



Office of the Washington State Auditor
Pat McCarthy

Accountability Audit Report

Yakima County

For the period January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016

Published October 19, 2017

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Office of the Washington State Auditor
Pat McCarthy

October 19, 2017

Board of Commissioners
Yakima County
Yakima, Washington

Report on Accountability

Thank you for the opportunity to work with you to promote accountability, integrity and openness in government. The State Auditor's Office takes seriously our role of providing state and local governments with assurance and accountability as the independent auditor of public accounts. In this way, we strive to help government work better, cost less, deliver higher value and earn greater public trust.

Independent audits provide essential accountability and transparency for County operations. This information is valuable to management, the governing body and public stakeholders when assessing the government's stewardship of public resources.

The attached comprises our report on the County's compliance and safeguarding of public resources. Our independent audit report describes the overall results and conclusions for areas we examined. We appreciate the opportunity to work with your staff and we value your cooperation during the audit.

Sincerely,

Pat McCarthy
State Auditor
Olympia, WA

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AUDIT SUMMARY

Results in brief

In most areas we audited, County operations complied with applicable requirements and provided adequate safeguarding of public resources. The County also complied with state laws and regulations and its own policies and procedures in most areas we examined.

However, we noted certain matters that we communicated to County management in a letter dated October 3, 2017, related to Clerk's Office operations. We appreciate the County's commitment to resolving those matters.

About the audit

This report contains the results of our independent accountability audit of Yakima County from January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016.

Management is responsible for ensuring compliance and adequate safeguarding of public resources from fraud, loss or abuse. This includes the design, implementation and maintenance of internal controls relevant to these objectives.

Our audit involved performing procedures to obtain evidence about the County's uses of public resources, compliance with state laws and regulations and its own policies and procedures, and internal controls over such matters.

In keeping with general auditing practices, we do not examine every transaction, activity or area. Instead, the areas examined were those representing the highest risk of fraud, loss, abuse, or noncompliance. The following areas were examined during this audit period:

- Open Public Meetings Act
- Clerk's Office
- Department of Corrections
- Sole source purchases
- Disbursements
- Building and land use fees
- District Court
- Ground Water Management Area

SUMMARY SCHEDULE OF PRIOR AUDIT FINDINGS

Yakima County **January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016**

This schedule presents the status of findings reported in prior audit periods. The status listed below is the representation of Yakima County. The State Auditor's Office has reviewed the status as presented by the County.

Audit Period: January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2015	Report Ref. No: 1018319	Finding Ref. No: 2015-001
Finding Caption: The Clerk's Office does not have adequate internal controls or oversight of its financial operations to safeguard public resources.		
Background: The County Clerk's Office collected \$1,157,034 in revenue for fines, fees, and restitution payments in 2015. The Clerk is responsible for developing policies and ensuring adequate controls are in place and effective over office operations. As evidenced below, the Office lacks important controls over accounting operations. Without these controls, the Office cannot ensure funds are safeguarded and the risk of misappropriation, loss of public assets and noncompliance increases. We reviewed the internal controls over Clerk's Office activities and identified control deficiencies in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trust Fund Bank Reconciliations• Cash Receipting and Adjustments• Jury Service Billings• Child Support Orders		
Status of Corrective Action: <input type="checkbox"/> Fully Corrected <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Corrected <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Corrected <input type="checkbox"/> Finding is considered no longer valid		
Corrective Action Taken: <i>Although the Washington State Auditor's Office has reduced the 2015 Audit Finding for the Clerk's Office to a Management Letter in 2016, the County continues to express our disappointment in our County Clerk's performance. The Clerk has been provided significant levels of support from multiple outside offices within the County. Despite these outside efforts, the Clerk has failed to resolve your findings. The Board of Yakima County Commissioners is</i>		

disappointed with the Clerk's progress concerning issues that are the sole responsibility of the elected Clerk.

RELATED REPORTS

Financial

Our opinion on the County's financial statements and compliance with federal grant program requirements is provided in a separate report, which includes the County's financial statements. That report is available on our website, <http://portal.sao.wa.gov/ReportSearch>.

Federal grant programs

We evaluated internal controls and tested compliance with the federal program requirements, as applicable, for the County's major federal programs, which are listed in the Schedule of Findings and Questioned Costs section of the separate financial statement and single audit report. That report is available on our website, <http://portal.sao.wa.gov/ReportSearch>.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE COUNTY

Yakima County is located in central Washington. The County encompasses 4,296 square-miles and is the second largest county in land area in Washington and seventh largest in population. It serves approximately 247,000 residents and is administered by an elected, three-member Board of Commissioners. The County has seven independently elected positions including Assessor, Auditor, Clerk, Coroner, Prosecuting Attorney, Sheriff and Treasurer. In addition, there are eight elected Superior Court judges and four elected District Court judges. The County has an annual budget of approximately \$289 million.

The County has approximately 1,200 permanent employees who provide a full range of services including: judicial and public safety; operation and maintenance of the County jail and youth detention center; building inspection; planning and zoning; property valuation; tax collection and distribution; vehicle licensing; construction, reconstruction and maintenance of streets, highways, bridges; employment and social services; parks and recreation and general administrative services.

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Information current as of report publish date.

Audit history

You can find current and past audit reports for Yakima County at <http://portal.sao.wa.gov/ReportSearch>.

ABOUT THE STATE AUDITOR'S OFFICE

The State Auditor's Office is established in the state's Constitution and is part of the executive branch of state government. The State Auditor is elected by the citizens of Washington and serves four-year terms.

We work with our audit clients and citizens to achieve our vision of government that works for citizens, by helping governments work better, cost less, deliver higher value, and earn greater public trust.

In fulfilling our mission to hold state and local governments accountable for the use of public resources, we also hold ourselves accountable by continually improving our audit quality and operational efficiency and developing highly engaged and committed employees.

As an elected agency, the State Auditor's Office has the independence necessary to objectively perform audits and investigations. Our audits are designed to comply with professional standards as well as to satisfy the requirements of federal, state, and local laws.

Our audits look at financial information and compliance with state, federal and local laws on the part of all local governments, including schools, and all state agencies, including institutions of higher education. In addition, we conduct performance audits of state agencies and local governments as well as [fraud](#), state [whistleblower](#) and [citizen hotline](#) investigations.

The results of our work are widely distributed through a variety of reports, which are available on our [website](#) and through our free, electronic [subscription](#) service.

We take our role as partners in accountability seriously, and provide training and technical assistance to governments, and have an extensive quality assurance program.

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