

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Executive Office of the Mayor



Fiscal Year 2026
Budget Oversight Question Responses
District of Columbia Office of the Chief Medical Examiner

Transmitted to
Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety
Council of the District of Columbia
Brooke Pinto, Chairperson

I. Operating Budget

General

1. ***Please provide a crosswalk of all FTEs that were reclassified to a different activity in the FY27 proposed budget.***

See Attachment A.

2. ***Please provide the position numbers for all positions eliminated in the proposed agency budget for FY27.***

- a. ***Were all eliminated positions vacant? If not, which eliminated positions were filled?***

N/A

- b. ***Are these positions eliminated effective October 1, 2026, or were funds swept in the FY26 supplemental budget?***

N/A

3. ***Please provide the top leave code usage for forensic investigators, mortuary staff, forensic toxicology staff, and other operational staff for FY 2025, FY 2026 to date, and projected FY 2027, broken down by position type, division, leave code, hours used, and total cost.***

See Attachment A.

- a. ***What measures has the agency utilized to reduce top leave code usage?***

Employees have earned leave and, thus, have the right to usage subject to absences do not interfere with government operations.

4. ***Please provide the FY25 actual, FY26 approved, and FY27 proposed budget for professional development, training, certification, continuing education, conferences, travel for training, and accreditation-related training, broken down by division, fund source, account, and programmatic purpose.***

See Attachment A.

- a. ***Please explain whether the FY 2027 proposed budget is sufficient to maintain all required professional licenses, certifications, accreditation standards, and continuing education requirements for medical examiners, forensic investigators, toxicologists, mortuary staff, and other credentialed staff.***

Professional development (travel and training) is required and critical to employee maintenance of licensure and certifications. The majority of professional development opportunities are provided at in-person conferences which average between \$2,000 - \$4,000 dependent on cost and location

of the conference, required duration of stay by the employee and costs for travel (travel, lodging, per diem etc.). The following positions require licensure and certification renewal in order to perform job duties: 7 medical examiners/forensic pathologists; 15 medicolegal and forensic investigators; 3 quality management specialist; 1 anthropologist; 4 toxicologists (Chief and Deputy Chief and 2 Breath Program Managers); 1 general counsel; and 1 chief information officer. These requirements are per statute and/or agency accreditation.

In addition to mandatory licensure and certification, many employs must obtain training to comply with forensic and scientific technologies and industry standards and to learn emerging information related to the subject matter of their positions. Such positions include: 10 toxicologists; 2 epidemiologists; 1 human resource manager; and 2 fatality review personnel.

Lastly, training is required for the medical examiner transport team employees in order to drive the large emergency management vehicles to include: the existing mobile command center and mortuary vehicles with large trailers attached. The agency has been quoted, in the past, approximately \$12,000-\$15,000 for such training.

b. Please explain whether reductions or underspending in professional development or travel accounts have affected recruitment, retention, accreditation readiness, staff morale, or the agency's ability to maintain specialized forensic expertise.

Without adequate funding for professional development or travel, the licensures, certifications and additional training, as outlined above, cannot be provided to employees via the agency. Many of these professional developments are required for performance of duties, as well as to maintain accreditation by the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) and the International Organization for Standards (ISO).

Given that external candidates do not know the agency's budget for professional development and/or how it is utilized, there has been no recruitment challenge on this issue. Should employees be required to maintain required professional development or that which would enhance the ability to perform their jobs, the ability to retain employees would be impacted and staff morale would decrease.

5. Please identify any areas of significant underspending in FY25 or FY26 to date, broken down by fund source, division/activity, and account, and explain the reason for the underspending, including whether it was caused by vacancies, delayed hiring, delayed procurements, delayed grant awards, reduced overtime, contract savings, or programmatic delays.

See Attachment A.

6. Please provide the title, salary, fund source, Activity/Division, and hiring plan for all new FTEs proposed in the proposed FY27 budget for the agency.

N/A

7. Please provide additional context and explanation for the increases in terminal leave across multiple agency divisions, including:

- a. (AF003) Agency Budgeting and Financial Management Services, Administration Division Executive Unit**
- b. (AMP007) Data Fusion Center Services, General Counsel Unit**
- c. (AMP014) Legal Services, General Counsel Unit**
- d. (AMP022) Records Management, Records Management Unit**
- e. (AMP030) Executive Administration, Executive Administrative Unit**
- f. (P02802) Forensic Investigations, Death Investigations Unit**
- g. (P02806) Mortuary Services, Mett Unit**
- h. (P02903) Forensic Toxicology, Forensic Toxicology Division**
- i. (P02903) Fatality Reviews, Fatality Review Administrative Unit**

Terminal leave was calculated on a three-year average by program.

8. What measures has the agency utilized to reduce top leave code usage?

Employees have earned leave and, thus, have the right to usage subject to absences do not interfere with government operations.

9. Please provide context and explanation for the use of Local Funds in the Forensic Pathology (P02803) “travel - out of city” account.

As stated above, medical examiners are required to maintain licensure in order to practice medicine as forensic pathologists in the District. The medical examiner position is one wherein the employees perform post-mortem examinations and render cause and manner of death determinations and forensic autopsy reports. This practice of medicine requires licensure and board certifications. The Forensic Pathology “travel-out of city” account is required by the Doctors Council Compensation 19 Collective Bargaining Agreement which provides for a \$5,000 annual allowance toward continuing education expenses for each medical examiner.

10. Please provide context and explanation for the \$93,841.41 increase in the Federal Grant Fund Death Investigations/Certifications, Forensic Pathology (P02803) Professional Services Fees & Contract account.

The Federal Grant is *The District of Columbia Office of the Chief Medical Examiner Forensic Pathology Fellowship*, as established by the agency in collaboration with George Washington University. The grant funding supports salary, training, equipment and supplies and other professional development activities and purchases for the fellowship.

11. Please provide a hiring plan for the following vacant positions:

- a. FY26**
 - i. 00036048 Records Management Specialist – Q4 Hiring Process**
 - ii. 00041749 General Counsel – Retirement in 06/14/2025; Funding utilized for Interim General Counsel and Attorneys**

- iii. 00045538 *Agency Fiscal Officer* - Start 05/18/2026
 - iv. 00091371 *Quality Control Specialist* – Q4 Hiring Process
 - v. 00092095 *Supply Technician* - Q4 Hiring Process
 - vi. 00095041 *Data Analyst* – Interviews and Selection Made 4/26; Offer Extended
 - vii. 00095041-I *Data Analyst 08/28/2025* - Interviews and Selection Made 4/26; Offer Extended
 - viii. 00100226 *Forensic Investigator* - Q4 Hiring Process
 - ix. 00104198 *Medical Technologist* - Q4 Hiring Process
 - x. 00106038 *Forensic Toxicologist* - Q4 Hiring Process
 - xi. 00117814 *Certifying Scientist* – Q3 Hiring Process Initiated; Next Steps - Advertising
- b. **FY27**
- i. 00041749 *General Counsel Retirement in 06/14/2025* – Q1 Hiring Process – Required Position
 - ii. 00045538 *AGENCY FISCAL OFFICER* - Filled in FY26
 - iii. 00091371 *Quality Control Specialist* - Q1 Hiring/Onboarding
 - iv. 00092095 *Supply Technician* - Q1 Hiring/Onboarding
 - v. 00104198 *Medical Technologist* - Q1 Hiring/Onboarding
 - vi. 00106038 *Forensic Toxicologist* - Q1 Hiring/Onboarding
 - vii. *Position 001001 Certifying Scientist* – Filled in FY26
 - viii. *Position 002002 Records Management Specialist (00036048)* - Q1 Hiring/Onboarding

12. Regarding Special Purpose Revenue Funds, please provide the Committee with:

- a. **A detailed spending plan for FY26 and FY27 for unspent funds in:**
- i. **Death Investigations / Certifications**
 - ii. **Forensic Toxicology**

See Attachment A.

- b. **Spending from the following SPRs in FY26, broken down by division/program, cost center, and account, and noting the programmatic initiative or service supported by the SPR fund dollars:**
- i. **Death Investigations / Certifications**
 - ii. **Forensic Toxicology**

See Attachment A.

- c. **Where the following SPRs have any restrictions on usage of fund dollars or fund balance (for example, a requirement that the fund maintain a certain balance) not reflected in the establishing statute, please provide a summary of those restrictions:**
- i. **Death Investigations / Certifications**

ii. Forensic Toxicology

Per BSA FY25, the fund was converted to a lapsing fund.

(AMP000) Agency Management program

13. Please provide context and likely impacts regarding proposed decrease in:

- a. (AMP005) Contracting and Procurement by \$3,000**
- b. (AMP009) Fleet Management by \$30,000**
- c. (AMP014) Legal Services by \$30,000**
- d. (AMP022) Records Management by \$36,000**

See Attachment B, Page 3.

The Contracting and Procurement, Legal Services and Records Management decreases are due to personnel cost adjustments. A decrease in the City-wide Fleet Assessment has resulted in the decrease in Fleet Management.

14. Please provide context and reasons regarding the proposed increase:

- a. (AMP007) Data Analytics And Research by \$3,000**
- b. (AMP011) Human Resource Services \$4,000**
- c. (AMP012) Information Technology Services by \$22,000**
- d. (AMP030) Executive Administration by \$1,000**

See Attachment B, Page 3.

The increases are due to personnel cost adjustments.

(PS0028) Death Investigations / Certifications

15. Please provide context and likely impacts regarding proposed decrease in:

- a. (P02801) Anthropology/Identification by \$88,000**
- b. (P02802) Forensic Investigations \$66,000**
- c. (P02805) Histology \$18,000**
- d. (P02806) Mortuary Service \$63,000**

See Attachment B, Page 4.

The decrease in Anthropology/Identification is due to a reallocation of an FTE to Records Management. The other decreases are due to personnel cost adjustments.

16. Please provide context and reasons regarding the proposed increase:

- a. (P02803) Forensic Pathology \$543,000**

See Attachment B, Page 4.

The increase is due to the mandated provisions of the Doctors' Council Compensation 18 Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA).

(PS0029) Fatality Reviews

- 17. Please provide context and likely impacts regarding proposed decrease in:***
a. (P02903) Fatality Reviews – Other by \$172,000

See Attachment B, Page 5.

The decrease is a reallocation of an FTE to Information Technology.

(PS0030) Forensic Toxicology

- 18. Please provide context and likely impacts regarding proposed decrease in:***
a. (P03001) Forensic Toxicology Lab Services by \$70,000

See Attachment B, Page 6.

The decrease in Forensic Toxicology Lab Services is within contractual services. Contractual services for the laboratory consists of maintenance and repair service agreements that increase annually. Without such agreements, the laboratory would procure services on an “as needed basis.” Such one-time services may cost between \$30,000 to \$50,000 for the certain current equipment and instrumentation.

II. Capital Budget

- 19. Please provide a spending plan for all new or ongoing capital projects, broken out by year, including how available balances will be spent.***
a. 100056-AM0.FX0FRC - OCME FACILITY RENOVATION AT THE CFL
i. What specific renovation, construction, or facility needs are driving the additional \$1.9 million in 6-year budget authority?

Phase III of facility renovation. The agency continues to have challenges with spacing to include staff seating and offices, as well as storage. Currently, the agency has limited seating for any additional staff that will be onboarding FY26. For example, while there may or may not be any additional FTEs in the local budget, it is anticipated that additional FTEs will be a consideration as part of grants/subgrants, as well as residents, interns and other persons that may affiliate with the agency. While this project has supported funding for the agency's continued facility renovations. While renovations were to be completed in FY25, the time for delivery of goods prior to the end of the fiscal year was insufficient after a lengthy attempt at reprogrammed funds to local for such purposes. At this time, such renovations are scheduled to be completed by the end of FY26. As such, any FY27 funds would be used for contingency purposes.

The majority of the funds for renovations will be utilized towards the Phase IV build-out for the agency's Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) with regard to replacement of the COOP site roof, pavement of the parking lot, security upgrades (fencing and security system) and renovation of internal space for mortuary operations and storage space for COOP supplies and equipment. Accrediting bodies require that the agency have a COOP site as part of fatality management and a mass fatality plan. The agency expects the COOP renovation to provide a base camp for a field operations center (which would have been invaluable during the COVID-19 pandemic where the agency built-out all of its operation). Success is translated as completion of the projects and documentation within agency Standard Operating Procedures of the enhancement.

- ii. Please provide a project timeline, anticipated procurement, construction, completion, and closeout dates.***

Generally, the Phase III CFL Renovation timeline will be dependent on two actions: procurement of materials/goods and actual construction. Given that the Department of General Services (DGS) is the implementing agency, the OCME will continue to work with that agency with regard to project timeline, anticipated procurement, construction completion and closeout dates.

- iii. The OCME Facility Renovation at the CFL project has an allotment balance of approximately \$2.474 million and proposes \$1.2 million in FY27 and \$700,000 in FY 2028. Please explain how existing balances and new funding will be spent by planned activity.***

Given DGS is the implementing agency, the OCME will continue to work with that agency with regard to project timeline, anticipated procurement, construction completion and closeout dates.

b. 100426-FX0.FXEERC - EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT AT THE CFL

- i. What specific equipment will be replaced with the additional \$4.2 million in 6-year budget authority?***
- ii. Please identify each planned major equipment purchase, estimated cost, useful life, and the division or function supported.***
- iii. The capital budget states that industry standards and accreditation guidelines require most specialized OCME equipment be replaced every 7 to 10 years. Please provide the agency's current equipment replacement schedule and identify any equipment that is past, at, or approaching the end of its useful life.***

Issue: Based on accreditation standards, industry standards, and best practices, forensic toxicology laboratory equipment must be replaced after approximately 7-10 years after procurement. The agency's Toxicology Laboratory equipment has equipment and instrumentation that has aged up to 7-10 years old. The agency's equipment replacement

plan provides a schedule for all equipment utilized in the toxicology laboratory. When instrumentation is “down” for maintenance/repair, turnaround times for completion of post-mortem, sexual assault and DUI testing are jeopardized and next of kin, victims and law enforcement must wait longer for report results. The laboratory must maintain modern equipment to ensure accuracy and reliability for next of kin stakeholders, law enforcement and the court system.

Equipment Replacement Plan: Note that consistently following a replacement plan addresses the rising cost of preventive maintenance and repairs based on the age or equipment. Further, planned equipment replacement allows the laboratory to plan to procure up-to-date equipment and instrumentation models.

The agency’s Equipment Replacement plan details all Forensic Toxicology Laboratory equipment and instrumentation, as well purchase dates, the replacement schedule based on a 7-10 year lifespan, current day costs of replacement, and costs of maintenance and service agreements.

Note that the overall cost of replacement of the equipment at this time averages about \$8.65 million, and as such, the replacement plan requested is a measured, cost-effective approach. Note that approximately sixteen instruments are over \$250,000 in cost with about six of those averaging between \$400,000 to \$600,000 each. The equipment replacement plan proposes procurement of a certain percentage of equipment annually. This determination is based not only on the age of the equipment, but also industry standards and the type of equipment needed per the trends of drugs at the time.

Implementation: Once funding is identified or provided, the agency’s Forensic Toxicology Laboratory management reviews the Equipment Replacement Plan in light of current drug standards and trends, the need for new methodologies for testing, age and condition of current equipment, emerging industry equipment technologies, and equipment costs. Based on this real-time analysis, a determination of the priority of equipment procurement is made. Note that accreditation standards with regard to age are considered paramount in this analysis.

For FY26, the spending plan is as follows:

LCQTOF (x2) or Orbitrap (x1)	\$400,000.00
LCMSMS	\$300,000.00

Total \$700,000

Additional available funding will also be spent in FY26 to procure equipment as determined by the needs analysis.

c. 101272-FX0.CAPITAL - VEHICLE REPLACEMENT PROGRAM

- i. What specific vehicles will be replaced with the additional \$537,000 in 6-year budget authority?**
- ii. How many vehicles will be purchased or outfitted in FY27?**

iii. How many vehicles are currently in OCME's fleet, and how many are used for death scene visits, decedent transport, fatality management, emergency response, public health surveillance, and records functions?

Issue: The agency fleet is utilized for the following mission critical tasks: death scene visits and transport bodies; fatality management and emergency response; public health surveillance; and to register and archive records. Currently the average age of the oldest vehicles in the OCME fleet is (14) years old, with the newest vehicles being (6) years old. Such aging vehicles have contributed to an increase in the agency's actual fleet costs due to frequent vehicle breakdown and reliability issues.

Having vehicles in good working condition ensures adequate and timely response times to death scenes and ability to carry out mandated functions of the agency to include: death scene investigations, case related body and specimen transfer, and travel for court testimony. Interoperability between agency staff, EOM, other public safety cluster agencies, as well as additional incident management entities is also critical. Additionally, the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) and the International Organization of Standards (ISO) require adequate vehicles for all OCME operations with regard to accreditation.

Vehicle Replacement Plan: To ensure consistent vehicle operability, the agency has developed a Capital Vehicle Replacement and Communications and Vehicle Upgrade Plan that includes: purchase of vehicles; and retrofitting vehicles with infrastructure for body transport and fatality management; and outfitting vehicles with Mobile Data Terminal Devices and IT/Communications. records retrieval and archiving and other administrative duties.

Implementation: During FY25 Q4, the agency was able to identify a vendor and submitted requisition for procurement of 4 Medical Examiner Transport Team Vehicles. These transport vehicles are utilized to report to death scenes and transport decedents to the agency morgue for processing, examination, storage and release to next of kin and/or public disposition. The four vehicles have been procured and are undergoing the next step of retrofitting for mortuary purposes, specifically buildout of shelving within. A second procurement of 4 vehicles has been implemented in Q2 of FY26. These vehicles are death investigation vehicles utilized by agency medicolegal and forensic investigators to report to death scenes for investigation of decedents and surrounding circumstances.

Additional funds identified for the FY27 budget will be utilized to support procurement of a mobile command center to replace an aged 14 year-old vehicle. The command center is utilized for operability during emergency management and fatality management incidents given that, by statute, OCME is the coordinator of fatality management for the District. The justification and budget for the mobile command center are included on the following pages.

20. Please provide a spending plan for all capital projects with allotment balances but no new funding proposed in the CIP.

- a. 100056-AM0.FX0FRC - OCME FACILITY RENOVATION AT THE CFL**
- b. 100426-FX0.FXEERC - EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT AT THE CFL**
- c. 101272-FX0.CAPITAL - VEHICLE REPLACEMENT PROGRAM**

J&PS Budget Oversight Questions (FY27)
OCME

The plan is discussed above in question 19. Specific costs cannot be provided until quotes are obtained from vendors for possible future FY27 funding.