

Westchester County Department of Laboratories and Research
2008 Proposed Operating Budget

Mission

This department's mission is two-fold:

1. Performance of all major laboratory testing for Westchester County including:
 - a. Microbiological testing of clinical specimens for TB, sexually transmitted diseases, AIDS, and unusual diseases. Major clients: Westchester County Dept. of Health, Westchester Medical Center, other hospitals, and nursing homes.

Testing for biodefense – related incidents as a member of the nationwide CDC Laboratory Response Network. Clients: Emergency response and related agencies of the seven (7) counties in the lower Hudson Valley.
 - b. Testing of air, water, food, soil, and waste to monitor the environment and control disease. Major clients: Municipal water departments, Westchester County Dept. of Health, Westchester County Dept. of Environmental Facilities, Westchester Medical Center.
 - c. Forensic Science (“crime lab”) evidence collection and analyses including DNA, arson, illicit drugs, trace evidence, and photography to aid in crime prevention, crime solving and prosecution of criminals. Major clients: 37 Town and Village Police Departments, Westchester District Attorney, New York State Police, and Federal CODIS (DNA Identification Program).
 - d. Toxicological analyses of body fluids and tissues for medico-legal and clinical purposes. Major clients: 37 Town and Village Police Departments, Westchester District Attorney, Westchester Department of Public Safety
2. Medical Examiner functions including investigation of all unnatural deaths occurring within Westchester County.

Accomplishments

During the past year this department achieved a number of accomplishments including the following:

- The Forensic Science Laboratory expanded into newly constructed space, drastically improving evidence storage and examination abilities, as well as, allowing staff to provide enhanced DNA testing in the area of “touch DNA”. This technique significantly improves our ability to determine DNA profiles on biological evidence having as few as 3-6 human cells.
- Toxicology continues to see an increase in the DWI, DWAI, and DFSA case load in 2007. Most DWI/DWAI cases see an increase in multiple drug positives besides or combined with alcohol.

Accomplishments (cont'd)

- The Environmental Laboratory has expanded its bacteriology, radiological, and lead testing capabilities in order to further assist Westchester County and its constituents with their investigative and monitoring requirements, projects, and objectives.
- The Biodefense Laboratory, one of only four in New York State, achieved certification in an additional select agent, bringing our total to seven.

Tax Levy

Currently, the Department of Laboratories and Research budgeted tax levy for 2007 is \$9,796,163. The 2008 Budget that is before the Board of Legislatures at this time proposes a tax levy of \$9,865,913, an increase of \$69,750 (0.7 %) over the current year budget. Major expenditure and revenue changes are noted below.

ExpendituresAnnual Regular (1010)

- This account increases by \$345,662, mainly due to the provision for unsettled labor contracts.
- In response to the Health Department's directive for private water companies to test for radioactive contaminants, one new position, Environmental Chemist, is requested for 2008 at \$51,610. This will be offset by an estimated \$180,000 in revenue to the County in 2008.
- In addition we had one added starter position in 2007 for a Microbiologist in the Biodefense lab at a cost of \$51,610. Our Biodefense lab had only one (1) Microbiologist which was not sufficient staffing to perform all the testing procedures the CDC, NYSDOH, and Westchester County expected the lab to perform during a bioterrorism occurrence. This expense is partially offset by a 36% reimbursement in State Aid.
- Finally one Toxicologist position was added in 2007, at a cost of \$51,610. This position was previously funded out of a DWI trust account to handle increased testing resulting from stepped-up DWI enforcement. From 2004 to 2006 DWI cases increased dramatically and police training in drug recognition, as well as, more complex drug mixtures have increased case time and caseloads.

Equipment Service and Rental (4070)

- 2008 Request based on current contracts for service of complex instrumentation and new contracts for instruments coming off warranty in 2007. \$30,000 increase.

Expenditures (cont'd)Services by I.T.-Data Processing (5260)

- This account has increased with the increase of the number of computers associated with the opening of Forensic DNA addition and computerization of laboratory instrumentation.

Services by Public Works (5280)

- This account has increased dramatically, primarily due to fuel costs impacting both heating and electricity. This building and our processes are large consumers of both.

RevenueInter Dept Billings (9508)

- Revenue from Westchester Health Care Corporation is budgeted at \$525,000 in 2008. This is an increase of \$60,000 from 2007 budget.

Lab Fees (9067)

- Environmental revenue is forecast based on current revenues plus an additional \$55,000 for UCMR2 EPA certification, and \$180,000 for radiochemical water testing.

Lab State Aid (9708)

- State Aid has been increased by \$458,560. This is formula driven as a percentage of net expense for Medical Examiner, Microbiology Lab, and Environmental Lab. Both percentage of reimbursement, and reimbursement expenses have increased – causing the increase of State Aid.