

Medicolegal Death Investigation Systems

3,143 MDI offices were recorded in the United States in 2018

Types of Medicolegal Death Investigation Systems

The Collaborating Office for Medical Examiners and Coroners (COMEC) recognizes three types of MDI systems in the United States:

Coroner	Medical Examiners	Other County Officials
- Often Elected - Single County - Not required to possess medical training or to be a certified physician	- Often Appointed - Often Trained Physicians - Often Forensic Pathologists	Employ a different county official to perform, medicolegal death investigations

Proportion of MDI Offices in the United States (n = 3,143)

Coroner	n = 1,544	49%
Medical Examiner	n = 1,146	36%
Other County Officials	n = 453	14%

Variability

Organizational Placement	Some MDI systems have standalone offices, while others are housed in established official offices such as law enforcement agencies, forensic laboratories, or health departments.
Funding	Funding for these offices varies by the state and are heavily reliant on county or state tax dollars. Lower salaries can lead to fewer applications for qualified staff positions

Qualifications and Statutes

- 62% of states (n = 31) require a minimum level of forensic pathology training certified by the American Board of Pathology.
- Ongoing training varies by state, with some states not requiring it and others ranging from a one-time training to ongoing training with consequences for lack of completion.
- Statutes often stipulate the applicant must be a resident of the county in which they wish to hold office, a U.S. citizen, and hold a high school diploma.
- The five most commonly identified themes from state statutes are listed in the table.

Qualifications and Training
Medical Examiner vs. Coroner
Forensic Pathology
Residency Requirements
Citizenship and Age Requirements