

20
25

Impact Report

LA CROSSE COUNTY MEDICAL
EXAMINER AND CLERK OF COURTS



Medical Examiner



Clerk of Courts

Beth Lubinski, Medical Examiner
Tammy Pedretti, Clerk of Courts



LA CROSSE COUNTY

Essential Work

MESSAGE FROM THE MEDICAL EXAMINER



Within the last full year, the La Crosse County Medical Examiner's office has had the privilege to serve the community members of La Crosse County. This was possible through serving on various committees, working with all nine law enforcement agencies within the County, and working with various first responder and fire departments. The La Crosse County Medical Examiner's Office was able to strengthen our interagency relationships to work towards improving the health of the community.

In 2025, our case numbers increased a total of 1.22% compared to 2024. The Medical Examiner's Office continues to see a yearly increase in cases investigated because of a large percentage of aging individuals within La Crosse County. The La Crosse County Medical Examiner's office saw a slight increase in the number of overdose deaths investigated, but a decrease in the number of suicide deaths investigated in 2025 compared to 2024.

Throughout 2025 and into 2026, our office has been working diligently to ensure the work we provide aids in solving the issues faced by La Crosse County. This is accomplished by continuing to assist and work hand in hand with other agencies within La Crosse County.

Thank you!

Beth Lubinski

La Crosse County Medical Examiner

elubinski@lacrossecounty.org

2025 HIGHLIGHTS

- Investigated a total of 742 cases including 28 drug-related deaths, 18 suicides, 3 homicides, and 5 motor vehicle collisions.
- Hired four On-Call Deputy Medical Examiners. The hires allowed the Medical Examiner's Office to be fully staffed for the first time in several years. All four Deputy Medical Examiners are currently going through their first year of probationary training and will be completing the training within the next several months.
- Hired full time Deputy Supervisor resulting in two full time investigators and a full-time administrative assistant within the office during the week.

What We Do

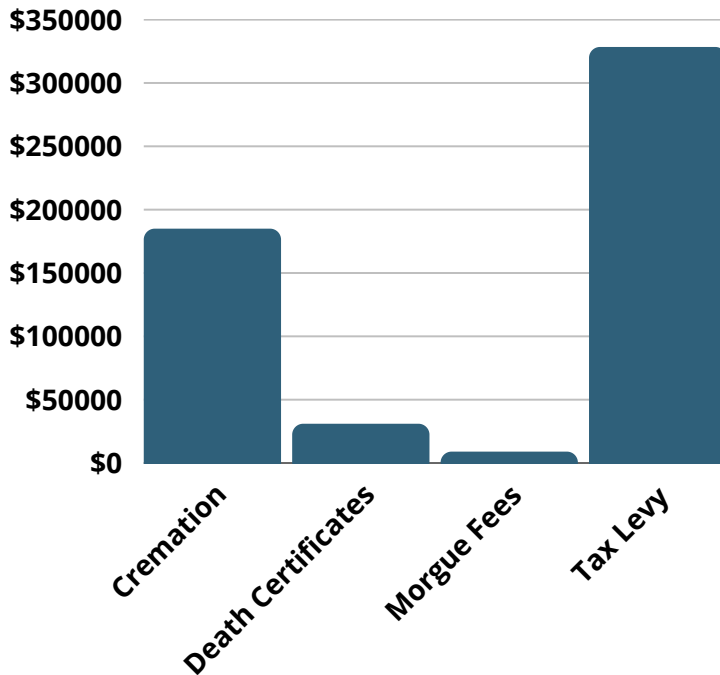
- Within the Medical Examiner's office, we perform many tasks, only some of which are publicly known. Our office investigates any type of death that occurs outside a medical facility. This includes natural home deaths, suicides, homicides, motor vehicle accidents, and accidental deaths. When we investigate deaths that occur outside of a medical facility, we are required to report to the scene, provide a thorough investigation, and work alongside law enforcement officials.
- Besides scene calls, our office also is required to investigate any death that occurs within 24 hours of hospital admission, any death at the hospital, nursing home, or home hospice where the decedent experienced a fall within the preceding 6 months. Also, any death that occurs in a medical facility that is not natural is required to be investigated. For these investigations, our presence is not necessary on scene, but rather conversation through phone calls and medical record investigation is performed.
- Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, our office visits local funeral homes in La Crosse County to obtain a photograph with identifying information for decedents who will have a cremation performed. This is also accomplished for any decedent that is leaving La Crosse County by visiting the hospital morgues. After the photograph is obtained, our office signs all cremation permits for La Crosse County which allows the funeral homes to cremate individuals. With assistance of local funeral homes, our office is responsible for investigating the cause of death and signing death certificates.
- If a case meets criteria and an autopsy is warranted, the decedent is transported by our office to Southeast Minnesota Regional Medical Examiner Office in Rochester, Minnesota for a full and complete autopsy. Our office will also obtain toxicology samples even if an autopsy is not performed. Tissue and Eye procurement occurs in our facility through various donation agencies.

LOOKING FORWARD

- Continuing to update standard operation guidelines for the department since Wisconsin Standards for Medical Examiners are updating their protocols.
- Continuing education training with staff members attending Wisconsin Coroner's & Medical Examiner's Association Conferences being held in June and January along with Minnesota Coroner's and Medical Examiner's conferences being held in May and September. Including Deputy Medical Examiners taking the national exam to become certified through the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators.
- Taking possession of our new van for the Medical Examiner's Office.

2025 Finances

REVENUE & EXPENSES

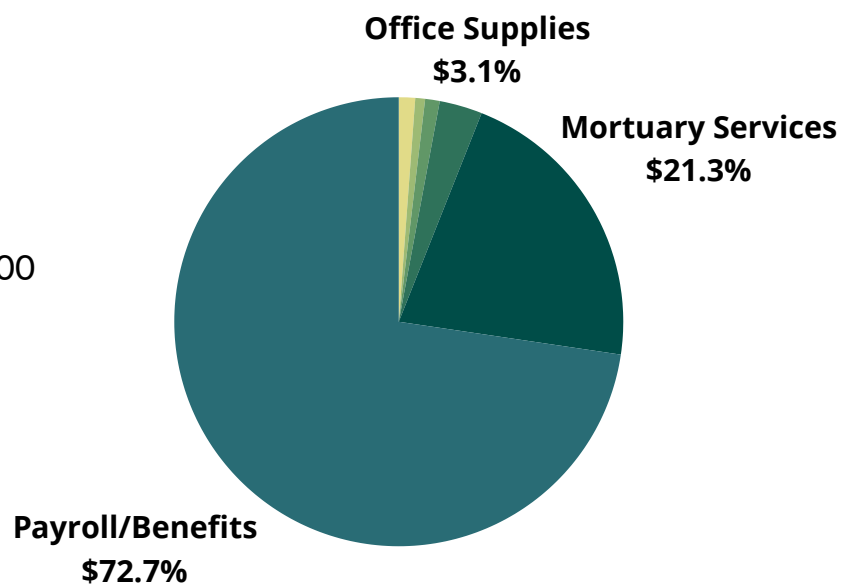


REVENUE

- Cremation: \$185,000
- Death Certificates: \$31,000
- Morgue Fees/Reports: \$9,000
- Tax Levy: \$328,420
- **TOTAL: \$553,420**

EXPENSES

- Autopsies/Mortuary Services: \$117,000
- Employee Education/Training: \$3,900
- Lab and Medical Supplies: \$5,800
- Office Supplies/Maintenance: \$17,104
- Payroll/Benefits: \$402,116
- Vehicle Maintenance/Gasoline: \$6,500
- **TOTAL: \$553,420**



1187

1187 cremation permits were signed along with 361 death certificates in 2025.

742

In 2025, 742 cases were investigated. Including, 28 drug-related deaths, 18 suicides, 3 homicides, and 5 motor vehicle collisions.

59

59 Autopsies Performed and 30 Cases with Toxicology Performed.

Spotlight on the Frontline

MESSAGE FROM THE CLERK OF COURTS



Our frontline team is the face of the Clerk of Courts Office. Whether someone is filing for divorce, seeking a restraining order or trying to navigate the legal system without an attorney, our frontline professionals are the ones who help navigate the system.

From the time a person walks in, they are in motion! They accept initial filings for small claims, name changes, and other civil actions, creating files for those who do not have an attorney and do not utilize the e-filing system. They have a great deal of financial accountability - receipting credit cards, collecting cash bonds and setting up payment

plans while ensuring that delinquent debts are handled with notice and care.

They also fill a critical role by organizing group files for probable cause statements. They ensure that pre-charge documents are ready for the next step, keeping transition from “pending to “charged” seamless and organized.

The phones never stop, and they are the first point of contact for questions on “no contact” orders, court dates, and fines. They serve as a vital information hub for citizens referred by other agencies, often de-escalating confusion with clear, direct answers.

We have one who specializes in jury duty tasks by sending 100 questionnaires a week, fielding phone calls from potential jurors and organizing jury panels by sending summonses to potential jurors for trials that we have scheduled on the second and fourth Mondays of every month.

Our frontline manages everything from tax intercepts to paternity filings – they don’t just do “tasks”, they uphold the integrity of this office and the legal process every single day.

Tammy Pedretti

La Crosse County Circuit Clerk

2025 HIGHLIGHTS

- 13 trials were held last year, including a one-week trial that required two Urdu interpreters. The trial ended in a plea change and the case was not handed to the jury. We obtained emergency funding from the state to cover some of the expenses incurred.
- Judge Veenstra was elected as Circuit Judge for Branch 1 and sworn in August 1, 2025.
- Judge Levine was named Presiding Judge for La Crosse County.
- With the great help of the Wisconsin Counties Association, Wisconsin Clerks of Circuit Court Association had successful conversations with the governor’s office to increase the Circuit Court Costs appropriation in 2025/27 state budget. The increase provided nearly \$200,000 in court support payments to La Crosse County.

What We Do

Serving as the cornerstone of the judicial system, the Clerk of Courts Office facilitates the essential flow of judicial operations. We are committed to delivering excellent service to our stakeholders and the public.

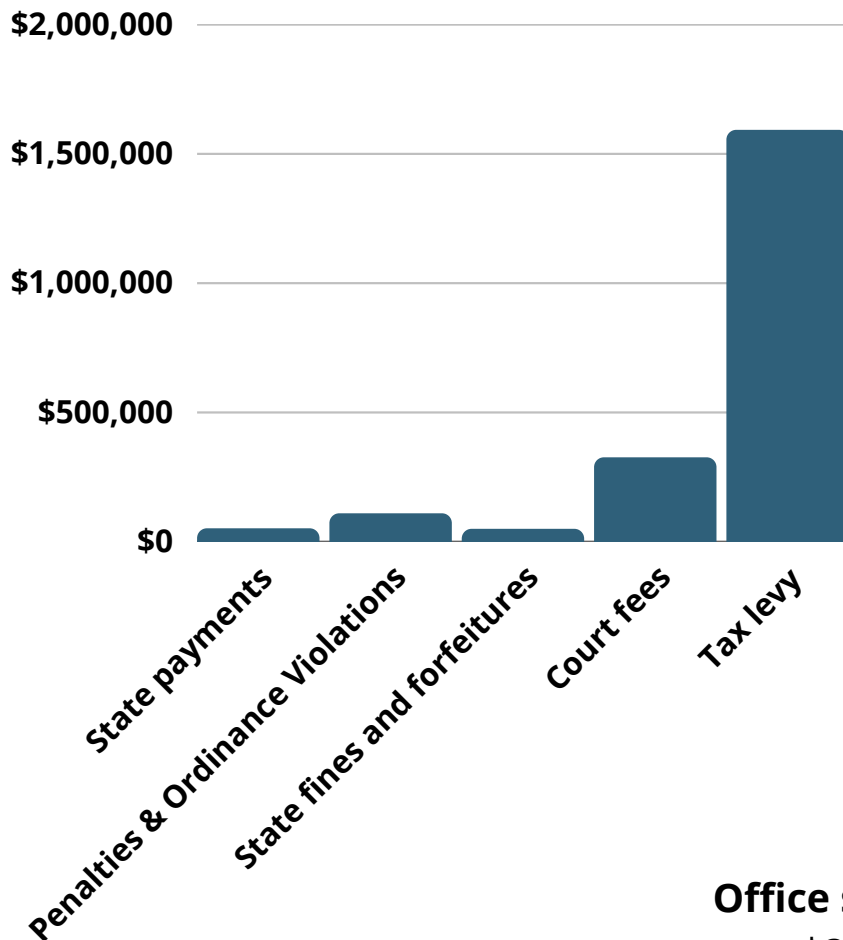
- Clerk of Courts is essential for the daily functioning of the La Crosse County judicial system. We provide case management for all circuit court activities, including criminal, traffic, family, civil, juvenile, and probate cases.
- Jury Management: ensuring that juror questionnaires are mailed to a pool of jurors in a timely manner, that jurors are educated on the process and what it means to be impartial, as well as ensuring that the needs of each juror are met in a compassionate and professional manner.
- Managing the collection of fees and fines is a vital fiscal responsibility and serves as a major revenue source for our office as well as a significant office expenditure. To ensure that fees and fines are paid, we allow payment plans, have the ability to intercept state taxes, and utilize State Debt Collection for delinquent accounts. In accordance with state statutes, we prepare and submit an annual report detailing all sources of revenues and expenditures.
- Public Records Requests are frequent and high volume. We have several office staff tasked with searching for records, preparing invoices, and providing records to the requestor through e-mail, regular mail, or in person.

LOOKING FORWARD

- The approval of AB320/Act 179 provides an increase to court fees. We will begin to see the increase in fees in November 2026. The increase in fees includes, but are not limited to, jury demand fees from \$6/juror to \$17/juror. Witness fees will see an increase in the mileage reimbursement from 20 cents per mile to the current federal mileage reimbursement rate. Many other fees will see an increase as well. This rule will require a review every 3rd fiscal biennium beginning in 2032 to determine if fees or surcharges should be increased based upon the consumer price index.
- The dollar limit for filing small claims lawsuits will increase to \$15,000 in 2027. We are anticipating that there will be a significant increase in small claims filings. We'll need to assess the case load and redistribute some of the duties related to small claims filings.

2025 Finances

REVENUE & EXPENSES

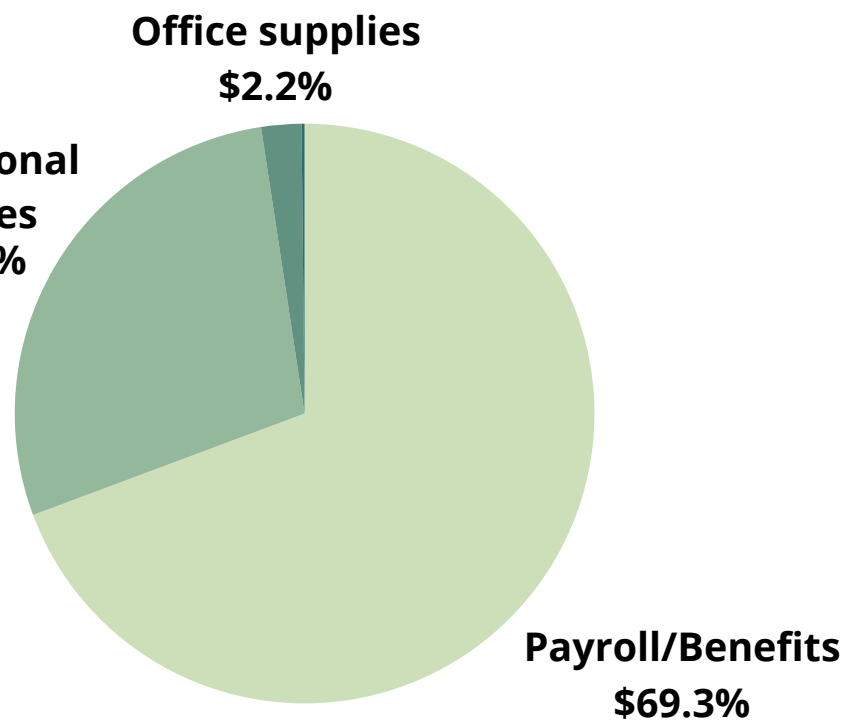


REVENUE

- State Payments: \$520,000
- Penalties & Ordinance Violations: \$110,000
- State fines and forfeitures: \$50,000
- Court fees: \$326,600
- Tax Levy: \$1,592,947
- **TOTAL: \$2,599,447**

EXPENSES

- Payroll & Benefits: \$1,801,687
- Professional Services: \$735,300
- Office Supplies/Admin expenses: \$58,060
- Training & Travel: \$4,400
- **TOTAL: \$2,599,447**





LA CROSSE COUNTY

Exceptional services. Extraordinary place.



[Website](#)



[Newsletter](#)



[Facebook](#)



[Instagram](#)