

Department of Laboratories and Research

2023 Executive Proposed Budget



Core Programs & Functions

Medical Examiner

- Investigates cause and manner of deaths in Westchester “due to unlawful acts, criminal neglect, violence, casualties, or by sudden or unexplained circumstances” and extends help to grieving families in time of intense grief.
- Partners with other divisions to provide accurate results and answers to public health or criminal justice questions.

Environmental

- Analyzes drinking water, waste water, soil and hazardous materials for harmful chemicals and microorganisms to maintain a healthy environment and to comply with regulatory authorities.
- Supports Health Department monitoring of public swimming pools and bathing beaches, in addition to the Environmental Lead Program for water, soil, paint, dust wipes, and food items.

Forensics

- Performs DNA, gunshot residue and fire debris analysis on crime scene evidence, analysis of drugs submitted by law enforcement agencies, analysis of audio video evidence such as surveillance videos of crime scenes and trace evidence analysis including paint samples from hit and run cases.
- Provides expert witness testimony upon request by prosecution or defense on processed cases.

Core Programs & Functions

Microbiology

- Identifies bacteria, viruses and parasites of public health concern in clinical and environmental samples in support of the health department.
- Maintains the Laboratory Response Network Level B Biodefense Laboratory as a national security asset to identify agents of Bioterrorism.

Toxicology

- Provides analysis of biological samples from autopsies, DWI, DWAI, DFSA specimens for alcohol, drugs and medications.
- Support the breath alcohol instruments and testifies in court upon request.

Budget Summary

ITEM	2022	2023
Operating Positions	102	105
Trust Positions	4	4
TOTAL POSITIONS	106	109
Personal Service	\$9,068,498	\$9,413,623
Equipment	\$293,062	\$94,580
Materials & Supplies	\$1,297,438	\$1,269,500
Contractual Expenses	\$1,073,108	\$1,260,104
Inter-Departmental Charges	\$3,784,499	\$4,608,344
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$15,516,605	\$16,646,151

Budget Summary

ITEM	2022	2023
Inter-Departmental Revenue	\$5,000	\$5,000
Departmental Revenue	\$2,566,761	\$2,624,494
State & Federal Aid	\$1,223,913	\$1,423,530
TOTAL REVENUE	\$3,795,674	\$4,053,024
DEPARTMENT TAX LEVY	\$11,720,931	\$12,593,127

New Initiatives & Highlights

Environmental

- Joined NYS Wastewater Community of Practice Forum to assess method development for epidemiological surveillance of wastewater.
- Continue to participate in the New York State Free Lead Testing Pilot Program to assist homeowners in determining the level of lead in their drinking water.
- In the process of validating a new instrument and new method to detect Mercury in wastewater at part-per-trillion levels.

New Initiatives & Highlights

Forensics

- Membership in Working Groups or Task Forces:
 - Member of the Heroin Overdose Task Force to provide analysis on overdose cases to the DA Intel Center
 - Member of the NYS Investigative Genetic Genealogy (IGG) Working Group. Supports the attempt to identify suspects or missing persons using advanced DNA techniques
- Provide training lectures to explain our services or to describe Forensic Science concepts for law enforcement, prosecutors and defense attorneys, Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners, students
- Electronically interface with law enforcement and the Westchester County DA for remote evidence log in, case status tracking, reporting

New Initiatives & Highlights

Microbiology

- Implemented testing for Monkeypox utilizing the CDC LRN PCR method to address the Monkeypox Public Health Emergency.
- Implemented molecular testing for Herpes Simplex Virus 1&2 and Varicella Zoster Virus (Chickenpox) to reduce turn-around-time and complement Monkeypox PCR testing.
- Provide COVID-19, Flu A&B and RSV PCR testing from a single sample for Medical Examiner specimens and as needed in response to any clustered outbreaks that may occur.
- Updated current testing methodologies for agents of bioterrorism as required by the National Laboratory Response Network.

New Initiatives & Highlights

Toxicology

- Applied for ISO17025 accreditation for 2023 which is a nationally and internationally recognized standard to ensure consistent and accurate test results.
- Continues to report heroin, Fentanyl and oxycodone in DWAI and Medical Examiner casework in the midst of this crisis. Fentanyl, the abused Fentanyl analogues, new opioid drugs and new designer drugs continue to be detected in Medical Examiner and DWI/DWAI casework.
- Provides screening of multiple drugs in all toxicology/ME cases using TOF (Time of Flight) LC/MS. New drugs are constantly being added to the library.
- Moving away from older technologies to institute drug analyses using new LC/MS/MS technology for shorter turn around time and better confidence in results reducing the need for send outs.

New Initiatives & Highlights

Medical Examiner's Office

- Medical Examiner's Office maintains their role as a key player, presenter, consultant and supporter of county-wide state mandated or initiated programs including the Child Fatality Review Team and Suicide Review Team