



**REPORT TO THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND THE  
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH ON THE FISCAL 2021 EXECUTIVE BUDGET FOR THE OFFICE  
OF CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER**

**New York City Council**

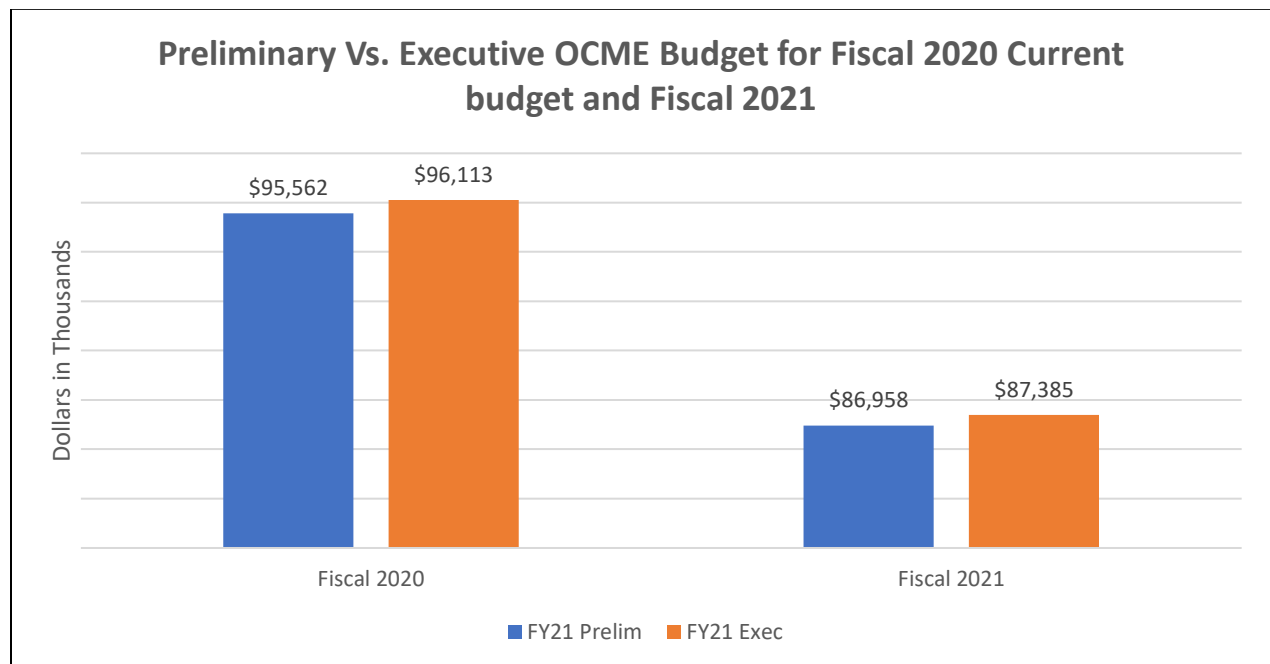
Hon. Corey Johnson, Speaker  
 Hon. Daniel Dromm, Chair, Finance Committee  
 Hon. Mark Levine, Chair, Health Committee  
 Hon. Diana Ayala, Chair, Mental Health,  
 Disability, and Addiction

**Finance Division**

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 Regina Poreda Ryan, Deputy Director  
 Nathan Toth, Deputy Director  
 Paul Scimone, Deputy Director  
 Crihien Francisco, Unit Head  
 Lauren Hunt, Financial Analyst

On April 16, 2020, the Administration released the Executive Financial Plan for Fiscal 2020-2024 with a proposed budget for Fiscal 2021 of \$89.3 billion. The Office of Chief Medical Examiner (the office or OCME) accounts for \$87.4 million and represents less than percent of the Executive Fiscal 2021 Budget. This Note provides a summary of the changes in the Executive Budget for OCME introduced in the Financial Plan. Topics covered include the agency’s response to the COVID-19 emergency, changes to the Expense and Capital Budgets, and agency issues.

**OCME Budget Overview**



OCME’s Fiscal 2021 Executive Budget totals \$87.4 million and 768 positions. The Program to Eliminate the Gap (PEG program) reduces OCME’s budget by \$300,000 in Fiscal 2020. City tax-levy remains the only source of funding for OCME.

<b>\$87 Million</b> Fiscal 2021 Prelim	Exec PEGS and Other Adjustments for FY21	<b>\$87.4 Million</b> Fiscal 2021 Executive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PS \$69.2M               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headcount 768</li> </ul> </li> <li>• OTPS \$17.8M</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hiring Freeze Saving (\$300,000)</li> <li>• Other adjustments FY20 \$851,284 &amp; FY21 \$427,243</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PS \$69.6M               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headcount 768</li> </ul> </li> <li>• OTPS \$17.8M</li> </ul>

Changes introduced in the Executive Plan raise the Office’s budget for Fiscal 2021 by \$427,243. The major changes are described below:

#### PEG Program

- **Hiring Freeze Savings.** Due to the citywide hiring freeze, OCME found \$300,000 in savings for Fiscal 2020.

#### Other Adjustments

The majority of OCME’s other adjustments for Fiscal 2020 and the outyears are due to collective bargaining increases for Electricians, Maintenance Workers, Oilers, Stationary Engineers, and Senior Stationary Engineers and Principal Admin Associates.

#### Agency Response to COVID -19

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, New York State issued ‘New York State on PAUSE’, an Executive Order effective 8 p.m. on March 22 to close all non-essential businesses, prohibit all non-essential gatherings, practice social distancing of six feet in public and more. This pandemic is widespread throughout the world, but especially prevalent in New York City. The City accounts for nearly five percent of confirmed positive cases worldwide. Because of the severity of cases in New York City, agencies have had to change their responsibilities to reduce the impacts of COVID-19. The Office has closed the forensic biology, molecular genetics, toxicology, and histology labs with the exception of public safety priority cases.

The Office was charged with taking a leading role in addressing the pandemic. OCME’s and other mortuary facilities were faced with capacity issues and an overwhelming number of requests for cremations, burials and funerals. The Fiscal 2021 Executive Budget fails to include any funding for the expenses incurred by OCME during the last few months. Data pulled from the City’s Financial Management System (FMS) shows that OCME has spent significant amount of funds to rent extra refrigerated vans for emergency storage for the deceased.

At the release of the Executive Budget, the amount of federal funding had not been finalized. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has estimated that the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) will receive \$15,000,000 in Fiscal 2020 for Covid-19 response. The entire federal funding for COVID-19 falls under DOHMH’s Unit of Appropriate Disease Control and does not take into consideration the funding for OCME. On May 11, 2020, IBO published “How much “Care” for NYC? An Estimate of Federal Coronavirus Emergency Relief Act Funding to the City Budget.” IBO estimates the between the four federal emergency aid bills net the city’s public health programs \$1.9 billion in funding for expenses incurred to fight the pandemic, this does not include the millions more going to the public hospital system<sup>1</sup>. The table below estimates what the need for federal funding will be. It is still unclear if the funding will be available in Fiscal 2020 or Fiscal 2021.

<b>IBO Estimates of Federal Relief Aid Funding to New York City Budget</b>		
<i>Dollars in thousands</i>		
<b>Program Area</b>	<b>City Agency</b>	<b>Total City Funding</b>
<b>Coronavirus Relief Fund</b>	Various	\$1,454,710
<b>Public Health</b>		
Enhanced Federal Medicaid Assistance Program (eFMAP)	Health	\$1,000,000
Public Health and Services Emergency Fund: Testing	Health	845,000
Centers for Disease Control Preparedness Grants (Coronavirus Preparedness Act)	Health	25,100
Centers for Disease Control Preparedness Grants (CARES Act)	Health	18,800
Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund: Hospital Preparedness	Health	11,700
Suicide Prevention	Health	2,400
Reauthorization of Healthy Start Program	Health	1,200
Public Health and Emergency Social Services Emergency Fund: Hospital Preparedness	Health	1,100
Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program	Health	1,000
Poison Control Centers	Health	131
<b>Subtotal Public Health Programs</b>		<b>\$1,906,431</b>

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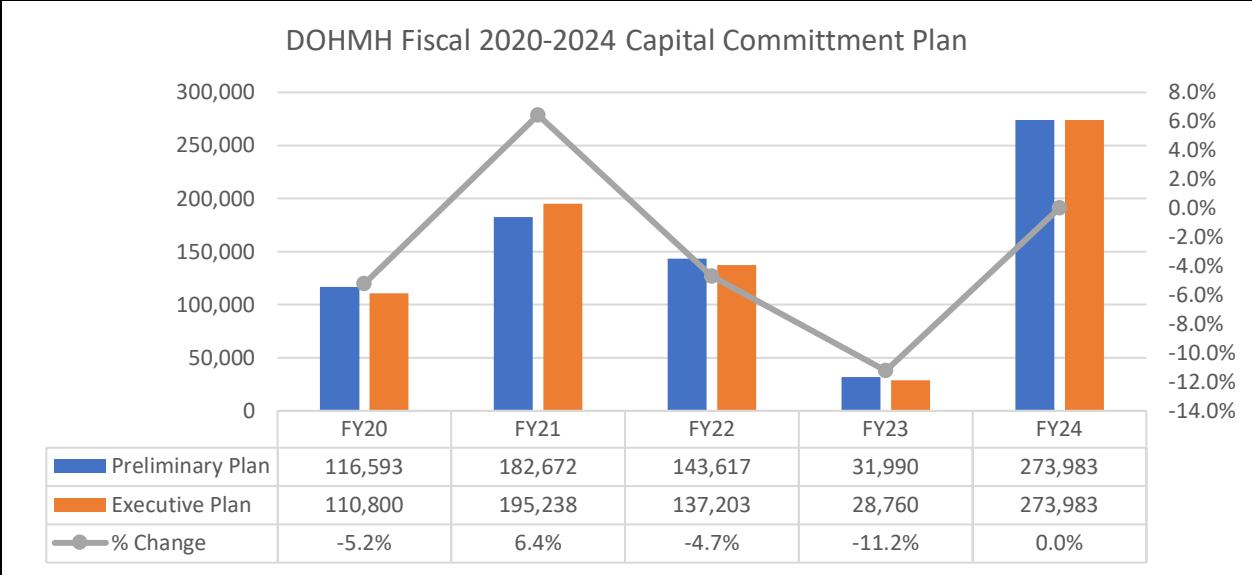
## Capital Program

### Executive Capital Commitment Plan for Fiscal 2020-2024

The Executive Capital Commitment Plan includes \$746 million planned commitments in Fiscal 2020-2024 for DOHMH and OCME, \$2.9 million less than the \$748 million scheduled in the Preliminary Plan. The Department’s planned commitments are less than one percent of the \$83.2 billion City total.

<sup>1</sup> <https://ibo.nyc.ny.us/iboreports/how-much-CARE-for-nyc-an-estimate-of-federal-coronavirus-emergency-relief-act-funding-to-the-city-budget-may-2020.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://ibo.nyc.ny.us/iboreports/how-much-CARE-for-nyc-an-estimate-of-federal-coronavirus-emergency-relief-act-funding-to-the-city-budget-may-2020.pdf>



Fiscal 2020 Executive Capital Plan Changes – Project level Changes

The following project is delayed:

- **OCME New Medical Examiner Facility-** construction of a new medical examiner facility was delayed due to budgetary constraints.