



November 17, 2014

FEE INCREASE SURVEY

The Center for Health Statistics (aka Oregon Vital Records) plans to increase vital records fees in 2016 and **we need your input**. To let us know what you think about a fee increase visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/VitalRecords> by 5:00 p.m. November 25, 2014.

What are Vital Records?

All vital events such as live births, deaths, marriages, domestic partnerships, divorces, dissolution of domestic partnerships, and fetal deaths are reported to the Center for Health Statistics as required by law. The confidential documents that legally record vital events are called vital records. Vital records are needed for many purposes. One of the most important vital records is the certificate of birth. Birth certificates are needed to establish identity. You use a birth certificate to get important documents such as a social security number, driver's license, and passport. You also need birth certificates to get into school, to get a job and to get government services. Death certificates are needed to settle the affairs of your deceased family members.

Vital records also have essential health information that is used to study the health of Oregonians and to measure key public health indicators, such as life expectancy, infant mortality, prenatal care, low-birth weight, and leading causes of death.

What services do we provide and how much do they cost?

To produce vital records and provide other services the Center for Health Statistics now **spends** about \$57 for services associated with each vital event. A description of our services and how much we spend to provide each service are below.

Oregon Vital Records:

- Processes orders for certified copies of records (Cost to provide service \$11): Approximately 170,000 orders for certified copies of vital records are processed each year. All orders must be screened and tracked. The records must be located and printed on certified bank-note paper. The majority of orders for certified copies are processed within two business days. The state is the only place the public can get certified copies of birth and death certificates six months after the event. County vital records offices can issue certified copies of birth and death records up to six months after the event.

The fee for vital records as been the same since 2003, but our costs to provide the services increased almost 80%.

**What the State pays –
Vital Records Services cost the
State \$57 per vital event**

**What you pay now –
\$20 for a certificate**

- Registers records (Cost to provide service \$6): About 128,000 vital records are registered annually. Each record is reviewed to make sure it is complete and legally valid. Complete records are numbered and indexed so they can be found. Registered records must be stored safely and securely indefinitely. To date, over 6 million vital records are maintained by the Center for Health Statistics.
- Amends records (Cost to provide service \$21): Any changes to the 6 million or so records on file must be made following specific procedures and laws. Each amendment request is reviewed to make sure it is complete and legally valid before being approved. Many amendment requests must be researched before approval. Many amendments are completed for free.
- Analyzes vital statistics data (Cost to provide service \$4): We analyze the combined data from all vital records and publish the findings in different reports. The reports provide important information on key public health indicators, describing the health of Oregonians without identifying individuals.
- Maintains the vital records electronic system (Cost to provide service \$11): Oregon's vital records are stored electronically using a secure, web-based system. Electronic systems offer greater efficiency and security which requires regular testing, maintenance and updates.
- Administers the Center (Cost to provide service \$5): Every business requires administrative support to operate, purchase office supplies and equipment, and manage business processes.

Why does the Center need to increase the fee?

The fees we currently charge for our services have not changed since 2003 but our costs have increased by almost 80%. There was a small increase in 2012 for the security quiz but this fee does not go to our office. At \$57 per vital event, our costs to provide services are much higher than the \$20 to \$30 fee paid by the customer. Despite implementing cost cutting measures and generating additional revenue from contracts with federal and Oregon state agencies, we still have a budget shortfall. We don't get general funds from Oregon taxpayers to help cover our costs. We propose to increase the fee so that we can maintain our current services. Without the fee increase, we will have to reduce services.

How much is the proposed fee increase?

We are interested in your opinion on different fee options. Please take the survey to provide input on the options.

How do I provide input on the proposed fee increase?

To let us know what you think of the proposed fee increase visit. Go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/VitalRecords>

Please complete your survey by 5:00 p.m. November 25, 2014.