



# MELISSA WILK

## ALAMEDA COUNTY

### AUDITOR-CONTROLLER/CLERK-RECORDER

## *Winter 2023 Newsletter*

### *Message from Melissa*

Dear Alameda County,

While we reflect on the past year's challenges and accomplishments I find this is also a time to look forward and find inspiration in the bright hope of new beginnings. My team and I are already busy formulating plans to meet future goals and objectives as we strive to provide ever better service to the County and community.

I am so proud of our community's resilience and resolve over the past year, and I am especially grateful for the achievements of my staff, including:

- Serving over 100,000 community members at the Clerk-Recorder's Office in Oakland and the Tri-Valley, with in-person services and extended online services;
- Numerous innovations that allow us to continue to provide safe and efficient services to the public, including an electronic ticketing system and our award-winning online marriage service program;
- Receiving the Government Finance Officers Association Award for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the 39th year in a row;
- Securing millions of dollars in transfer taxes for Alameda County's cities that would have otherwise been lost without our intervention;
- Engaging with the community through public programs and festivals from Livermore in East County to Fremont in South County.

I feel both fortunate and honored to have begun my second term as the re-elected Alameda County Auditor-Controller/Clerk-Recorder on January 2, 2023, providing me with the opportunity to continue to serve the Alameda County community. I eagerly look forward to working for you over the next four years and furthering my commitment to the safeguarding of County finances, records and assets.



Also re-elected for their second terms were County Supervisor for District 2, Richard Valle; the Assessor, Phong La; and the Treasurer/Tax-Collector, Hank Levy. Three newly elected County officials also began terms on January 2nd in the positions of the County Supervisor for District 3, Lena Tam; the Sheriff, Yesenia Sanchez; and the District Attorney, Pamela Price. I welcome this new team and the beginning of many new opportunities for County leadership to collectively serve the vibrant communities of Alameda County.

One of my favorite things about being an elected leader in Alameda County is living in and serving such a diverse community. We are truly fortunate to have such a wealth of backgrounds, languages, and cultures in our communities. A rich example of this is the January 22nd celebration of the Lunar New Year followed by the celebration of Black History Month in February.

February is also a busy time for our Office in serving the many happy couples getting married on Valentine's Day, Tuesday, February 14th. I want to express my sincere appreciation to all of the couples who have made the Alameda County Clerk-Recorder's Oakland Office a part of their marriage story. Located at 1106 Madison Street in Oakland, our Oakland Clerk-Recorder's Office seems to inspire love for all who enter including those who work here! A member of our staff met her future husband when he visited here, and to commemorate where they met, they named their first baby "Madison." Every day, we welcome couples into our Office to obtain marriage licenses and have a civil marriage ceremony performed in our well-appointed wedding room. More information about how to reserve an in-person or virtual wedding ceremony, as well as how to obtain a marriage license and/or marriage certificate is shown below in our newsletter.

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We have all experienced this Winter's heavy rain storms. The Alameda County Assessor Phong La announced that "Property owners impacted by the Winter Storms in 2022 and 2023 may be eligible for calamity property tax relief." For more information please call the Alameda County Assessor staff who manage the Disaster Relief for Winter Storms at [\*\*\(510\) 272-3787\*\*](tel:510-272-3787), select option 2 or visit their [\*\*webpage\*\*](#).

As always, thank you for your interest in our Office and for reading our 2023 First Quarter Newsletter! Please see our [\*\*website\*\*](#) for more information about our services, and as always, don't hesitate to contact us at [\*\*ACCR.info@acgov.org\*\*](mailto:ACCR.info@acgov.org). I look forward to my second term and serving you!

Best,



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# In Memory of Supervisor Richard Valle



I would like to dedicate this newsletter to Supervisor Richard Valle who passed away on February 7, 2023 after a courageous battle with cancer. Supervisor Valle was elected to represent District 2 in 2012 and was re-elected three times, most recently in 2022. He was a champion for organized labor, at-promise youth, environmental stewardship, veteran services and providing second chances for those who were justice-involved. Supervisor Valle was also a stalwart leader for the communities he represented and the County that he served. His generosity, selflessness and words of wisdom will be greatly missed by us all, and his passing is a profound loss to everyone who knew him. My deepest sympathies and thoughts go out to his wife and family.



On November 7, 2022 in recognition of Veterans Day, I was honored to join Supervisor Valle at the reception for the Veterans Art Partnership Exhibition presented by the Alameda County Arts Commission in partnership with the Oakland Vet Center, Hayward Arts Council, and the Hayward Public Library. Supervisor Valle and I presented a certificate of recognition to the Oakland Vet Center and the Veterans and their family members from across the county that have participated in the Alameda County Arts Commission's Veterans Art Partnership, now in its eighth year. During the event, Supervisor Valle gave a moving speech about his life and his experience as a Veteran.

*"True ease and comfort are not found in a quiet, uneventful life. This may sound paradoxical, but hardships bring about ease and comfort. For only by establishing strong individual lives capable of boldly challenging difficult obstacles can we find true peace and security in this lifetime."*

-Excerpt of Speech by Richard Valle on Nov. 7, 2022, presented in



The Supervisor's inspiring dedication and commitment to the Veterans Community will be forever remembered and treasured by the many lives touched by his light. You can now view the Veterans Art Partnership exhibition so admired by Supervisor Valle at the Alameda County Administration Building, 5th Floor Lobby Gallery in Oakland. It is open to the public during regular office hours, Monday through Friday, 9:00am - 5:00pm through July 25. Learn more on the Arts Commission's [website](#).

Images above feature the reception event for the Veterans Art Partnership Exhibition at the Hayward Public Library and a picture of Arts Commission Director Rachel Osajima, Glynis Banks, Melissa Wilk and Supervisor Valle. Photos by Paul Kuroda.

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## Celebrating the Year of the Rabbit



Lunar New Year is one of the most important holidays in East Asia and is observed by millions of people around the world. It is a time to start fresh and is celebrated with festivals, fireworks, and family gatherings. The holiday observes the start of the new year on the traditional lunisolar Chinese calendar; in 2023, the Chinese Zodiac falls on the Year of the Water Rabbit. Because the Yin Water element is associated with the

color black, some people call this the "Year of the Black Rabbit." The Yin Water element represents sensitivity, intuition, and, in its most positive form, the way of inner peace.

I was happy to be able to attend the Annual Lunar New Year Celebration presented by Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson and the Asian Pacific Islander Community Collaborative. The event was presented at Oakland Chinatown's Lincoln Recreation Center and featured engaging cultural performances, such as the traditional Lion Dance, and remarks from community leaders.

"I'm honored to celebrate the Lunar New Year that is so meaningful to the Asian Pacific Islander community," said Melissa. "I've always taken a community-first approach to our work, which means trying to meet the needs of our wonderfully diverse County. That's why we translated our customer brochure into Chinese-language to let our Chinese-speaking customers know that we are here for them."

The Clerk-Recorder's Office is available to help with language translation services during our regular business hours (Monday-Friday, 8:30am-5:00pm). For help over the phone, customers can call us at [\(510\) 272-6362](tel:5102726362), extension 3.

Image below is a picture of the Mongolian Dancers performing during the Alameda County Lunar New Year Celebration on January 30th at the Lincoln Recreation Center in Oakland's Chinatown.



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## Honoring Black History Month

Alameda County is proud to honor Black History Month with the recognition of this important annual celebration. Established by historian Carter G. Woodson, this event, initially began as a week-long celebration, has transformed into what is now known as Black History Month with the help of former president Gerald Ford in 1976. Since 1976, every U.S. president has officially designated February as Black History Month.



February is dedicated to celebrating Black history as it coincides with the birthdates of two key figures who played central roles in shaping black history: abolitionist Frederick Douglass and former President Abraham Lincoln. Observed annually during the entire month of February, Black History Month allows us to share, learn, and celebrate the profound impact that Black history has had on not just the United States, but throughout the world.

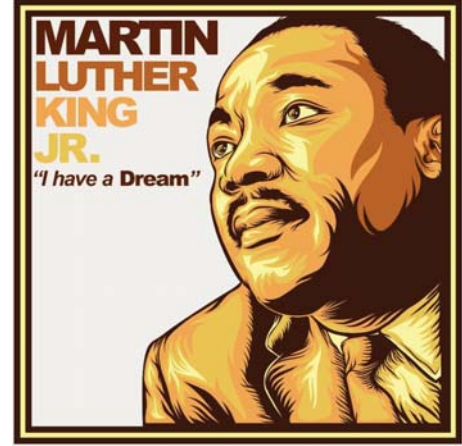
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## Honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Auditor-Controller/Clerk-Recorder Agency is proud to celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the profound, lasting impact of his life. Shortly after his death in 1968, advocates began rallying to make Martin Luther King Jr. Day a federal holiday to honor the civil rights leader. Significant efforts

were made by communities across the country to launch the campaign forward, which played a pivotal role in the holiday's approval 15 years after Dr. King's death.

In 1983, the measure to make Martin Luther King Jr. Day a federal holiday was passed by the Senate and signed into law by President Ronald Reagan on November 2, 1983. In 1994, Congress passed the King Holiday and Service Act, appointing the federal holiday as a national day of service to celebrate Dr. King's life and legacy. Observed annually as "a day on, not a day off," Martin Luther King Jr. Day is the only federal holiday designated to encourage volunteering in our communities.

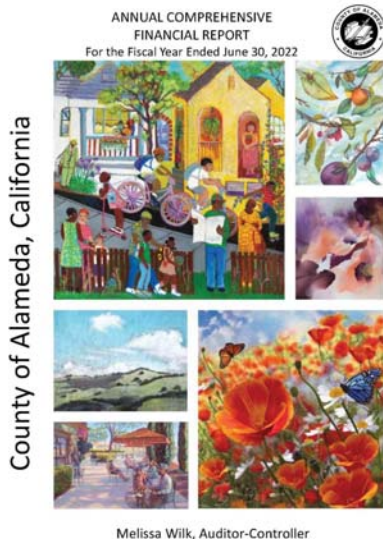


The Auditor-Controller/Clerk-Recorder Agency enjoyed attending the City of Piedmont Anti-Racism and Diversity Committee's 26th Annual MLK Celebration on January 16 to honor Dr. King's legacy and his spirit of service. Based on the words and beliefs of Dr. King, this year's event theme was "Beyond Race, Beyond Class, Beyond Nation" and featured remarks from Congresswoman Barbara Lee; Dr. Clayborne Carson, the Founding Director of Stanford's King Research & Education Institute; and Corrina Gould on behalf of the Sogorea Te' Land Trust.

"Everybody can be great, because everybody can serve." – Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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## Annual Comprehensive Financial Report



Every year in December, my Office completes the [Alameda County Annual Comprehensive Financial Report \(ACFR\)](#). The ACFR is presented to the Alameda County Board of Supervisors and is made available to Alameda County community members on our [website](#). The external auditor issued an unmodified ("clean") opinion on the latest report, which is the highest level of assurance that the external auditor provides.

This year's document is a report on the County's financial information for the fiscal year of July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022. It is submitted in compliance with the requirements of the State of California government code and is prepared with the principles and standards for financial reporting set forth by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board. The ACFR includes information about all funds managed by Alameda County which support a full range of services, including public protection; social services; health care for the indigent; construction and maintenance of highways, streets and other infrastructure; recreational activities; library services; and cultural events.

In addition to the ACFR, the County issues several other reports for year-end financial reporting. The County issues financial statements for the Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum Authority, the East Bay Regional Communications System Authority, the Bay Area Regional

Interoperable Communications System, the Abandoned Vehicle Abatement Authority, the Local Transportation Fund and the State Transit Assistance Fund. The County also prepares its Cost Allocation Plan for submission to the State Controller's Office.

The successful preparation of the ACFR and other financial reports are made possible by the dedicated services of the entire staff of the Auditor-Controller/Clerk-Recorder Agency. Thank you to my staff and to all members of the County departments who assisted and contributed to their preparation. In addition, I acknowledge and appreciate the leadership and support provided by the Alameda County Board of Supervisors and the County Administrator who have made the preparation of this report possible.

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## Project SEARCH Internship Graduation Celebration

I am proud to announce the successful completion of four East Bay Innovations (EBI) Project SEARCH internships in the Auditor-Controller/Clerk-Recorder Agency. A virtual graduation ceremony was held on January 27 in recognition of their many contributions and achievements. Each intern worked for two months in our Central Collections Division on a variety of tasks and job duties providing valuable assistance in completing day to day operations that included reviewing and organizing files for long-term secure storage and the review and recording of check payment deposits.



The EBI Project SEARCH program provides opportunities to adults with disabilities to develop skills through innovative workforce and career development. Participants can develop valuable and transferable work skills through on-the-job vocational training and job placement programs. The Project SEARCH goals are to expose each intern to a range of jobs that offer training of meaningful transferable work skills, to ensure that every participant gains experience that will build their résumé; to make it possible for graduates to seamlessly move into a job development phase; and to see each Project SEARCH graduate secure gainful employment. EBI's support doesn't end there. Once an individual is placed in a job, on-the-job support and training is provided for as long as it is needed.

Image above of Project SEARCH intern at work at the Central Collections Division.

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## Internal Audit Division and the Transfer of Accountability Reviews

Our staff in the Internal Audit Division work diligently throughout the year to ensure that dependable and accurate County systems are in place, that County assets



are safeguarded, and that the highest degree of public accountability is achieved.

This Division also has an important role in conducting a Transfer of Accountability Review whenever a change in County leadership occurs. As County Supervisor Lena Tam, Sheriff Yesenia Sanchez and District Attorney Pamela Price are newly elected to their positions, the Internal Audit Division will conduct a Transfer of

Accountability Review in these offices.

This process includes but is not limited to a review of the employee separation process, confirmation that access and authorizations have been removed from the former Supervisor or department head and assigned to the new Supervisor or department head, and confirmation that County assets (e.g. keys, badges, equipment, etc.) have been collected and reassigned.

Any issues identified during a Transfer of Accountability Review require follow up and may result in improvements to make future transitions more thorough and complete, which can then be applied across all levels, supporting the Internal Audit Division's goal to assist in minimizing risks, strengthening internal controls, and process improvement.

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## Getting Married at the Oakland Clerk-Recorder's Office



It has truly been our pleasure and honor to perform both in-person and virtual [marriage ceremonies](#) for so many happy couples at the Alameda County Clerk-Recorder's! As a reminder, we provide marriage licenses and marriage certificates in both the Oakland and Tri-Valley Clerk-Recorder's Office.

If you would like to get married at an in-person ceremony at the Alameda County Clerk-Recorder's Oakland Office, please schedule an appointment through our online reservation system - or by calling [\(510\) 272-6362](tel:510-272-6362). You should complete the marriage license application online prior to your arrival. Please ensure that there is a maximum of eight guests plus the couple attending the wedding and arrive at least twenty minutes prior to your wedding ceremony appointment to allow time to check in.

For a virtual marriage ceremony, you can make an appointment [online](#). Please remember you will need reliable, high-speed internet access. Individuals getting married virtually must be physically located within the State of California during the video conference. For more



details, including computer software requirements, please visit our [website](#). You can also have a friend, family member or loved one marry you once they legally become an officiant. To learn more about how to become an officiant, please visit our [webpage](#)



I want to acknowledge and thank all of my staff in the Clerk-Recorder's Office in Oakland and the Tri-Valley location for consistently providing excellent support and services to the public in performing marriage ceremonies, obtaining marriage licenses, and other related assistance. I would also like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all of our volunteer marriage commissioners conducting ceremonies. All of this work is a team effort, and is very much appreciated by both myself and the community members being served!

Images above features the Clerk-Recorder marriage related services team in Oakland and the Clerk-Recorder Tri-Valley staff in Dublin.

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## New California Laws Drive Important Changes at Our Agency

With the arrival of each New Year, the Auditor-Controller/Clerk-Recorder Agency staff is busy implementing important changes to comply with new laws and regulations which typically take effect on January 1st. This year was no different with dozens of legislative changes that impact the services we provide and the public we serve.



Here are just a few of the legislative initiatives we've reviewed and incorporated into our Clerk-Recorder workflows as we venture into 2023.

**AB218: Change of Gender and Sex Identifier** - This bill was signed into law in 2021 and became effective on January 1st, 2023. This law creates a process for Californians seeking a change of gender to also request that their birth certificate, marriage license and certificate, or confidential marriage license and certificate, be reissued to reflect their updated gender affirming information when accompanied by the requisite court order and documentation. Under AB218, the State Registrar will primarily be tasked with the reissuance for the majority of these vital records and our Office will be responsible for confidential marriage licenses and certificates previously issued by Alameda County. We have implemented a new confidential marriage reissuance process in order to meet these requirements.

AB1837: The Homes in Community Hands Act – This bill was signed into law in 2022. Under the new law, foreclosure sales may require that the eligible winning bidder and their eligible property be subject to recordation of specific affordable housing covenants.

AB2011: The Affordable Housing and High Roads Jobs Act of 2022 - This bill was signed into law in 2022 to create a ministerial, streamlined approval process for 100% affordable housing projects in commercial zones and, as specified, for mixed-income housing projects along commercial corridors. The developer may also be required to record some deed restrictions.

SB1112: Building Decarbonization (Notice and Recordation of Decarbonation Charge) – This bill, signed into law in 2022, requires energy suppliers that fund a decarbonization upgrade program to record (within 30 days) a notice of decarbonization upgrade change. It also requires an energy supplier to record (within 30 days) a notice of the full cost recovery, or a notice of removal of the decarbonization charge.

As always, we invite you to visit our [website](#) or reach out to our Customer Service Unit if you have any questions about our policies or any of the services we provide. The Customer Service Unit phone number is [\(510\) 272-6362](tel:5102726362) and email is [CROCustomerService@acgov.org](mailto:CROCustomerService@acgov.org).

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## Uncashed County Payments



One of the many services provided by our Agency is issuing and tracking County payments. Recipients of County payments include individuals, local and small businesses, community-based and non-profit organizations, and a variety of other for-profit and non-profit entities. From time to time, checks may go uncashed. This may be due to a number of reasons including a check being lost or misplaced

until it is "stale dated" or too old (over six months) to cash. Stale dated checks may also be the result of having been misdelivered or sent to a mailing address where the recipient moved before it was received. The good news is that my Office maintains a public website of uncashed payments including the procedure to follow if a check should need to be re-issued. Please visit our [website](#) to view the Uncashed Warrants Listing to confirm whether or not you have any uncashed payments from the County and follow the posted re-issuance procedure as needed.

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## Interns Gain Valuable Experience

I am so proud that my Agency is able to provide paid internship positions to students attending and graduating from colleges throughout the year. Interns are placed in various divisions, working on a variety of projects and

learning many new skills.



One of our current interns is Saleen Moreno from Hayward who recently completed her BA in Design Studies from San Jose State University. Saleen is working with our Alameda County Arts Commission division on a number of projects supporting the Veterans Art Partnership program including the assembly of art kits for veterans, preparation for veterans' art workshops, and helping with the current exhibition of veterans' artwork at the County Administration Building, 5th Floor Lobby Gallery.

Saleen has also had a major role in planning a community art activity that was part of the Ribbon Cutting Event to commemorate the completion of the Hesperian Boulevard Corridor Improvement Project on Saturday, February 4th. This event also celebrated the completion of the public artwork by artist Vanessa Marsh. The public artwork is in the form of stencil sandblasting on the sidewalks and is featured on street banners and utility boxes along Hesperian Boulevard. Community members of all ages who attended this event were able to do a fun, hands on art activity. For more information about the public art project, visit the Arts Commission's Public Art Program [website](#).

Our Agency's Internship Program offers a wide range of job assignments. Full-time, part-time and short-term internships are available with flexibility for current students. To learn more about this program please send an email to [hr.auditor@acgov.org](mailto:hr.auditor@acgov.org).

Image above features Arts Commission Director Rachel Osajima, Intern Saleen Moreno, and Arts Education Program Coordinator Violet Harlo holding examples of the community art project presented at the Ribbon Cutting Event on Feb. 4. Image below of the Ribbon Cutting Event. Photo by Paul Kuroda.



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**SAVE TIME AND ORDER ONLINE**



Need a birth, marriage, or death certificate? Save yourself time and order online! Select our pick-up option, and we can typically turn around your order within a few days.

Once you've submitted your order, you can check the status of your request online. You can then request the document be mailed to you, or you can pick it up from our Office. It's just that easy!

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## QUESTIONS FOR OUR AGENCY?

Are there upcoming community events that you would like us to attend? Do you have a specific question you would like to ask? Is your community or organization interested in a presentation about the services provided by the County and the Auditor-Controller/Clerk-Recorder Agency?



Email Melissa Wilk at [ACCR.info@acgov.org](mailto:ACCR.info@acgov.org) to let her know what questions we can answer and how we can support your efforts. We look forward to sharing upcoming news with you in the Fall as we move to a quarterly schedule for our newsletter.

## STAY IN TOUCH

If this email was forwarded to you, subscribe to our newsletter by emailing us at [ACCR.info@acgov.org](mailto:ACCR.info@acgov.org).

[Visit our Website](#)

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