

OSAC RESEARCH NEEDS ASSESSMENT FORM



Title of research need: Forensic Pathologist and Forensic Anthropologist Partnerships in Medical Examiner / Coroner Offices

Keyword(s): Forensic Pathologist, Forensic Anthropologist, Partnership

Submitting subcommittee(s): MDI **Date Approved:** 6/30/2025

Background Information:

1. Does this research need address a gap(s) in a current or planned standard? (ex.: Field identification system for on scene opioid detection and confirmation)

Not at this time.

2. Are you aware of any ongoing research that may address this research need that has not yet been published (e.g., research presented in conference proceedings, studies that you or a colleague have participated in but have yet to be published)?

No.

3. Key bibliographic references relating to this research need: (ex.: Toll, L., Standifer, K. M., Massotte, D., eds. (2019). Current Topics in Opioid Research. Lausanne: Frontiers Media SA. doi: 10.3389/978-2-88963-180-3)

None.

4. Review the annual operational/research needs published by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) at <https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/forensic-science-research-and-development-technology-working-group-operational#latest>? Is your research need identified by NIJ?

No.

5. In what ways would the research results improve current laboratory capabilities?

There are less than 50 board-certified forensic anthropologists within medical examiner / coroner offices. Forensic anthropologists provide critical information to forensic pathologists, including but not limited to identification, trauma analysis, research. It is our understanding that there is not standardized training to become a forensic anthropologist nor are their tiered certification levels. The addition of standardized training and tiered certification levels will allow forensic anthropologists to provide their expertise to medicolegal death investigations and postmortem examinations.

6. In what ways would the research results improve understanding of the scientific basis for the subcommittee(s)?

Forensic anthropologists can often be a huge asset to medicolegal death investigators at the death scene, especially death scenes where the decedent is decomposed or burned.

7. In what ways would the research results improve services to the criminal justice system?

Forensic anthropologists provide critical insight in trauma analysis, which can provide additional information for the criminal justice system.

8. Status assessment (I, II, III, or IV):

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	Major gap in current knowledge	Minor gap in current knowledge
No or limited current research is being conducted	I	III
Existing current research is being conducted	II	IV

This research need has been identified by one or more subcommittees of OSAC and is being provided as an informational resource to the community.