



Variation in Medicolegal Death Investigation Systems: A Review of Literature

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Introduction

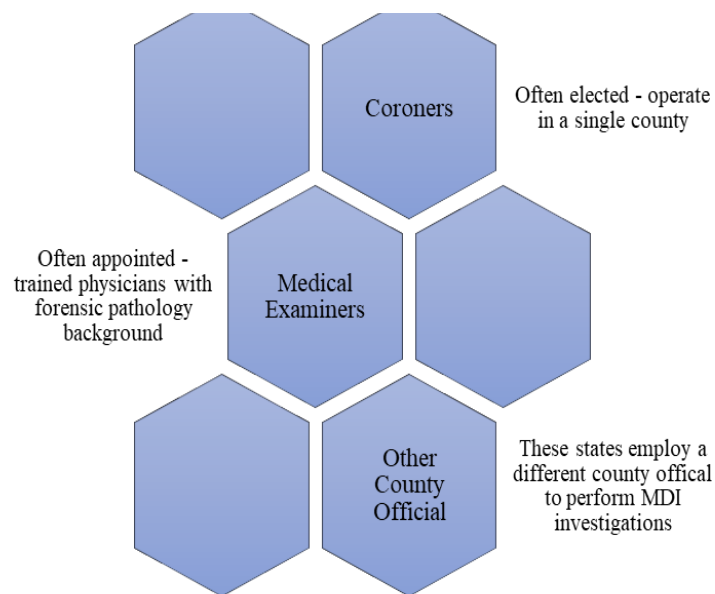
With the importance of coroner and medical examiner systems in the United States, it is imperative to understand their rules and regulations for operation. Medicolegal death investigations are performed for deaths in the jurisdiction of a coroner or medical examiner and collect information regarding the deceased individual and scene in order to identify whether further investigation into the death is necessary (American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigator, n.d.). They are instrumental in the investigation and determination of cause and manner of death. Though their primary focus is often in cases of unexplained or unnatural deaths, they play a role in determining all cases of death (Institute of Medicine, 2003). This report seeks to understand the variation and complexity of these positions across the United States through analysis of statutes and policies pertaining to the procedures and operations of medicolegal death investigation (MDI) systems.

Types of MDI Systems and Variability

In examining the findings of the Collaborating Office for Medical Examiners and Coroners (COMEC), there are three recognized types of MDI systems present in the United States, presented in Figure 1. Coroners are most often elected, operate within a single county, and are not usually required to possess medical training or be a certified physician (Institute of Medicine, 2003). Medical examiners, on the other hand, are often appointed officials, trained physicians, and commonly also recognized as forensic pathologists. Depending on the location, they can serve their role in a county, region, or state level capacity (COMEC, 2024). The final category recognized is other county official systems. Not including a coroner or medical examiner, these systems employ a different county official who performs MDI investigations. Their suggestions for common positions in these systems are “Justices of the Peace, county attorneys, sheriff-coroners and other law enforcement personnel” (COMEC, 2024, p. 1).

Lack of standardization of MDI systems is the result of multiple factors. An office's organizational placement is a large defining factor. Many states have standalone offices, while some house them within established law enforcement offices. There are also states that establish these offices as part of a forensic laboratory or in their health department. As of 2003, approximately 43% of the nation's population existed in an area covered by standalone

Figure 1. Types of MDI Systems in the United States



offices (Institute of Medicine, 2003). Funding for these offices also varies by state, often made up largely of county or state tax dollars. However, low personnel salaries often lead to difficulties in recruiting qualified and well-trained staff (Institute of Medicine, 2003).

The operation of MDI systems can also be standardized across an entire state or vary by county. This is usually correlated with the existence of a state medical examiner, who is often the guiding office for procedures. Findings from March 2024 show that 23 states as well as Washington D.C. have counties primarily served by a medical examiner. Twenty states have counties that are served by county coroners, and six remaining states have MDI systems run by other county officials (COMEC, 2024). As of 2018, there were over 3,000 MDI offices located in the United States. Of the recorded offices ($n = 3,143$), approximately 49% employed the use of a coroner ($n = 1,544$), 36% employed a medical examiner ($n = 1,146$), and 14% employed a system using other county officials ($n = 453$) (COMEC, 2018). These findings are presented in Figure 2 (COMEC, 2024, p. 2).

Map 1: Type of Medicolegal Death Investigation System, by County

● Coroner ● Medical Examiner ● Other County Official

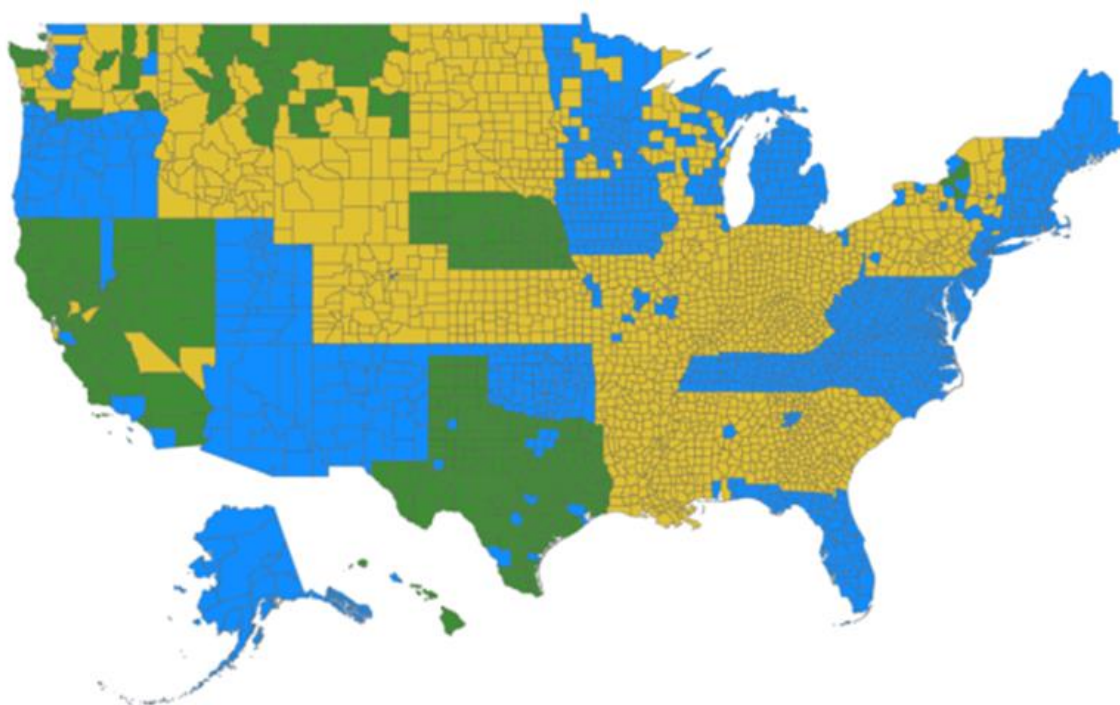


Figure 2. Type of Medicolegal Death Investigation System, by County (COMEC, 2024, p. 2)

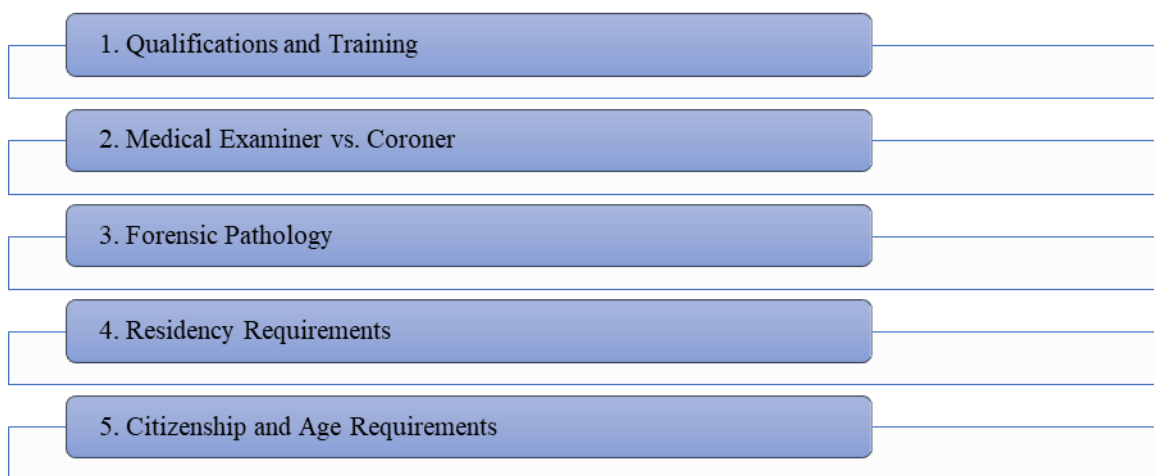
Qualifications and Statutes

Many states use both a coroner and medical examiner. In these cases, coroners are often elected or appointed positions, whereas medical examiners are mainly appointed by a governing body to oversee certain tasks and procedures, or in the event of the office of the coroner's abolishment. The intricacies of coroner and medical examiner positions vary by state, but there are identifiable commonalities. Trying to determine the standing of offices is difficult, but many are evaluated on factors such as accreditation through the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME)

and requirements for training. According to state statutes regarding the term length of coroners and medical examiners, 23 states implement a term length of four years, often coinciding with the regular election cycle (CDC, 2024). Two states, Arkansas and Tennessee, limit their terms to two years (CDC, 2024). The remaining 25 states, either do not designate a term length or the MDI position in their state is appointed, so term length is determined by a governing body rather than through a fixed term. The term limits of the 25 identified states and associated statutes are listed in Appendix A.

The largest theme identified throughout all statutes was qualifications and training, as statutes mention education requirements, medical background, specialized training, as well as the process of continued training. Qualifications vary depending on the state, but there are commonly recognized and frequently repeated requirements. Almost two-thirds, 62% (n = 31), require a minimum of forensic pathology training often with certification by the American Board of Pathology. Many of these states coincide with those that primarily use medical examiners. A number of other qualifications are identified, most commonly being a resident of the county, a U.S citizen, and holding a high school diploma or equivalent. An interesting area of variation is within the required amount of ongoing training required for individuals in MDI positions. Not all statutes require ongoing education, and those that do range from needing to complete a program once to ongoing training on an annual basis with consequences if it is not completed (CDC, n.d.). This variation suggests that there are substantial differences in education across the country, not only in the content but in the required length. The other most frequent areas identified were distinctions between medical examiner and coroner roles, state residency requirements, age and citizenship requirement, and the mention of forensic pathology experience. The five most frequent themes are identified in Figure 3. A full list of qualifications is listed by state and statute in Appendix B.

Figure 3. Five Most Common Qualification Themes from Statutes



Conclusion

Medicolegal Death Investigation (MDI) Systems play a crucial role in how deaths are processed in the United States. They may be run by varying personnel according to a state's needs, and operational differences present themselves in their placement and funding. Both are determined by a multitude of factors that can impact the day-to-day functions of these offices. Perhaps the

largest area of variation is within qualifications, with each state mandating their own requirements for the positions of coroner and medical examiner. While commonalities, such as education and residency, appear in many of the statutes, the lack of standardization leaves the broader network of MDIs to be inconsistent and difficult to widely analyze. In conclusion, understanding the disparities present in MDI systems is important to bettering the processes through which death investigations are performed as well as the organizational systems that support them.

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Appendix A

Table 1. Term Length of Elected MDI By State, as of 2024

State	Term Length	Statute
Alabama	4 yrs.	<u>Ala. Code § 11-5-1.</u>
Arkansas	2 yrs.	<u>Ark. Code Ann. § 14-14-1302.</u>
Colorado	4 yrs.	<u>Colo. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 30-10 601.</u>
Georgia	4 yrs.	<u>Ga. Code Ann. § 45-16-1</u>
Idaho	4 yrs. [but may be less than four years as provided by resolution or petition]	<u>Idaho Code Ann. § 34-622</u>
Illinois	4 yrs.	<u>10 Il. Comp. Stat. Ann. § 5/2A-18.</u>
Indiana	4 yrs.	<u>Ind. Code Ann. § 36-2-14-2.</u>
Kentucky	4 yrs.	<u>Ky. Const. § 99.</u>
Louisiana	4 yrs.	<u>La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 13:5701.</u>
Minnesota	4 yrs.	<u>Minn. Stat. Ann. § 382.01.</u>
Mississippi	4 yrs.	<u>Miss. Code. Ann. § 23-15-193.</u>
Missouri	4 yrs.	<u>Mo. Ann. Stat. § 58.020.</u>
Nebraska	4 yrs.	<u>Neb. Rev. Stat. § 32-522.</u>
Nevada	4 yrs.	<u>Nev. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 248.010; Nev. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 248.020.</u>
New York	4 yrs.	<u>N.Y. County Law § 400 (McKinney).</u>
North Carolina	4 yrs.	<u>N.C. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 152-1.</u>
Ohio	4 yrs.	<u>Ohio Rev. Code Ann. § 313.01.</u>
Pennsylvania	4 yrs.	<u>53 Pa. Cons. Stat. Ann. § 3092.</u>
South Carolina	4 yrs.	<u>S.C. Code Ann. § 17-5-40.</u>
South Dakota	4 yrs.	<u>S.D. Codified Laws § 7-7-1.1.</u>
Tennessee	2 yrs.	<u>Tenn. Code Ann. § 8-9-101.</u>
Texas	4 yrs.	<u>Tex. Const. art. V, § 18.</u>
Washington	4 yrs.	<u>Wash. Rev. Code Ann. § 36.16.020.</u>
Wisconsin	4 yrs.	<u>Wis. Stat. Ann. § 59.20.</u>
Wyoming	4 yrs.	<u>Wyo. Stat. Ann. § 7-4-101.</u>

Appendix B

Table 2. Statutory Qualifications for Coroners by State, as of 2024

State	Qualifications	Statute
Alabama	“Complete at least 12 hours of approved training within six months of assuming office, unless he or she has at least 24 months of previous service as a county coroner or deputy coroner in the state. Any coroner, deputy coroner, or any person authorized to officially represent the county coroner shall complete 12 hours of training, approved by the commission, during each calendar year he or she serves as coroner. (1) Is a US Citizen (2) is a resident in the county they seek election for at least a year (3) registered voter (4) is 25 yrs old prior to election date (5) has a high school diploma (6) no felony convictions (7) completed next scheduled training no longer than 180 days after election or appointment”	<u>Ala. Code § 11-5-31.</u>
Alaska	“(b) The state medical examiner and the deputy medical examiner must be physicians licensed to practice in the state who have education and experience in forensic pathology”	<u>Alaska Stat. Ann. § 12.65.015.</u>
Arizona	“Forensic pathologist”	<u>Ariz. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 11-592.</u>
Arkansas	“(a)(1) The State Medical Examiner as well as associate medical examiners shall (A) Be citizens of the United States; (B) Be physicians or surgeons with a doctor of medicine degree who have been licensed or who are eligible to be licensed to practice medicine in the State of Arkansas; (C) Have a minimum of three (3) years postgraduate training in human pathology as recognized by the American Medical Association; and (D) Have had at least one (1) year of experience in medical-legal practice. (2) The State Medical Examiner shall also be board certified or eligible for board certification as recognized by the American Board of Pathology in Forensic Pathology.”	<u>Ark. Code Ann. § 12-12-307.</u>
California	“The medical examiner shall be a licensed physician and surgeon duly qualified as a specialist in pathology”	<u>Cal. Gov't Code § 24010</u>
Colorado	-Is a citizen of the United States and a resident of the state of Colorado and of the county in which the person will hold the office of coroner; -Has earned a high school diploma or its equivalent or a college degree -Attends at the first opportunity after the election or appointment, a training course for new coroners of at least forty hours -Obtain certification in basic medical-legal death investigation	<u>Colo. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 30-10-601.5.</u>

	-Complete a minimum of sixteen hours of in- service training	
Connecticut	“The Chief Medical Examiner shall be a citizen of the United States and a doctor of medicine licensed to practice medicine in Connecticut and shall have had a minimum of four years postgraduate training in pathology and such additional subsequent experience in forensic pathology as the commission may determine, provided any person otherwise qualified who is not licensed to so practice may be appointed Chief Medical Examiner, provided he or she obtains such a license within one year of his or her appointment. The chief medical examiner shall meet all qualifications specified in Section 19a-404 of the Connecticut General Statutes and shall be certified by the American Board of Pathology in forensic pathology.”	Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 19a-404.
Delaware	"Chief Medical Examiner (unspecified). Qualifications of Medical Examiner"	§ 4704
Florida	“Practicing physicians in pathology.”	Fla. Stat. Ann. § 406.06.
Georgia	Qualifications of Coroners and Medical Examiners in Georgia	Ga. Code Ann. § 45-16-80 Ga. Code Ann. § 45-16-1. Ga. Code Ann. § 45-16-6. Ga. Code Ann. § 112-2-.04.
Hawaii	“An autopsy of a deceased person under this chapter shall be performed by an anatomic or forensic pathologist certified as such by the American Board of Pathology. The medical examiner or any of the medical examiner's assistants in the city and county of Honolulu, and any experienced or qualified government physician designated by the coroner in the counties of Hawaii, Maui, and Kauai, shall be the coroner's physician for such county or city and county.”	Haw. Rev. Stat. § 841-14.5. Haw. Rev. Stat. § 841-18.
Idaho	“After January 1, 2010, each county coroner shall complete twenty-four (24) hours of continuing education on a biennial calendar basis. No person shall be elected to the office of coroner unless he has attained the age of twenty-one (21) years at the time of his election, is a citizen of the United States and shall have resided within the county one (1) year next preceding his election . . .All newly elected or appointed county coroners shall attend a coroner's school within one (1) year of taking office. Such school shall be sponsored or endorsed by the Idaho state association of county coroners.”	Idaho Code Ann. § 31-2810 Idaho Code Ann. § 34-622.
Illinois	Qualifications of Coroner and Medical Examiners in Illinois	55 Il. Comp. Stat. Ann. § 5/3-3014. Ill. Admin. Code tit. 20, § 1760.201. 55 Il. Comp. Stat. Ann. § 5/3-3001.
Indiana	-A county coroner must reside within the county as provided in Article 6, Section 6 of the Constitution of the State of Indiana. -The requirement for the minimum basic training course necessary to satisfy the	Ind. Code Ann. § 36-2-14-23. Ind. Code Ann. § 36-2-14-2. 207 Ind. Code Ann. § 36-2-14-22.3.

	mandate contained in 207 IAC 1-2 for all deputy coroners, whether employed on a part-time or full-time basis, shall consist of not less than forty (40) hours of classroom and practical training: The coroners training board established by IC 4-23-6. 5-3, in consultation with the Indiana law enforcement academy, shall create and offer a training course for coroners and deputy coroners. The coroners training board, in consultation with the Indiana law enforcement academy, shall create and offer an annual training course for coroners and deputy coroners. Each coroner shall successfully complete the training course offered under section 22.3(a) of this chapter within six (6) months after taking office . . . (c) Each coroner and each deputy coroner shall successfully complete the annual training course offered under section 22.3(b) of this chapter each year after the year in which the coroner or deputy coroner received the training required by section 22.3(a) of this chapter.”	
Iowa	The state medical examiner shall be a physician and surgeon or osteopathic physician and surgeon, be licensed to practice medicine in the state of Iowa, and be board certified or eligible to be board certified in anatomic and forensic pathology by the American board of pathology. The state medical examiner shall be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the director of public health upon the advice of and in consultation with the director of public safety and the governor. The state medical examiner, in consultation with the director of public health, shall be responsible for developing and administering the medical examiner's budget and for employment of medical examiner staff and assistants To serve as a county medical examiner a person shall be licensed in this state as a doctor of medicine and surgery, a doctor of osteopathic medicine and surgery, or an osteopathic physician.	<u>Iowa Code Ann. § 331.801.</u> <u>Iowa Code Ann. § 691.5.</u>
Kansas	The district coroner shall be a resident of the state of Kansas licensed to practice medicine and surgery by the state board of healing arts or shall be a resident of a military or other federal enclave within the state and shall be duly licensed to practice medicine and surgery within such enclave.	<u>Kan. Stat. Ann. § 22a-226.</u>
Kentucky	State Medical Examiner: board-certified forensic pathologist. Coroner: No person shall be eligible to the offices mentioned in Sections 97 and 99 who is not at the time of his election twenty-four years of age . . . , a citizen of Kentucky, and who has not resided in the State two years, and one year next preceding his election in the county and district in which he is a candidate.	<u>Ky. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 72.240.</u> <u>Ky. Const. § 100.</u>
Louisiana	A. The coroner shall be a physician licensed by the Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners to practice medicine in the state of Louisiana. This requirement shall be waived in any parish in which no licensed physician qualifies to run for the office. B. The coroner shall be a resident of the parish. However, a licensed physician who is not a resident of the parish but who maintains a full-time medical practice at a principal medical office facility in the parish may qualify for and hold the office.	<u>L.a. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 13:5704.</u>
Maine	The Chief Medical Examiner must possess a degree of doctor of medicine or doctor of osteopathy, be licensed to practice in the State and be expert in the specialty of forensic pathology.	<u>Me. Rev. Stat. tit. 22, § 3022.</u>
Maryland	(b)(1) The Chief Medical Examiner . . . shall be board certified in anatomic and	<u>Md. Code Ann., Health–Gen. § 5-305.</u>

	forensic pathology by the American Board of Pathology.	
Massachusetts	The chief medical examiner shall be a physician who is a diplomat of the American Board of Pathology with certification in anatomic pathology and subspecialty certification in forensic pathology, a graduate of an approved fellowship program in forensic medicine and licensed to practice medicine in the commonwealth and must reside within the commonwealth within six months after his appointment.	<u>Mass. Gen. Laws Ann. ch. 38, § 2.</u>
Michigan	County medical examiners shall be physicians licensed to practice within this state or, if the county does not have an accredited hospital, licensed in another state that borders the county.	<u>Mich. Comp. Laws Ann. § 52.201.</u>
Minnesota	(a) The medical examiner must be a forensic pathologist who is certified or eligible for certification by the American Board of Pathology . . . (b) The coroner must be a physician with a valid license in good standing under chapter 147, to practice medicine as defined under section 147.081, subdivision 3 . . . The coroner must obtain additional training in medicolegal death investigation, such as training by the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators, within four years of taking office, unless the coroner has already obtained this training. (c) The coroner or medical examiner need not be a resident of the county.	<u>Minn. Stat. Ann. § 390.005.</u>
Mississippi	<u>Qualifications of Coroners and Medical Examiners in Mississippi</u>	<u>Miss. Code. Ann. § 41-61-55.</u> <u>Miss. Code. Ann. § 41-61-57.</u> <u>Miss. Code. Ann. § 19-21-103.</u> <u>Miss. Code. Ann. § 19-21-105.</u>
Missouri	No person shall be elected or appointed to the office of coroner unless he be a citizen of the United States, over the age of twenty-one years, and shall have resided within the state one whole year, and within the county for which he is elected, six months next preceding the election. The county medical examiner shall be a physician duly licensed to practice by the state board of the healing arts.	<u>Mo. Ann. Stat. § 58.030.</u> <u>Mo. Ann. Stat. § 58.705.</u>
Montana	<u>Qualifications of Coroners and Medical Examiners in Montana</u>	<u>Mont. Code Ann. § 7-4-2905.</u> <u>Mont. Code Ann. § 44-3-201.</u> <u>Mont. Code Ann. § 7-4-2201.</u> <u>Mont. Code Ann. § 7-4-2904.</u>
Nebraska	Every person who is elected or appointed as a coroner or deputy coroner in or for the State of Nebraska shall satisfactorily complete initial death investigation training within one year after the date of election or appointment and thereafter annually complete continuing education as determined by the council.	<u>Neb. Rev. Stat. § 23-1213.03.</u>
Nevada	[A]ll sheriffs in this state are ex officio coroners, unless such an arrangement is altered pursuant to the mechanism set forth in NRS 244.1507 [which permits consolidation of offices between counties with populations below 45,000]. The boards of county commissioners in their respective counties may . . . prescribe	<u>Nev. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 244.163.</u> <u>Nev. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 259.020.</u>

	the qualifications and duties of the county coroner . . .	
New Hampshire	[T]he "chief medical examiner" . . . shall be a duly licensed physician and certified by the American Board of Pathology to possess special competence in forensic pathology and who has had experience in forensic medicine.	N.H. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 611-B:2.
New Jersey	Qualifications of Coroners and Medical Examiners in New Jersey	N.J. Stat. Ann. § 52:17B-83. N.J. Stat. Ann. § 40A:9-46. N.J. Stat. Ann. § 52:17B-79. N.J. Admin. Code 13:49-7.1.
New Mexico	The state medical investigator shall be a physician licensed to practice in New Mexico. Insofar as practicable, the medical investigator shall be trained in the fields of pathology and forensic medicine. State medical investigator: A licensed physician appointed by the board responsible for developing the rules and regulations for the proper investigation of deaths occurring within the state of New Mexico. . . . District medical investigator: A licensed physician appointed by the state medical Investigator who is responsible for directing the investigations within a particular district in which they practice. . . Deputy medical investigator: A lay individual appointed and trained by the OMI who responds to the scenes of reportable deaths in order to perform the duties enumerated by law. This individual is specially trained in essential aspects of forensic medicine and death investigation . . .	N.M. Stat. Ann. § 24-11-3. N.M. Code R. § 7.3.2.
New York	The medical examiner shall be a resident of the county and a physician duly licensed to practice his profession in the state of New York and shall be a person determined by the board of supervisors as qualified to perform an autopsy and dissect dead bodies of human beings. Coroner's physician. Except in counties where the office of coroner has been abolished, the board of supervisors may appoint one or more coroner's physicians or may provide by local law for the appointment of one or more coroner's physicians, and may fix the terms of their office. In any county in which the coroner or any of the coroners is not a physician duly licensed to practice medicine in this state, the board shall appoint one or more coroner's physicians. Each coroner's physician appointed pursuant to this subdivision shall by virtue of his office be a deputy coroner and shall possess the powers and perform the duties of the coroner, during the absence or inability of the coroner to act, or in the event of a vacancy in the office of coroner.	N.Y. County Law § 400 (McKinney).
North Carolina	The Chief Medical Examiner shall be a forensic pathologist certified by the American Board of Pathology and licensed to practice medicine. [P]hysicians licensed to practice medicine in this State . . .	N.C. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 130A-378. N.C. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 130A-382.
North Dakota	The state forensic examiner must be a physician who is board-certified or board-eligible in forensic pathology, who is licensed to practice in this state, and who is in	N.D. Cent. Code Ann. § 23-01-05.4.

	good standing in the profession. 1. Subject to the qualifications, training, and continuing education requirements determined by the state forensic examiner, the following individuals are eligible to serve as coroner: a. A physician licensed under chapter 43-17; b. An advanced practice registered nurse or registered nurse licensed under chapter 43-12.1; c. A physician assistant licensed under chapter 43-17; and d. Any other individual determined by the state forensic examiner to be qualified to serve as coroner.	<u>N.D. Cent. Code Ann. § 11-19.1-04.</u>
Ohio	<u>Qualifications of Coroners and Medical Examiners in Ohio</u>	<u>Ohio Rev. Code Ann. § 313.02.</u>
Oklahoma	Chief Medical Examiner . . . shall be a physician licensed to practice in Oklahoma and a diplomate of the American Board of Pathology or the American Osteopathic Board of Pathology in forensic pathology. Each medical examiner so appointed shall be a Doctor of Medicine or Osteopathy and Surgery, [and] shall hold a valid license to practice his profession in Oklahoma . .	<u>Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 63, § 934.</u> <u>Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 63, § 937.</u>
Oregon	Unspecified. The State Medical Examiner Advisory Board shall: (1) Recommend to the Oregon Department of Administrative Services the qualifications and compensation for the positions of State Medical Examiner and Deputy State Medical Examiner. The district medical examiner shall regularly conduct administrative training programs for the assistant district medical examiners, deputy medical examiners and law enforcement agencies.	<u>Or. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 146.025.</u> <u>Or. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 146.095.</u>
Pennsylvania	<u>Qualifications of Coroners and Medical Examiners in Pennsylvania</u>	<u>37 Pa. Code § 199.41.</u> <u>37 Pa. Code § 199.24.</u> <u>37 Pa. Code § 199.21.</u> <u>16 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 9525.3.</u>
Rhode Island	[S]hall be a physician licensed under the provisions of chapter 37 of title 5 and a qualified pathologist, certified by the American Board of Pathology and who has had forensic training or experience. [T]he state medical examiners commission . . . shall conduct a training course for newly appointed and qualified members within six (6) months of their qualification or designation.	<u>R.I. Gen. Laws Ann. § 23-4-5.</u> <u>R.I. Gen. Laws Ann. § 23-4-6.</u>
South	<u>Qualifications of Coroners and Medical Examiners in South Carolina</u>	<u>S.C. Code Ann. § 17-5-130.</u>

Carolina		
South Dakota	Each newly selected county coroner shall participate in the training program established by the Law Enforcement Officers Standards Commission within one year of taking office. Each county coroner shall participate in and successfully complete an advanced or refresher training established by the commission at least every two years...The county coroner training shall include training programs concerning scene investigation and death registration. The commission shall establish and maintain a county coroner training program in consultation with the Department of Health and the county coroners and through such agencies and institutions as the commission may deem appropriate.	S.D. Codified Laws § 7-14-10. S.D. Codified Laws § 23-3-71.
Tennessee	Qualifications of Coroner and Medical Examiner in Tennessee	Tenn. Code Ann. § 38-7-103. Tenn. Code Ann. § 38-7-104.
Texas	No person shall be appointed medical examiner unless he is a physician licensed by the State Board of Medical Examiners. To the greatest extent possible, the medical examiner shall be appointed from persons having training and experience in pathology, toxicology, histology and other medico-legal sciences.	Tex. Crim. Proc. Code Ann. art. 49.25.
Utah	[C]hief medical examiner . . . shall be licensed to practice medicine in the state and shall meet the qualifications of a forensic pathologist, certified by the American Board of Pathologists. "Regional pathologist" means a trained pathologist licensed to practice medicine and surgery in the state, appointed by the medical examiner pursuant to Subsection 26-4-4(3).	Utah Code Ann. § 26-4-4.
Vermont	The state board of health may contract with any person, institution, or state department for the performance of any or all of the duties of the chief medical examiner.	18 Vt. Stat. Ann. § 507.
Virginia	Chief Medical Examiner . . . shall be a forensic pathologist licensed to practice medicine in this Commonwealth . . .	Va. Code Ann. § 32.1-278.
Washington	To be appointed as a medical examiner pursuant to this section, a person must either be: (1) Certified as a forensic pathologist by the American board of pathology; or (2) a qualified physician eligible to take the American board of pathology exam in forensic pathology within one year of being appointed. A physician specializing in pathology who is appointed to the position of medical examiner and who is not certified as a forensic pathologist must pass the pathology exam within three years of the appointment.	Wash. Rev. Code Ann. § 36.24.190.

West Virginia	Qualifications of Coroner and Medical Examiner in West Virginia	W. Va. Code Ann. § 61-12-3. W. Va. Code Ann. § 61-12-6. W. Va. Code Ann. § 61-12-7. W. Va. Code Ann. § 61-12-10. W. Va. Code R. § 64-84-4.
Wisconsin	Unspecified	
Wyoming	(i) Not later than one (1) year after assuming office, a basic coroner course; (ii) Continuing education requirements promulgated by the board of coroner standards pursuant to W.S. 7-4-211(c)(iii).	Wyo. Stat. Ann. § 7-4-103.

- a. NOTE: Qualifications of MDI By State, as of 2024. This table contains links for states with expansive lists of qualifications.