

Annual Report for FY 2024-2025



Dr. Brian Pierce, DC, D-ABMDI

Coroner-Baldwin County, Alabama

From the desk of the Coroner:

The Baldwin County Coroner's Office (BCCO) has worked diligently to strengthen the quality, professionalism, and overall value of the services it provides to the citizens of Baldwin County, Alabama.

For many years, the BCCO operated in a manner common to coroner offices across the state—responding from crisis to crisis with limited long-term planning or organizational structure. While this approach met immediate needs, it often resulted in staff burnout and limited the office's ability to consistently serve families during what is frequently the most difficult day of their lives.

Over the past several years, the BCCO has undergone a significant transformation. The office has evolved from a single-coroner operation into a fully functioning agency model. This includes an established command staff, full-time certified death investigators, and trained deputy coroners capable of providing reliable after-hours and on-call coverage. Office leadership maintains professional certification in death investigation and actively reviews casework to ensure accountability, consistency, and quality oversight.

Today, the Baldwin County Coroner's Office stands as a stable, professional organization positioned to expand its impact within the community. Planned initiatives include enhanced family outreach, expansion of forensic and investigative services, and increased training opportunities for community partners and public safety agencies.

It is only through cooperative relationships with the County Commission, District Attorney, Law Enforcement, Fire, EMS, and Funeral Directors that our success is possible.

The Coroner and staff of the BCCO provide essential public safety services relied upon by both Baldwin County residents and the millions of visitors we serve each year. These responsibilities demand professionalism, preparedness, and compassion—values that remain central to our mission as ***“Baldwin County grows, so should our ability to serve it.”***

***Dr. Brian Pierce, DC, D-ABMDI
Coroner***



Baldwin County Coroner's Office

Annual Report FY 2024-2025

Background:

The Baldwin County Coroner's Office (BCCO) serves over 2,000 square miles within Baldwin County, Alabama, providing death investigation services to approximately 265,000 residents and an estimated 7.5 million visitors annually. During Fiscal Year 2024–2025, a total of 1,811 deaths were reported to the Coroner's Office.

Natural causes continue to account for the majority of cases handled by the BCCO. Among unnatural and unattended deaths, gunshot wounds and drug-related fatalities remain the most significant contributing factors in Baldwin County.

Baldwin County continues to experience substantial growth, with the residential population projected to reach approximately 295,000 by 2030. Despite increasing demands, the BCCO has made significant progress in recent years, including improvements in staffing, acquisition of specialized equipment to enhance operational capabilities, strengthened preparedness for mass fatality incidents, and expanded information sharing through the development of a comprehensive Case Management System.

This report outlines trends in unattended, unexpected, and unnatural deaths occurring in Baldwin County during the period of October 1, 2024, through September 30, 2025.

The primary purpose of the Coroner's Office is to investigate unattended, unexplained, violent, and accidental deaths as set forth in the Constitution of Alabama Title 11, Chapter 5.

Mission Statement



Accurately determine the cause and manner of death to provide details for Law Enforcement and Closure for families.



To establish and maintain cooperative, professional relationships with all our community partners.



To assist the bereaved in the loss of a loved one.



To earn and hold the trust and respect of the citizens that we are privileged and honored to serve.

FY 2024-2025 the Office of the Coroner had the following Staffing:

Command Staff



Troy Dyess, D-ABMDI
Chief Deputy Coroner



Dr. Brian Pierce, DC, D-ABMDI
Coroner

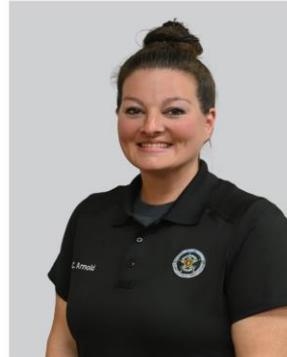


Brandy Byrd
Executive Coroner Assistant



Greg Schnupp MDI -I

Medical Legal Death Investigators



Claire Arnold MDI -I

Administration/Lab-Morgue Tech Staff



Shanna Bonner
Administration Specialist-II



Ashley Tackla
Lab Tech/Morgue Tech

Deputy Coroners



Leslie Bishop



Nick Miller, D-ABMDI



Tim Cooper



Jacob VanBlake, D-ABMDI

The BCCO has a blended staff of 4 full-time investigators and 4 part-time investigators as well as 3 full-time administrative staff.

This allows for 24/7 coverage of Baldwin County and providing standby assistance in moments of heightened case load.

Baldwin County realized 2463 deaths in FY 24-25 and 1811 of those deaths were reported to the BCCO. Of the 1811 deaths, 1100 were from hospice agencies, 711 were generated by Hospitals or 1st responders, 69 were noted as Non-coroner, and 642 met the criteria for further investigation.

1811 deaths were reported to BCCO:

Hospice	1100
Non-Coroner	69
Coroner	642

1521 Cremation Permits issued

Prior to proceeding with standard cremation procedures, the Coroner must issue a cremation permit indicating that no further forensic investigation is required. In FY 2024–2025, the Baldwin County Coroner’s Office issued **1,521** cremation permits.

636 Death Certificates completed

The Coroner is also required to sign death certificates for all unattended deaths. This responsibility involves comprehensive medical record review, interpretation of postmortem examinations, and evaluation of toxicology findings. In FY 2024–2025, the Baldwin County Coroner’s Office signed **636** death certificates.

Cases referred to the BCCO



Breakdown of Coroner Cases

Types of Death

Medical	573
GSW	45
Overdose Deaths	36
Blunt Force	34 *MVA/ Fall /Assault
Drownings	8
Hanging	7
Fire Deaths	4
SUIDI	2
Electrocution	1
Strangulation	1

Manner of Death

Natural	566
Accident	82
Suicide	47
Homicide	11
Undetermined	5

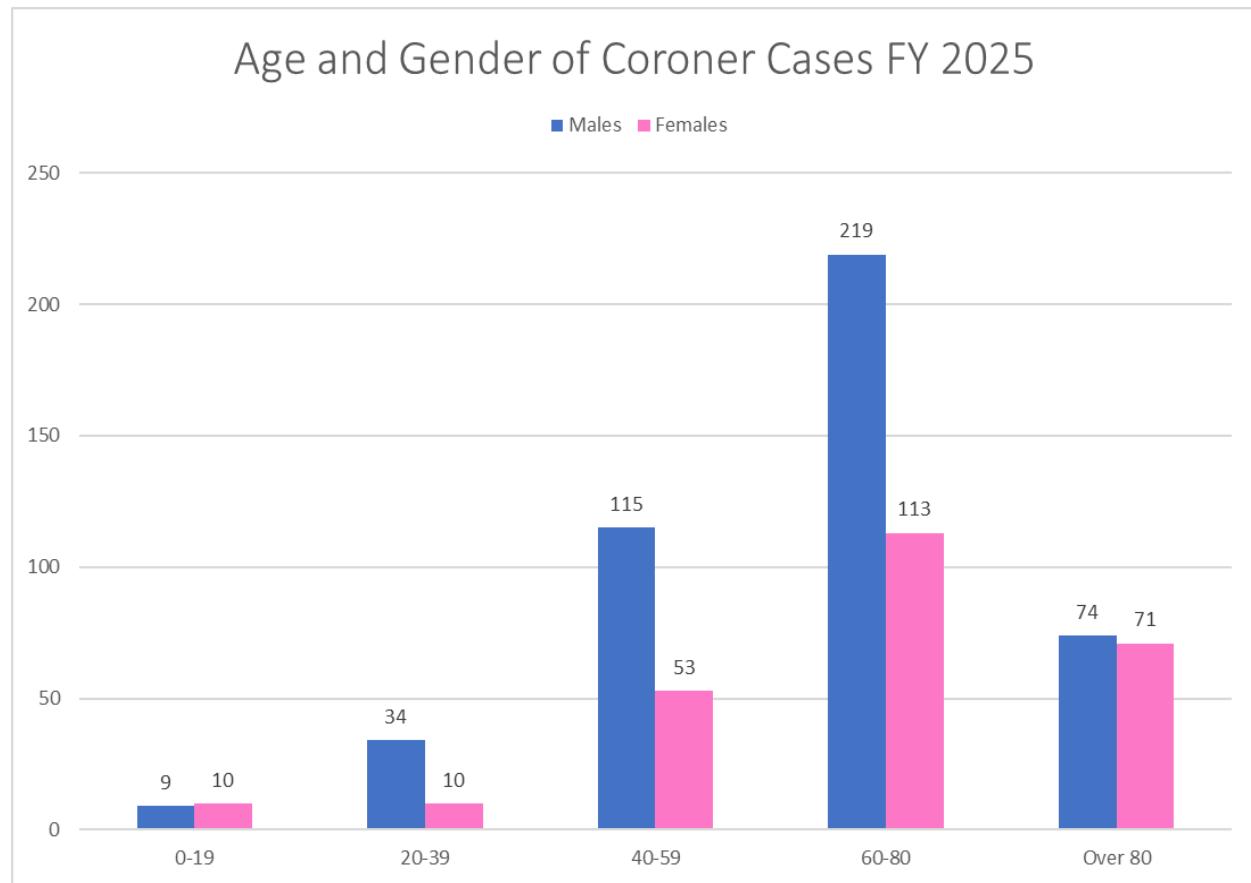
Cases Sent for Exam by Pathologist: 142 (22 % of Coroner Cases)

Gender: Males – 451 (64% of Coroner Cases)

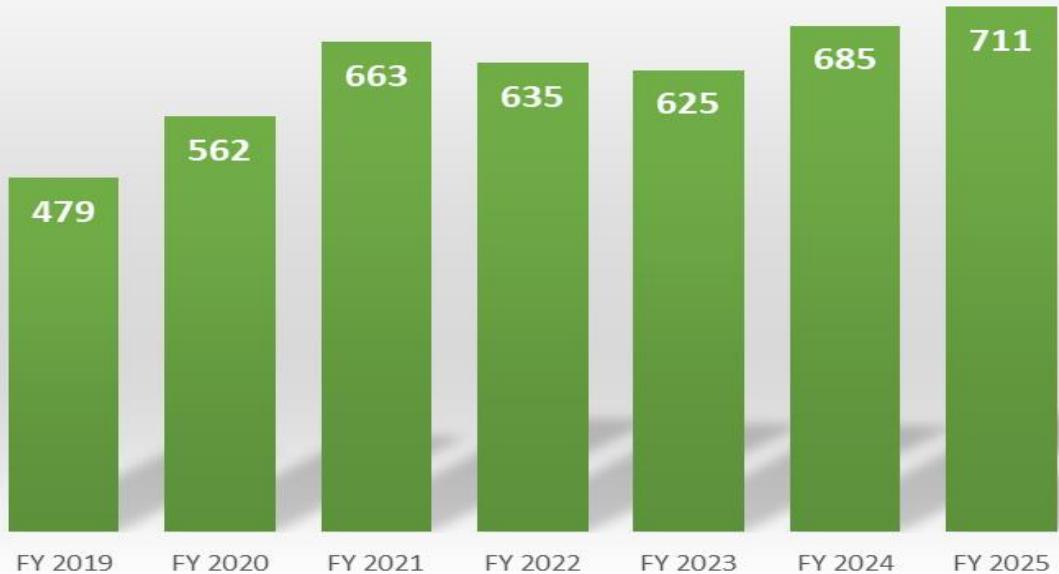
Females – 257 (36% of Coroner Cases)

Race:

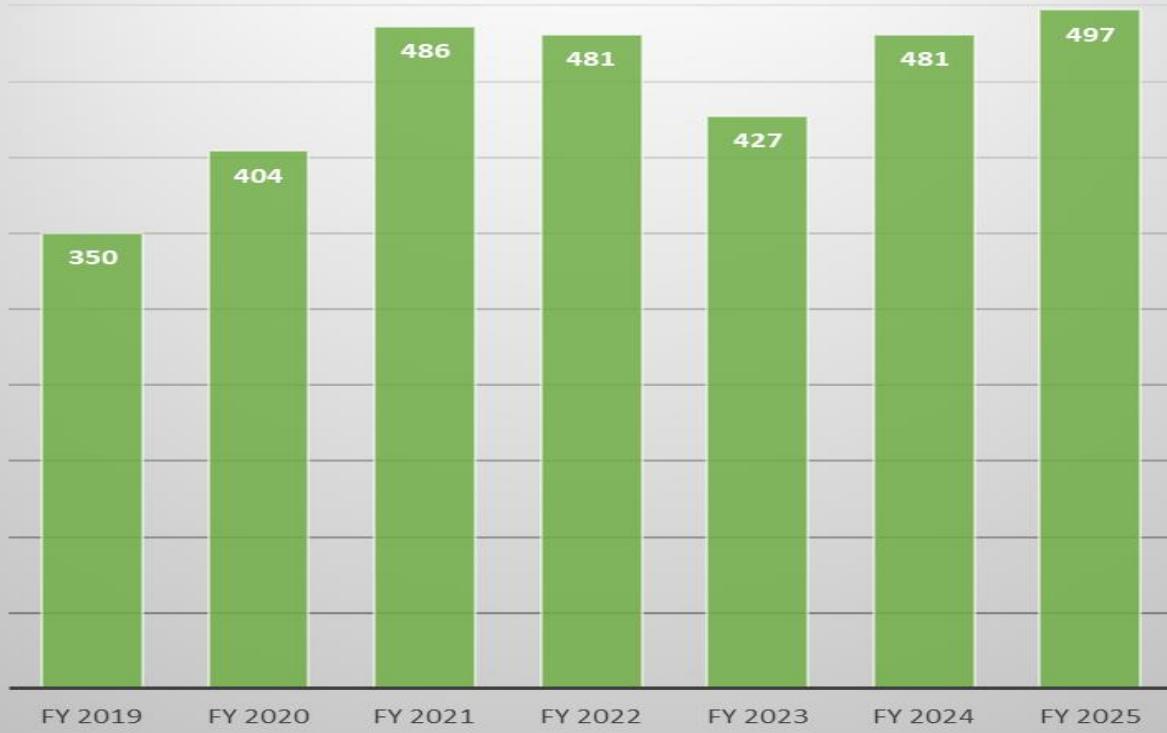
- Caucasian – 606 (86% of Coroner Cases)
- Black – 86 (12% of Coroner Cases)
- Hispanic – 14 (2% of Coroner Cases)
- Other – 5 (1% of Coroner Cases)



Baldwin County Coroner Cases



Number of Natural Deaths



Number of Blunt Force Trauma Deaths

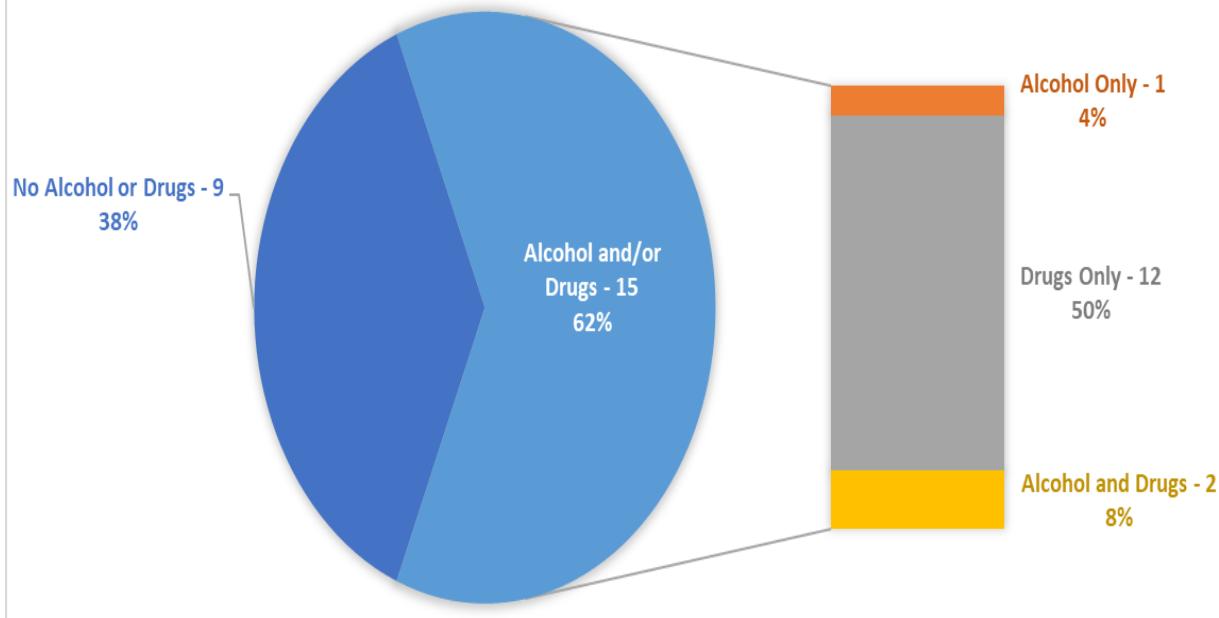


Blunt Force Trauma deaths are handled 3 different ways by our office, BFT MVA, BFT Fall, BFT Assault.

In FY 24-25 the **34 BFT** deaths had the following breakdown:

1. BFT MVA 24
2. BFT Fall 6
3. BFT Assault 4

TOXICOLOGY IN TRANSPORTATION FATALITY CASES

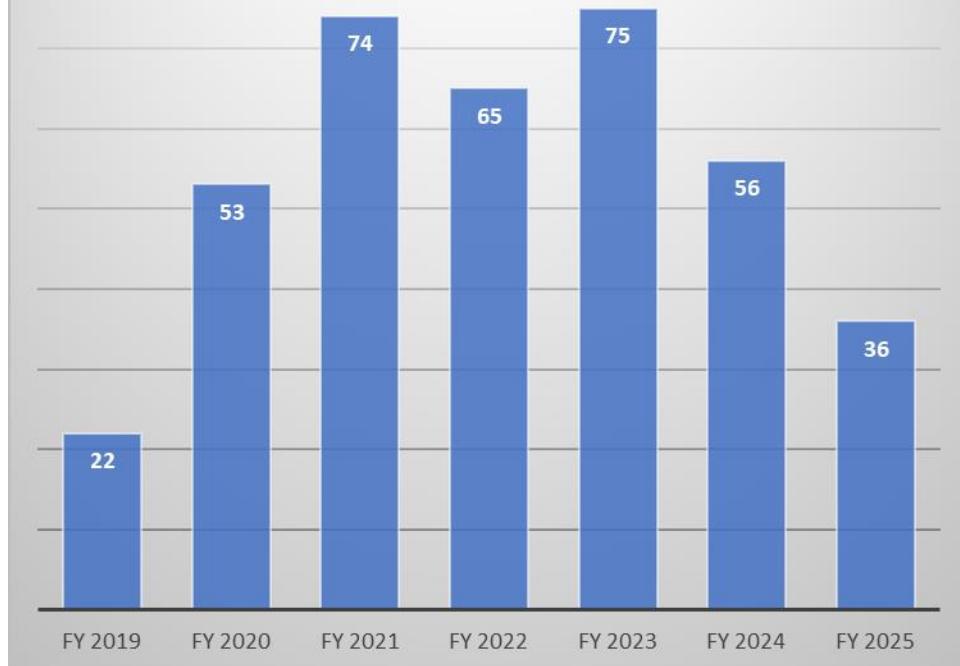


Transportation Fatalities FY 2024 – 2025

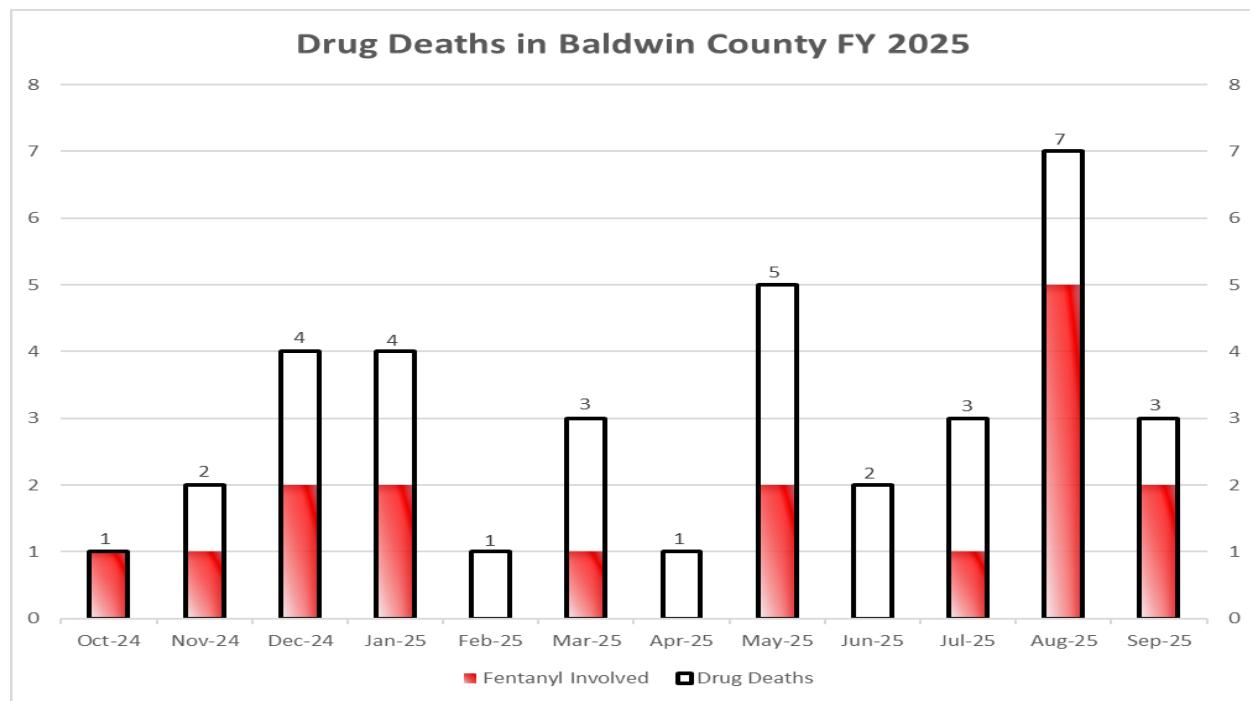
Automobile	15
Other Motorized Vehicle	7
Pedestrian	1
Bicyclist	1
Total	24

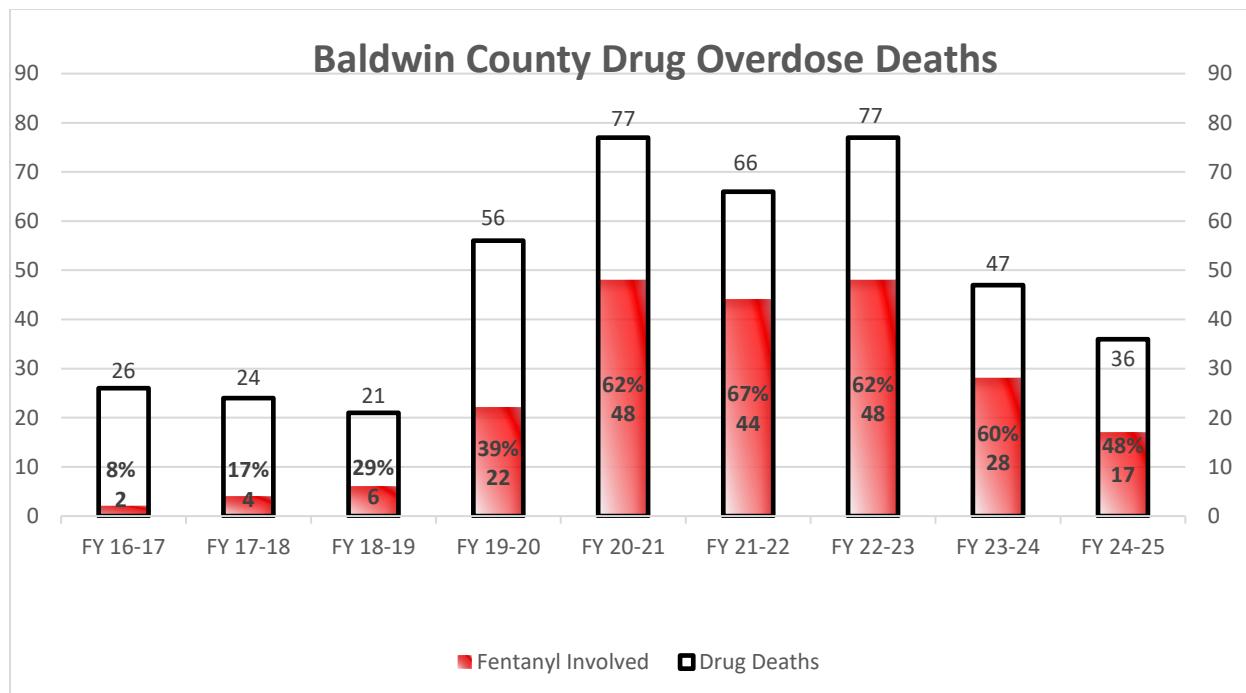
Seatbelt Usage in Automobile Fatalities	
Seatbelt Used	7
Seatbelt Not Used	4
Unknown if Seatbelt Used	4

Number of Overdose Deaths

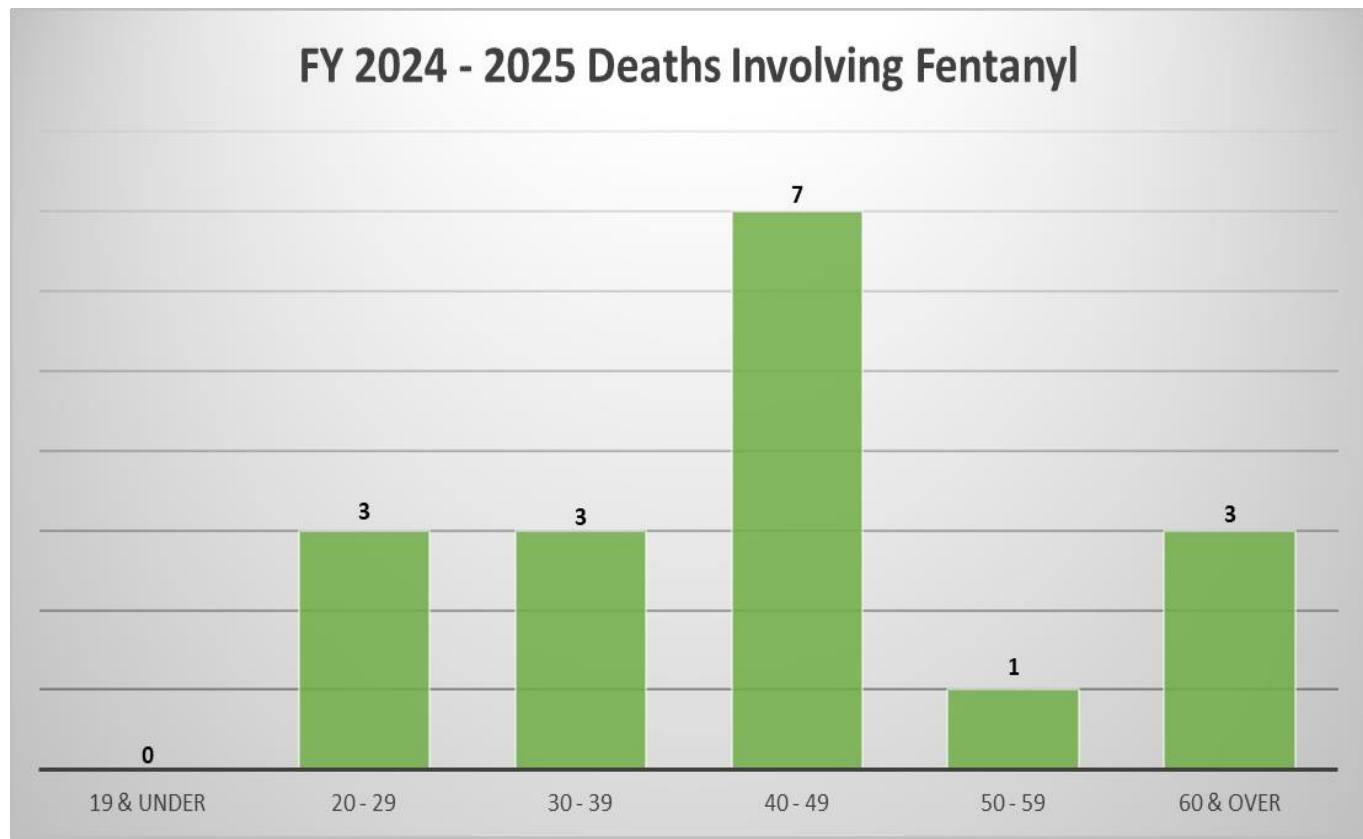


48% involve Fentanyl (17)





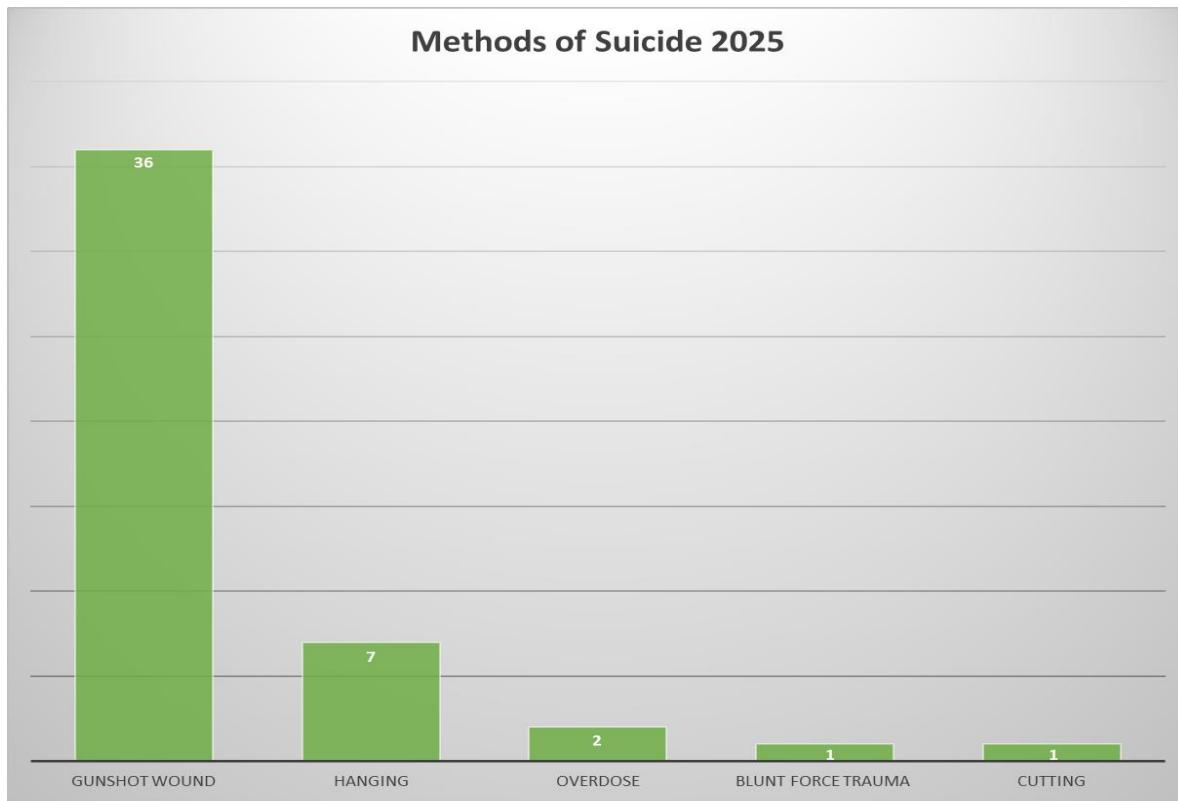
Age of Fentanyl related deaths



Number of Suicides

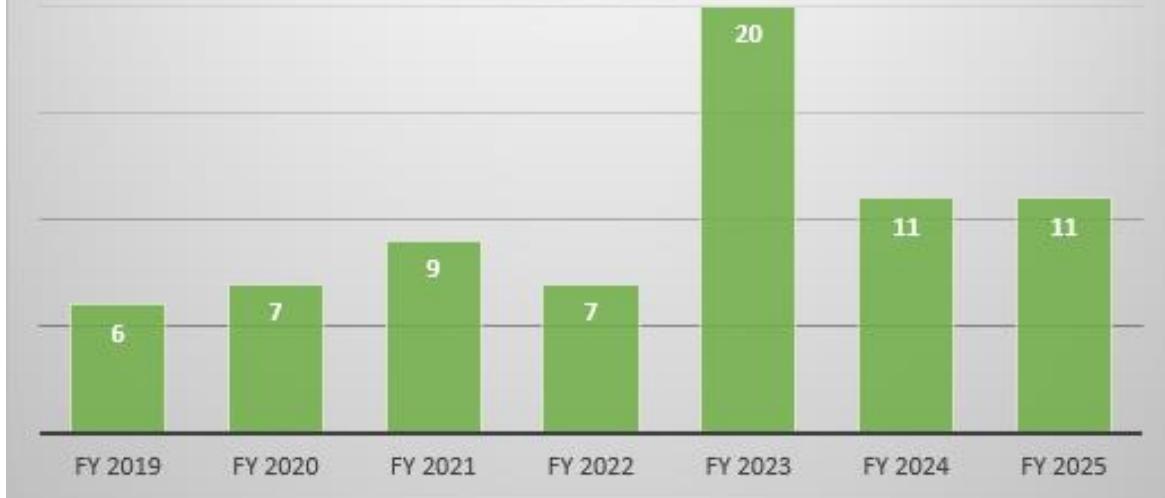


Methods of Suicide 2025

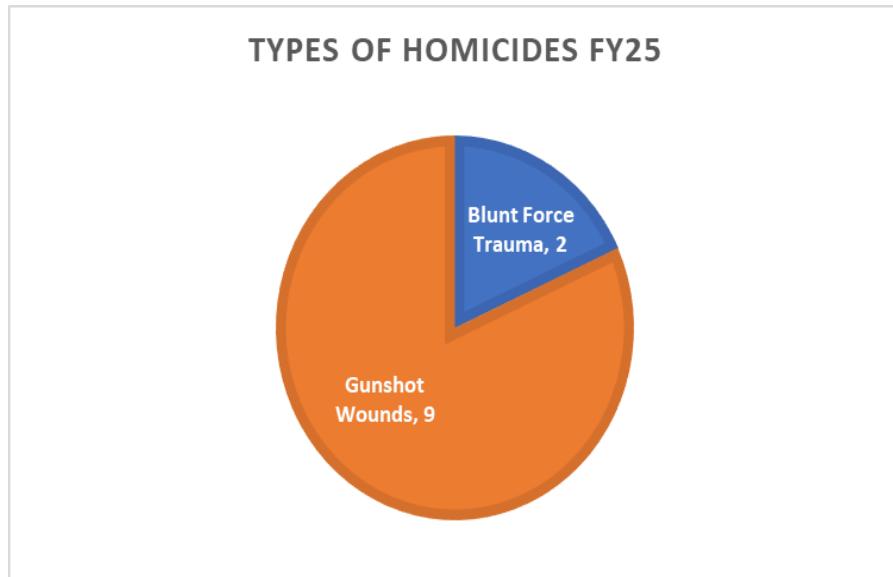




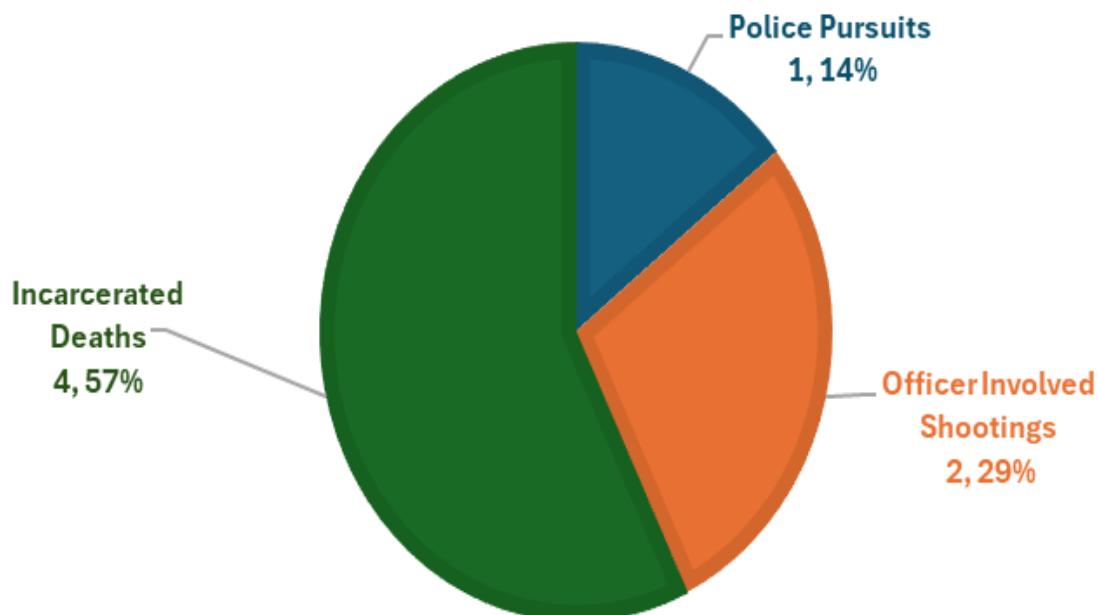
Baldwin County Coroner's Office Homicide Cases



Type of Homicide Death



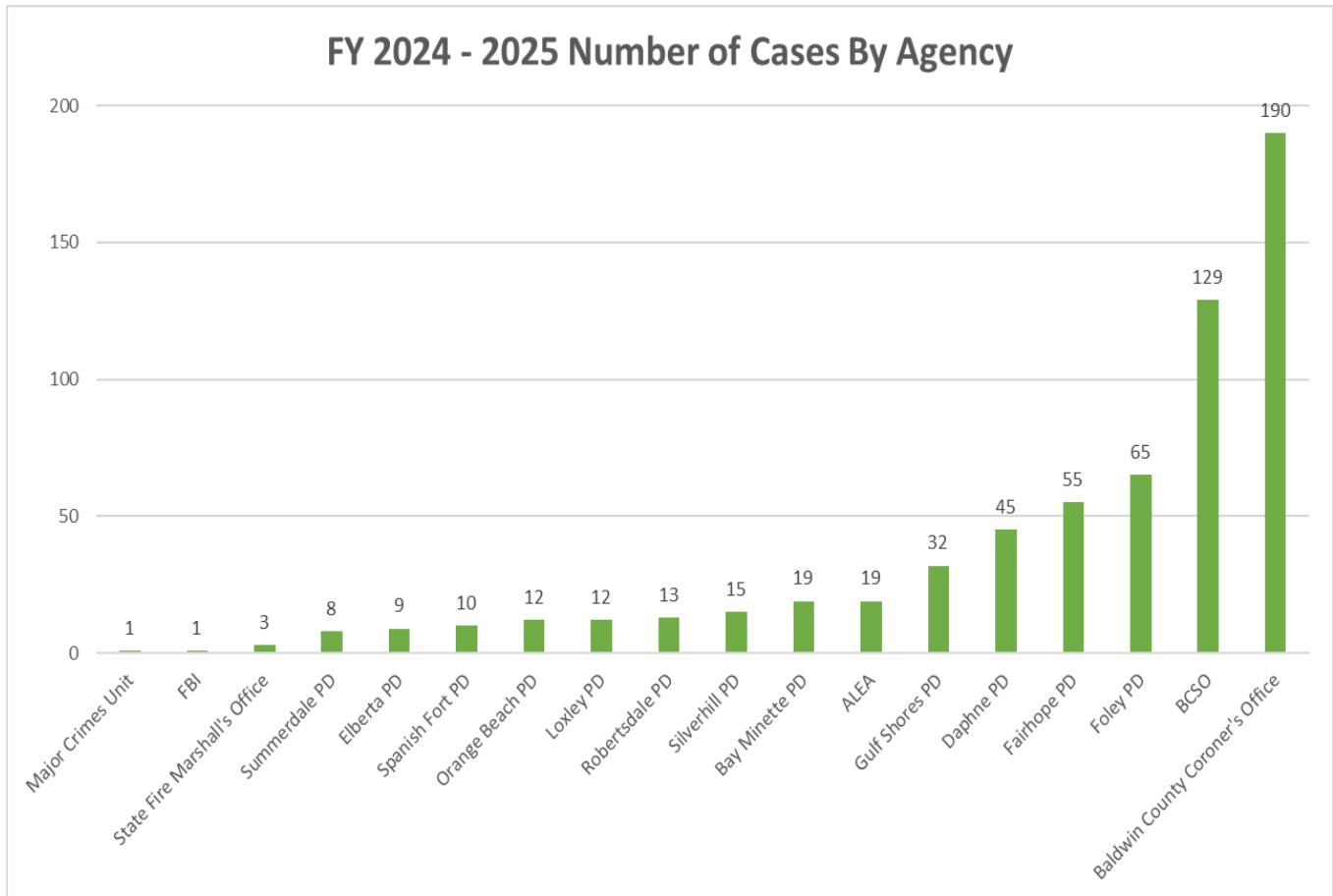
TYPES OF IN CUSTODY DEATHS FY25



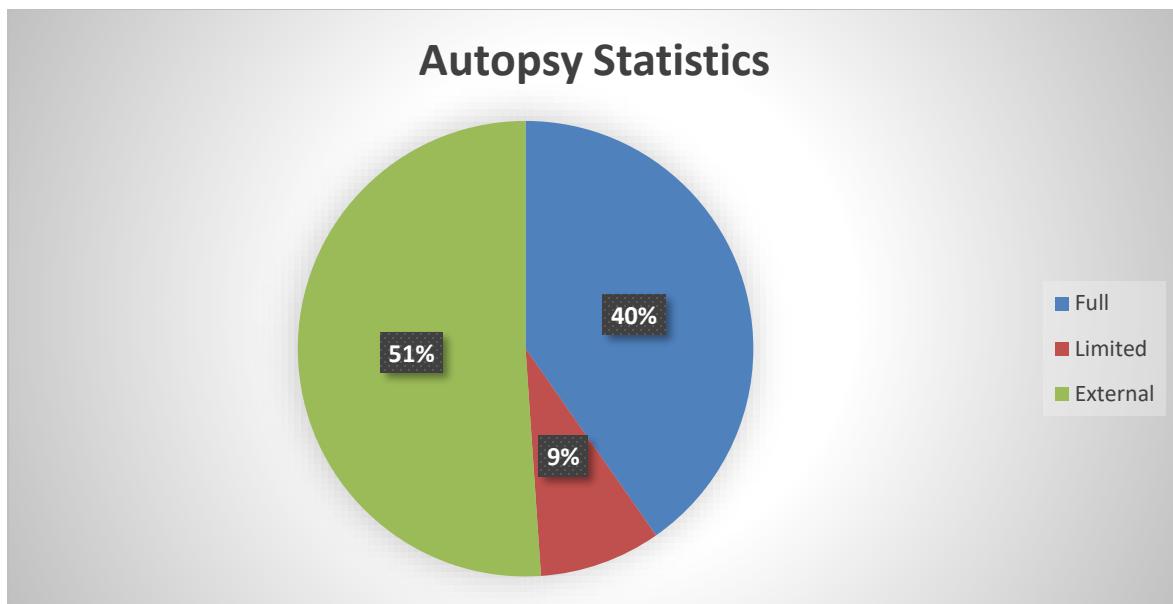
Manner of Death for In-Custody Deaths

- Homicide: 2
- Accidental: 2
- Natural: 2
- Suicide: 1

Death Investigation by Agency



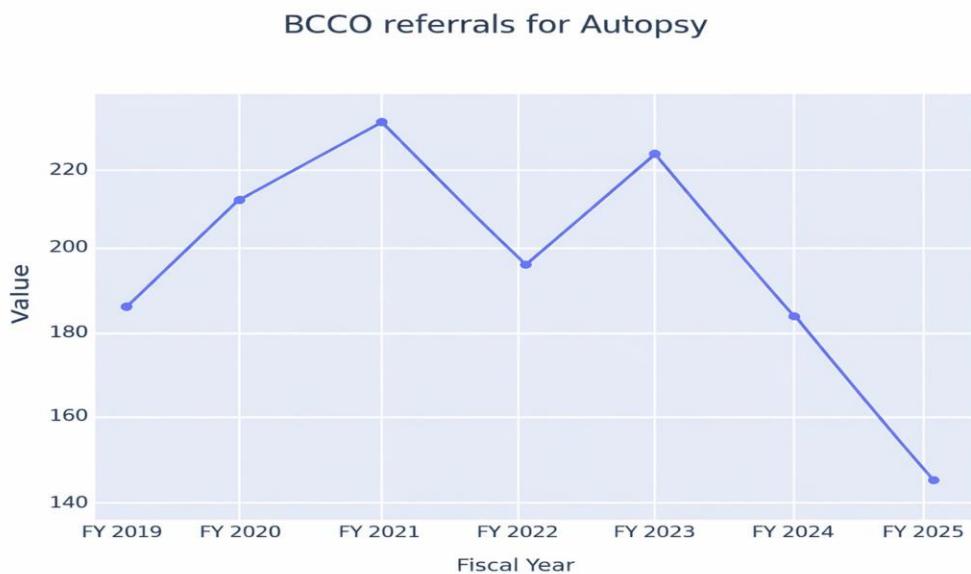
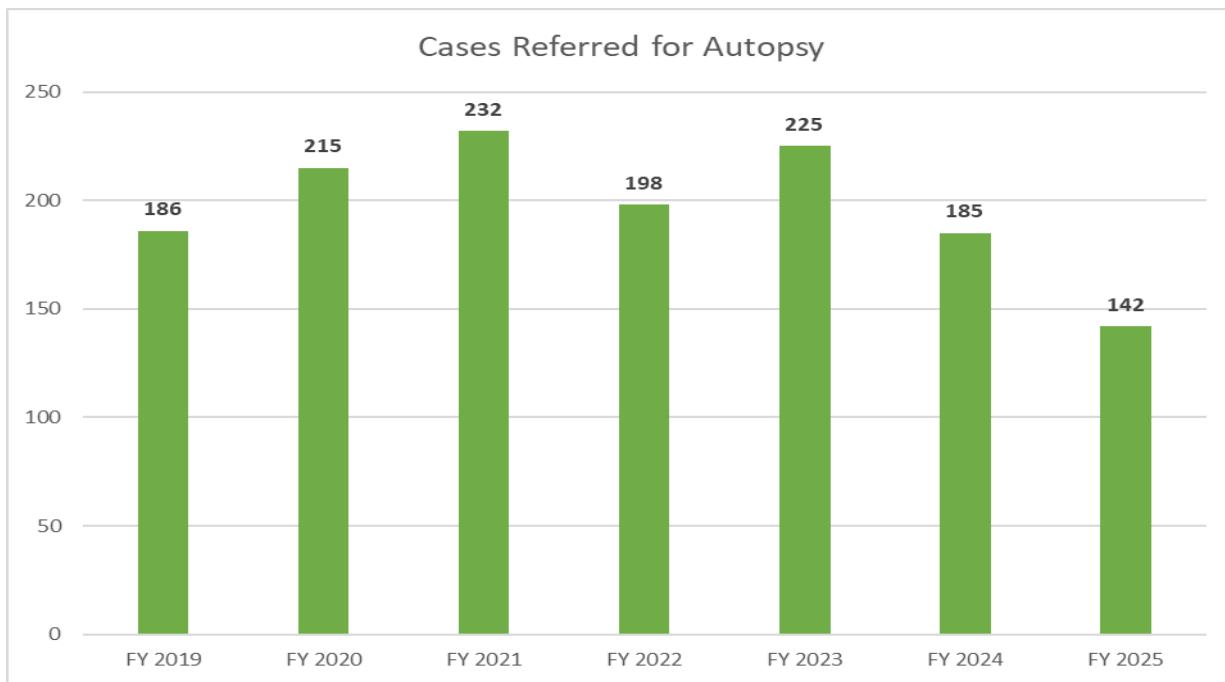
The Baldwin County Coroner's Office worked alongside 17 agencies with investigations of death that occurred in Baldwin County. The BCCO also handled 190 death investigations that had no Law Enforcement involvement.



Once a case is referred to the Alabama Department of Forensic Sciences, the assigned forensic pathologist determines the extent of the examination necessary to establish the cause and manner of death. During FY 2024–2025, 142 cases were referred for examination. Of these, 56 required full autopsies, 12 involved limited autopsies, and 71 were resolved through external examinations only.



The acquisition of the Randox Multistat Analyzer has enabled the Baldwin County Coroner's Office to conduct enhanced surveillance of drug-related fatalities. As a result, the number of autopsy referrals to the Alabama Department of Forensic Sciences decreased from 185 in FY 2023–2024 to 142 in FY 2024–2025. This procedural improvement has provided more timely and actionable information to law enforcement, expedited the release of decedents to their families, and reduced transportation-related costs to the citizens of Baldwin County.



During the reporting period, the Baldwin County Coroner's Office (BCCO) took custody of 419 decedents, an increase from 391 in 2024. Of these cases, 142 were referred to the Alabama Department of Forensic Sciences (ADFS) for autopsy, representing a decrease of 43 referrals compared to the prior year, after which decedents were released and returned to the funeral home of the family's choice.

The BCCO transported and housed 278 decedents for families residing out of state or for cases requiring extended medical record review. Additionally, 69 of the 711 total cases involved non-resident decedents.

The Coroner's office responded to 197 death scenes for investigative purposes. Typically, when Coroners respond to a scene, an exam is warranted. Each case is different but often scene investigation will result in at least an external exam and toxicology.

During FY 2024–2025, the Coroner's Office assisted the Council on Aging with seven (7) county-funded cremations for individuals requiring financial assistance. In addition, the Coroner's Office managed fourteen (14) county cremations involving indigent and unclaimed individuals. In total, twenty-one (21) county cremations were conducted during FY 2024–2025, representing an increase of two (2) cases compared to FY 2023–2024.

During FY 2024–2025, the Baldwin County Coroner's Office (BCCO) assisted with 97 organ and tissue donations. The BCCO works collaboratively with organ recovery teams whenever feasible to honor the wishes of the decedent or their family. At the same time, the Coroner's Office safeguards the public trust; when further investigation is required—such as in cases involving pending criminal charges—authorization for procurement may be denied preserving the integrity of the investigation.

As we move into 2026, the BCCO will continue to maintain its response time of 1-hour county wide. Continue to advance the educational status of its investigators as well as the public as to the scope of work performed by the Office of the Coroner. Work closely with our community partners to assist families who are dealing with unexpected deaths and work to prevent common accidental deaths.

In FY 2024-2025, the Baldwin County Coroner's Office participated in zero exhumations. The Baldwin County Coroner's office handled zero initial in-person death notifications. Initial in-person death notifications in Baldwin County, Alabama are made by the appropriate law enforcement agency. Following that notification, families are directed to the on-call coroner investigator for next steps and assistance with any matters requiring coroner involvement.

We will continue to work diligently to ensure Baldwin County is prepared to serve its citizens and visitors alike, with knowledgeable, empathetic, and timely after-life care. As Baldwin County grows, so should our ability to serve it.

I respectfully submit this FY 2025 report to the Commission.

In your Service,

Dr. Brian E Pierce

"As Baldwin County grows, so should our ability to serve it."

Dr. Brian Pierce, DC, D-ABMDI
Coroner of Baldwin County Alabama
1-01-2026