



ARAPAHOE COUNTY



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Coroner's Office Levels of Service

Board of County Commissioners

June 17, 2025, at 1:00pm

Current Service Levels and Resources

- The Arapahoe County Coroner's Office provides statutory services comprising death investigation and postmortem examinations. These services include identifying and taking custody of the deceased, establishing the cause and manner of death, and notifying the next of kin.
 - Due to employee training and professional investment, we have always provided a high level of service with minimal frills. We meet our national accreditation standards but due to a continued increase in cases in recent years, we have cut corners where possible. Additional funding would provide the opportunity to expand and modernize our services—providing additional support to families within Arapahoe County.
 - A major gap in funding impacts our ability to perform toxicology testing. The cost of these services increases significantly each year and outpaces our allocated budget.
 - Additional funding would also be helpful to provide hardworking staff with overtime compensation and create three new FTE positions. One that would support clerical needs, one that would assist with data analysis and reporting, and another that would provide mental health and supportive services to families who have just lost a loved one.
 - Finally, additional funding could serve as an investment and potentially provide an opportunity for us to cut spending on the transportation of bodies.
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Funding for “Have-tos”

Toxicology Testing

- Initial cost would be \$110,000 (ongoing) and the budget increase is about \$20,000 annually, due to our growing population throughout Arapahoe County. This number is based on cost increases from 2022 to 2024.
 - Toxicology testing is crucial for identifying and quantifying the presence and concentration of substances (medications, illicit drugs, and alcohol) at autopsy. These findings promote public health by pinpointing trends and patterns of drug use plaguing our community. We currently have federal grant funding which augments our toxicology budget, however that funding is time-limited.
 - If not funded, our Forensic Pathologists cannot identify patterns or potential impact substances are having on Arapahoe County. We will not be able to provide families with information regarding intoxication in certain cases of traumatic deaths.
 - Ranked #1
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Funding for “Have-tos”

Overtime for Medical Death Investigators (MDI)

- The initial cost is \$37,265 (ongoing) with projected increases in salary over time. This number is based on the median salaries for our MDIs and the number of compensation hours accrued from 2024.
 - Overtime offers hardworking staff an immediate financial incentive and satisfaction, professional development and experience, and can be easier to track over time. Staff currently accrue comp time, which is difficult to utilize given their 24/7 schedule.
 - If not funded, we are worried staff will feel like they are not being compensated for their hard work and possibly seek to work for other counties that provide the benefit. Staff will continue to accumulate comp time which is not able to be used, negating the benefit.
 - Ranked #2
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Funding for “Have-tos”

Coroner’s Office Specialist

- The initial cost is \$82,423 (ongoing) with projected increases in salary over time. This would be a N06 grade, \$60,091 median salary, and \$82,423.25 overall cost for total compensation.
 - One (1) FTE
 - This person would take on clerical duties, currently being performed by our MDIs, at a lower cost. We expect this will improve administrative efficiencies, streamline workflows, and enhance organizational performance.
 - If not funded, we will continue to see a backlog on both clerical and investigative duties, with undue clerical burden on other specialized staff.
 - Ranked #3
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Funding for “Shoulds”

Forensic Epidemiologist

- The initial cost is \$115,423 (ongoing) with projected increases in salary over time. This would be a E05 grade, \$88,403 median salary, and \$115,791.78 overall cost for total compensation.
- One (1) FTE
- This person would analyze MDI data, track trends, fulfill data requests, and prepare dashboards and annual reports to promote public health planning. We expect this will improve administrative efficiencies and enhance prevention data for our community.
- If not funded, there we will continue to see a backlog in or absence of these duties. We do not have one specialized person who can focus solely on analyzing data to establish causation and risks facing our community.
- Ranked #1



Funding for “Shoulds”

Family Assistance Coordinator/Social Worker

- The initial cost is \$90,930 (ongoing) with projected increases in salary overtime. This would be a N07 grade, \$67,309 median salary, and \$90,930.39 overall cost for total compensation.
- One (1) FTE
- This person could provide crucial support and resources for families during and after a death investigation. This includes but is not limited to notifying loved ones of a death, providing grief services and referrals to community resources, guiding families through coroner office procedures and answering questions, and acting as a liaison to public health programs.
- If not funded, Arapahoe County families might not feel the complete support they deserve after a family member’s passing. These duties are currently spread amongst the current staff, who do not have specific social work or grief counseling training.
- Ranked #2

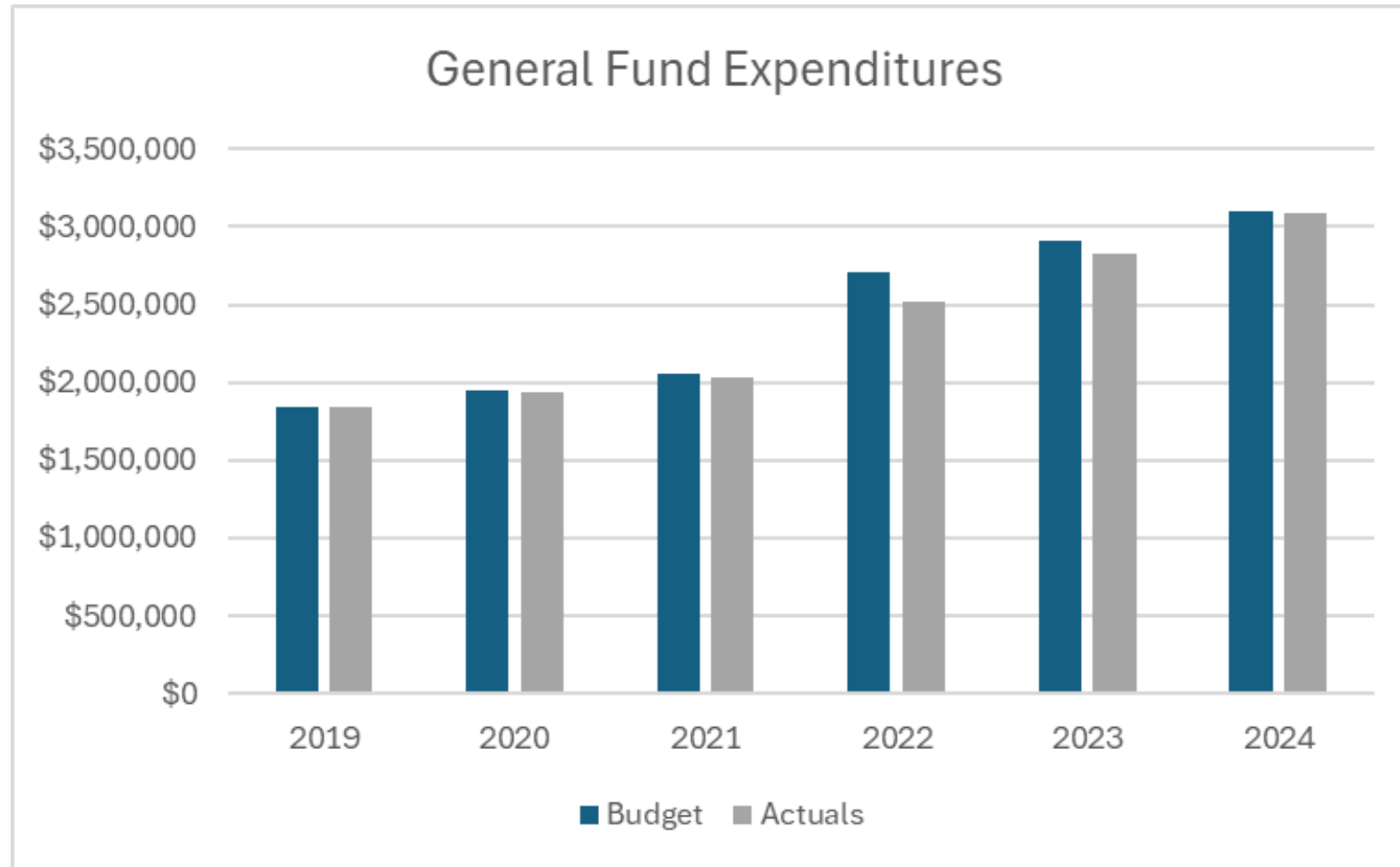


Funding for “Could’s”

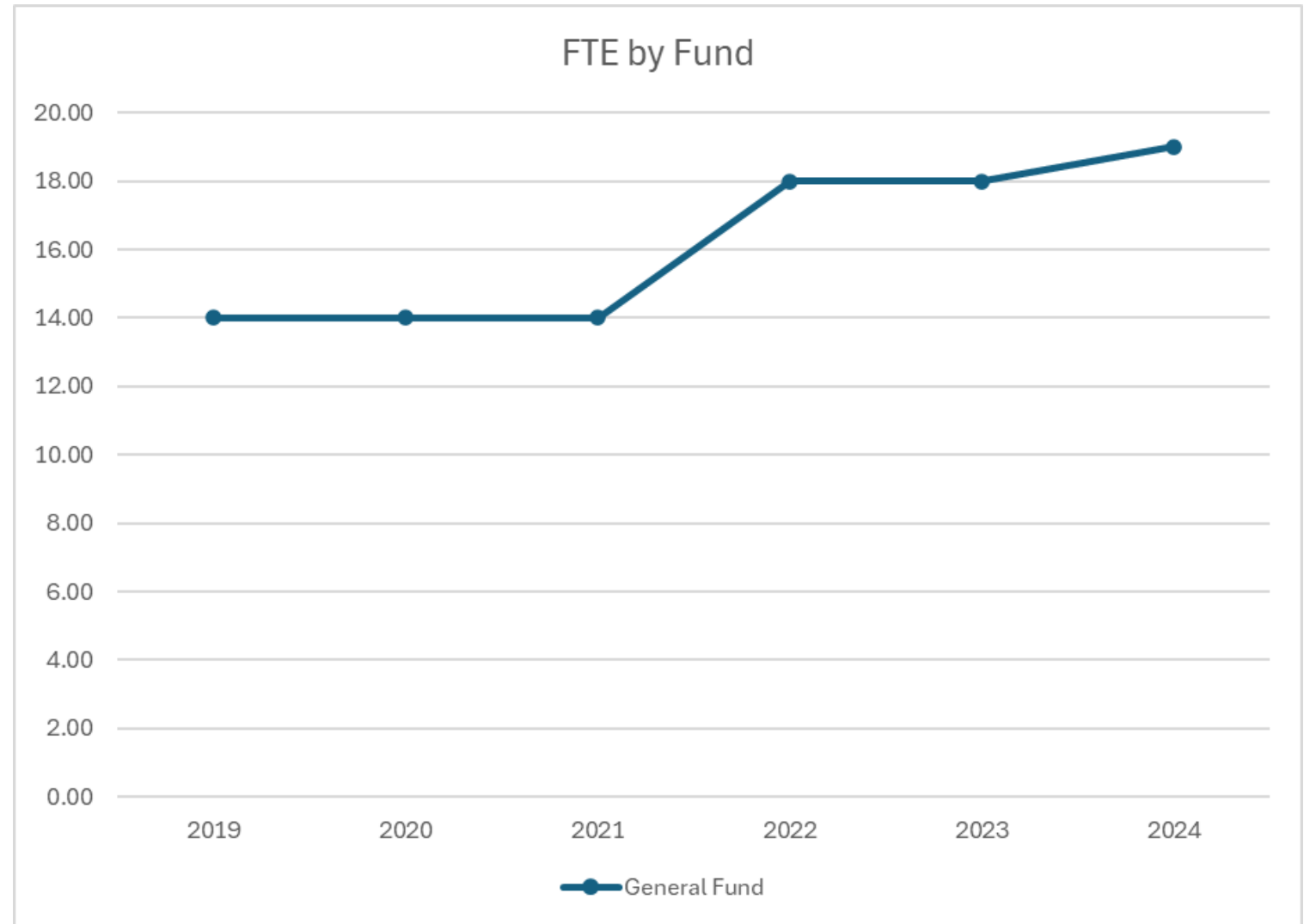
Body Transportation Unit

- Initial cost is \$62,384 (one-time) for a vehicle and \$120,182 (ongoing) for transportation staff with projected increases in salary overtime. This would be a N06 grade, \$60,091 median salary, and \$82,423.25 overall cost for total compensation.
 - Two (2) FTE
 - While this is a large upfront cost, there is the potential for return on investment, by reducing the overall annual cost of body transportation.
 - If not funded, we will potentially continue to pay for a costly service (total amount in 2023 was \$154,317 and \$152,870 in 2024, and there will be routine increases due to increased caseload and RFP/contract renewal).
 - Ranked #1
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Coroner's Office Historical Look 2019-2024



Coroner's Office Historical Look 2019-2024





Areas of Opportunity

Ensuring Accurate Information

Supporting Families

Promoting Public Health

Employee Satisfaction and Retention

Modernization

Research and Education

Reducing Cost by Investing



Areas of Efficiencies

Allocation of Duties

Streamlined Employee Responsibilities

Communication with Families

Expedited Reporting

Public Health Coordination

Improved Response Times

Guidance to Resources

Keeping Services Onsite



Challenges/Concerns

- Challenge to find grant funding for specific services.
 - Concerned about increase cost for services.
 - Challenge in the increased population of our county and being able to support them with current staff shortages.
 - Lack of skilled/appropriate personnel to allocate statutory and community-supporting tasks.
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