OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER

FY 2026 PERFORMANCE PLAN

NOVEMBER 26, 2025

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR

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1 INTRODUCTION

This document is the Fiscal Year 2026 Performance Plan for the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner.

This Performance Plan is the first of two agency performance documents published each year. The Performance Plan is published twice annually – preliminarily when the Mayor's budget proposal is delivered, and again at the start of the fiscal year when budget decisions have been finalized. A companion document, the Performance Accountability Report (PAR), is published annually in January following the end of the fiscal year. Each PAR assesses agency performance relative to its annual Performance Plan.

Performance Plan Structure: Performance plans are comprised of agency Objectives, Administrative Structures (such as Divisions, Administrations, and Offices), Activities, Projects and related performance measures. The following describes these plan components, and the types of performance measures agencies use to assess their performance.

Objectives: Objectives are statements of the desired benefits that are expected from the performance of an agency's mission. They describe the goals of the agency.

Administrative Structures: Administrative Structures represent the organizational units of an agency, such as Departments, Divisions, or Offices.

Activities: Activities represent the programs and services an agency provides. They reflect what an agency does on a regular basis (e.g., processing permits).

Projects: Projects are planned efforts that end once a particular outcome or goal is achieved.

Measures: Performance Measures may be associated with any plan component, or with the agency overall. Performance Measures can answer broad questions about an agency's overall performance or the performance of an organizational unit, a program or service, or the implementation of a major project. Measures can answer questions like "How much did we do?", "How well did we do it?", "How quickly did we do it?", and "Is anyone better off?" as described in the table below.

Measures are printed in the Performance Plan along with the Objective, Administrative Structure, Activity, or Project that they measure.

Measure Type	Measure Description	Example
Quantity	Quantity measures assess the volume of work an agency performs. These measures can describe the inputs (e.g., requests or cases) that an agency receives or the work that an agency completes (e.g., licenses issued or cases closed). Quantity measures often start with the phrase "Number of...".	"Number of public art projects completed"
Quality	Quality measures assess how well an agency's work meets standards, specifications, resident needs, or resident expectations. These measures can directly describe the quality of decisions or products or they can assess resident feelings, like satisfaction.	"Percent of citations issued that were appealed"
Efficiency	Efficiency measures assess the resources an agency used to perform its work and the speed with which that work was performed. Efficiency measures can assess the unit cost to deliver a product or service, but typically these measures assess describe completion rates, processing times, and backlog.	"Percent of claims processed within 10 business days"

(continued)

Measure Type	Measure Description	Example
Outcome	Outcome measures assess the results or impact of an agency's work. These measures describe the intended ultimate benefits associated with a program or service.	"Percent of families returning to homelessness within 6-12 months"
Context	Context measures describe the circumstances or environment that the agency operates in. These measures are typically outside of the agency's direct control.	"Recidivism rate for 18-24 year-olds"
District-wide Indicators	District-wide indicators describe demographic, economic, and environmental trends in the District of Columbia that are relevant to the agency's work, but are not in the control of a single agency.	"Area median income"

Targets: Agencies set targets for most performance measures before the start of the fiscal year. Targets may represent goals, requirements, or national standards for a performance measure. Agencies strive to achieve targets each year, and agencies provide explanations for targets that are not met at the end of the fiscal year in the subsequent Performance Accountability Report.

Not all measures are associated with a target. Newly added measures do not require targets for the first year, as agencies determine a data-informed benchmark. Changes in some measures may not indicate better or worse performance. They may be "neutral" measures of demand or input or outside of the agency's direct control. In some cases, the relative improvement of a measure over a prior period is a more meaningful indicator than meeting or exceeding a particular numerical goal, so a target is not set.

2 OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER OVERVIEW

Mission: The mission of the Office of Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) is to ensure that justice is served and that the health and safety of the public is improved by conducting quality death investigations and certification, and providing forensic services for government agencies, health care entities and grieving families.

Summary of Services: OCME provides forensic services to local and federal government agencies, health care providers, institutions of higher learning and citizens in the District and metropolitan area. Forensic services include: forensic investigation and certification of certain deaths (i.e., deaths occurring as a result of violence (injury) as well as those that occur unexpectedly, without medical attention, in custody, or pose a threat to public health); review of deaths of specific populations; grief counseling; performance of a full range of toxicological examinations; cremation approvals; and public dispositions of unclaimed remains.

Objectives:

1. Provide Efficient and Quality Forensic Services
2. Implement a Quality Management System
3. Provide Public Health and Safety Surveillance
4. Coordinate the District's Fatality Management Function
5. Contribute to an Efficient, Transparent, and Responsive Government

Administrative Structures:

1. Death Investigation and Certification
2. Forensic Toxicology
3. Agency Management and Financial Operations
4. Fatality Review

3 OBJECTIVES

3.1 PROVIDE EFFICIENT AND QUALITY FORENSIC SERVICES

Provide efficient and quality forensic services related to: a) the medicolegal investigation and certification of the cause and manner of death; b) toxicological analyses and interpretations; c) family assistance in understanding the cause and manner of death; d) expert testimony; and e) education and training of law enforcement, health care providers, academic institutions, and other stakeholders.

Measure Type	Measure	Directionality	FY2024	FY2025 Target	FY2025	FY2026 Target
Outcome	Percent of all reports of postmortem examinations completed within 90 calendar days from the time of autopsy in all cases	Up is Better	81.85%	90%	71.34%	**90%**
Outcome	Percent of mortuary/transport service scene response within one hour of transport notification by an investigator or medical examiner of an accepted case	Up is Better	95.15%	95%	95.06%	**95%**
Outcome	Percent of storage requests from hospitals filled within two business days of receipt	Up is Better	100%	85%	100%	**85%**
Outcome	Percent of toxicology examinations completed within 60 calendar days of case submission	Up is Better	69.74%	50%	82%	**50%**
Outcome	Percent of toxicology examinations completed within 90 calendar days of case submission	Up is Better	99.11%	85%	98.62%	**85%**
Efficiency	Percent of decedent cases scientifically identified within five days	Up is Better	79.17%	35%	No data available	**50%**
Efficiency	Percent of decedent storage unit spaces unoccupied within the morgue during normal operation periods	Up is Better	50.76%	50%	37.99%	**50%**
Efficiency	Percent of decedents with no known next of kin to be entered into Namus Unclaimed prior to the release of the decedent for public disposition	Up is Better	Data is pending	65%	No data available	**65%**

3.2 IMPLEMENT A QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Provide efficient and effective service through a quality management system supported by continuous process improvement, quality control measures, adherence to accrediting body guidelines, training, and best practices.

Measure Type	Measure	Directionality	FY2024	FY2025 Target	FY2025	FY2026 Target
Outcome	Percent of employees completing and maintaining licensure, certification, industry-specific, web-based, internal agency training	Up is Better	95.83%	90%	100%	**95%**
Outcome	Percent of external autopsy requests responded to within 2 business days of receipt	Up is Better	100%	90%	100%	**90%**
Outcome	Percent of forensic pathologists (medical examiners) that are board certified or board eligible	Up is Better	100%	95%	96.43%	**95%**

3.3 PROVIDE PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY SURVEILLANCE

Serve as a public health and safety surveillance organization providing statistical data to law enforcement, health care entities and social service entities tasked with prevention, detection and deterrence, and ultimately preventing deaths.

Measure Type	Measure	Directionality	FY2024	FY2025 Target	FY2025	FY2026 Target
Outcome	Percent of Child Fatality Review Committee (CFRC) case summary reports that will be uploaded to the web portal three days prior to the scheduled case review meetings	Up is Better	100%	90%	100%	**95%**
Outcome	Percent of Child Fatality Review Committee (CFRC) fatality reviews held within six months of notification of the death	Up is Better	51.8%	80%	0%	**80%**
Outcome	Percent of Developmental Disabilities Fatality Review Committee (DDS FRC) fatality reviews held within three months of receipt of the investigative report from DHS/DDS and determination of the cause and manner of death	Neutral	100%	55%	100%	**65%**
Outcome	Percent of FOIA requests responded to within fifteen (15) days	Up is Better	93.8%	90%	98.75%	**95%**

3.4 COORDINATE THE DISTRICT'S FATALITY MANAGEMENT FUNCTION

Provide sound expertise as the District's fatality management authority maintaining a comprehensive District-wide plan to respond to all types of fatality incidents and ensure decedent disposition, family assistance, and continuity of operations.

Measure Type	Measure	Directionality	FY2024	FY2025 Target	FY2025	FY2026 Target
Outcome	Percent of agency employees completing a mass fatality training annually	Up is Better	95%	95%	98.02%	**Target not required**

3.5 CONTRIBUTE TO AN EFFICIENT, TRANSPARENT, AND RESPONSIVE GOVERNMENT

Create and maintain a highly efficient, transparent, and responsive District government.

Measure Type	Measure	Directionality	FY2024	FY2025 Target	FY2025	FY2026 Target
Outcome	Percent of agency staff who were employed as Management Supervisory Service (MSS) employees prior to 4/1 of the fiscal year that had completed an Advancing Racial Equity (AE204) training facilitated by ORE within the past two years	Up is Better	11.11%	Target not required	100%	**Target not required**
Outcome	Percent of employees that are District residents	Up is Better	39.39%	Target not required	42%	**Target not required**
Outcome	Percent of new hires that are District residents (Peoplesoft)	Up is Better	54.55%	Target not required	50%	**Target not required**
Outcome	Percent of new hires that are current District residents and received a high school diploma from a DCPS or a District Public Charter School, or received an equivalent credential from the District of Columbia (eRecruit)	Up is Better	14.29%	Target not required	28.57%	**Target not required**
Outcome	Percent of required contractor evaluations submitted to the Office of Contracting and Procurement on time	Up is Better	100%	Target not required	0%	**Target not required**

4 ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES

4.1 DEATH INVESTIGATION AND CERTIFICATION

The Division is responsible for forensic pathology, forensic investigation, and forensic support services. Forensic pathology involves conducting decedent examination, determining the cause and manner of death, and providing that information to next of kin, law enforcement, designated government entities, and interested parties. Forensic investigation includes evidence-gathering, medical interpretation, and provision of information to aid in the determination of the cause and manner of death. The purpose of forensic support services is to provide services in the form of consultations and testing services to support the forensic pathology staff in the determination of the cause and manner of death.

Activities under Death Investigation and Certification:

1. Case Management System: Utilize system to manage death investigation and toxicology documents and data, as well as, for decedent tracking. Maintain and continue development of case management databases utilized to track: a) all relevant case types from case initiation through disposition; b) testing and analysis toxicology data; c) inventory; d) decedents; and e) other key documents and resources.

No Related Measures

2. Fatality Management Facility, Operations, Training, Supplies/Resources/Equipment: Provide training and education to agency staff and District stakeholders in order to ensure preparedness for mass fatality incident. Develop and coordinate emergency response/incident training and exercise programs amongst District, regional, and federal stakeholders to ensure the appropriate implementation of incident plans and standard operating procedures, availability and use of equipment and resources, and interoperability.

No Related Measures

3. Medicolegal Death Investigations: Gather information and collect evidence and perform medical interpretation services for agency forensic pathologists, law enforcement agencies, and legal counsel. Utilize information obtained from investigations toward identification of decedents and to aid in the determination of the cause and manner of death by forensic pathologists.

No Related Measures

4. Medical Surveillance Program: Provide a safe and healthy workplace for all employees and visitors. Implement an employee medical surveillance program involving a formal safety program that involves management, supervisors, and employees in identifying and eliminating hazards that exist or may develop during work processes and testing.

No Related Measures

5. Decedent Handling/Postmortem Examination: Provide body transport, body release and postmortem examination support services. Support forensic pathologists in postmortem examination toward the determination of the cause and manner of death; release of bodies to the funeral industry in a timely manner; and transport of bodies from public spaces, homes, hospitals and other facilities.

No Related Measures

6. Forensic Pathology Services: Provide timely decedent examination and cause and manner of death determination. Investigation and analysis services performed by forensic pathologists resulting in certification of cause and manner of death provided to next of kin, law enforcement, government agencies, and other interested parties.

Measure Type	Related Measures	Directionality	FY2024	FY2025 Target	FY2025	FY2026 Target
Quantity	Number of Anthropologic Analyses Performed	Down is Better	62	Target not required	No data available	**Target not required**
Quantity	Number of child deaths due to inappropriate bedding/Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID) (with or without crib in the dwelling)	Down is Better	19	Target not required	0	**Target not required**
Quantity	Number of deaths due to hypertensive cardiovascular disease/obesity	Neutral	265	Target not required	363	**Target not required**
Quantity	Number of Deaths Due to Traffic Accidents (i.e., cars, Metro, motorcycles, pedestrian, bicycle)	Down is Better	59	Target not required	77	**Target not required**
Quantity	Number of drug deaths (illicit/rxn) diagnosed	Down is Better	389	Target not required	316	**Target not required**
Quantity	Number of elder deaths due to falls (age 65 and over)	Down is Better	54	Target not required	81	**Target not required**
Outcome	Number of Infant deaths (1 year and under)	Down is Better	21	Target not required	27	**Target not required**
Quantity	Number of Postmortem Examinations performed: Full/Partial (Not including External Exams)	Down is Better	873	Target not required	874	**Target not required**
Quantity	Number of youth (ages 10-19) homicides where gun violence is a factor	Neutral	13	Target not required	25	**Target not required**

4.2 FORENSIC TOXICOLOGY

The Division maintains standards of practice for the detection, identification, and quantitation of alcohol, drugs, and other toxins in biological specimens. The laboratory provides scientific support services to OCME so that the agency may provide accurate death investigation information in a timely manner to the next of kin, law enforcement agencies, legal counsel, and the community, when required. It also provides services to various external government entities regarding specified types of testing to include driving under the influence and drug facilitated sexual assault cases. The Forensic Toxicology Laboratory also provides toxicological analyses and interpretive services on a variety of drug and alcohol related matters for the Office of the Attorney General (OAG),

Public Defenders Service, United States Attorney's Office, United States Park Police, Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), U.S. Capitol Police, U.S. Secret Service, and Office of Victims Services.

Activities under Forensic Toxicology:

1. Forensic Analytic Testing: Provide scientific support services in the form of analytic testing for OCME and law enforcement agencies. Provide support toward the timely determination of cause and manner of death determinations via testing of specimens at forensic laboratories.

No Related Measures

2. Toxicology Analysis: Provides toxicological analyses, interpretive services and expert testimony. Provides toxicological testing on postmortem cases, as well as, testing on a variety of drug and alcohol related matters for law enforcement entities, other District agencies and federal entities, as well as, administers the District's Breath Alcohol Testing Program.

Measure Type	Related Measures	Directionality	FY2024	FY2025 Target	FY2025	FY2026 Target
Quantity	Number of DUI cases performed	Up is Better	292	Target not required	395	**Target not required**

4.3 AGENCY MANAGEMENT AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS

This Division provides for administrative support and the required tools to achieve operational and programmatic results. Division jurisdiction includes budget, procurement, human resources and employee relations, IT, records management and quality control/accreditation, legal, risk management, emergency management, labor relations, construction and renovations. Agency Financial Operations includes comprehensive and efficient financial management services to, and on behalf of, District agencies so that the financial integrity of the District of Columbia is maintained.

Activities under Agency Management and Financial Operations:

1. Standard Operating Procedures: Manage agency operational documents providing effective and detailed tracking, auditing, and reporting. Maintain and update standard operating procedures, work processes and instructions, and other related documentation utilizing document management and control systems and process automations to ensure compliance with industry standards.

No Related Measures

2. Vehicle Operations and Accountability: Implement and maintain a system for managing the use of agency vehicles and accountability for agency drivers. Work throughout the year to manage, maintain, and purchase new vehicles utilized for death scene investigation, transport of decedents, emergency incident management, and administrative functions.

No Related Measures

3. Professional Training/Career Development: Provide training and career development services to agency staff so they can maintain licensure and certifications, meet accrediting guidelines, and adhere to best practices. Establish innovative ways to obtain training opportunities for staff through District, university, industry-specific, web-based, and internal programs.

No Related Measures

4. Performance Management: Provide support to overall organizational performance via agency leadership, administrative support services, and employee performance management. Develop short and long term strategic plan for the agency, manage agency and employee performance planning, reporting and evaluating, and provide the administrative support necessary to operate.

No Related Measures

5. Customer Service: Provide service information and responses to internal and external customers to have their needs met in a courteous, reliable, and timely manner. Engage next of kin, the funeral industry, law enforcement, health care providers, legal entities, educational institutions, emergency response entities, the public health entities, elected officials, other agencies and residents in the: a) dissemination of requested information; and b) the awareness of agency programs, issues, and challenges.

No Related Measures

6. Human Resources: Recruitment and retention of a highly skilled, professional, and diverse workforce. Focus on staff development, hiring candidates with requisite qualifications, licenses and certifications, maintaining a low vacancy rate, and an efficient onboarding time.

No Related Measures

7. Data Analysis Fusion Center: Provide data collection, surveillance, and analysis resulting in the promotion of public safety and health. Establish scientific and technical methods and practices to identify and evaluate data in order to determine outcomes and trends in mortality statistics to improve the quality of life of District residents.

No Related Measures

8. Procurement Process Management: Support the District's contracts and procurements process through adherence to the District's rules and regulations, particularly the percentage of budget spent on CBEs. Provision of contracts management, purchasing, and technical assistance to agency staff to obtain products and services within budget, in a timely manner, and according to customer specifications.

No Related Measures

9. Records Management: Serve as the custodian of agency records providing premier customer service to all parties requesting records the agency is entrusted to secure. Process, maintain, and secure error-free quality records for the District to include autopsy reports, photographs, and other documents as requested by next of kin, the legal community, insurance companies, courts, and other entities.

No Related Measures

4.4 FATALITY REVIEW

This Division reviews the circumstances of the deaths of individuals within certain populations, including their interaction with District government services. The purpose of the reviews is to provide analysis and recommendations to the public and District entities serving defined populations so that they can address systemic problems and provide better services. Current fatality review committees or boards include: Child Fatality Review Committee; Developmental Disabilities Fatality Review Committee; Maternal Fatality Review Committee; Violence Fatality Review Committee; Opioid Fatality Review Board.

Activities under Fatality Review:

1. Committee Recommendations: Review circumstances of the deaths of individuals within certain populations, including their interaction with District government services. Conduct fatality reviews to provide recommendations to District entities serving defined populations, so they can address systemic problems, provide better services, and be held accountable.

No Related Measures

5 PROJECTS

5.1 HUMAN RESOURCES MODERNIZATION

Proposed Completion Date: September 30, 2026

Agency management will evaluate current Human Resource assets and procedures in order to determine areas for modernization and improvement. The project includes a full overview of overall procedures for recruitment, retention, FMLA/ADA and employee relations; filing and record-keeping systems; updating and training on the employee manual; strategic planning; and the provision of training to HR staff.

5.2 CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS PLAN (COOP) SITE BUILD-OUT

Related Administrative Structure: Death Investigation and Certification

Proposed Completion Date: September 30, 2026

The agency will continue to work with DGS toward a Phase III of agency renovations targeted toward buildout of a Fatality Management Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) Site. The agency began discussion with DGS regarding the COOP Site in 2018 and requested funding for the buildout of a site. The agency was able to secure a DC government-owned building (Blue Plains Annex) and was formally approved to use the site as its COOP site. The agency will work with DGS toward concept, design and ultimately construction to renovate the site to include mortuary, emergency response and administrative space to be able to operate as an alternate site as required by its accrediting body (National Association of Medical Examiner). During FY25, the first part of the project will include the assessment and design. In FY26, design will continue toward actual construction.

5.3 VEHICLE REPLACEMENT PLAN

Related Administrative Structure: Death Investigation and Certification

Proposed Completion Date: September 30, 2026

The agency vehicle replacement plan must be implemented at this time given the age of current vehicles. During the first quarter of FY25, the agency will implement its plan to procure vehicles based on its replacement plan. The first phase of this plan is to identify the actual vehicles and determine the procurement methodology. In FY26, the agency intends to procure the vehicles.

5.4 AGENCY VEHICLE UTILIZATION IMPROVEMENT

Proposed Completion Date: September 30, 2026

Agency management has noted a significant increase in citations for moving and parking violations. Additionally, the significant number of the agency fleet vehicles have sustained damage resulting from agency employee utilization. Agency employees have consistently attempted to avert responsibility for violations and damage to the vehicles. To address this serious matter, the agency will host additional trainings to include: driving, safety, District requirements for vehicle utilization. The agency will investigate enhanced methods to track vehicle utilization per employee in order to assign accountability. The agency will update its Vehicle Operations Manual to include a modified method of notification of violations and clarification regarding disciplinary measures for employees that do not adhere to the District and agency regulations and protocols. The goal is ensure the safety of employee, residents and visitors; cost-effective vehicle utilization (i.e., reduction in moving and parking violations and vehicle damage); and to promote accountability amongst agency drivers.