

Idaho Criminal Justice Commission - Coroner Subcommittee Meeting Agenda

Date: December 16, 2025,

Location: Idaho Association of Counties,
700 W. Washington St., Boise, ID 83701

Time: 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM Mountain Time

Facilitators: Senator Melissa Wintrow and Kelli Brassfield (IAC)

Subcommittee Members Present:

- Senator Melissa Wintrow, JLOC Co-chair
- Kelli D. Brassfield, Idaho Association of Counties
- Ryan Langrill, Director, Office of Performance Evaluations
- Sheriff Bart Quayle, Fremont County
- Bernie LaSarte, Coeur d'Alene Tribe
- Joshua Hall, Nez Perce County Coroner
- Torey Danner, Bannock County Coroner
- Jimmy Roberts, Bingham County Coroner
- Will Carson, Twin Falls County Coroner
- John Fudenberg, Executive Director, IACME
- Robert Bleazard, Ada County Deputy Prosecuting Attorney

Subcommittee Members Absent:

- Kirt Gaston, Bellevue Police Department
- Matthew Gamette, ISP Forensic Services
- Robert Beers, Bonner County Coroner
- Brett Harding, Ada County Chief Deputy Coroner
- Scott Carver, Valley County Coroner
- Tara Beard Parsons, Butte County Coroner
- Brent Mendenhall, Madison County Commissioner

Action Item – Approval of the minutes from November 3, 2025

Nez Perce County Coroner Joshua Hall made a motion to approve the minutes from November 3, 2025, Bingham County Coroner Jimmy Roberts seconded. Motion carried.

Classifications – Bernie LaSarte

Bernie stated that Native Americans and Alaskan Natives are frequently misclassified in Idaho death investigations, sometimes by up to 40% in vital records in some states, which has been recognized by the National Congress of American Indians, Indian Health Service, and the CDC. Bernie shared that they had personally been misclassified while working as a nurse in Seattle.

Josh Hall noted that the section for American Indian or Alaskan Native status, including enrolled tribe name, is currently filled out by funeral homes. Jimmy Roberts explained that an

amendment to a death certificate after issuance is possible through an affidavit, which requires a fee and a notary public. Bernie found this helpful, noting that their tribe has MMIWP programming that could institute guidance on the correction process for families.

Strategic Plan/Charter - Kelli D. Brassfield & Senator Melissa Wintrow

The group agreed to use the charter for the Criminal Justice Commission packet while comparing the two larger strategic plan documents (previously sent to committee members) to determine multi-year goals. This will continue to be a work in progress.

Possible Legislative Ideas – Kelli D. Brassfield & Senator Melissa Wintrow

- Death Certificate fee increase
- Required autopsies

The discussion explored tying reimbursement to certification, with Jimmy suggesting that state certification testing could be similar to ABMDI standards, as many rural counties would not meet the caseload requirement of 200 death investigations to sit for the national exam. There is a third level of certification for rural communities that cannot obtain the hours and scene responses needed for the standard certification.

There was a brief discussion on increasing the death certificate fee from the current \$16, which Melissa Wintrow suggested should be raised by \$2. Kelli Brassfield noted that a \$1 increase would generate about an \$80,000 increase, which is not a substantial amount. A potential solution discussed for requiring certification was to include verbiage in the statute that an individual must be certified to be eligible for reimbursement, with a footnote that the certification process will be determined by the coroner training board or the coroner association board. There was a discussion about developing an advisory board to determine how the funds would be distributed, as they believe the public would be more amenable to an increase if the fund distribution mechanism is established. This board would determine criteria, a mechanism for voting, and establish grants, which they could intend to mimic for a tiered approach to autopsy reimbursement.

Confidentiality Update – Senator Melissa Wintrow

The proposed language, agreed upon by the prosecutors, exempts such records from disclosure, with an exception for disclosure to the decedent's next of kin once all related investigations and legal proceedings are no longer active. Next of kin is strictly defined as the closest living relative in the order of spouse, adult child, parent, sibling, and grandparents. There is a competing bill that may also address the use of photos, potentially including training situations, and stated they are trying to reconcile the differences with the other bill sponsor. There was a concern that the proposal only addresses photos, arguing that if they are going to cover confidential matters, they should also include the coroner's report because their office must currently provide reports upon request, though not photographs.

Other Business – Kelli D. Brassfield & Senator Melissa Wintrow

- Brent Mendenhall – No Update

It was stressed for the need to ensure consistent data reporting across the state to Vital Statistics, particularly with MDI log, as legislators are highly interested in this. Jimmy agreed that data is crucial and suggested minimal training from coroners already using the MDI log system effectively. The current issue is that there is no entity receiving the data from MDI log, even though Ada County pays for the system for the majority of counties.

John suggested using existing statute from other states, such as Nevada, which mandates data sharing for child and maternal death review teams, as a model for legislation. Jimmy proposed that they could mirror existing statute that requires law enforcement agencies to submit data. Jimmy suggested that accountability could be linked to the reimbursement piece, where a lack of data provision could render a coroner ineligible for funding, which would involve the county commissioners.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 pm MT.