



# WASHOE COUNTY

Integrity Communication Service  
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## STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: March 11, 2025

**DATE:** Thursday, March 06, 2025

**TO:** Board of County Commissioners

**FROM:** Justin Norton, Operations Manager, Regional Medical Examiner's Office  
(775) 785-6114, [jnorton@washoecounty.gov](mailto:jnorton@washoecounty.gov)

**THROUGH:** Dr. Laura D. Knight, Chief Medical Examiner & Coroner

**SUBJECT:** Recommendation to approve and accept grant funding from the State of Nevada Department of Health and Human Services in the amount of \$819,094.00 [no County match] for personnel, equipment, toxicology testing, training, travel, and operating expenses relating to the State Opioid Response grant, for a retroactive term of September 30, 2024 through September 29, 2025; authorize the creation of 1.0 FTE Medicolegal Death Investigator/Technologist and 1.0 FTE Forensic Epidemiologist (effective and contingent on Job Evaluation Committee (JEC) review and approval) funded 100% by the State Opioid Response grant award, and as such if grant funding is reduced or eliminated, the position hours will be reduced and/or the position will be abolished accordingly unless additional funding is secured; direct the Human Resources Department to make the necessary staffing adjustments as evaluated by the JEC; and if approved, authorize the Chief Medical Examiner & Coroner of the Washoe County Regional Medical Examiner's Office to sign the grant award documents necessary to receive the grant; and if approved authorize Finance to make the necessary amendments to the Regional Medical Examiner's Office's Fiscal Year 2025 budget to reflect the receipt and use of the grant funds. (All Commission Districts.)

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### **SUMMARY**

The Regional Medical Examiner's Office is requesting that the Board of County Commissioners approve and accept grant funds in the amount of \$819,094.00 from the State of Nevada for a retroactive term of September 30, 2024 through September 29, 2025. The funds will be utilized to create two new full-time positions, a Medicolegal Death Investigator/Technologist and a Forensic Epidemiologist (exact title and paygrade to be determined). It will also be utilized to cover expenses for intermittent hourly employees, overtime, equipment, training, toxicology testing, travel, and other operating expenses to investigate drug-related deaths and to provide data regarding these investigations to the state and other regional partners. This is the first year the Regional Medical Examiner's Office has received this grant. The grant is expected to be renewed for at least three years.

AGENDA ITEM # \_\_\_\_\_

The new positions are entirely grant funded and will be eliminated upon termination of grant funding.

**Washoe County Strategic Objective supported by this item:** Vulnerable Populations.

**PREVIOUS ACTION**

No previous action.

**BACKGROUND**

This grant is awarded to Washoe County from the State of Nevada. The purpose of the grant is to pay for personnel and operating expenses to investigate and analyze drug related deaths in the region and to generate statistical data for the state and community partners. The grant is retroactive from September 30, 2024 due to not receiving the grant award from the State of Nevada until early 2025.

**GRANT AWARD SUMMARY**

**Project/Program Name:** State Opioid Response

**Scope of the Project:** Enhanced capabilities for the Washoe County Medical Examiner to accurately identify and report on opioid, xylazine, and stimulant-related deaths, thereby providing critical data to inform public health strategies. This comprehensive testing and data dissemination will support targeted harm reduction efforts, improve community awareness, and ultimately contribute to a decrease in substance-related fatalities in the region.

**Benefit to Washoe County Residents:**

In addition to performing additional toxicology testing on those who die, statistical data can be used by law enforcement, health agencies, and other agencies to better understand the causes/factors of these deaths and find ways to reduce them.

**On-Going Program Support:**

This is the first year of the program which is expected to continue for at least three years.

**Award Amount:** \$819,094.00

**Grant Period:** September 30, 2024 – September 29, 2025

**Funding Source:** United States Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

**Pass Through Entity:** State of Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health

**Assistance Listing #/CFDA:** 93.136

**Grant ID Number:** 6H79TI085762-02M005

**Match Amount and Type:** No match

**Sub-Awards and Contracts:** No sub-awards or contracts

**FISCAL IMPACT**

Should the Board accept this grant award, the Fiscal Year 2025 adopted budget for the Regional Medical Examiner’s Office will be increased by \$819,094.00 in both revenue and expenditures in the following accounts:

<b>Cost Object &amp; Description</b>	<b>G/L Account &amp; Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>
IO 12499 – State Opioid Response FY25 & FY26	431100 – Federal Grants	\$819,094.00
IO 12499 – State Opioid Response FY25 & FY26	701412 – Salary Adjustment	\$173,000.00
IO 12499 – State Opioid Response FY25 & FY26	705360 – Benefit Adjustment	\$115,610.00
IO 12499 – State Opioid Response FY25 & FY26	701130 – Pooled Positions	\$70,000.00
IO 12499 – State Opioid Response FY25 & FY26	701300 – Overtime	\$50,000.00
IO 12499 – State Opioid Response FY25 & FY26	711210 – Travel	\$12,080.00
IO 12499 – State Opioid Response FY25 & FY26	710104 - Toxicology	\$200,004.00
IO 12499 – State Opioid Response FY25 & FY26	710210 – Software Maintenance	\$33,004.00
IO 12499 – State Opioid Response FY25 & FY26	710300 – Operating Supplies	\$54,896.00
IO 12499 – State Opioid Response FY25 & FY26	711504 – Equipment Non-Capital	\$110,500.00

- No match required.
- Indirect costs are not requested on this grant award.
- As this award funds personnel, if grant funding is reduced or eliminated, the position hours will be reduced and/or the positions abolished accordingly.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Board of County Commissioners approve and accept grant funding from the State of Nevada Department of Health and Human Services in the amount of \$819,094.00 [no County match] for personnel, equipment, toxicology testing, training, travel, and operating expenses relating to the State Opioid Response grant, for a retroactive term of September 30, 2024 through September 29, 2025; authorize the creation of 1.0 FTE Medicolegal Death Investigator/Technologist and 1.0 FTE Forensic Epidemiologist (effective and contingent on Job Evaluation Committee (JEC) review and approval) funded 100% by the State Opioid Response grant award, and as such if grant funding is reduced or eliminated, the position hours will be reduced and/or the position will be abolished accordingly unless additional funding is secured; direct the Human Resources Department to make the necessary staffing adjustments as evaluated by the JEC; and if approved, authorize the Chief Medical Examiner & Coroner of the Washoe County Regional Medical Examiner's Office to sign the grant award documents necessary to receive the grant; and if approved authorize Finance to make the necessary amendments to the Regional Medical Examiner's Office's Fiscal Year 2025 budget to reflect the receipt and use of the grant funds.

## **POSSIBLE MOTION**

*Should the Board agree with staff's recommendation, a possible motion would be: "Move to approve and accept grant funding from the State of Nevada Department of Health and Human Services in the amount of \$819,094.00 [no County match] for personnel, equipment, toxicology testing, training, travel, and operating expenses relating to the State Opioid Response grant, for a retroactive term of September 30, 2024 through September 29, 2025; authorize the creation of 1.0 FTE Medicolegal Death Investigator/Technologist and 1.0 FTE Forensic Epidemiologist (effective and contingent on Job Evaluation Committee (JEC) review and approval) funded 100% by the State Opioid Response grant award, and as such if grant funding is reduced or eliminated, the position hours will be reduced and/or the position will be abolished accordingly unless additional funding is secured; direct the Human Resources Department to make the necessary staffing adjustments as evaluated by the JEC; and if approved, authorize the Chief Medical Examiner & Coroner of the Washoe County Regional Medical Examiner's Office to sign the grant award documents necessary to receive the grant; and if approved authorize Finance to make the necessary amendments to the Regional Medical Examiner's Office's Fiscal Year 2025 budget to reflect the receipt and use of the grant funds."*