



# International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners

*Collaboration · Education · Accreditation*

**Dedicated to the promotion of excellence in medicolegal death investigation through collaboration, education and accreditation.**

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December 11, 2019

Dear Fellow Coroner or Medical Examiner:

On behalf of the International Association of Medical Examiners & Coroners (IACME), I write to encourage you to participate in the attached 2018 Census of Medical Examiner and Coroner Offices (CMEC), which is sponsored by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and administered by RTI International. **To date, only 60% of medical examiner and coroner offices nationwide have submitted their surveys.**

**The CMEC is the only national data collection that provides a complete enumeration of coroners and medical examiner offices in the U.S.** As such, the CMEC provides key information about the infrastructure (e.g., staffing and budget) in place to handle our Nation's death investigations. The last survey documented that in 2004:

- County coroners' offices accounted for 80% of coroner or medical examiner offices nationwide, and most offices served populations of less than 50,000 persons.
- Offices serving large jurisdictions had an average of over 20 fulltime personnel, while those serving medium to small jurisdictions averaged 1 to 2 fulltime positions.
- The average number of cases reported to coroners and medical examiners ranged from 40 to 70 in offices serving small jurisdictions to over 3,500 among offices serving large jurisdictions.

More information about the findings from the previous CMEC survey may be found on BJS's website (<https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/meco04.pdf>). Given the opioid epidemic and other pressures that have been shouldered by our community in recent years, the 2018 CMEC has been revised to emphasize assessing "access" to resources (investigative teams, technology, and services) so that we will have a national gauge of our community's needs. These new questions were added by a panel of coroners and medical examiners who informed the survey team of the most important issues facing our community. The 2018 questions were then tested by a pool of coroners and medical examiners.

**Since the CMEC is a census, your responses cannot be replaced or replicated.** We know that coroners and medical examiners are overburdened and time is limited. However, IACME leadership would like to emphasize that this is our chance to provide key information about the state of the death investigation community and our needs, which reflects IACME's mission to promote excellence in medicolegal death investigation through collaboration and education.

We thank you in advance for your participation in this important study.

Sincerely,

Gary Watts, President  
IACME