessary to achieve accreditation.
- Establish an independent division within our office to discharge the coroner function.

Challenges

- Lack of staff dedicated solely to the Coroner function increases the magnitude and severity of the present office resource challenge and limits the provision of service to the community.
- Limited availability of forensic pathologists create a challenge in scheduling autopsies and now necessitate autopsies to be hosted out-of-county.

Workload Indicators

	2019 Actual	2020 Actual	6/30/21 Actual
Total Coroner Cases	240	291	130
Autopsies	61	72	35
No Autopsies	179	219	95

Grant Funding Sources

This fund does not receive any grant revenue. State reimburses 40% of pathologist costs for autopsies. The state reimburses 100% of costs relative to the death of a child under 3 years of age.

Revenues

	2019 Actual	2020 Actual	6/30/21 Actual	2022 Budget
Taxes	0	0	0	0

Licenses and Permits	0	0	0	0
Intergovernmental Revenues	33,600	36,960	26,880	40,000
Charges for Goods and Services	0	0	0	0
Fines and Forfeits	0	0	0	0
Miscellaneous Revenues	2,035	0	0	1
Other Financing Sources	0	0	0	0
Transfers In	0	0	0	0
General Tax Support	113,111	141,259	76,857	381,570
Total	148,746	178,219	103,737	421,571

Expenditures

	2019 Actual	2020 Actual	6/30/21 Actual	2022 Budget
Salaries and Wages	0	0	0	141,804
Personnel Benefits	0	0	0	33,717
Supplies	0	0	0	32,000
Other Services and Charges	148,746	178,219	103,737	204,050
Intergovernmental Services	0	0	0	0
Capital Outlays	0	0	0	10,000
Interfund Payments for Services	0	0	0	0
Transfers Out	0	0	0	0
Total	148,746	178,219	103,737	421,571

Staffing

	2019 Budget	2020 Budget	2021 Budget	2022 Budget
Full Time Equivalents	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00