



DALLAS COUNTY  
OFFICE OF BUDGET AND EVALUATION

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August 24, 2025

**TO:** Dr. Ronica Watkins  
Budget Officer *RW*

**FROM:** Nathaniel Dears  
Budget and Policy Analyst

**SUBJECT:** FY2026 Proposed Budget for the Southwestern Institute of Forensic Sciences (SWIFS)

**Background**

The Dallas County Southwestern Institute of Forensic Sciences (SWIFS) provides a comprehensive range of forensic services that ranges from supporting law enforcement, medical professionals, and the justice system. The Institute operates under two major divisions:

The Office of Medical Examiner (OME) and Crime Investigation Laboratory (CIL). OME is responsible for the investigations of deaths that fall under the jurisdiction of the medical examiner, which services include the following:

- Medicolegal Death Investigation
- Autopsies and Postmortem Examinations
- Forensic Pathology Consultation
- Death Scene Investigation

CIL provides forensic analysis to agencies, which includes following services:

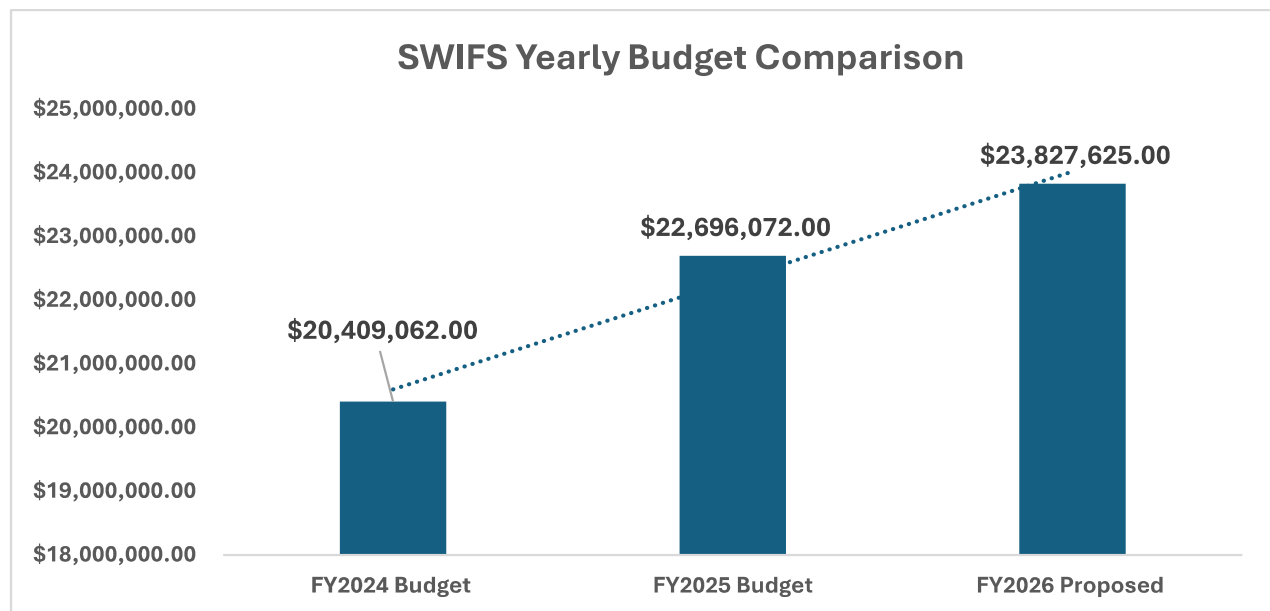
- DNA Analysis
- Firearms and Toolmarks Examination
- Drug Chemistry
- Toxicology
- Expert Witness Testimony and Reporting

**Transition of Body Transportation Services In-House**

Since FY2011, the decedent transport services for the Southwestern Institute of Forensic Sciences (SWIFS) have been provided through an interlocal agreement with a state agency. However, after the FY2025 budget was approved, The University of North Texas Health Science Center (UNTHSC) notified the County that they would not continue the agreement. Due to the lack of availability of contract service providers within the area, Commissioners Court approved the body transport service in-house with an estimated cost of \$1,406,994; the anticipated total cost was not included in the departmental budget; Court Order 2024-1257.

For FY2025, the Office of the Medical Examiner (OME) budgeted to cover the cost of the UNTHSC agreement in the amount of \$591,678. The services with UNTHSC continued until December 2024 with the remaining funds budgeted for the contractual service and department vacancies were used to offset the projected cost of Body Transportation Services. The estimated annual personnel cost for eighteen (18) full-time positions and two (2) part-time positions is \$1,324,869, which will include salaries and benefits. In addition, OME requested an operational budget allocation of \$82,125 (365 transports estimated at \$225 each) for contract transportation services to be used for funeral homes or mortuary service providers for natural death cases during staffing shortages. For FY2026, SWIFS' budget includes the absorption of staff and services to continue the level of operation for the body transportation program.

<b>Dallas County SWIFS FY2025 vs. FY2026 Proposed Budget</b>			
<b>FY2024 Budget</b>	<b>FY2025 Budget</b>	<b>FY2026 Proposed Budget</b>	<b>Variance from FY2025</b>
<b>\$20,409,062</b>	<b>\$22,696,072</b>	<b>\$23,827,625</b>	<b>\$1,131,553</b>



### **Approved FY2026 Equipment Requests**

The Office of Budget and Evaluation (OBE) receives requests from SWIFS throughout the fiscal year, which are included as part of their budget submissions during the budget process. Listed below are the approved items for SWIFS that OBE has deemed essential and critical to operations. Upon review by the Forensic Operations Administrator Cathy Self, funds will be transferred into the necessary cost center budgets to fund the approved requests. These items are still subject to the mandated procurement process before acquisition.

**One-Time Approved Equipment Requests**

<b>Cost Center</b>	<b>Item Requested</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>
3311 Crime Lab	Mideo Caseworks Analyst and Adobe Photoshop Licenses	\$82,403
3311 Crime Lab	LC-MS/MS system	\$400,000
3312 Medical Examiner	Autopsy saws	\$19,000
3313 Medical Examiner	Cameras, digital	\$3,750
3314 Medical Examiner	Autopsy carts	\$30,000
3315 Medical Examiner	Shell space finish-out	\$85,000
<hr/> <b>Total Cost</b>		<b>\$620,153</b>

**Recommendation**

The proposed FY2026 total budget for SWIFS is \$23,827,625, resulting in a \$1,131,553 increase from FY2025 adopted budget of \$22,696,072. The Office of Budget and Evaluation recommends that the FY2026 proposed budget be approved.