



# MELISSA WILK

## ALAMEDA COUNTY

### AUDITOR-CONTROLLER/CLERK-RECORDER

## *Winter 2024 Newsletter*

### ***Message from Melissa***

Dear Alameda County,

I hope that 2024 has been off to a good start for you and your family!

February is here and the perfect time to honor the rich diversity within our County as we observe Black History Month and the Lunar New Year - I hope that you and your family will be able to participate in the many celebrations being held throughout the County.

This year, as in years past, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors will issue an official proclamation in recognition of Black History Month and appreciation of Black heritage and culture, and how it impacts our local communities and nation. Continuing in the spirit of embracing diversity, the County has partnered with the Asian Pacific Islander Community Collaborative to commemorate the Lunar New Year – the Year of the Dragon – and to celebrate the diversity of Asian culture. Led by Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson, this annual event took place on February 8th at the Lincoln Square Recreation Center and included guest speakers, lion dancing, and other cultural performances.

This month also brings the joy of Valentine’s Day, a special day for our Office and the many couples who have chosen the Alameda County Clerk-Recorder’s wedding room to tie the knot. I extend my heartfelt congratulations and gratitude to the newlyweds who have given us the honor of being a part of their marriage story. Appointments for this special day were booked well in advance this year, and we could not be more excited about a full house of happiness on February 14th! See the article below for information about getting married with us.



Looking ahead, the March 5th Presidential Primary election holds special significance for Alameda County residents. In addition to your vote to select the presidential candidates to appear on the November ballot, there will be a host of other important state and local elections – including the election of four seats on the Alameda County Board of Supervisors. Details on voting options and information from the Alameda County Registrar of Voters (ROV) can be found in the article below or by visiting the ROV website at [acvote.org](http://acvote.org).

Before we move on to things ahead, I would just like to share that over the past year, team members of the Auditor-Controller/Clerk-Recorder Agency have worked diligently to carry out our mission of providing the highest degree of fiscal stewardship of public funds and protection of public records. I'd like to recognize some of the many ways this team works tirelessly to provide support to employees, County departments, and the public:

- Ongoing service to over 100,000 Alameda County community members annually at both the Oakland and Tri-Valley locations of the Clerk-Recorder's Office, offering a mix of in-person and extended online services.
- Implementation of innovative solutions, including an electronic ticketing system for more efficient walk-in service at the Clerk-Recorder's Office and an award-winning online marriage service program.
- Overseeing a \$4.1 billion annual budget and managing the systems infrastructure that supports its complex accounting and auditing requirements.
- Securing millions of dollars in transfer taxes for Alameda County's cities, preventing potential losses without our intervention.
- Efficient management of payroll and timekeeping systems for over 10,000 County employees.

Thanks to the Auditor-Controller/Clerk-Recorder Agency team for a job well done!

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Being an elected leader in Alameda County is an honor that I hold in the highest regard. Thank you for your confidence, and for engaging with the Auditor-Controller/Clerk-Recorder Agency by reading this newsletter. Stay tuned for our next edition in the Spring.

For more information about our services, please visit our [website](http://acgov.org), and feel free to reach out to us at [ACCR.info@acgov.org](mailto:ACCR.info@acgov.org).

Best,



## Please Plan Ahead

All County Offices will be closed on Monday, Feb. 19 in observance of Presidents' Day.



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# Getting Ready to Vote on March 5th



For the March 5th Presidential Primary Election, every eligible registered voter will be mailed a Vote by Mail ballot. The County began sending out ballots on February 5th. In addition to the Presidential Primary, voters will have the opportunity to vote on important state, regional, county, and city races including four seats on the Alameda County Board of Supervisors. In 2020, the County implemented requirements of the California Voter's Choice Act, which modernizes elections by allowing

counties to conduct elections under a model that provides greater flexibility and convenience for voters. In Alameda County, voters will have more options in choosing when, how, and where to vote.

## Check Your Voter Status

Visit [acvote.org](https://acvote.org) to check your voter status and political party.

Not registered? Moved? Changed your name? Changed political parties? Visit <https://registertovote.ca.gov> or update your voter registration.

## More Days and More Ways to Vote

You now have more days to vote at a Vote Center location in Alameda County, open Saturday, February 24th through Election Day, Tuesday, March 5th. You can submit your ballot by mail (every eligible registered voter will receive a Vote by Mail ballot), drop off your Vote by Mail ballot in any designated 24-hour Drop Box, or vote in-person at a Vote Center.

## Bilingual Ballots

Alameda County offers Ballots and Voter Information Guides in 5 languages. Visit [acvote.org/mvp](https://acvote.org/mvp) to update your language preference. Voters who live in an area identified as needing language support in Burmese, Khmer, Hindi, Korean, Laotian, Mien, Mongolian, Punjabi, and Telugu, can request a Facsimile Ballot by contacting the Alameda County Registrar of Voters at **510-272-6973** or **1-800-834-6454**.

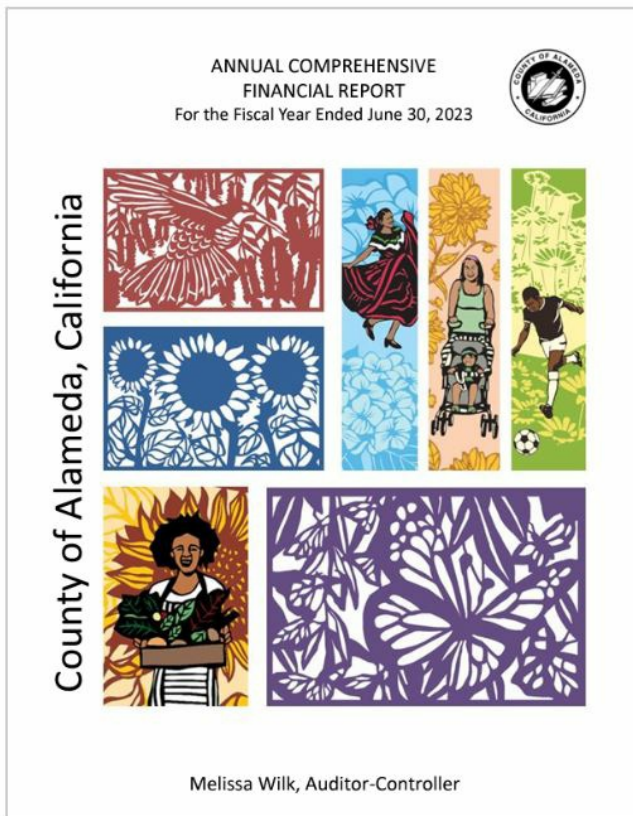
## Track Your Ballot

Tracking your Vote by Mail ballot – when it is mailed, received, and counted – has never been easier. Alameda County offers a way for voters to track and receive notifications on the status of their Vote by Mail ballot. Sign-up at [acvote.ballottrax.net](https://acvote.ballottrax.net) to receive automatic email or SMS (text) notifications about your ballot.

### Need More Information?

Visit [acvote.org](https://acvote.org) or call toll free **1-800-834-6454** for more information. TTD/TTY **510-208-4967**.

# Annual Comprehensive Financial Report



As I have previously reported, every year in December our Office completes the **Alameda County Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR)**. The ACFR is a detailed report of the County’s financial position based on an independent audit of financial statements, and is presented to the Board of Supervisors and 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.

The ACFR reports on the County’s financial information for the fiscal year of July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023. 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.

The ACFR is a nearly 200-page report with very detailed information. Recognizing its intricacy, our Office is creating a Popular Annual Financial Report (PAFR) – a community friendly guide providing an overview of essential financial details extracted from the ACFR. The PAFR will be finalized soon – stay tuned!

In addition to the ACFR, our Office issues several other reports for year-end financial reporting, including 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. Our Office 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 the over 200 employees of the Office 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 these reports possible.

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## Celebrating the Year of the Dragon

This year the Lunar New Year began on Saturday, February 10th! It is one of the most important celebrations in our Asian community and is observed by millions of people around the world. Throughout Alameda County there are 1.6 million people. Community members who are Asian and Pacific Islander comprise 35 percent of our population.



This time of the year is a new beginning 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 2024, the Chinese Zodiac falls on the Year of the Dragon and represents health, strength and good fortune. Those born in this year are believed to embody qualities associated with dragons – natural leadership, charisma, and boundless enthusiasm. The Alameda County Auditor-Controller/Clerk-Recorder Agency wishes each of you a happy Lunar New Year!

I was happy that our Agency was able to attend the February 8th Lunar New Year Celebration presented by Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson and the Asian Pacific Islander Community Collaborative. The event took place at Oakland Chinatown's Lincoln Recreation Center. The event was attended by community members including over 200 children from the elementary and middle schools in the Chinatown area. They enjoyed music and dance performances by local Chinese, Korean and Southeast Asian cultural organizations. Special guest speakers included Alameda County Supervisors Keith Carson and Lena Tam, Alameda County Assessor Phong La, and County Administrator Susan S. Muranishi.

"The Lunar New Year is an important event in the Asian and Pacific Islander community and throughout our whole County." said Melissa. "I, along with the whole County, truly enjoy joining in this celebration of the Year of the Dragon."

Alameda County community members speak a wide range of languages. The Clerk-Recorder's

Office is proud to provide information in different languages including our printed brochure in Chinese language. Our Office also provides 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**.

Image below is a picture of event performers with Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson and Rachel Osajima who attended the event to represent Melissa Wilk at the Lunar New Year Celebration on February 8th at the Lincoln Recreation Center in Oakland's Chinatown.



## Honoring Martin Luther King Jr. & Black History Month

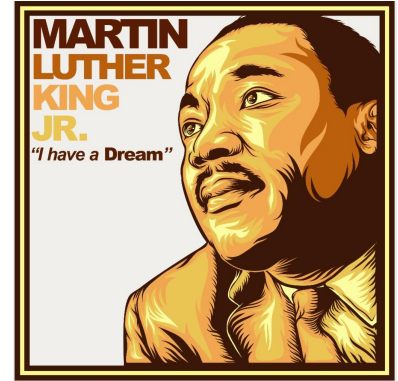


Alameda County is proud to celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Black History Month of February. This is an important time to recognize and honor the achievements, contributions, and history of African Americans. It is a month dedicated to acknowledging the significant impact that Black individuals and communities have had on the nation's history, culture, and progress.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. has had a profound and lasting impact. 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.

Auditor-Controller/Clerk-Recorder Agency staff enjoyed attending the City of Piedmont Anti-Racism and Diversity Committee's 27th Annual MLK Celebration on January 15 to honor Dr. King's legacy and his spirit of service. This year's event theme was "Remain Awake" and was based on the quote by Dr. King, "Let us stand up. Let us be a concerned generation. Let us remain awake through a great revolution."



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## Getting Married at the Alameda County Clerk-Recorder's Office



If you are interested in getting married in-person at the 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. A maximum of 25 guests are permitted to attend the ceremony. Please arrive at least twenty minutes prior to your wedding ceremony appointment to allow time to check in.

I am excited to announce that the Alameda County Auditor-Controller/Clerk-Recorder Agency will continue to provide online virtual marriage ceremonies in 2024 and beyond. During the pandemic, Alameda County was one of the very first Counties in California to set up and provide virtual marriages, making our Agency a leader in adapting the use of online technology to meet the needs of our community. With the passage of California Assembly Bill 1756, these services may continue throughout the state. While all California counties are not required to continue this service, I am pleased to share that due to the efforts of Alameda County leadership and our staff, we will continue to offer this important service.

For a virtual marriage ceremony, please note that 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 detailed information about both virtual and in-person marriage ceremonies, or to make an appointment please visit our [website](#) and [online reservation system](#).

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# California State Association of Counties' Executive Credential Program



Congratulations to Jocelyn Cole, Division Chief in our Clerk-Recorder's Office, and Gustavo Lozano, Principal Auditor in our Tax Analysis Unit, on their completion of the Executive Credential and Coaching Program!

This transformative 10-month professional development initiative, developed in collaboration with the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), is specifically tailored for senior staff within county government. The program aims to elevate leadership capabilities in public sector administration and governance to create a culture of excellence and innovation.

At its meeting on February 7th, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors, joined by CSAC executive leadership, formally recognized the twenty-two County employees for their commitment to professional excellence and completion of the program. At the recognition ceremony, District 5 Supervisor Keith Carson said, "This partnership [with CSAC] underscores the County's commitment to investing in our employees and creating pathways to enhance leadership skills."

Melissa Wilk expressed her congratulations saying, "Jocelyn and Gustavo are two of the four managers in our Office to complete this program since its inception in 2022, and I'm so proud of them. This Agency is committed to empowering excellence within our workforce, ensuring that our employees are equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to serve our County and community effectively."

We applaud Jocelyn Cole and Gustavo Lozano and their fellow graduates for their dedication to professional excellence, and we look forward to witnessing the continued positive impact of their enhanced leadership skills.

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# Annual Conference about New Laws

Demetrius Griffin, Assistant County Clerk-Recorder, attended this year's New Law Conference for officials from County Clerk, Elections and Recorders offices. This conference allowed members of all 58 California counties to gather together and gain insights into legislative changes, discuss best practices and network with peers. In addition, the annual conference focused on highlighting new laws and played a crucial role in keeping County Clerk-Recorder's staff informed and up to date on new legislative processes for the upcoming year. The event fostered a collaborative environment for sharing expertise and addressing challenges in the realm of the Clerk-Recorder's Office. Participants left equipped with the knowledge needed to adapt to new laws and enhance the efficiency of their roles in preserving and managing vital public records, as well as practical knowledge to optimize document recording practices in compliance with the latest laws, ensuring the integrity and accessibility of crucial records in the state of California.



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## Project Search Internship Graduation



I am proud to celebrate the success of three **Project Search** interns, Diedra, Khizer, and William, who recently completed their 2023 Internship Program with our Agency! Their achievements were commemorated at a graduation ceremony on January 25<sup>th</sup>, attended by family members, friends, and representatives from the program partners – Alameda County, **East Bay Innovations**, and the Oakland Unified School District. Since 2009, the

program partners have been collaborating to recruit, train, and provide meaningful work experience for adults with developmental disabilities. Throughout the past year, the three interns worked at the Clerk-Recorder's Office where they provided valuable assistance including indexing vital records for public access and clerical support services.

During the graduation ceremony, Diedra shared that her experience working with vital records has ignited her desire to become a local historian. Khizer spoke about gaining confidence and the boldness to advocate for himself. And, William expressed how navigating public transportation during his work commute allowed him to gain an appreciation for the County's beauty.

The Auditor-Controller/Clerk-Recorder Agency remains dedicated to being a Project Search

partner by offering continued work opportunities for interns. Congratulations and thank you once again to Diedra, Khizer, and William!

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## Meet the Small, Local and Emerging Business Certification (SLEB) Team

I am very proud to house the SLEB Certification Team within our Agency! The SLEB program is all about creating County contracting opportunities for small businesses located in the 14 cities and unincorporated areas of Alameda County. With a strong network of over 900 SLEB-certified businesses, the program allows for collaboration between County departments and certified businesses, facilitating essential County goods and services and contributing to economic growth. In 2023, SLEB contractors were awarded nearly \$80 million in contracts, underscoring the program's substantial impact on our local economy.



Supporting these achievements is our SLEB Certification Team. Led by Susan Wewetzer, this dynamic team includes Christina Chen, Truc Van, Terry Lau, Aaron Edington, Krissie Li and our talented intern, Kobe Keiner. From processing applications, conducting site visits and issuing certifications to maintaining the online user-friendly SLEB Search Query System, this is the team that gets the job done!

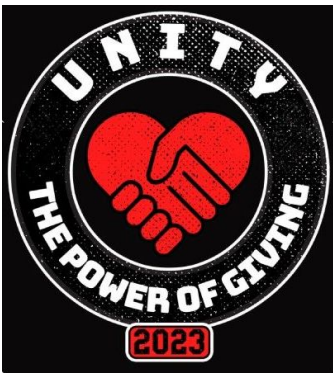
"It's great to go into the community and meet with businesses that are going through the SLEB certification process. It really brings it home that small businesses are the backbone of our local economy," said Aaron, one of our valued SLEB Certification Auditors.

Our experienced SLEB team is dedicated to this County program and its positive impact on our community. Next year will mark an incredible milestone – 25 years of the SLEB program supporting the economic vitality of our local community. It's been an incredible journey, and an honor to provide certification services to small local and emerging businesses.

Check out the enhanced SLEB Search Query System, designed to make it quicker and easier for County departments and the community to connect with local and SLEB-certified businesses. Visit the County's [SLEB website](#) for information about the SLEB program and how to get SLEB certified.

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## The Power of Giving

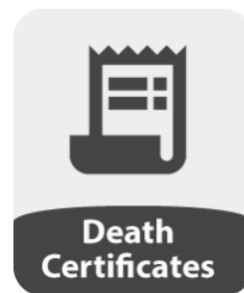


For many years Alameda County employees have participated in the annual Combined Charities workplace Giving Campaign. The theme of the recent campaign was “Unity - The Power of Giving” and was led by the Alameda County Fire Department. Over a two-month period more than 1,000 County employees showcased a collective impact with their commitment of nearly \$400,000 for organizations working to enrich communities locally and nationally. Our Agency’s Payroll Unit plays a special role in the success of this program by ensuring that all employee payroll contributions are collected and disbursed to all of the nonprofit

charities. I am proud that our Agency is an integral part of this process that enables County employees to send donations to so many important nonprofit organizations that serve our community.

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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 us at [ACCR.info@acgov.org](mailto:ACCR.info@acgov.org) to let us know what questions we can answer and how we can

support your efforts.

## 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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