



# El Dorado County Civil Grand Jury 2025-2026



## FINAL REPORT

June 24, 2026

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DISCLAIMER 1: For Report No. 26-04, the Foreperson consulted with County Counsel regarding a juror's prior volunteer affiliation with the investigated organization. County Counsel determined that a recusal was not required. The juror nonetheless voluntarily abstained from voting on matters related to this report as a self-imposed precaution to avoid any appearance of impropriety.

### DISCLAIMER 2:

Portions of published reports were drafted with assistance from generative AI tools. All findings, recommendations, factual verification, and final approval were performed by members of the Civil Grand Jury.



## El Dorado County Civil Grand Jury 2025-2026

### Presiding Judge

Gary Slossberg, Judge of the Superior Court

### Jurors

Michael O'Dell – Foreperson  
Steve Barbaccia  
Bruce Brinkman  
Kathleen Craven  
Cynthia Freeland  
Richard Johnson  
Robert Mathis

Debera Jackson – Pro-Tem  
Michael Ott  
Eugene Swystun  
Elizabeth Symons  
Nick Villa  
Taffy Warner



# Civil Grand Jury

El Dorado County

P.O. Box 1003

Placerville, CA 95667



June 30, 2025

Honorable Gary Slossberg, Presiding Judge  
California Superior Court, County of El Dorado

Judge Slossberg,

It is my honor to present the 2025-2026 Civil Grand Jury Final Report, the product of dedicated service by a remarkable group of El Dorado County citizens.

This year's Grand Jury brought together returning and new members whose diverse backgrounds and perspectives strengthened every aspect of our work. While many of us underestimated the commitment required, we found the experience profoundly educational and fulfilling. Each juror played an essential role in our investigations and deliberations, and we are grateful for the lasting friendships formed along the way.

Our reports aim to do more than recommend improvements—they seek to illuminate how our County operates and to engage citizens in these critical issues. As the public's watchdog, our effectiveness depends on community awareness and involvement. We hope this report sparks greater public interest and dialogue about the matters we have examined.

The quality of our work reflects extraordinary support from key partners. Assistant County Counsel Janeth D. SanPedro provided unwavering guidance that enhanced both our process and our findings. Assistant District Attorney James A. Clinchard offered thoughtful counsel throughout our investigations. The Superior Court, including you, Judge Slossberg, and Administrative Assistant Cindy Denton, ensured smooth operations at every turn. The County IT team delivered essential technical support. Compared to other rural counties, the resources and encouragement El Dorado County provides have enabled this Civil Grand Jury to stand among the most effective and productive in California.

Leading this year's Grand Jury and serving alongside such capable and committed individuals has been a true privilege.

Sincerely,

J. Michael O'Dell  
Foreperson, 2025-2026 Civil Grand Jury



**SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA  
COUNTY OF EL DORADO**

2927 Meder Rd  
Cameron Park, CA 95682

May 20, 2026

To the Members of the 2025/2026 El Dorado County Grand Jury,

On behalf of the El Dorado County Superior Court, I would like to express my appreciation for all your hard work and dedication. The importance of the Civil Grand Jury cannot be understated. The time and effort involved in Grand Jury service is significant. You have risen to the occasion, working tirelessly to conduct thorough investigations and provide comprehensive reports and recommendations.

During the past year, as members of our Civil Grand Jury, you have provided independent oversight of the operation of various local governmental agencies. You have reviewed processes and procedures, looking for ways in which government can operate more efficiently, effectively, and with more transparency. Additionally, you have evaluated the adult and juvenile detention facilities operating in El Dorado County.

You are each to be commended for your willingness to serve on our Civil Grand Jury. Your efforts, and those of your predecessor Grand Jurors, have made El Dorado County a better place. Thank you for your service.

Very truly yours,

Gary Slossberg, Judge of the Superior Court



Civil Grand Jury 2025-2026

## El Dorado County Detention Centers

Placerville and South Lake Tahoe Jails and the South Lake Tahoe Youth Treatment Center Inspections



El Dorado County Jail – Placerville Facility Expansion Project

Case No. 26-01

April 29, 2026

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## SUMMARY

Security is a top priority at El Dorado County jails and detention centers. The Sheriff's Office and Probation Department take that responsibility seriously. The 2025-2026 El Dorado County Civil Grand Jury (Grand Jury) completed annual inspections of El Dorado County (County) jails at South Lake Tahoe (SLT), Placerville, and the South Lake Tahoe Juvenile Treatment Center (JTC).

Inspections included physical examination of the facilities and interviews with staff and inmates. The buildings' exterior and interior are well maintained. No facility exceeded its inmate capacity.

Maintaining adequate staffing is a concern for both jails. Staff interviews revealed shortages resulting in overtime. Staff identified competitive compensation as a problem in recruiting and retaining qualified personnel.

**M**aintaining adequate staffing is a concern for both jails.

The Sheriff's Office implemented a successful recruitment method by streamlining the application and testing process.

The staffing concern requires additional action to ensure appropriate staffing levels at both the South Lake Tahoe and Placerville locations.

The expansion project at the Placerville Jail scheduled for completion in 2026 will add 22,000 square feet to the facility. The expansion includes a new medical services area, female housing, and other ancillary services. The expansion will not add inmate capacity. This addition amplifies the need to fill vacant positions for correctional officers and jail staff, especially at the Placerville jail.

## BACKGROUND

Penal Code (PC) Section 919(b) mandates that, annually, the Civil Grand Jury in each California county "... inquire into the condition and management of the public prisons

within the county.” The term “public prisons” was clarified in a California Attorney General (AG) Opinion (No. 18- 103) dated March 10, 2022. The term “public prisons” in PC Section 919(b) includes “local detention facilities” that confine prisoners for more than 24 hours. Both El Dorado County jails are considered local detention facilities. The AG concluded that each Grand Jury must inquire into at least one local detention facility located within its county.

County jails were originally built to serve as pretrial detention centers and to house criminals sentenced to no more than one year. According to California Penal Code Sections 4000-4030, county jails were not designed to house prisoners serving long-term sentences. In 2011, the Public Safety Realignment Act [Assembly Bill (AB) 109] reduced California’s overcrowded prison system by moving lower-level offenders to county jails. Counties became responsible for incarceration and all ancillary services related to long-term incarceration. Prior to AB 109, criminals were sent to state prison or county jail based mostly on length of sentence.



## METHODOLOGY

### SITE VISITS

El Dorado County South Lake Tahoe Jail on September 18, 2025

El Dorado County Juvenile Treatment Center (JTC) in South Lake Tahoe on September 18, 2025.

El Dorado County Placerville Jail on October 7, 2025

## DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

Prior El Dorado County (EDC) [Grand Jury Reports and Responses - El Dorado County](#)

County of El Dorado [Fiscal Year 2025-26 Adopted Budget Book](#) including Law and Justice – Sheriff budget document.

Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) 2023/2024 [Inspection Report \(Dated February 4, 2024\) Local Detention Facility Inspection Reports](#) – BSCC

Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) 2025-2026 [COMPREHENSIVE INSPECTION, WELFARE & INSTITUTIONS CODE](#)

[SECTIONS 209 & 885, EL DORADO COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT](#)

[DETENTION FACILITIES](#)

[BSCC Jails Inspection Handbook for Grand Jury Sample Documents](#) - Civil Grand Jurors' Association

[California Grand Jury Association of California](#)

Detention Facility Inspection Form Sample Documents

## INTERVIEWS

El Dorado County Sheriff's Department staff

El Dorado County Probation Department staff

County Correctional Officers

Select Inmates

# DISCUSSION

## JAIL OPERATIONS

Inspections conducted at both County jails included, but were not limited to, housing, holding cells, medical units, culinary facilities, indoor gym recreation facilities, library, classrooms, and control rooms.

Each main control room monitors the entire facility, including adjacent grounds. Separate control rooms monitor the housing units. The



The Grand Jury inspected the booking and intake areas, public access spaces, isolation cells, and the sally port—a secure entrance where inmates are brought into the facility for processing.

The El Dorado County Office of Education (EDCOE) offers a range of educational classes at both facilities, including court-ordered narcotics and alcohol abuse treatment and anger management. Inmates can complete General Educational Development (GED) requirements, giving them an alternative to a high school diploma. EDCOE is working with both jails to upgrade classroom technology and opportunities.

Inmates have access to computer tablets for education and entertainment. Tablets are gathered in the evening to be recharged. Permission to use the tablets depends on an inmate's good behavior. The Network Computer Integrating Company provides controlled internet access that is preloaded on tablets. Tablets are used for communication with people outside the jail as well as watching movies as a reward for exhibiting good behavior. Officers monitor all electronic communications within 24 hours of receipt before sending them to recipients. Inmates may also use phones located in the communal areas.

Each jail has a culinary program. To participate in the program, inmates must meet guidelines and complete a food safety course. Qualified candidates prepare daily meals

for inmates and staff under the supervision of a registered dietician and a cook. Food storage and refrigerated areas at both jails were clean and well organized. Cleaning fluids and other chemicals were labeled properly and secured safely. Knives and other sharp instruments are used under supervision, counted, and secured when not in use.

Meals are served in a communal area and cell. Each inmate is given up to 60 minutes for a meal with a minimum of 15 minutes.



The County contracts with Wellpath, an independent medical care provider, to provide health care services to inmates. All inmates are medically cleared through a preliminary screen before they are accepted into custody. Once accepted into custody, a thorough evaluation is done before they are housed. Inmates needing medical care can see the appropriate medical professional on the same day for an urgent problem and within three to five days for a chronic problem.

Exercise is done outside if the weather permits. There is an indoor gym where inmates can exercise. SLT also has an all-weather, indoor recreational area available year-round.

Showers are available daily for each inmate.

Both Placerville and South Lake Tahoe jails have the same rules and procedures. Rules are posted in communal areas, and inmates are oriented to jail procedures. Inmates are given an Inmate Orientation Handbook in either English or Spanish, covering a variety of topics from inmate rights and disciplinary process to health services and visitation.

Discipline is enforced as needed and is progressive. The first minor offense is a verbal warning. The second warning results in removing benefits, and a major offense will result in a lockdown. The jail utilizes Moral Recognition Therapy (MRT) with its inmates to redirect inmates' behavior.

Discipline is enforced as needed and is progressive.

Both facilities showed signs of age but were clean and well maintained at the time of inspection. No graffiti was observed, although staff reported that graffiti is evident at times due to inmate access to pencils.

Maintaining adequate staffing is a concern for both jails. Staff interviews revealed shortages resulting in overtime. Some studies warn that excessive overtime can lead to fatigue, reduced work rate, absenteeism, and negatively impact employee morale. Staff identified competitive compensation as a problem in recruiting and retaining qualified personnel. The Sheriff's Office implemented a successful recruitment method by streamlining the application and testing process. The staffing concern requires ongoing attention to ensure appropriate staffing levels at both the South Lake Tahoe and Placerville locations.

Compensation studies were conducted by the Department of Human Resources prior to labor contract negotiations in 2023 for the position of Correctional Officer II. Compared to other comparable county positions, El Dorado County pay was substantially below the average. Compensation was adjusted pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the County and Operating Engineers Local No. 3, representing the Corrections Bargaining Unit employees, but wages still lag. Staff interviews revealed that efforts are being made at recruitment fairs as well as other events and have been successful in attracting more candidates. New hires must complete training prior to assignment on site.

More recently, staff indicated that while the County is filling positions, staffing needs have increased over the years, and approved staffing ratios have been stagnant.

Current minimum staffing levels are not in alignment with today's demands and inmate population needs. Since the State changed the population makeup of county jails in 2011 with the Public Safety Realignment Act [Assembly Bill (AB) 109], duties that previously required one officer to oversee now require two or more officers to address safety concerns and/or inmate needs. Staffing ratio plans are dependent upon staffing allocations. The plan has not been updated since 2008.

## SOUTH LAKE TAHOE JAIL



The El Dorado County South Lake Tahoe (SLT) jail was built in 1973 with an addition in 1992. The Grand Jury conducted a site visit and inspected the jail on September 18, 2025. The maximum capacity of the facility is 158 inmates. On the date of inspection, it housed 106 males. Due to female staffing shortages, female inmates are housed at the Placerville jail. In the past year, the facility has experienced one suicide, one attempted suicide, and one other death. The South Lake Tahoe jail has maintained a record of zero escapes over the past two years.

According to Penal Code Section 6031.1, inspections of local detention facilities shall, at a minimum, be made biennially. SLT inspections are current as follows:

Fire Inspection conducted August 28, 2024

Medical/Mental Health inspection conducted July 26, 2024

Environmental Health inspection conducted April 16, 2024

Nutritional Health inspection conducted April 9, 2024

Correction Standards Authority inspection conducted November 12, 2025

US Marshall inspection conducted September 27, 2024

## SOUTH LAKE TAHOE STAFFING

Daily staffing Includes one Commander, five Sergeants, and 27 Correctional Officers on the floor. Allocated staff positions are about 50% filled. Existing staff work significant overtime to meet schedule demands. Correctional Officers stated they believe the primary reason for the staffing shortage is because jails in surrounding counties pay higher wages.

Recruiting staff in South Lake Tahoe presents unique challenges, including the high cost of housing and the requirement that mandatory department training be conducted in Placerville.

Federal law requires same-sex supervision of inmates under the 2003 Prison Rape Elimination Act. Jail staff stated that they do not have the appropriate number of female Correctional Officers to monitor females for 24 hours, seven days per week. Female inmates are transferred to the Placerville jail where appropriate female staffing is available.

## PLACERVILLE JAIL

The Placerville (PV) jail was built in 1988. The Grand Jury conducted a site visit and inspected the jail on October 7, 2025. The maximum capacity of the facility is 303 inmates. At the time of inspection, Placerville jail housed 194 inmates - 146 males and 48 females. In the past year, there have been



three attempted suicides. The facility has maintained a record of zero escapes over the past two years and no deaths.

According to Penal Code Section 6031.1, inspections of local detention facilities shall, at a minimum, be made biennial. All inspections are current or scheduled as follows:

Fire Inspection conducted December 3, 2025

Medical/Mental Health inspection conducted June 5, 2025

Environmental Health inspection conducted May 20, 2025

Nutritional Health inspection conducted June 20, 2025

Correction Standards Authority inspection conducted November 12, 2025

US Marshall inspection conducted September 27, 2025

## PLACERVILLE STAFFING

There are 85 staff positions with 21 vacant at the time of the site visit. This shortage requires ongoing overtime for the current staff.

The primary factor contributing to staff shortages is the higher wages offered by neighboring counties. According to County staff, the Human Resources Department conducted a compensation study in 2023 for the Correctional Officer II classification. El Dorado County paid 15% below the median of the State of California and comparable counties of Butte, Napa, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, Solano, Sutter, and Yuba.

A similar compensation study in 2024 for Sheriff's Correctional Lieutenant revealed that the County paid 34.73% below median comparable counties of Amador, Napa, Placer, Sacramento, and Yolo.

## PLACERVILLE INMATE INTERVIEWS

The Grand Jury interviewed three inmates. Topics discussed were food quality and educational opportunities within the jail. One male inmate working in the kitchen stated he was happy working there, did not have any complaints, and enjoyed contributing. Two female inmates working in the laundry area were also interviewed. One said she was treated well, enjoyed the food, but would like more learning opportunities. The second inmate agreed.

## PLACERVILLE EXPANSION

New construction for a 22,000 square foot facility expansion in Placerville is underway adjacent to the current facility.

The project is funded by a grant awarded to El Dorado County under California Senate Bill 844 for \$25 million. The expansion project includes a separate housing area for female inmates and a



new medical wing. The medical wing increases treatment capacity and expands mental health services for all inmates. The expansion also includes ADA-compliant cells and a computer lab. The expansion will not increase overall inmate capacity.

According to the County's 2025-26 Budget book, "the Jail Expansion project is expected to be completed mid-summer 2026, and although inmate capacity will not increase with the expansion, it will significantly impact operational demands by adding services provided to inmates. It is anticipated that ten Sheriff's Correctional Officer I/II's and two Sheriff's Correctional Sergeants will be needed once the expansion is complete. The expansion will also increase Services and Supplies costs, such as utilities, maintenance, equipment, and supplies. It is estimated that the annual costs could increase by \$2.5 million. To help smooth the impact of these increases over the next few years, it is recommended to place \$2.5 million in a designation for Jail Expansion Operational Costs."

## JUVENILE TREATMENT CENTER SOUTH LAKE TAHOE

The current Juvenile Treatment Center (JTC) in South Lake Tahoe is a 40-bed facility built in 2003. The County moved all juvenile treatment operations from Placerville to the South Lake Tahoe facility in June 2020. The Grand Jury conducted a site visit and inspected the South Lake Tahoe JTC on September 18, 2025. At the time of inspection JTC housed 13 male youths.

The Probation Department is responsible for the operations of the JTC. There are 34 staff positions at JTC with 7 currently vacant. The Department employs temporary “extra help” staff to cover vacancies until positions are filled with permanent staff.

The age range for youth placement at JTC is 14 to 25 years old. No escapes or deaths occurred last year, though six suicide attempts were reported. The facility was clean, free of graffiti, and well maintained, with carpeting and furniture giving it a more homelike atmosphere. Current staffing meets the minimum standards established by the El Dorado County Probation



Department, who are responsible for operating and staffing the facility.

Inspections are current as follows:

Fire Inspection conducted November 14, 2024

Medical/Mental Health inspection conducted March 18, 2025

Environmental Health inspection conducted March 10, 2025

Nutritional Health inspection conducted March 25, 2025

Correction Standards Authority inspection conducted April 15, 2025

The County contracts with Wellpath for medical care. A Registered Nurse (RN) is onsite daily, and a physician is at the facility during the week. On-call medical services are available. A mental health care program coordinator, therapist, psychiatrist, and other medical staff provide mental health care. Medications are kept locked and dispensed by the RN.

The JTC is developing vocational educational programs, including a culinary training program. The EDCOE provides high school and community college instruction. Youth have a structured daily schedule that includes designated times for meals, exercise, hygiene, educational instruction, counseling, and a minimum of one hour participation in a program determined through an assessment by a probation officer. Visitations take place in person and by Zoom.

The 2025-2026 BSCC Comprehensive Inspection of JTC was completed on May 16, 2025. The report stated that the facility complies with the California Code of Regulations, Title 15 Minimum Standards, and Title 24 Minimum Standards. The full report is available on the BSCC Juvenile Detention Facilities Standards and Operations website at [Facilities Standards & Operations \(FS.O\) – BSCC](#)

## FINDINGS

F1. Staff vacancies at the County jails require current staff to work overtime on a regular basis. Excessive overtime can lead to fatigue, reduced work rate, absenteeism, and negatively impact employee morale.

F2. The Sheriff's Office has made progress in recruitment by streamlining the application and testing process.

F3. Attracting qualified individuals to live and work in South Lake Tahoe and drive to Placerville for testing and training is a deterrent to recruitment.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. The El Dorado County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors direct the Director of Human Resources to conduct a compensation study for Correctional Officers. The study should consider comparing with neighboring counties in State of Nevada to be completed no later than December 9, 2026.

R2. The El Dorado County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Sheriff, in cooperation with the Director of Human Resources, develop a plan for recruitment opportunities to specifically address the application process, testing, training, and incentives for open positions located in South Lake Tahoe by December 9, 2026.

## REQUIRED RESPONSES

A Civil Grand Jury report details a single investigation. Each report lists FINDINGS and RECOMMENDATIONS. The organization responsible is notified and is required to respond to the report.

The California Penal Code § 933(c) specifies response times.

- **PUBLIC AGENCIES.** The governing body of any public agency (also referring to a department) must respond within 90 days from the release of the report to the public.
- **ELECTED OFFICERS OR AGENCY HEADS.** All elected officers or heads of agencies/departments are required to respond within 60 days of the release of the report to the public.
- **FAILURE TO RESPOND.** Failure to respond to a Grand Jury report violates California Penal Code Section § 933.05 and is subject to further action that may include additional investigation into the subject matter of the report by the Jury.

The following responses are required pursuant to Penal Code § 933 and § 933.05:

From the following governing boards within 90 days:

- El Dorado County Board of Supervisors
  - All Findings
  - Recommendation 1

From the following elected county official within 60 days:

- El Dorado County Sheriff's Office
  - All Findings
  - Recommendation 2

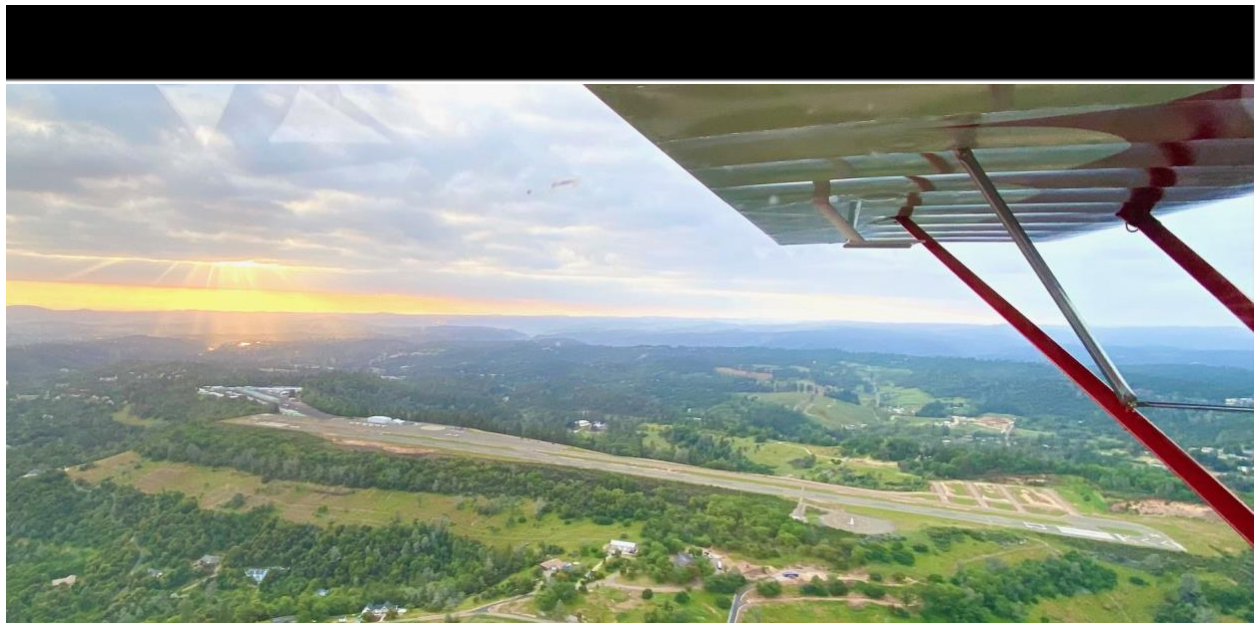
For more information refer to “How to Respond to an El Dorado County Civil Grand Jury Report” available on the El Dorado County Grand Jury Reports and Responses webpage at <https://www.eldoradocounty.ca.gov/Public-Safety-Justice/Safety-Justice/Grand-Jury>.

Reports issued by the Civil Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code section 929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury do not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.

Civil Grand Jury 2025-2026



# El Dorado County Owned Airports Navigating Change



Placerville Airport, El Dorado County – Audry Brand

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## SUMMARY

More than five years have passed since the Civil Grand Jury issued recommendations in 2020 for the operations of County owned airports. Progress was minimal until 2024, when the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors (Board) moved the Airports Division from the Planning and Building Department to the Chief Administrative Office (CAO).

The Grand Jury acknowledges the County's initiative to update policies and procedures related to County owned airports. While this undertaking is praiseworthy, concerns remain regarding the openness and effectiveness of its implementation.

## BACKGROUND

The County of El Dorado owns and operates the Placerville and Georgetown Airports (Airports). Both Airports are located within one of California's highest fire hazard severity zones and play a vital role during wildfire emergencies.



The Civil Grand Jury (Grand Jury) reported on County airports over the years covering a range of topics from historical preservation to general safety. On June 15, 2020, the Grand Jury released a report entitled County Airports ([Civil Grand Jury Case 19-07](#)) addressing operational management and suggested improvements.

It has been more than five years since the Grand Jury shared its ideas with the County. Progress was minimal until 2024, when the Board moved the Airports Division from the Planning and Building Department to the CAO. Upon reviewing the operation and management of the Airports following the CAO's reassumption of responsibility for the Airports Division, the Grand Jury identified both ongoing challenges and emerging opportunities.

## METHODOLOGY

### Documents Reviewed

2019-20 Grand Jury Report: Airports

2022-23 Grand Jury Report: Building Projects

2023-24 Grand Jury Report: Georgetown Airport

Airport Ground Leases

El Dorado County Policy Number F-10 "County-Owned Airports – Regulations, Security, and Leases"

Board of Supervisors Meeting Minutes and Videos as indicated in text

## Interviewed

County employees

Aircraft owners/lease holders/airport users

Aviation business owners/lease holders

## DISCUSSION

### El Dorado County Airports Division Updates

The County Airports Division was managed by the Transportation Department, then the CAO, later the Planning and Building Department, and currently is overseen by the CAO.

The Grand Jury investigated recent changes to the Airports Division after its operations returned to the CAO as approved by the Board in 2024. (Legistar file [23-2157](#)).

Following the transfer, CAO staff promptly initiated updates to airport operations by revising existing ordinances and policies. Standards and procedures for airport users' ground leases (Leases) were also updated to reflect changes to policy.

On June 25, 2024, the Board appointed an Ad Hoc Committee on Airports, comprised of District III and District IV supervisors, representing Placerville and Georgetown. The committee worked with CAO staff to study airport issues: including operations, ordinance and policies, the Airports Advisory Committee, Airports Capital Improvements, Economic Development Studies, and funding strategies (Legistar file [24-1090](#)).

According to the staff report on July 16, 2024, after their initial meeting, the Ad Hoc Committee decided that a thorough review of the Airports program and the Airports Advisory Committee's role was needed. They recommended pausing the Advisory Committee assembly ([Legistar file 24-1281](#)).

The Ad Hoc Committee made decisions without adequate stakeholder input, according to interviews conducted by the Grand Jury. Without representation by the Airports Advisory Committee or a seat on the Ad Hoc Committee, stakeholders said they had limited opportunity to provide valuable feedback. As a result, the Grand Jury received several complaints with concerns ranging from ground lease terms and insurance demands to inadequate representation and public outreach.

...a thorough review of the Airports program and the Airports Advisory Committee's role was needed... in 2024.

The effort to expedite updates to the Airports program to meet Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) requirements and preserve airport grant funding were made with the appearance of limited opportunities for public participation by airport users and interested citizens. This created miscommunication and misunderstandings resulting in the need for additional County resources to complete subsequent revisions to policy and contracts.

## Communication Breakdown

The Board created the Airports Advisory Committee to represent airport users and collaborate with County Airport staff and the Board. The committee addresses issues such as safety, maintenance, tourism, and economic development.

Based on the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Committee, the Board suspended the assembly and responsibilities of the Airports Advisory Committee on July 16, 2024 ([Legistar file 24-1281](#)) because the Ad Hoc Committee saw a risk that Advisory Committee recommendations could be misinterpreted as personal gain instead of benefiting the airports.

The concern for conflict of interest relates to the 2018 Board-approved Airport Advisory Committee [By-Laws](#) (Legistar file [18-1721](#)) that permit the Advisory Committee to review and make recommendations to the Board regarding the annual airport budgets and issues regarding County airport leases, rates, and charges.



Pursuant to the By-Laws, the Advisory Committee is required to collaborate with County staff on proposed leases, rates, and charges. The Airports Advisory Committee gives advice but cannot establish rates or budgets.

The Board completely dissolved the Airports Advisory Committee on December 10, 2024. (Legistar file 24-1891). County staff reported to the Board that they may later recommend a new advisory body for the Airports program. Staff committed to convene annual meetings with airport users, community members, and the District III and District IV Supervisors to facilitate communication and gather feedback.

County staff believe that instituting a quarterly newsletter to Airport lessees and interested members of the public will solicit sufficient feedback as changes in the Airports program come forward. Newsletters, fees, applications, and other resources are posted on the County website for the Airports Division located at [Airports - El Dorado County](#) (<https://www.eldoradocounty.ca.gov/County-Government/County-Departments/Airports>).

The Airports website does not offer an option to request updates for new postings or changes. Other County web pages offer a "subscription" function to the public interested in receiving updates. Subscribers get email alerts about updates to their chosen

webpages. At the time of this writing, no such subscription function is available on the Airports website.

The Grand Jury found that program updates on the website are inadequate to inform the public regarding changes to the Airports program. Without an Airports Advisory Committee, representative body, or a subscription option for website updates, users have no straightforward way to provide feedback or receive program information.

## Airport Staffing

The Airports Division employs one full-time and one temporary part-time staff for management and operations, excluding the administrative duties of the CAO Airports Director. The title of Airports Director is defined in County Ordinance 5212, codified in El Dorado County Ordinance Code section 18.04.030 as “the officer or representative of the County having immediate charge of the airport to include the County Airports Director or any of his or her regularly appointed/designated deputies.” There is no job description for an Airports



Director, nor qualifications required to clarify the position. The Grand Jury was unable to find similar examples of undefined division Directors for comparison. Most smaller divisions of County government are managed by Program Managers, Deputy Directors, or other specialists with defined job descriptions and qualifications. Regardless, the Board appointed the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer overseeing the Airports Division as the Airports Director effective July 1, 2024. (Legistar file [24-1111](#))

On October 28, 2025, following the adoption of County Ordinance 5212 amending El Dorado County Ordinance Code Title 18 – Airports and Board Policy F-10 updated July 29, 2025 (Policy F-10), the Board approved a permanent position for an Airports Operations Officer. According to the Board item (Legistar file [25-1755](#)), “the Airport Operations Officer is an advanced journey-level supervisory class that links daily airport operations with program administration. The job specification assigns responsibility for supervising airport staff; preparing and monitoring operating budgets; administering leases and related records; assisting with Airport Improvement Program grants; verifying conformance with applicable federal and state requirements; and serving as liaison to tenants, pilots, agencies, and community partners.” The staff report to the Board states that the job class provides the Airports program with a single point of supervisory accountability and administrative coordination suited to a small division.

The Board item, approved on the consent calendar without discussion, was silent on how this position will integrate with the Airports Director responsibilities. The cost for the Airport Operations Officer position will result in an estimated annual cost of \$167,303.

## The Rush to Change

While aiming to improve operations, promote sustainability, and set clear airport standards, the County did not seek enough input from the public and airport users. This was evidenced by a series of revisions and updates to ground lease provisions that cost the County additional time and resources.

A series of well-publicized public outreach meetings might have prevented such problems. Significant policy changes by the County affecting stakeholders should prioritize public outreach and feedback. The County has achieved this in the past with other programs. Why it failed to do so with Airports is unknown.



Several citizen complaints to the Grand Jury raised concerns about the County's process and practices for introducing new airport policy and ground lease provisions.

## PUBLIC FEEDBACK

### New Application Fees for Current Hangar Occupants

Multiple interviewees expressed confusion about language in the new Airport policy regarding application fees. In the past, the County did not issue new lease agreements after the original lease expired, leaving tenants on month-to-month tenancy, sometimes for years. Airport users on month-to-month tenancy must now pay the County a \$711 application fee to initiate a new lease; otherwise, they have been advised that their access to the airport and their hangar will be suspended until the lease is finalized.

For instance, a long-term user whose lease expired more than a decade ago and was currently under a month-to-month tenancy was informed that the County needs to ensure all Airport users have updated leases and does not wish to continue a holdover relationship. The user was required to pay the new application fee of \$711 to begin discussions for an updated lease or have their access to the airport suspended. The County delayed discussing a new lease with this long-term tenant yet still required the new application fee.

The Grand Jury found that Board Policy F-10 contains conflicting language regarding application fees. For example, Section II, B.6 requires a new application and application fees for any sale of the hangar that could result in a reassigned or new lease. However, Section II, D requires “any individual or business desiring to enter into a hangar or ground lease for personal or business use, or any commercial operator intending to conduct business at the airport, to complete and submit a County-prescribed application form and pay the application fee.” This provision does not differentiate between existing tenants and prospective users.

Board Policy F-10 contains conflicting language regarding application fees.

Policy F-10 does not provide clear, non-conflicting language to specify how and when application fees are applied.

## Hold Harmless/Indemnification

The ground lease agreement's Hold Harmless and Indemnification section presented to users as of July 2025 requires ground-lease holder to "protect, defend, and hold harmless" the County and its representatives regardless of the degree of fault or negligence by the County.

The County, as the Airports operator, has the responsibility to regulate all activities including maintenance and upkeep of the Airports, types and movement of vehicles used on the Airport, business and commercial activities, the provision of flight information, and the enforcement of federal, state, and county rules and regulations as stated in Policy F-10.

The Grand Jury urges the County to keep an open dialogue with users to specify separate and mutual responsibility for safety. Interviews conducted by the Grand Jury revealed that modifications to this lease section may be considered by the Board for approval based on user feedback.

## Repairs and Upgrades at User Expense

[Policy F-10](#), Section II, B.4 states "the County shall require a Lessee who requests to enter into a ground lease for privately owned hangars that are in existence as of the last update of this Policy that are sold or have no current lease and require a new ground lease, to maintain, repair, or improve the hangar to current standards at the Lessee's expense."



Additionally, Section II, B states "All applicants for Leases at the Airports shall commit to minimum financial investments both at the commencement and during the term of the Lease to ensure that the Airport is developed to its maximum potential."

The proposed ground lease as of July 2025 requires the hangar owner hire a contractor to inspect the condition of the hangar and report "recommended retrofit alternatives for adherence to current development standards and the building and fire codes." This new requirement would result in personal cost of hiring inspectors and retrofitting to meet current code.

Multiple users viewed this as the County's attempt to seize assets after a lease expires or defaults, known as a reversionary policy. According to County staff, that is not the case.

As explained by staff, a reversionary policy allows assets such as hangars to revert from private ownership to County property at the conclusion of a lease, either by expiration or default. The County owned Airports, unlike comparable airports statewide, do not include a reversionary clause in ground lease agreements for current users.

Policy F-10, Section II, B.3.c states “All ground leases for the construction of new hangar or hangar assets shall be for a term of 30 years or an amount negotiated to allow lessee to recoup the investment, pursuant to FAA guidelines. New hangar leases shall contain a clause that at both termination or expiration of the term of that lease the ownership of all site and building improvements shall revert to the Airport except as follows: The Airports Director determines that the Lessee may remain past the expiration of the ground lease under a new lease with a term that is less than five years.” It is not clear in policy if a lessee may extend the lease term. The Policy also lacks clarification on the criteria the Airports Director must follow to allow the lease to extend or terminate.

The ambiguous language in the F-10 Policy makes it difficult for both staff and lessees to determine how to manage the assets. As for new construction, there is no suitable space available for such development.

County staff agree with user concerns that the inspection criteria are ambiguous and have recommended removing or revising language in the next proposed ground lease update, subject to Board approval. The Grand Jury found that the lack of initial communication with users contributed to misunderstanding and a climate of mistrust resulting in additional County resources necessary to make revisions. Early communication about the new lease terms could have prevented confusion between airport staff and users.

## Rate Insecurity

The proposed ground lease includes the initial lease rate but thereafter references the rate schedule in effect at time of annual payment after the first year. A Resolution of the Board establishes the rate schedule. Since rent costs are unknown after the first lease year, both the County and lessees cannot accurately plan budgets. Other rental contracts entered by the County include a cost factor for rent increases based upon an annual percentage increase or standard inflation index. There is no provision for budgetary planning in the ground lease. Including a cost factor would comply with County policy and help generate additional funds annually for planning.



County staff informed the Grand Jury that they are willing to give the Board options regarding annual rent increase rates in the lease. Early communication about the new lease terms would have prevented confusion between airport staff and users.

## Vehicle Insurance Confusion

Board Policy F-10, approved in December 2024, (Legistar file [24-1891](#)) included requirements for unjustified higher coverage on vehicle insurance for lease holders that interviews with airport users described as unrealistic. At that time, Board Policy F-10 required Motor Vehicle Liability Insurance of not less than \$250,000 bodily injury limits per person, \$500,000 bodily injury limits per occurrence, and \$500,000 for damage to the property of other people.



After multiple user complaints to airport staff, the Board revised the Motor Vehicle Liability Insurance requirements in July 2025 to require at least \$100,000 per person for bodily injury, \$300,000 per occurrence, and \$50,000 for property damage. These requirements, according to users, align with commercial insurance carrier's available coverage options.

Early communication about the new lease terms could have prevented confusion between airport staff and users.

## Agreements Conflict with Policy

Board Policy F-10 includes Lease Provisions in Section II, B. County staff recently recommended changes to the lease templates in response to user complaints. The Board approved the revised lease templates on February 10, 2026 (Legistar File [26-0259](#)). The approved lease templates conflict with Policy F-10. Good governance requires that policy guide implementation. Revisions to Policy F-10 should have preceded implementation of revised lease language or have occurred simultaneously.

## POSITIVE IMPACT

### Community Value

Local airports play a significant role in the safety, efficiency, and sustainability of communities. They serve as critical staging areas for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) during regional forest fires, supporting command, control, and coordination of aerial firefighting operations, including spotter aircraft operations.

According to the El Dorado County Transportation Commission, airports are a critical element of the regional transportation network and should be maintained as development pressures grow, and communities expand.

Airports provide year-round support for essential emergency services in addition to wildfire response, including air ambulance and medical evacuation flights, law

enforcement aviation operations conducted by the Sheriff's Office, California Highway Patrol, and Search and Rescue missions.

Airports support private aviation and, based on County-sponsored economic development studies, contribute indirect economic benefits by supporting tourism and related local business activity.

## Worth The Cost?

The County's airport-related costs cover management, planning, development, marketing, and maintenance not funded by federal or state grants. To offset these expenses, the County collects rents, fees, and other charges, to make each airport as financially self-sufficient as possible in accordance with FAA policy.

The Grand Jury Report issued in 2020 identified concern over County funding and provided recommendations to improve County Airports revenue. The Board responded that many of the recommendations in the report would be implemented in the coming year. [Board Response](#) link. The reality is that potential revenue was lost due to delays in implementing program management and operational improvements.



The County owned airports are operating at significant cost to the taxpayer. Staff estimated that the County General Fund contribution for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-2025 would be \$800,000. County funds make up the deficit between Airport revenues and expenses with General Fund contributions. The General Fund represents taxpayer dollars.

According to the staff report to the Board on December 10, 2025, (Legistar file [24-1891](#)) the total existing gap between airport expenditures and operating revenue over the previous years was \$630,000 each year. The recent changes to fees are projected to raise revenue by about \$33,000 annually. The collected fees only partially cover operating costs, regulatory compliance, and future Airport improvements.

The Airports have five main sources of revenue: lease income from land leased to owners who install portable hangars, rent from County owned hangars, rent from aircraft tie down spaces, fuels sales, and property tax on personal property (aircraft and hangars).

Although fuel sales have generated significant income, revenue has declined in recent years due to equipment breakdowns and increased maintenance expenses. Airport capital improvements are funded by FAA grants, county general funds, and limited state support from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). FAA grants come

with strict objectives and operational requirements which mandate the County to keep the airports open for public use.

Airport expansion to increase revenue is not feasible without significant cost for capital improvements. According to the 2020 Grand Jury Report, the east end of Placerville



airport has semi-developed open space with existing concrete taxiways. Developed in 2006, the east end project incorporated FAA safety upgrades. FAA funded 90 percent of the project, and the County funded the remaining 10 percent. To become fully operational, the site requires the availability of utilities like water and electricity that do not currently exist. Utility installation improvements do not qualify for FAA funding.

The Georgetown airport, the smaller of the two County airports, is rural and remote with unique challenges to expansion that would generate additional revenue for self-sustainability.

According to the 2025-26 [Recommended Budget](#) document for Airports, the total General Fund contribution for FY 2025-26 for Placerville Airport is \$550,129, reflecting a decrease of \$50,274 (8.4 percent) when compared to the FY 2024-25 Adopted Budget. In addition, Georgetown Airport has a General Fund contribution of \$116,468, reflecting a decrease of \$71,695 (38.1 percent) when compared to the FY 2024-25 Adopted Budget. The total General Fund contribution for both airports is \$666,597. Staff attribute the decrease specifically to staff cuts.

Although County subsidies for the Airports appear to be stabilizing, operating and administrative costs continue to rise. Currently, there is no established long-term cost recovery plan for the Airports. An Economic Development study was scheduled for completion in July 2024; however, the initial report recommendations were deemed

infeasible by staff, and the report was not completed. Future budget constraints and limited potential for additional revenue may make General Fund contributions to the Airports unsustainable unless there is change.

Could the County privatize the airports? Staff interviews indicate that the County believes selling or privatizing the Airports could result in costly FAA penalties. The Grand Jury found that the FAA Airport Investment Partnership Program (AIPP) allows airports to consider privatization for access to private capital for improvements and development. Under the AIPP program, the FAA may waive repayment of earlier grants or restrictions on sale proceeds if conditions are met, such as keeping the airport open to the public.

## LOOKING AHEAD

The County's Airports provide important community benefits. These valuable assets require diligent management and operations. Although the County's efforts to address outdated policy and sustainability are noteworthy, there is room for significant improvement.

The Grand Jury urges the Board of Supervisors and the community to support County staff initiatives to bring clarity to Airports policy and procedures while actively and openly including the community of airport users and county residents.



## FINDINGS

F1. The County does not follow the guidelines outlined in its Airport Policy Document, Policy F-10, which was updated on July 29, 2025, as evidenced by Board approved changes to the ground lease standards resulting in discrepancies between adopted policy and current lease practices.

F2. The County's Airport Policy Document, Policy F-10, does not define the duties and responsibilities of the Airports Director. The newly approved Airports Operations Officer role has both specific and general duties, which overlap with the Airports Director's responsibilities and creates confusion.

F3. The County's Airport Policy Document, Policy F-10, includes statements that lack specificity and fails to offer clear guidance for staff responsible for its implementation, such as clear criteria for lease extension or termination and new application requirements for existing versus prospective new users. The Policy's subjective language poses challenges for both staff and stakeholders in planning subsequent actions.

F4. El Dorado County failed to sufficiently inform the public about major Airport Ground Lease changes. The Grand Jury found that subsequent outreach prompted by complaints led to ground lease revisions that could have been avoided with earlier engagement.

F5 El Dorado County failed to meaningfully engage with the airport community in the same way it provides engagement for other special interest groups such as the Parks and Recreation Commission, Economic Development Advisory Commission, and Agriculture Commission.

F6. The County's Airports website does not offer a subscription option to request updates for new postings or changes.

F7. Without support from leaseholders, private pilots, and aviation businesses, County Airports would require additional general fund subsidies. These Airports benefit law enforcement, emergency services, and the broader local economy. Airport users should be respected as valuable contributors and need representation.

F8. The County is concerned that turning airports over to private management might lead to expensive FAA penalties. Airports play a vital role in the community, but rising subsidies from the County General Fund may not be sustainable long term and need to be examined.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. The Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors update Airport Policy Document, Policy F-10 in accordance with Board approved revisions to lease requirements by December 31, 2026.

R2. The Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors update Airport Policy Document, Policy F-10 defining the duties, responsibilities, and authority over the

County Airport program (aka Airports Director and/or Airports Operations Officer) and ensure language is clear and based on specific criteria by December 31, 2026.

R3. The Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors direct staff to add a subscription function to the County's Airports web page by September 1, 2026, that will notify subscribers when a change or update is posted.

R4. The Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors establish an aviation advisory group to meet at least biannually with Airport administrators and provide feedback to the Board, when necessary, by December 31, 2026.

R5. The Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors direct staff by December 31, 2026, to develop a plan to increase Airport revenue, ensuring public access to events, business expansion, or other recommendations from airport advisors that could reduce the County General Fund contribution to Airport operations.

R6. The Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors direct staff to work with the FAA and its Airport Investment Partnership Program to evaluate airport privatization.

## REQUIRED RESPONSES

*A Civil Grand Jury report details a single investigation. Each report lists FINDINGS and RECOMMENDATIONS. The organization responsible is notified and is required to respond to the report.*

*The California Penal Code Section 933(c) specifies response times.*

- *PUBLIC AGENCIES. The governing body of any public agency (also referring to a department) must respond within 90 days from the release of the report to the public.*
- *ELECTED OFFICERS OR AGENCY HEADS. All elected officers or heads of agencies/departments must respond within 60 days of the report's release to the public.*
- *FAILURE TO RESPOND. Failure to respond to a Grand Jury report violates California Penal Code Section 933.05 and is subject to further action that may include additional investigation into the subject matter of the report by the Jury.*

*The following responses are required pursuant to Penal Code Sections 933 and 933.05:*

*From the following governing boards within 90 days:*

- *El Dorado County Board of Supervisors*
  - *All Findings*
  - *All Recommendations*

*For more information refer to How to Respond to an El Dorado County Civil Grand Jury Report available on the El Dorado County Grand Jury webpage at <https://www.eldoradocounty.ca.gov/Public-Safety-Justice/Safety-Justice/Grand-Jury>.*

*Reports issued by the Civil Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code Section 929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury do not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.*

Civil Grand Jury 2025-2026



## El Dorado County Civil Grand Jury Website

Bringing Clarity to the Public Process



Downtown Placerville with Grand Jury recruitment banner displayed – Robert Mathis

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## SUMMARY

Imagine that you have been invited to an interview with the El Dorado County Civil Grand Jury (Grand Jury). What can you anticipate? What information are they seeking? Are there any concerns regarding your involvement? You visit the County website to find information but have difficulty navigating the Grand Jury web pages.

The Grand Jury was informed of these concerns resulting in a thorough review of its website, focusing specifically on sections related to investigative procedures, interviews, confidentiality, and contact information.

## BACKGROUND

The El Dorado County Civil Grand Jury (Grand Jury) is a citizen-based investigatory body established under the California Constitution and Penal Code. It serves as an independent watchdog of local government operations — including county departments, cities, school districts, and special districts — and reports on matters of public concern to promote accountability, efficiency, and effectiveness in government.

As part of its investigative responsibilities, the Grand Jury conducts interviews to assist in fact-finding. Interviews are one of the primary methods the Grand Jury uses to gather information on a wide range of subjects affecting the county. For many individuals, an invitation to be interviewed may be their first interaction with the Grand Jury.

A concern was raised during interviews that individuals invited to participate were anxious about the process, resulting in uncertainty prior to their appearance. It was also reported that publicly available resources describing the Grand Jury's interview procedures were unavailable, leaving some interviewees without clear guidance regarding what to expect.

## METHODOLOGY

- Review of existing website content
- Identification of information gaps
- Comparative review of other California county civil grand jury websites

## DISCUSSION

The Grand Jury was informed that individuals invited to participate in interviews are primarily referred to the El Dorado County Civil Grand Jury website to obtain information about the process. It was reported that the website did not provide sufficient detail to address questions or alleviate concerns regarding what to expect during an interview.

The County of El Dorado hosts a website for the Civil Grand Jury under the Public Safety and Justice Division at <https://www.eldoradocounty.ca.gov/Public-Safety-Justice/Safety-Justice/Grand-Jury>.

The Grand Jury conducted a comprehensive review of its website, with particular attention to sections describing investigative procedures, interviews, confidentiality, and contact information. The review assessed whether the content was clear, complete, and understandable to individuals unfamiliar with the Civil Grand Jury process.

The Grand Jury compared the existing website content against commonly expressed concerns and questions. Criteria for evaluation included:

- Clarity of explanation regarding the purpose of interviews
- Description of what interviewees should expect (format, duration, setting)
- Explanation of legal obligations and protections

- Accessibility and ease of navigation on the website
- Availability of contact information for additional questions

The Grand Jury evaluated websites from selected California counties to identify best practices in communicating general information and specifically interview procedures and expectations. This comparison focused on the presence of dedicated interview guides, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), resources, and overall transparency.

This approach provided a structured and objective framework for determining if additional information and resources would benefit the public, prospective interviewees, and improve overall transparency.

The evaluation of the El Dorado County Civil Grand Jury website revealed that the site contains basic information in four sections, also called pages: Apply to Join, Reports and Responses, How to File a Complaint, and How to Contact the Civil Grand Jury. The Grand Jury determined that the website does not fully address the needs of the public, prospective jurors, or individuals invited for interviews. The Grand Jury determined that gaps in clarity, accessibility, and comprehensiveness could lead to confusion, unnecessary anxiety, and reduced engagement with the Civil Grand Jury process.

Several areas where the site could be improved to better inform the public and prospective interviewees were identified. It was determined that a comprehensive update to the website would be necessary to include additional pages to provide more information and resources. The shortcomings of the website were identified as follows:

1. Definition of the Civil Grand Jury – The website does not provide a clear explanation of the Grand Jury’s role, authority, and function.
2. Clarification on How to Submit a Complaint – Instructions for submitting complaints are unclear, and the process could be better outlined for the public.
3. What to Expect from a Grand Jury Interview – There is insufficient information describing the interview process, including what participants can expect and their legal rights.

4. How to Apply to Join the Civil Grand Jury – Eligibility criteria, application procedures, and timelines are not clearly presented.
5. Reports and Responses – Information about Grand Jury reports and required responses is limited and is not easily accessible.
6. Resources Page – Insufficient information to provide resources, such as brochures, links to relevant legal references, and links to state Grand Jury organization, are lacking or difficult to find.
7. How to Contact the Civil Grand Jury – Contact information and guidance for inquiries are not prominently displayed or clearly explained.

The Grand Jury found that adding or revising the following sections to the website would provide comprehensive information for the public:

1. About the Civil Grand Jury
  - Provide a clear and concise explanation of the Civil Grand Jury's role, authority, and function within El Dorado County.
2. How to Submit a Complaint
  - Develop step-by-step guidance, including forms, submission methods, and timelines for response.
3. What to Expect from a Grand Jury Interview
  - Create an informational guide for interviewees outlining the purpose, format, duration, confidentiality, and legal protections.
4. Apply to Join the Civil Grand Jury
  - Include eligibility criteria, application procedures, deadlines, and contact information for questions.
5. Reports and Responses

- Ensure reports and agency responses are easily accessible, searchable, and explained in plain language.

## 6. Resources Page

- Include information and links to Civil Grand Jury brochures, relevant statutes, and links to additional state or local Grand Jury resources.

## 7. Contact the Civil Grand Jury

- Make contact information prominent and clear. Provide guidance for inquiries, including secure methods for submitting questions or concerns.

The Civil Grand Jury completed a comprehensive update of the Grand Jury's website to ensure transparency, enhance public understanding of the Grand Jury's role, avoid confusion and anxiety for interviewees, and strengthen trust in the Civil Grand Jury's oversight of local government.

## FINDINGS

- F1. The El Dorado County Civil Grand Jury website does not provide information that explains the interview process.
- F2. The El Dorado County Civil Grand Jury website does not provide a comprehensive explanation of the Grand Jury's role, authority, and function.
- F3. The El Dorado County Civil Grand Jury website does not provide comprehensive eligibility criteria for individuals interested in joining the Civil Grand Jury.
- F4. The El Dorado County Civil Grand Jury website does not provide information about application procedures for joining the Grand Jury and timelines are not clearly presented.
- F5. The El Dorado County Civil Grand Jury website does not prominently display or clearly provide contact information, or guidance for inquiries.
- F6. The El Dorado County Civil Grand Jury website does not provide a separate section for additional resources for those individuals seeking information about the Civil Grand Jury.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. The El Dorado County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors direct the IT department to consult annually with the sitting Grand Jury and the Court to review and update the Civil Grand Jury website as necessary to maintain current information and relevancy.

## REQUIRED RESPONSES

*A Civil Grand Jury report details a single investigation. Each report lists FINDINGS and RECOMMENDATIONS. The organization responsible is notified and is required to respond to the report.*

*The California Penal Code Section 933(c) specifies response times.*

- *PUBLIC AGENCIES. The governing body of any public agency (also referring to a department) must respond within 90 days from the release of the report to the public.*
- *ELECTED OFFICERS OR AGENCY HEADS. All elected officers or heads of agencies/departments must respond within 60 days of the report's release to the public.*
- *FAILURE TO RESPOND. Failure to respond to a Grand Jury report violates California Penal Code Section 933.05 and is subject to further action that may include additional investigation into the subject matter of the report by the Jury.*
- *The following responses are required pursuant to Penal Code Sections 933 and 933.05:*

*From the following governing boards within 90 days:*

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  - *All Findings*
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*Reports issued by the Civil Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code Section 929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury do not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.*



Civil Grand Jury 2025-2026

# Mosquito Fire Protection District Serving The Community



Case # 26-04

June 10, 2026

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## Summary

This report addresses two areas of concern regarding governance and finance in the Mosquito Fire Protection District (MFPD or District).

The MFPD Board of Directors (Board) currently operates with limited effectiveness. Meetings are hindered by inadequate preparation, incomplete information sharing, and inconsistent practices. As a result, key responsibilities, such as monitoring monthly expenditure and service performance, do not receive sufficient attention, reflecting gaps in leadership and oversight. Meetings are often prolonged and contentious, leading to frustration among both directors and members of the public. This lack of productivity is further compounded by insufficient formal training for newly appointed directors.

Finally, the organization faces a looming financial crisis, yet no formal plan is in place to address it.

## Background

The Mosquito Fire Protection District, comprising the communities of Mosquito and Swansboro in El Dorado County, is in a beautiful and somewhat secluded region of the Sierra Nevada foothills. It is bordered on the east and south by the Federal Bureau of Land Management. The northern boundary is adjacent to the El Dorado National Forest. The southern boundary tracks the South Fork of the American River. The population is about 1800, which makes it the second smallest fire district in the county. By population comparison, it is less than 4% of the size of the county's largest fire district, El Dorado Hills Fire Department.

These communities place great value in their fire department station. This goes beyond the fire and medical services that are provided. The station serves as a community center where people meet at numerous events. These include



fundraising breakfasts and dinners, as well as other family social gatherings.

It is well known that MFPD is fiscally constrained which may impact future operations. The community has generously responded to this reality by developing many organizations that are dedicated to help. There is an MFPD Support Group composed of volunteers that work under the direction of the Fire Chief. They do tasks that do not require the extensive training needed by the professional firefighters. There are three other non-profit organizations that support or raise money for MFPD. Recently, one organization donated \$40,000 for replacement of the station's roof.

There is concern that a station closure could result in adverse consequences, including diminished responsiveness and reduced levels of public safety service delivery, as well as the erosion of a highly valued cornerstone of community life: its distinct identity, culture, and tradition of civic involvement.

## Methodology

### Interviews

Interviews were conducted with:

- Complainants
- Current MFPD Board Members
- Former MFPD Board Members

El Dorado County:

- Board of Supervisors District Representative (BOS)
- Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)
- Auditor-Controller

El Dorado Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo)

- Executive Officer

### Documents Reviewed

MFPD Policies and Procedures

MFPD Board Agendas and Minutes (when available)

El Dorado Regional Fire Authority (EDRFA)

1. Commissioned evaluation of MFPD, December 2024
2. Agenda and Minutes from 5/16/2024 - 1/16/2025 (Final)

#### Local Area Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo)

1. Municipal Service Review Vol II 4/27/22
2. El Dorado County Fire Protection Districts Targeted Municipal Review and Sphere of Influence Update: DRAFT for public review September 2025
3. Agenda of January 28, 2026

Annual Audit Reports, Robert W. Johnson, an Accounting Corporation – years 2020-25

Board of Supervisors; Region 4 representative's printed material:

Supervisor's Meeting Notes from LAFCo & MFPD meetings: 10/29/25, and 1/8/26  
Rural Communities Study – completed by University of California Santa Barbara,  
October 2025

El Dorado County Civil Grand Jury Reports and Responses:

2015-2016 Mosquito Fire Protection District Dysfunction (Case 15-01)  
2019-2020 West Slope Fire Protection Update (Case 19-06)

California Intergovernmental Risk Authority, Brown Act Training Curriculum April 2025

California Ralph M. Brown Act

California Special Districts Association

Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) Grant: Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) (Grant # EMW-2022-FF-0241)

## Discussion

### Governance

The Grand Jury investigation focused on the Board's performance as it addresses its responsibilities during the preceding 18 months. This review focuses on the Board's governance involving productivity, compliance with policies and statutory requirements, transparency, and the conduct of meetings. Attention was given to the role of the Board President as the officer who presides over the Board's meetings.

## Monitoring Operations Spending

An important responsibility of the Board is to craft an annual budget and provide oversight which should include a monthly spending plan. At MFPD, a monthly spending plan has not been created. Without that plan, the Board is limited in its ability to identify trends, variances, or emerging fiscal concerns in a timely manner. Without utilizing comprehensive budgeting tools, the Board does not effectively perform their role of monitoring monthly fiscal performance of district operations.



In 2023, MFPD started a four-year FEMA Grant (Grant) that allocated \$50,000 per year for “Stipend for Duty Shifts.” Spending in early years has nearly depleted the total amount. This leaves little or no funding for the final year (2027).

The Board is responsible for overseeing MFPD’s fiscal spending. The Fire Chief manages Operations and has an obligation to report to the Board. Operations include managing District staff, overseeing daily activities, and delivering fire protection and emergency response services to the community.

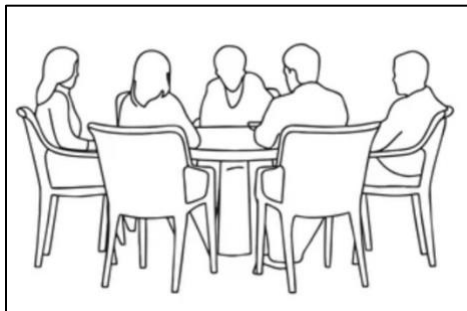
The Board failed to fully carry out its responsibility to oversee Mosquito Fire Protection District spending on Operations. At a Board meeting, Directors asked the Fire Chief about specific expenditures. The Fire Chief blatantly refused to provide any information. He informed the Directors that detailed spending information was outside the Board’s area of responsibility. Although the statement by the Fire Chief was false, the Board did not challenge this position or require greater financial transparency, effectively accepting limited fiscal oversight.

Until recently, MFPD had a Finance Committee, comprised of 2 Board members, 3 community members with fiscal familiarity, and the Fire Chief. They would meet monthly to review current spending status, evaluate grant status and reimbursement timelines,

examine MFPD expenditures occurring that month, and obtain updates from staff regarding projected operational costs that might affect the budget (unexpected vehicle costs, staffing realignment, etc.). The Finance Committee lead (Board Member) would provide a report to the entire Board. It would include action items for future meeting agendas. This provided the Board with valuable insight into operations spending and its immediate needs. As a result, the Board could take informed fiscal actions.

In October 2025, the Board dissolved the Finance Committee. No action was taken to replace this function. At present, fiscal monitoring remains the responsibility of one Board member who has stated that he has had no fiscal training. He seldom provides any details of operational spending to the Board.

## Unproductive Board Meetings



Witnesses reported that unproductive meetings have led to visible frustration among Board members that contributed to the resignation of three directors in 2025. It has also diminished respect from both operational staff and members of the community.

Effective meetings depend on all directors having ample time to study the agendas and Board Member meeting packages before each regular Board meeting. Board Member meeting packages contain detailed information that accompany agenda items. Grand Jury witnesses stated there are regular breakdowns in providing complete information in advance to the Board and to the public.

The MFPD Policy Manual states submissions for agendas must be in the Board clerk's hands "at least 7 days before the regularly scheduled meeting." The Brown Act requires the agenda to be posted at least 72 hours prior to the regular monthly Board meeting. Directors receive the agenda at the same time it is posted. The Policy Manual does not state similar time requirements for the Board Members Package.

The agenda packet materials are often provided to the Board Clerk for distribution in a sporadic manner right up to meeting time. Sometimes materials are handed out to

directors at the Board Meeting. The Agendas and Board Member Packages have errors and are inconsistent and confusing. The agenda lacks organization and connection to the accompanying Board Member Package.

Directors spend a large amount of time early in the meetings sorting things out, often in an argumentative manner. Directors are given little or no time to consider each issue before the meeting. Meetings are routinely extended beyond the expected time. As a result, 16 special meetings occurred in 2025. This is a clear sign that the meetings are inefficient.

Another barrier to Board productivity is poor meeting management. The Board President does not consistently employ effective meeting practices necessary to maintain focus, manage discussion, and guide productive deliberations. As a result, discussions frequently stray from the matter at hand. Directors often raise concerns or grievances and engage in lengthy exchanges with fellow Board members; however, after significant meeting time is consumed, no corrective motion, formal direction, or actionable resolution is brought forward. This pattern results in inefficient use of meeting time and limits the Board's ability to effectively conduct business.

## Meeting Decorum

Maintaining decorum during meetings is a core responsibility of the presiding officer. There have been occurrences of personal verbal attacks against committee participants, Board members, and citizens attending meetings. There have also been rude and angry outbursts by Operations command staff directed at individual directors. This conduct is allowed to proceed unchecked, reflecting a failure of meeting control.

## Improper Board Leadership Involvement in Operations

The MFPD Policy Manual establishes that the Board President is the primary channel for communication between the Board and the Fire Chief. That role is to be a two-way conduit for communication between the Board and Operations. It is not to be a source of the President's independent authority over Operations. The current relationship of the President with Operations has gone far beyond the above principles of communications governance.

Through interviews, the Grand Jury learned of a pattern of informal interaction between the Board President and command staff occurring outside established Board communication channels and without regular reporting to the full Board.

Multiple witnesses described the President's frequent presence at the station and in the Fire Chief's office. Complicating this relationship, the current Board President also serves in an operational support capacity as an Emergency Medical Responder under the command structure of the Fire Chief in support of the incident response team.

Directors raised two principal governance concerns. First, Directors expressed concern that the President receives operational information and knowledge that is not regularly shared with the rest of the Board, resulting in unequal access to information necessary for informed decision making. Operations include managing District staff, overseeing daily activities, and delivering fire protection and emergency response services to the community. This created a perception of an informal line of influence between the Board President and Operations.

As a result, Directors felt excluded from critical communication channels between Board leadership and Operations. This lack of shared information leaves the Board without a common factual foundation when deliberating District matters. Consequently, Board meetings become reactive, argumentative, and inefficient, as Directors are often required to debate operational and policy issues without equal access to relevant information. Such conditions diminish effective governance, hinder productive decision making, and weaken transparency within the District's leadership structure.

## Violation of Legal Counsel Communications Policy

Mosquito Fire Protection District policy states that when legal counsel is to be consulted on District matters, Board approval must first be obtained by majority vote. The policy further provides that if such consultation occurs in person, both the Board President and a second Director must be present. However, during Board meetings, the President stated that on several occasions she communicated with legal counsel without prior Board approval and without another Director present, raising concerns about compliance with established

Board policy and governance procedures. The Board took no disciplinary action related to this violation.

## Brown Act Violations

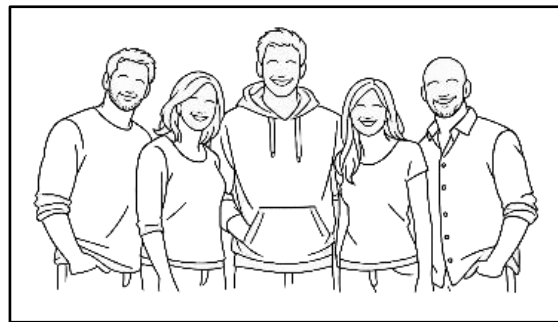
There have been multiple reports related to Brown Act violations. There was an admission by the Board President in a public meeting, that she “probably violated the Brown Act” in connection with the hiring decision of a new Fire Chief as confirmed by multiple witnesses. The event involved one-on-one communications between the Board President and other individual directors.

The Grand Jury also learned that the Fire Chief Hiring Committee was abruptly dissolved prior to completion of its work, after which the new Fire Chief was selected through a process that raised concerns regarding transparency, adherence to established governance procedures, and compliance with open meeting requirements. These circumstances created a perception that a significant Board action may have occurred outside the public process.

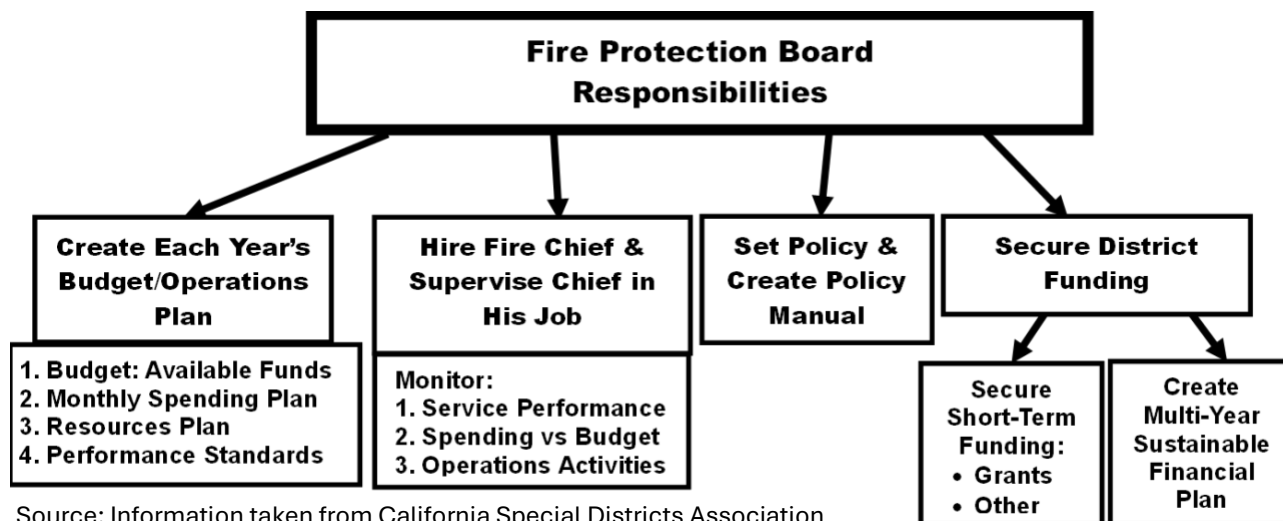
Under the Brown Act, publication of meeting minutes is not required. However, posting minutes in a timely fashion is recognized as best practice for fire districts and other local agencies. An eighteen-month review of meeting records available on the MFPD website revealed inconsistent and, in some instances, delayed publication of meeting minutes, limiting timely public access to Board actions and deliberations.

## Lack of Preparation for New Board Members

Like most fire districts, MFPD has a group of Directors who are responsible for governing a complex system. They are unpaid community volunteers; residents who care deeply about public safety and are willing to dedicate significant time and effort to serve their neighbors. Their intentions are sincere, and their commitment is substantial. Most Directors soon find that the role they assume is far more complicated than they expected.



New Directors enter their job armed with little more than good intentions. They are immediately faced with the major responsibilities of the job, as shown in the diagram below based on the California Special Districts Association.



***Narrative Description of Chart Above***

*Fire Protection Boards perform four primary functions: planning, leadership oversight, policy development, and financial management.*

*The Board first establishes the annual budget and operations plan. This includes identifying available funds, establishing a monthly spending plan, allocating resources, and defining performance standards.*

*The Board hires and supervises the Fire Chief. Oversight responsibilities include monitoring service performance, ensuring expenditures align with the budget, and reviewing operational activities.*

*In addition, the Board is responsible for establishing policy and maintaining a policy manual to guide governance and operations.*

*Finally, the Board ensures financial stability by securing short-term funding, such as grants and other sources, and by developing a long-term, multi-year sustainable financial plan.*

Fire Protection Board responsibilities must be managed across two distinct types of emergency response: medical and fire. On average, 80 percent of calls are medical in nature, while about 20 percent involve fires. This requires fire protection districts to maintain both medical response capability and traditional firefighting operations. Each

function requires different training, certifications, equipment, and staffing to provide these services.

These operational demands are made more difficult by limited financial resources. The MFPD, like many other fire protection districts, operates with severely constrained revenue. This limits staffing, wages, benefits, equipment purchases, and long-term planning. Equipment is often older and may require repair. Compensation and benefits are modest compared to neighboring fire protection districts, making employee retention difficult. Turnover of leadership and staff is common. This adds instability to an already challenging management environment.

Directors must quickly embrace the day-to-day work of the Board. This includes:

- Defining clear boundaries between the Board and Operations
- Establishing core committees, such as a finance committee
- Assisting in the preparation of effective meetings, including agendas and meeting materials
- Contributing to smooth and efficient Board meetings in order to make sound decisions
- Maintaining respectful communication with other board members
- Identifying Board officer roles such as President, Vice President, and Secretary

Despite this, new Directors receive little to no formal preparation for their role. This lack of preparation creates immediate challenges. Board members must learn while performing their duties under public scrutiny. All deliberations take place in open meetings, where community members observe discussions and disagreements. For individuals unfamiliar with public governance, open meeting laws can make communication difficult and decision-making slower.

Differences in personality, communication style, and management experience among board members can further complicate communication. The unfortunate result is that a group of well-intentioned, hardworking community volunteers, people who stepped forward

to help their neighbors, can find themselves presiding over a system that struggles to function effectively.

A consequence of such dysfunction is a decline in public confidence, especially when disagreements occur during open meetings. Board members themselves have become discouraged by the stress and criticism. Some may resign, creating vacancies that are difficult to fill, as other residents may be reluctant to serve in a role perceived as difficult or argumentative.

### Impending Financial Crisis

Created in 1973 as a community collective of volunteers, Mosquito Volunteer Fire Department operated successfully as a volunteer fire department. In 1978, voters approved the formation of Mosquito Fire Protection District (MFPD), joining El Dorado County Special Districts and became eligible for funding. The percentage of property taxes that MFPD received supported their volunteer model. Proposition 13 and AB-8 MFPD froze that contribution at a lower percentage leading to a constrained funding situation.

In the last decade, this low-cost volunteer model has collapsed. The primary causal event occurred in 2019 when California required volunteer firefighters to have Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) certification and wildland fire training. While these standards improved safety and professionalism, they also sharply reduced the number of residents able to participate as firefighter volunteers. For MFPD, volunteer firefighter participation has steadily declined. MFPD is now forced to rely on paid or stipend professional firefighting personnel to maintain emergency response. This is a much higher cost model. MFPD's property-based tax revenue is inadequate to fund this model.

**Financial Summary Table: Reserves, Expenditures, Revenue by Source, Total Revenue, and Net Income/(Deficit) — Years 2020–2025 (all amounts in dollars)**

Description	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Reserves, (End of Year)	\$377,371	\$550,118	\$502,210	\$439,892	\$475,654	\$377,231

**Financial Summary Table: Reserves, Expenditures, Revenue by Source, Total Revenue, and Net Income/(Deficit) — Years 2020–2025 (all amounts in dollars)**

Description	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	\$533,498	\$1,333,220	\$835,618	\$935,986	\$735,646	\$748,801
<b>Revenue</b>						
<b>Taxes</b>	\$345,020	\$351,952	\$359,915	\$374,158	\$367,027	\$381,247
<b>Development Fees</b>	\$8,250	\$10,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Interest</b>	\$6,461	\$1,832	\$1,672	\$6,492	\$12,087	\$10,011
<b>Grant</b>	\$80,880	\$78,162	\$196,963	\$383,576	\$332,891	\$103,034
<b>Other</b>	\$8,278	\$101,356	\$52,638	\$5,467	\$32,410	\$29,341
<b>Strike Team</b>	\$79,156	\$967,312	\$276,524	\$81,930	\$46,994	\$120,245
<b>Total Revenue</b>	\$528,995	\$1,510,965	\$887,712	\$851,678	\$791,403	\$643,878
<b>Net Income/(Deficit)</b>	(\$4,503)	\$177,745	(\$47,906)	(\$62,318)	\$55,753	(\$98,423)

Source: MFPD’s Independent Auditor’s Reports

In the past two years, property tax revenue supported less than half of the expenditures. The balance came primarily from grants and Strike Team revenue. Both sources are highly unreliable. The current FEMA Grant will expire in December 2027.

Despite this impending financial crisis, there is limited evidence of focus on MFPD’s long-term financial sustainability. This issue is notable in that prior external reviews have identified serious financial sustainability issues for MFPD. Two examples are a Grand Jury Report, 2019-2020, and findings from the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) Municipal Services Review (MSR) dated 4-27-2022.

## Findings

**Finding 1.** The Mosquito Fire Protection District Board does not have a monthly spending plan.

**Finding 2.** The Mosquito Fire Protection District Board has improperly relinquished its governance responsibility regarding district spending.

**Finding 3.** Mosquito Fire Protection District Board Agendas and Board Member Packages have errors, are late, and are often incomplete.

**Finding 4.** Mosquito Fire Protection District Board meetings suffer from a lack of meeting control and discipline.

**Finding 5.** The Mosquito Fire Protection District Board President's interactions with the Fire Chief go beyond the principles expressed in the Mosquito Fire Protection District Policy Manual.

**Finding 6.** The Mosquito Fire Protection District Board President violates District Policy by talking with legal counsel without Board approval and without another Director present.

**Finding 7.** The effectiveness of the Mosquito Fire Protection District Board is impeded by actions that likely constitute violations of the Brown Act.

**Finding 8.** Mosquito Fire Protection District Board members lack knowledge in the governance and operations of a Fire Protection District.

**Finding 9.** Due to the end of the FEMA grant and decline in other funding sources the Mosquito Fire Protection District is very likely to experience a large reduction in funding leading to a financial crisis.

## Recommendations

**R1a.** The Grand Jury recommends that Mosquito Fire Protection District Board of Directors require the Fire Chief to prepare a monthly spending plan for the 2026-2027 fiscal year to support regular fiscal monitoring and improved budget oversight by September 2026.

**R1b.** The Grand Jury recommends that the Mosquito Fire Protection District Board of Directors require the Fire Chief to prepare a monthly spending plan as a standard component of the District's annual budget process.

**R2.** The Grand Jury recommends that the Mosquito Fire Protection District Board follow its own Policy of overseeing the District's fiscal well-being with a monthly review of actual spending compared to its monthly spending plan starting September 2026.

**R3.** The Grand Jury recommends that **all** materials for the Mosquito Fire Protection District Board Member Package for each scheduled meeting be submitted to the Board Clerk at least 7 days before the regularly scheduled meeting to match the policy timeframe for agenda submission beginning with the September 2026 meeting.

**R4.** The Grand Jury recommends that at the beginning of each calendar year the Mosquito Fire Protection District Board select a Board President by reaffirming the sitting Board President or electing a new one beginning January 2027.

**R5.** The Grand Jury recommends that the Mosquito Fire Protection District Board and Fire Chief develop by January 2027 a communication plan that defines communication procedures to ensure all Directors are kept informed of all communications between the Board President and the Fire Chief.

**R6.** The Grand Jury recommends that the Mosquito Fire Protection District Board revise District Policy to specify the consequences against any Director who violates District Policy such as unauthorized contact with legal counsel, by September 2026.

**R7.** The Grand Jury recommends that all Mosquito Fire Protection District Directors adhere to the requirements of the Brown Act immediately.

**R8.** The Grand Jury recommends that the Mosquito Fire Protection District work with the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors and Local Agency Formation Commission to provide

the means for practical, focused, hands-on business and governance training for every new Fire Protection District Director starting in January 2027.

**R9.** The Grand Jury recommends that the Mosquito Fire Protection District address the financial crisis with the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors with a funding plan in place by July 2027 prior to the expiration of the FEMA grant in December 2027.

## Required Responses

A Civil Grand Jury report details a single investigation. Each report lists FINDINGS and RECOMMENDATIONS. The organization responsible is notified and is required to respond to the report.

The California Penal Code § 933(c) specifies response times.

- **PUBLIC AGENCIES.** The governing body of any public agency (also referring to a department) must respond within 90 days from the release of the report to the public.
- **ELECTIVE OFFICERS OR AGENCY HEADS.** All elected officers or heads of agencies/departments are required to respond within 60 days of the release of the report to the public.

**The following responses are required pursuant to Penal Code § 933 and § 933.05:  
From the following government bodies:**

- Mosquito Fire Protection District Board  
All Findings and Recommendations 1-9

## Invited Responses

Responses are invited from the following within 90 days:

- El Dorado County Board of Supervisors  
Findings 8 and 9 and Recommendations 8 and 9

- El Dorado Local Agency Formation Commission  
Finding 8 and Recommendation 8

## Failure To Respond

Failure to respond, as required to a Jury report, violates California Penal Code Section 933.05 and is subject to further action that may include additional investigation on the subject matter of the report by the Jury.

For more information refer to How to Respond to an El Dorado County Grand Jury Report available on the El Dorado County Grand Jury webpage.

<https://www.eldoradocounty.ca.gov/files/assets/county/v/2/documents/public-safety-amp-justice/grand-jury/how-to-respond.pdf>

## Disclaimer

This report reflects the independent, evidence-based analysis of the 2025–2026 El Dorado County Civil Grand Jury. Findings and recommendations are offered solely in the public interest to promote efficient, equitable, and transparent county government.

Reports issued by the Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code section 929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.

Civil Grand Jury 2025-2026



# El Dorado County Code Compliance

A study of communication, contracts, code enforcement,  
and data compliance



Case No. 26-05

Final 4/30/26

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## SUMMARY

Increased development in areas of the county has presented a problematic environment for local citizens impacted by construction projects. Submitting grievances to the appropriate government department is a complicated process to navigate. The County of El Dorado (County) does not provide a central website or phone number to direct complaints appropriately when it comes to construction related grievances.

While this investigation began by looking into perceived shortcomings of the County to respond to citizen complaints concerning construction violations or nuisances, the Civil Grand Jury discovered something else. The system proved to be complex, with no direction provided by the County regarding the process for enforcement of County Codes, policies, and State laws.



The Grand Jury found that County departments provide inadequate communication and direction to the public, and that significant communication deficiencies also exist between departments.

## GLOSSARY

**Developer Agreement:** Sections 65865 et seq. of the California Government Code enables a county government and an applicant for a development project to enter into a development agreement establishing with certainty what zoning standards and land use regulations of the county will govern the construction and implementation of the development project from beginning to completion.

**Conditions of Approval** mean the requirements placed on the Project Approvals as conditions to development of the Project.

Code Enforcement Division of Planning and Building Department: Code Enforcement investigates a variety of building code, zoning code, and cannabis code complaints. El Dorado County Code Enforcement Violation Complaint Form

<https://us.openforms.com/Form/9b04ab47-fc61-43c9-ada2-c8911f3936f7>

Air Quality Management District (AQMD): Air District staff respond to outdoor air quality problems. AQMD does not respond to indoor Air Quality complaints. See Complaints - El Dorado County <https://www.eldoradocounty.ca.gov/Land-Use/Air-Quality-Management-District/Rules-and-Compliance/Complaints>

El Dorado County Ordinance Code Title 9, Chapter 9.02 Code Enforcement: Enforcement Official means the Sheriff, Fire Chief, Code Enforcement Officers, Chief Administrative Officer, Director of the Planning and Building Department, Director of the Environmental Management Department, or their authorized designee(s).

“Western Slope” is local slang for the western portion of El Dorado County west of Echo Summit and excludes the South Lake Tahoe area.

“Unincorporated Communities” refers to regions within El Dorado County that exclude both of its incorporated cities: Placerville and South Lake Tahoe.

The Megabyte Systems database refers to the backend of the Megabyte Property Tax System (MPTS), a specialized software solution developed by Megabyte Systems, Inc.. It's primarily used by over 35 California counties for managing property tax processes, including assessment, auditing, collection, and reporting.

## BACKGROUND

El Dorado County has experienced significant growth in new construction over the past decade. Builders and consumers have chosen El Dorado County, specifically the Western Slope, as a primary area for new housing and commercial development.

Increased development in areas of the county has presented a problematic environment for local citizens impacted by construction projects. Submitting grievances to the appropriate government department is a complicated process to navigate. The County of El Dorado (County) does not provide a central website or phone number to direct complaints appropriately when it comes to construction related grievances.



During active construction, a variety of County departments are responsible for the enforcement of County codes, ordinances, and development agreements with contractors. Larger construction projects are also held to Conditions of Approval that establish additional operating rules. Enforcement could involve the Environmental Management Department, the Planning and Building Department, the Department of Transportation, or the Air Quality Management Board (AQMD), among others.

Once construction has been completed, the Code Enforcement Division of the Planning and Building Department receives and investigates complaints that can be submitted to them via their website or by phone.

While this investigation began by examining perceived shortcomings in the County's response to citizen complaints regarding construction violations and nuisances, the Civil Grand Jury identified additional significant inadequacies with communication within the current system.

# METHODOLOGY

## INTERVIEWS

Complainants  
County Staff  
County Administrators  
Elected Officials

## DOCUMENT REVIEW

Project Conditions of Approval  
Developer Agreements  
Civil Grand Jury Case # GJ 13/14-18  
Civil Grand Jury Case # GJ 13-16  
Board of Supervisors Agenda and Meeting Minutes  
[10/11/22 Legistar item 22-1764](#) Code Enforcement activities and procedures  
[9/13/23 Legistar item 23-1118](#) Code Enforcement Amnesty Program  
El Dorado County Strategic Plan (<https://www.eldoradocounty.ca.gov/County-Government/County-Departments/Chief-Administrative-Office/Strategic-Plan>)

## WEBSITE REVIEWS

Planning Services web page (<https://www.edcgov.us/Planning>)  
Planning Services Code Enforcement Division web page (<https://www.eldoradocounty.ca.gov/Public-Safety-Justice/Code-Enforcement-Division>)  
Building Services Division web page (<https://www.eldoradocounty.ca.gov/Land-Use/Planning-and-Building/Building-Division>)  
Environmental Management web page (<https://www.eldoradocounty.ca.gov/County-Government/County-Departments/Environmental-Management>)

Air Quality Management District web page

(<https://www.eldoradocounty.ca.gov/Land-Use/Air-Quality-Management-District>)

## DISCUSSION

### CODE ENFORCEMENT

Communication is the cornerstone of effective governance. Effective communication in government is essential for transparency, trust, and citizen engagement, utilizing modern tools and technologies to improve information sharing.

Be it a residential or commercial project, certain conditions must be met for permit approval known as Conditions of Approval (conditions). The conditions are based on the County Code of Ordinances, state law, and state and local policy. Conditions may include, but are not limited to, requirements such as public outreach, soil erosion and dust control, noise control, acceptable work hours (including weekends), and open burning. The developer, builder, or property owner is required to adhere to these conditions.

Failure to enforce County Ordinance, policy, state law, and adherence to developer agreements is failure to enforce the law. That failure benefits property owners who act unlawfully while denying the law's specific protection to others. This leads to a perception of corruption on the part of County officials and general mistrust of County government.



## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

As part of an investigation into citizen complaints, the Grand Jury found that while the contractor agrees to the conditions and receives permit approval, compliance is not always consistent.

In the absence of clear direction, residents frequently contact the Planning and Building Department's main phone number as a starting point. Associated staff then attempt to direct the complainant to the appropriate department. Often those calls are forwarded to the Code Enforcement Division for evaluation. This process causes frustration for the complaining parties and delay in addressing immediate issues.

As established in Title 9 of the County Ordinances, the Code Enforcement Division is responsible for enforcing building and zoning regulations related to health, life, and safety across all El Dorado County unincorporated communities. Interviews with County staff



indicated that Code Enforcement is reactive, responding to citizen complaints rather than seeking out violations. Typically, Code Enforcement gets involved after a project is completed, unless it is discovered that unpermitted construction is in progress.

According to the complaint form available on the Code Enforcement website, ([Code Enforcement Division - El Dorado County](#)) "Code Enforcement investigates a variety of building code, zoning code and cannabis code complaints. New complaints are reviewed, assigned, and prioritized as workload allows."

The identity of the complainant is kept confidential according to [County Ordinance Section 9.02.070](#), but based on interviews with County staff they caution that anonymous complaints are not recommended. A full investigation may not be

completed without contact information. In fact, the identity of reporting parties remains confidential unless the County is required to release that information pursuant to a lawful subpoena or at the direction of a hearing officer or judge. Knowingly filing a false complaint is a misdemeanor pursuant to County Ordinance Section 9.02.070.

During construction projects, residents often do not know which department oversees compliance with the Development Agreement or the permit Conditions of Approval. There are multiple departments with authority to enforce the conditions.

For example, dust complaints get referred to AQMD for air quality. Smoke from burning vegetation or construction debris may be reported to the Fire Department and/or AQMD. Early morning or late-night noise from machinery may be reported to the Planning Department. Mud, runoff, and other issues may be reported to the Department of Transportation or Environmental Management or even the Stormwater Management Division of the Planning and Building Department. The process is difficult to navigate.

## PROSESSING COMPLAINTS

Once the appropriate department receives a complaint, it is assigned to County staff for investigation. The reporting party may be contacted for additional information such as site details, directions, or current conditions. This may be the end of contact with the complainant. It is not the end of the investigation. County staff coordinate with developers, contractors, or landowners to resolve issues.

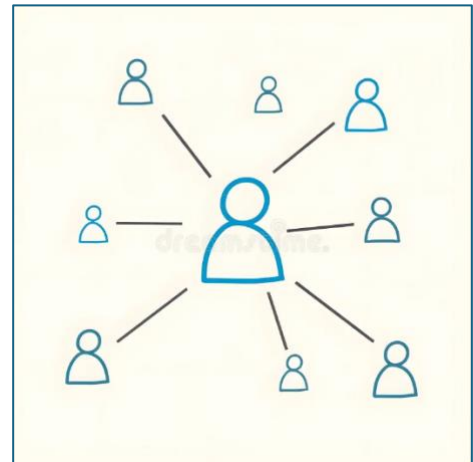
Through interviews and reviewing El Dorado County Board of Supervisors (Board) agenda items, the Grand Jury found that the first step for County staff is to make contact and educate the violators about the rules and the consequences if the problem is not rectified. The next step is to issue warnings and/or fines. Work can be halted or permits withheld, but consequences depend on the department's authority and the relevant ordinance or law.

The Grand Jury requested a procedures manual for the Code Enforcement Division to clarify the complaint process but found that a complete procedures manual was not available. The documented procedures are limited to those presented to the Board

during the Code Enforcement Division’s October 11, 2022, presentation ([Legistar item 22-1764](#)).

Understanding codes and regulations can be challenging. All affected parties are not familiar with the rules and processes involved. The Planning and Building Department created a liaison position to help landowners navigate the permit processes and to help resolve issues that may arise. The primary focus of the liaison is to assist homeowners and contractors, not complainants.

The Grand Jury found that many departments provide a complaint process available on the County website. Those related to building and construction include Code Enforcement, Environmental Management, and AQMD. The County lacks a coordinated web page or phone number to guide residents with grievances to the appropriate authority.



As previously stated, effective communication in government is essential for transparency, trust, and citizen engagement. Providing a centralized referral hub would enhance the Board’s commitment to their Strategic Plan goal to “improve external and internal service delivery in a more convenient and efficient way.”

## INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATION FLAWS

To achieve the County’s Strategic Plan goals that include “Working as One Organization,” communication between departments with enforcement responsibilities is critical. County staff should be aware of overall County operations to better serve constituents.

During this Grand Jury investigation, a lack of communication was denoted between associated but distinctive departmental staff. For instance, the County Assessor’s Office routinely inspects properties for improvements that, by state law, are added to the assessed value for the tax rolls. Regardless of the permit status, improvements are

recorded in the Assessor's database (Megabyte Property Tax System). For example, non-permitted square footage is routinely added to permitted living area square footage without delineation and reported as living area square footage.

The Assessor's Office routinely provides property information, for a fee, to outside agencies for use by the public, lending institutions, and government entities. This includes property information for real estate transactions and the characteristics of each property.

The Assessor's database does not interface with the Planning and Building Department's TRAKiT, a land management software system, which can create conflicting information for users.

The Assessor's Office provides a highly visible disclaimer on their web page that warns the following:

Assessor maps and property characteristics are prepared for assessment purposes only. County maps are not intended to illustrate legal building sites or establish precedence over local ordinances. Official information concerning size or use of any parcel should be obtained from recorded documents and local governing agencies.

A reasonable effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the data provided; nevertheless, some information may be out of date or may not be accurate. The County of El Dorado and the Office of the Assessor assume no responsibility arising from the use of this information. Associated data are provided without warranty of any kind, either expressed or implied. Do not make any business decisions based on this data before validating the data. [Revenue and Taxation Code 408.3(d)]

It is incumbent upon prospective property owners to perform due diligence in real estate transactions. They may find after contacting the Planning and Building Department for a site or parcel permit history, that property improvements were completed without required building permits. This is problematic, in that prospective property owners have

limited access to the Assessor property records of their desired property (pre-purchase), due to privacy laws that were enacted over the past decade.

The Grand Jury found that the Planning and Building Department provides the Assessor's Office with permit issuance data. The Assessor's Office does not provide the Planning and Building Department with information regarding property improvements, permitted or not, per the Revenue and Taxation Code. The California Revenue and Taxation Code is the primary body of state law governing all taxation matters in California, including property, income, sales, and special taxes.

In 2023, the Board authorized a building permit [Amnesty](#) program providing a reasonable solution for property owners for circumstances they did not cause themselves and were not aware of when purchasing or inheriting a property. Code Enforcement and Building Services staff continue to work with property owners, providing a reasonable solution.

As part of the Amnesty Program approval in 2023, staff reached agreement to hold more regular discussions about information sharing between the Planning and Building Department and the Assessor's Office. The Grand Jury determined through interviews with County staff that this has not been implemented.

The Board was made aware that enhanced communication between the Planning and Building Department and the Assessor's Office regarding unpermitted structures may result in an increase in property taxes from property assessments and/or fines from code enforcement violations. By law, the Assessor may capture up to four years of escaped assessments (meaning not previously captured on the tax roll) on unpermitted structures.



Because code enforcement is a key function of government, the Grand Jury found it important to remind prospective property owners of their responsibility to conduct due diligence, as well as to provide resources and solutions when information is inconsistent. It is also important for the Planning and Building Department and Assessor's Office to ensure that prospective property owners can obtain accurate property characteristics.

## FINDINGS

F1 Citizens with complaints are not routinely informed of resolutions.

F2 There is no central County web page or phone number to direct complaints.

F3 There is no procedure manual specific to the Code Enforcement Division.

F4 The Planning and Building Department and the Assessor's office have associated roles which are not being utilized to the fullest potential.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

R1 The Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors direct the IT Chief Information Officer to establish a central web page and phone number that will provide the public with directions for submitting grievances to the appropriate authority by December 31, 2026.

R2 The Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors direct the Planning and Building Department Director to develop a Procedure Manual for the Code Enforcement Division by February 1, 2027.

R3 The Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors form a working group of representatives from the Planning and Building Department and the Assessor's Office by December 31, 2026, to propose solutions for property owners and stakeholders seeking verified property information.

# REQUIRED RESPONSES

*A Civil Grand Jury report details a single investigation. Each report lists FINDINGS and RECOMMENDATIONS. The organization responsible is notified and is required to respond to the report.*

*The California Penal Code Section 933(c) specifies response times.*

- *PUBLIC AGENCIES. The governing body of any public agency (also referring to a department) must respond within 90 days from the release of the report to the public.*
- *ELECTED OFFICERS OR AGENCY HEADS. All elected officers or heads of agencies/departments must respond within 60 days of the report's release to the public.*
- *FAILURE TO RESPOND. Failure to respond to a Grand Jury report violates California Penal Code Section 933.05 and is subject to further action that may include additional investigation into the subject matter of the report by the Jury.*
- *The following responses are required pursuant to Penal Code Sections 933 and 933.05:*

*From the following governing boards within 90 days:*

- *El Dorado County Board of Supervisors*
  - *All Findings*
  - *All Recommendations*

*For more information refer to How to Respond to an El Dorado County Civil Grand Jury Report available on the El Dorado County Grand Jury webpage at <https://www.eldoradocounty.ca.gov/Public-Safety-Justice/Safety-Justice/Grand-Jury>.*

*Reports issued by the Civil Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code Section 929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury do not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.*



Civil Grand Jury 2025-2026

# Investigation Of Charter Section 504 Executive Salary Linkage Practices Efficiency, Equity, and Governance



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## SUMMARY

El Dorado County Charter Section 504, approved by voters in 1994, requires an annual salary survey and adjustment for five specific sworn peace-officer classifications (Undersheriff, Captain, Lieutenant, Sergeant, and Deputy Sheriff) to remain competitive with three designated agencies: Amador County Sheriff's Department, South Lake Tahoe Police Department, and the California Highway Patrol.

The Board of Supervisors (Board) has extended these percentage-based increases through Board resolutions and the annual Salary and Benefits Resolution for Unrepresented Employees to seven high-level positions never named in the Charter: Sheriff/Coroner/Public Administrator, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), District Attorney, County Counsel, Public Defender, Alternate Public Defender, and Chief Probation Officer.

As of 2026, personnel allocations countywide — 181 in the Sheriff's Office plus 25 additional positions added by the Board — are directly or indirectly linked to the Deputy Sheriff II benchmark. Board staff reports project \$9.147 million in General Fund costs for all Charter Section 504-linked increases from calendar years 2022 through 2026. Internal data show the seven linked executives alone received cumulative base-pay increases exceeding \$351,000 during 2023–2026.



Although legally permissible under Board authority, the practice creates automatic, compounding salary increases for executives that are untethered to performance evaluations or position-relevant independent market studies. This framework lacks key fiscal safeguards commonly associated with long-term compensation policies, including sunset provisions, periodic independent review, and revenue-based financial stress testing. It widens internal pay gaps with rank-and-file employees who must negotiate under budget constraints and deviates from the original voter intent to ensure competitive compensation for frontline sworn peace officers.

Comparison with other counties selected by the Board (Sacramento, Napa, Placer, Yolo, Nevada, Butte, and Shasta) confirms El Dorado County is an outlier: no comparable jurisdiction automatically links non-sworn executive compensation to sworn peace officer salary formulas.

The Grand Jury finds the current linkages fiscally unsustainable in the long term, internally inequitable, and inconsistent with both voter intent and responsible governance practices.

While likely not illegal, the policy suggests poor administrative stewardship. Immediate decoupling and structural reform are warranted.

## GLOSSARY

**Charter County:** A California county governed by its own local charter, giving it more control over local rules and administration within state law limits.

**Charter Section 504:** Charter provision mandating annual comparator salary survey and adjustment for listed sworn officer classifications.

**Unrepresented Employees:** Elected officials and appointed executives whose compensation is governed by Board resolution rather than collective bargaining.

**Salary & Benefits Resolution:** Annual Board policy document that establishes fixed-percentage internal ties to Charter Section 504 benchmarks.

**Compaction:** Administrative practice of maintaining fixed percentage differentials between classifications to preserve internal equity.

## BACKGROUND

Charter Section 504, a voter-approved provision of the El Dorado County Charter, was adopted to address recruitment and retention challenges for sworn peace officers after the County had become a training ground for other agencies. The Charter language is narrow and specific: it lists only the five sworn peace officer classifications and three comparator agencies. The three comparators used were Amador County Sheriff's Department, South Lake Tahoe Police Department, and California Highway Patrol which were similar in scope of job duties and reflected demographics that aligned with El Dorado County. Adjustments are calculated from the Deputy Sheriff II benchmark and become effective the first pay period in January if warranted.



Over time, the Board expanded the percentage-based compensation increases established under Charter Section 504 to non-Charter classifications through Board resolutions and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs). These actions created fixed compensation linkages between executive positions including formulas such as the Sheriff receiving 2.5% above the Undersheriff, the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) receiving approximately 2% above the Sheriff, and County Counsel receiving 1% above the Sheriff. These compensation relationships are now embedded in the County's annual Salary and Benefits Resolution for Unrepresented Employees and reinforced through successive implementing resolutions ([Salary and Benefits Resolution 037-2025](#)).

The Director of Human Resources described the expansion of these linkages as a deliberate "domino effect" intended to preserve internal hierarchy and avoid salary compaction between classifications. Examples cited include maintaining the CAO salary approximately 2% above the Sheriff, County Counsel 1% above the Sheriff, the Public Defender 15% below the District Attorney, and the Alternate Public Defender 5% below the Public Defender.

The Grand Jury finds that this cascading compensation structure effectively institutionalizes automatic upward salary escalation across multiple executive classifications, absent independent market analysis, organizational performance, or the County's long-term fiscal condition.

Public concern intensified in 2025, evidenced by increased citizen complaints at Board meetings, public comments submitted to the Board, formal Grand Jury complaints, and a citizen-initiated ballot measure in February 2026. The ballot measure was withdrawn, due to lack of funds, after the County initiated litigation against the citizens behind the initiative. In December 2025 and again in April 2026 the Board directed staff to review unrepresented compensation linkages, but no decoupling action has been taken.

## METHODOLOGY

The Grand Jury reviewed the following:

- The original complaints and all supporting materials
- El Dorado County Charter, Section 504 Fact Sheet
- All relevant Board resolutions (including 014-2023, 166-2022, 229-2024, and 184-2025)
- Related internal spreadsheets
- Board staff cost projections (2022–2026)
- February 2026 Total Compensation Market Study for Unrepresented Classifications

- March 2026 Human Resources Compensation Study Presentation (Legistar 26-0449)
  - Public comments received by the Board
- Intent to File Petition by Hold El Dorado Accountable
  - County Lawsuit in Response
- Testimony from five key witnesses
- Analysis focused on fiscal impact, internal equity, voter intent, governance controls, and peer-county practices.

All findings rest exclusively on documentary evidence and testimony received.

## DISCUSSION

### Fiscal Efficiency & Taxpayer Impact

Charter Section 504 adjustments are mandatory for the original sworn peace officer classifications but discretionary for the seven linked executives. When uniform percentage increases are applied to high base salaries, the resulting absolute dollar costs to the County for executives are significantly greater. County-wide payroll costs reached \$9.147 million (2022–2026), while the seven executives alone accounted for more than \$351,000 in cumulative base-pay increases (2023–2026). Seven executives, representing only about 0.38% of County employees, received roughly 3.8% of the total increases, or about ten times their share of the workforce.



Projected property and sales tax revenue growth of 2–3% annually has been outpaced by some recent compensation adjustments. The Grand Jury found no evidence of formal financial modeling that ties executive compensation increases to long-term revenue forecasts, operational efficiencies, or measurable productivity gains.

### Equity Between Executive and Rank-and-File Employees

Rank-and-file employees negotiate raises under explicit budget constraints, while unrepresented executives receive automatic parity pay increases. Although cumulative pay-raises for the 504-linked group have been lower than those of major bargaining units since 2018, the automatic mechanism eliminates performance accountability and negotiation for the County’s highest-paid officials.

The Director of Human Resources confirmed that annual performance evaluations are conducted for appointed department heads, yet no 504-linked raise has ever been withheld or reduced due to performance concerns. Uniform percentage raises on disparate bases have steadily widened internal pay gaps. No objective evidence of a recruitment or retention crisis for CAO or DA positions was presented to justify automatic linkage.

## Ballot Measure and Intimidation

A coalition filed a ballot initiative in February 2026 aiming to end automatic salary increases for certain top officials in El Dorado County. The measure submitted to the Elections Office would have amended Charter Section 504 but was challenged by county legal officials, who claimed it violates California's Constitution regarding pay-setting authority by the Board of Supervisors.



Following a legal review, El Dorado County filed a lawsuit in superior court in March 2026 to determine the initiative's constitutional validity. According to statements made by County counsel, attempts to resolve the dispute informally failed, resulting in the suit for declaratory relief, with individual citizen proponents named as defendants ([Complaint for Declaratory Relief](#)).

The Grand Jury has concerns regarding the County's request in the lawsuit for reimbursement of legal costs from the ballot initiative organizers, which ultimately contributed to citizens withdrawing the measure due to lack of financial resources. While the County's actions may have been legally permissible, the response sends a strong message about the financial and legal risks citizens may face when exercising their right to participate in local government through the initiative process.

## Consistency With Voter Intent and Governance Standards

Ballot initiative organizers raised concerns that the voter intent for Charter Section 504 was that it be limited to sworn peace officers and that it deliberately excluded elected and non-sworn executives. All subsequent additions occurred through Board resolutions without voter approval. Governance safeguards are absent: there is no sunset clause, no mandatory independent review cycle, and no requirement to demonstrate continued public benefit. The Board retains authority to decouple linkages annually but has treated them as permanent. The Director of Human Resources characterized these extensions as administrative decisions made to preserve internal salary hierarchy and avoid compaction, rather than as requirements of the Charter itself.

## Peer-County Compensation Policies

According to interviews, examination of five peer counties of similar size and character (Placer, Yolo, Nevada, Butte, Shasta) reveals that El Dorado's practice is an outlier.

Placer County maintains a voter-approved formula (Measure F) strictly for sworn peace officers; executive and unrepresented positions are set separately by Board resolution based on market studies.

Yolo, Nevada, Butte, and Shasta Counties set executive compensation through annual Board-adopted salary resolutions or ordinances following independent total-compensation market surveys. None apply automatic percentage linkages from sworn-officer formulas to non-sworn executives.

The County of El Dorado alone extends a voter-mandated sworn-officer salary base to non-sworn executives via administrative resolution, producing automatic wage raises without separate market review or performance metrics. The Director of Human Resources stated he is not aware of any other county that applies an equivalent Charter 504-style linkage to non-sworn executive positions.

## FINDINGS

**F1.** The Grand Jury finds that Charter Section 504 percentage adjustments are currently applied to seven non-Charter executive and elected positions in opposition to original voter intent.

**F2.** The Grand Jury finds that automatic uniform-percentage increases under Charter Section 504 are applied to high-based-salary non-Charter executive positions and no revenue-tied stress testing is performed on these linkages.

**F3.** The Grand Jury finds that compensation for non-Charter executive positions is benchmarked to law-enforcement salary comparators rather than to peer executive positions in comparable counties.

**F4.** The Grand Jury finds that the current application of Charter Section 504 adjustments to non-Charter positions includes no sunset clause, periodic independent review, or governance stress test.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**R1.** The Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors reassess the merits of decoupling the seven high-level executive positions not originally named in Charter Section 504 by December 31, 2026. The positions are Sheriff/Coroner/Public

Administrator, District Attorney (DA), Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), County Counsel, Public Defender, Alternate Public Defender, and Chief Probation Officer.

**R2.** The Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Administrative Officer and Director of Human Resources to develop and present to the Board by September 2026 a formal unrepresented-employee compensation framework. This framework should include a three-year sunset/re-evaluation cycle, public reporting of fiscal impact versus projected revenue growth, and clear performance metrics for department heads.

**R3.** The Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Administrative Officer and the Director of Human Resources to adopt peer-county best-practice models for unrepresented executive compensation.

**R4.** The Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Administrative Officer work with the Auditor Controller to incorporate into all future adopted budgets and mid-year reports a transparent breakout of Charter Section 504 costs (Charter vs. linked positions) and a five-year fiscal projection under varying revenue scenarios.

## REQUIRED RESPONSES

*A Civil Grand Jury report details a single investigation. Each report lists FINDINGS and RECOMMENDATIONS. The organization responsible is notified and is required to respond to the report.*

*The California Penal Code Section 933(c) specifies response times.*

- *PUBLIC AGENCIES. The governing body of any public agency (also referring to a department) must respond within 90 days from the release of the report to the public.*
- *ELECTED OFFICERS OR AGENCY HEADS. All elected officers or heads of agencies/departments must respond within 60 days of the report's release to the public.*
- *FAILURE TO RESPOND. Failure to respond to a Grand Jury report violates California Penal Code Section 933.05 and is subject to further action that may include additional investigation into the subject matter of the report by the Jury.*

*The following responses are required pursuant to Penal Code Sections 933 and 933.05:*

*From the following governing boards within 90 days:*

- *El Dorado County Board of Supervisors*

- *All Findings*
- *All Recommendations*

For more information refer to [How to Respond to an El Dorado County Civil Grand Jury Report](#) available on the El Dorado County Grand Jury webpage at <https://www.eldoradocounty.ca.gov/Public-Safety-Justice/Safety-Justice/Grand-Jury>.

*Reports issued by the Civil Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code Section 929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury do not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.*

## INVITED RESPONSES

Responses are invited from the following within 60 days:

Auditor-Controller respond to F2, R4

Responses are invited from the following within 90 days:

Chief Administrative Officer respond to R2, R3, R4

Director of Human Resources respond to R2, R3

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

El Dorado County Charter § 504 and official Fact Sheet

Board Resolutions 014-2023, 166-2022, 229-2024, 184-2025

504 Estimated Increases by Calendar Year staff reports and internal tie spreadsheets (2023–2026)

February 2026 Total Compensation Market Studies

Placer County Code § 3.12.040 (Measure F) and salary resolutions of Yolo, Nevada, Butte, and Shasta Counties (public records)

Charter Section 504 Fact Sheet (26-0449 C), El Dorado County, 4 pages

Total Compensation Study for Unrepresented Classifications, February 2026 (26-0449 B), Human Resources Department

Human Resources Compensation Study Presentation, March 2026 (Legistar File 26-0449)

Public Comments received by the Board of Supervisors, March 23, 2026 (Agenda Item 46, 26-0449)

## DISCLAIMER

This report reflects the independent, evidence-based analysis of the 2025–2026 El Dorado County Civil Grand Jury. Findings and recommendations are offered solely in the public interest to promote efficient, equitable, and transparent county government.



El Dorado County Civil Grand Jury 2025-2026

# Continuity and Response Compliance



Case No. 26-07

June 5, 2026

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## SUMMARY

The 2025-2026 El Dorado County (County) Civil Grand Jury reviewed responses to the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 reports, evaluated progress on prior recommendations, and informed the public about the ongoing, continuous nature of Grand Jury work across successive juries.

The El Dorado County Civil Grand Jury may appear to be an institution that exists continuously, however, it is a series of individual Grand Juries, each of which is impaneled for one year (July 1–June 30), as mandated in the California Constitution and statutes. No jury is a continuance of any other and is independent and separate from all others.

A Grand Jury may forward citizen complaints or research from incomplete investigations, but each subsequent Grand Jury must make its own decisions on whether and how to pursue those investigations. They may not have access to any work product generated by the previous Grand Jury that is not published for the public except as stated in [California Penal Code, Section 924.4](#).

The purpose of this compliance report is to share the responses of the prior year's Grand Jury reports to determine if the required entities met their statutory requirements and to provide updates on accepted recommendations that were to be completed during this Grand Jury term.

## BACKGROUND

Each Civil Grand Jury investigates the county government during its one-year term. It may also investigate city governments, agencies, schools, and special districts within the county. Each investigation may generate a report containing evidence, with findings of facts derived from that evidence, and may recommend actions based on those findings.

Each report may require responses to identified findings and recommendations from the officials responsible for the subject of the report. Grand Jury reports may be published and released at any time during the Grand Jury term. Responses must be submitted within a timeframe of 60 or 90 days from the date the report is published.

Because responses may be submitted after the issuing Grand Jury's term has ended, the current Grand Jury receives and reviews those responses. The current Grand Jury is then responsible for evaluating the responses for statutory compliance and determining whether the required actions have been completed.

## DISCUSSION

### Compliance: Late or No Response 2024-2025

All responses to reports published in the 2024-2025 term were received in a timely manner and complied with provisions of the California Penal Code. Follow-up actions specified in the responses had either been implemented, were in the process of being implemented, were not being implemented, or required further analysis.

The Grand Jury commends those local agencies and districts that provided timely and compliant responses to the reports of prior Grand Juries, as well as their commitment to implementing recommendations for improving programs and services.

## CONTINUITY

Responses to reports published by the 2023-2024 and the 2024-2025 Grand Juries were reviewed to determine the following:

1. Did they comply with the provisions of the California Penal Code?

Penal Code section 933.05, subdivision (b), states that, as to each Grand Jury recommendation, the responding person or entity shall report one of the following actions:

- a. If the recommendation has been implemented, a summary of the implementation must be given.
- b. If the recommendation will be implemented in the future, a time frame must be specified for completion.
- c. Should an agency respond that further study is required to accomplish a recommendation, the study must be completed within six months.
- d. When a response claims the recommendation is not warranted or is not reasonable, an explanation must be provided.

2. Have the actions promised in the response been completed?

## Continuity: Report Responses Requiring Follow-up

The current Grand Jury reviewed report responses from 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 Grand Jury reports. The following criteria were used to determine which recommendation responses required follow-up:

1. Those responses that stated “Will be Implemented”
2. Those responses that stated “Requires Further Analysis”

Below are the responses and updates. For additional information refer to the Comprehensive Index of Civil Grand Jury Reports on the Grand Jury Webpage.

### Grand Jury Term 2023-2024

#### *Case #24-05 El Dorado Hills CSD*

Report: <https://www.eldoradocounty.ca.gov/files/assets/county/v/1/documents/public-safety-amp-justice/grand-jury/2023-2024/edh-csd-report-final.pdf>

**Recommendation 6:** Within 90 days of this report, [Community Services District] CSD should establish and document clearer guidelines for the CSD Board of Directors or [General Manager] GM certification of the assessment levy to the County Controller/Auditor and publish that procedure in the CSD Policies and Procedures documents.

**Initial Response received 7/3/2024:** This Recommendation requires further analysis: To the extent the District can resolve its pending lawsuit with the County Auditor, there may be changes in the guidelines and procedure the District follows to provide the necessary certification of the assessment levies to the County Controller/Auditor. Only if a resolution is reached, short of court resolution, could the District create the appropriate documentation.

**Follow-up Response received 10/15/25:** As indicated in our initial response, the District's ability to make changes involving the certification of the assessment levy is intertwined with ongoing and pending litigation with the Auditor-Controller. The District possesses no power to unilaterally modify the certification process outside of County cooperation and agreement. This is precisely why we did not represent and did not agree to perform these actions within 90 days.

**Follow-up Response received 2/13/26:** An answer was not provided.

**Follow-up Response In-person Meeting 3/24/26:** Resolved in the last month or two. Court Settlement (public) outlines the process. Need to document the guidelines. Will take it as an action item. Board needs to determine if they will write a guideline or not.

**Recommendation 9:** By September 30, 2024, [Community Services District] CSD should review, revise, and publicize its Master Plan from 2021 with realistic timelines for all new park development, as well as accurate and realistic cost estimates that can be funded and executed within a 10-year planning period.

**Initial Response received 7/3/24:** This Recommendation has not been implemented but will be implemented in the future: The District has planned and budgeted for a complete review and revision of the 2021 Master Plan beginning in FY25, which starts on July 01, 2024, in accordance to our policy for a five (5) year review. The outcome of the [El Dorado Hills Community Services District]

EDHCSD Response El Dorado County Grand Jury Report #24-05 Page 14 of 16 revised Master Plan will have an influence on the District's ten-year Capital Improvement Plan. This is a very comprehensive review process and plan revision that includes community input on several occasions, which cannot be completed in the timeframe recommended.

**Follow-up Response received 10/15/25:** As indicated in our initial response, the District stated it could not implement the recommendation within the allotted timeframe but estimated it would start a review and possible revised or updated Master Plan beginning FY25. During the October 09, 2025, Regular Meeting, the District Board of Directors approved and awarded a contract to a consultant to prepare a comprehensive Master Plan for the District. As part of the Master Planning process, a development plan will be formulated.

**Follow-up Response received 2/13/26:** An answer was not provided

**Follow-up Response In-person Meeting 3/24/26:** Master Plan is underway – Anticipated completion by the end of year (2026).

**Recommendation 10:** Within 90 days, [Community Services District] CSD should employ or retain a full-time licensed [Certified Public Accountant] CPA professional to be Treasurer/[Chief Financial Officer] CFO-equivalent.

**Initial Response received 7/3/24:** This Recommendation has not been implemented but will be implemented in the future: As stated in the Findings, the concerns of the Grand Jury are a function of District Policy and not due to the lack of having a CPA on staff or retainer. However, the District recognizes that government accounting is unique and complicated; and reporting is always changing with Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) regulations having new requirements that the District must adhere to each year. District staff understand that education is a priority and will work towards having at least one

member of the finance department receive a certification in government accounting through a reputable government entity, including GFOA and/or California Society of Municipal [Financial] Officers (CSMFO). The goal will be to have this completed by December 2025. Additionally, the District will look at incorporating an appropriate accounting certification requirement for future recruitments

**Follow-up Response received 10/15/25:** As indicated in our initial response, the District did not agree to employ or retain a full-time licensed CPA professional for the various reasons stated therein. However, the District did express its goal to endeavor to have a finance team member receive further certifications by December 2025, which is currently underway.

**Follow-up Response received 2/13/26:** An answer was not provided

**Follow-up Response In-person Meeting 3/24/26:** The Grand Jury was referred by the Board to the General Manager for follow-up.

**Follow-up Response received 4/7/26:** The District's former Senior Accountant has been promoted to the Director of Administration & Finance [Director] position. The [Director] investigated the certificate program, and it is extremely time intensive. We don't currently have the staffing levels necessary for the [Director] to go through this program but intend to do so when we are able. [The District is] also in the process of onboarding a Director of Finance, who will serve the District on a contract basis, to provide this level of expertise in government finance and strategic, fiscal leadership that will serve our board, our community and taxpayers at the highest and best standard practices.

**Recommendation 11:** Within 90 days, [Community Services District] CSD should get public input on its latest 10-year development plan, including any updates to the Master Plan from 2021, and how they plan to use [Park Impact Fee] PIF funds over an

extended period. This development needs to include a contingency plan for new park development in a reasonable time frame if additional funds do not become available that are required for the current Master Plan.

**Initial Response received 7/3/24:** This Recommendation has not been implemented but will be implemented in the future: As noted in our response to R9, the District has planned and budgeted for a complete review and revision of its 2021 Master Plan in FY 24/25. As part of that process, the District solicits input from the community on the Master Plan and the 10-year development plan. Additionally, the significant amount of community input the District is currently receiving as a result of the Central [El Dorado Hills] EDH Park outreach project will be taken into consideration.

**Follow-up Response received 10/15/25:** As indicated in our initial response, the District stated it could not implement the recommendation within the allotted timeframe but estimated it would start a review and possible revised or updated Master Plan beginning in FY25. The District has just approved a consultant to prepare a comprehensive Master Plan. As part of the Master Planning process, a development plan will be formulated, and robust public outreach and input will be solicited.

**Follow-up Response received 2/13/26:** An answer was not provided

**Follow-up Response In-person Meeting 3/24/26:** Master Plan is underway – Anticipated completion by the end of year (2026). Public workshops are in progress.

**Recommendation 12:** Within 90 days, [Community Services District] CSD should document its plans for Bass Lake Park and justify why CSD took on the obligation to build a turnkey park in Village J7, and how development of Bass Lake Park will now proceed up through park completion proposed by CSD in FY 31.

**Initial Response received 7/3/24:** This Recommendation requires further analysis: With the Districts acquisition of 55 acres of the old executive golf course and the option to acquire the remaining 41.5 acres, the Bass Lake Park design may be subject to change depending on the community input for the Central [El Dorado Hills] EDH Park and what amenities that park will have. The community outreach project for Central EDH Park will run through summer at which time the District will be in a better position to define and document its plans for Bass Lake park. With regard to the turnkey park in Village J, the District participated in a settlement which was negotiated between Parker Development, the District, and El Dorado County that provided the 12.5 acres and \$3.5M in funding identified from the County's Serrano CFD 1992-1 that had been slated for the development of the parkland. Given the years of delay in the construction of the turnkey park, and that the District had recently acquired acreage from Rescue Unified School District that was adjacent to the Village J lot, it was envisioned that the Village J lot could be incorporated into a larger park project. With that newer vision, the District elected to accept the land and funding and construct the park itself. To assist the community in understanding the history of this decision, the District will be seeking to create a public review of the information and series of events that led up to the settlement agreement between the three parties whereby the District accepted the 12.5 acres and \$3.5M in funding in order to incorporate the J Lot H parkland into the larger Bass Lake Park project.

**Follow-up Response received 10/15/25:** As indicated in our initial response, this recommendation requires further analysis, and we did not agree to provide the requested information within 90 days. That being said, development of Bass Lake Park is still ongoing, and the current project description is being analyzed and studied through an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). At this time, it is unclear when the EIR will be completed. At that point, we should have more clarity in terms of any modifications to the current project based on the ongoing Master Planning process that has just commenced.

**Follow-up Response received 2/13/26:** An answer was not provided

**Follow-up Response In-person Meeting 3/24/26:**

The Grand Jury was referred by the Board to the General Manager for follow-up.

**Follow-up Response received 4/7/26:** The property known as Bass Lake Park has been and is still currently undergoing an [Environmental Impact Review] EIR process with the County. While at this stage, no work can be done on the property. We have been notified that the EIR for Bass Lake will be completed in the next few months (anticipated completion no later than end of summer 2026), and we are working actively with LSA [Environmental Consulting] (firm handling the EIR) to come to conclusion.

## Grand Jury Term 2024-2025

### *Case #25-04 DOT Maintenance*

Report: <https://www.eldoradocounty.ca.gov/files/assets/county/v/2/documents/public-safety-amp-justice/grand-jury/2024-2025/25-04-dot-report.pdf>

**Recommendation 1:** Adopt and deploy a software package that will assist staff in fully electronic processing of roadway complaints by January 1, 2026.

**Initial Response received 5/4/25:** The recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future. As noted in the response to Finding 1, Department of Transportation [DOT] staff has been actively researching alternate complaint systems and participating in demonstrations that will result in the implementation of a more reliable, efficient system. Timeframe for implementation is dependent on the system selected, but the Department of Transportation hopes to implement the new software system prior to January 1, 2026

**Follow-up Response received 2/12/26:** The Department of Transportation launched the new complaint and service-request management system on January 12, 2026. The enhanced platform is designed to streamline how resident reports are received, distributed to area supervisors, and communicated back to the complainant, resulting in faster and more transparent responses.

Residents can submit complaints or service requests through two convenient channels:

GovAlert Mobile App

County Department of Transportation Website

The Road Maintenance phone line continues to be staffed and available for those who prefer to call. Residents may still report concerns by calling 530-642-4909.

*Case #25-05 Technology Leadership with a Chief Information Officer Report:*

<https://www.eldoradocounty.ca.gov/files/assets/county/v/1/documents/public-safety-amp-justice/grand-jury/2024-2025/25-05-it-report.pdf>

**Recommendation 1:** Instruct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to deliver a Chief Information Officer (CIO) job description by September 1, 2025, ensure the job description includes measurable strategic responsibilities and specific authority for county-wide technology alignment. (Sample Job Description provided in appendix.)

Note: See Appendix A for 2026 follow-up responses.

**Initial Response received 6/25/25:** The recommendation has been implemented. The CAO and Human Resources have been tasked with revising the IT Director job description and possibly the title to reflect a more strategically focused emphasis. The Board expects to receive the revised job description and initiate a new recruitment by September 1, 2025.

**Recommendation 2:** Direct the CAO to hire a Chief Information Officer (CIO) to lead Information Technology (IT) by January 1, 2026.

**Initial Response received 6/25/25:** The recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future. As referenced above, the title of the position has yet to be determined, based on the research and recommendations the Board will receive from the CAO and HR this Fall; however, the goal is to hire a permanent head of Information Technologies by January 1, 2026.

**Recommendation 3:** Direct the future [Chief Information Officer] CIO to develop and present comprehensive storage and data center consolidation strategies by May 1, 2026.

**Initial Response received 6/25/25:** The recommendation requires further analysis. As noted in the response to Recommendation #2, the Board hopes to find a permanent leader for the Information Technologies Department by January 1, 2026. The Board would then work with the new department head to identify any needed changes to the departments strategic plan and work to implement those. This will include encouraging discussions with the Sheriff and District Attorney regarding efficiencies.

**Follow-up Response received 4/29/26:** EDSO and County IT are planning a joint data center review in FY 27/28. We will work together to analyze and inventory both systems and identify targets for future storage consolidation. This helps prevent redundant storage purchases. This timeline aligns with the required hardware refresh cycles for both data centers scheduled for FY 28/29. Although the full consolidation strategy will be informed by that review, EDSO and County IT are already collaborating on upcoming initiatives and expiring contracts to identify opportunities for countywide cost savings and improved operational efficiencies. [See Appendix A]

**Recommendation 4:** Instruct the future CIO and [Chief Administrative Officer] CAO to reconfigure the [Information Technologies] IT Steering Committee into a collaborative body to evaluate projects, consolidate infrastructure needs, coordinate County-wide IT purchases and report results regularly by May 1, 2026.

**Initial Response received 6/25/25:** The recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future. This recommendation is dependent on recommendations 1 and 2. The IT department has already begun drafting recommended changes to the [Information Technology Steering Committee] ITSC structure, but a firm timeline for full implementation of this recommendation cannot be provided until a new head of the Information Technologies Department has been hired.

**Follow-up Response received 4/29/26:** The ITSC agenda prior to the redesign included Security and Compliance, Project Intakes, Countywide Project Updates, Policy & Procedures, and Overall Communication. The meeting did not include project evaluations or coordination of purchases. After conducting research and consulting with other County CIOs, the following IT Governance Structure has been established for El Dorado County. ITSC remains a component of the Governance Structure, with additional committees added as part of the redesign. Each committee has a distinct role within the overall structure to ensure effective coordination and decision-making. These roles are aligned with the former ITSC agenda, enabling ITSC to function as a decision-making body. [See Appendix A]

**Recommendation 5:** Establish Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure IT effectiveness and efficiency across county departments by July 1, 2026, and provide quarterly reports to the BOS.

**Initial Response received 6/25/25:** The recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future. This recommendation is dependent on recommendations 1 and 2. The IT Department has started drafting

potential KPIs, but a firm timeline for full implementation of this recommendation cannot be provided until a new head of the Information Technologies Department has been hired.

**Follow up response 4/29/26:** IT has started monitoring KPIs in 3 areas: Strategic Plan, Project Management Office, and Operations. IT plans to continue maturing its KPIs for service versus incident management and to refine ticket categories. [See Appendix A]

**2025-2026 Grand Jury Opinion:** Case # 25-05 called for the County of the El Dorado to hire a qualified Chief Information Officer (CIO) with county-wide IT authority. The Board of Supervisors pledged to hire one by January 2026. The 2025-2026 Grand Jury finds that the Board's response was facially compliant with Recommendations 1 and 2, but substantively inadequate.

In the 2024-2025 Grand Jury Report on IT Leadership (Case #25-05), the Grand Jury recommended that the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Administrative Officer to develop a comprehensive Chief Information Officer job description by September 1, 2025, emphasizing measurable strategic responsibilities, county-wide technology alignment, and enhanced authority to drive innovation and efficiency. This was intended to address longstanding issues such as high IT leadership turnover, departmental silos, duplicate spending, and delayed strategic initiatives. The report further urged hiring a qualified CIO by January 1, 2026, to lead a transformative approach including reconfiguring the IT Steering Committee, consolidating data centers, and establishing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for accountability and estimated annual savings of between \$1,000,000 to \$3,000,000.

While the Board conducted a competitive search and modified the job description to incorporate strategic elements such as enterprise IT governance, data management, and budget optimization, they ultimately appointed the interim IT Director to the CIO role effective January 10, 2026. The appointee is a 19-year internal candidate whose

experience aligns more closely with tactical operations than the executive-level visionary leadership the Grand Jury envisioned.

This approach perpetuates the tactical focus criticized in the original report, prioritizing reactive support over proactive planning and cross-departmental collaboration. Opportunities to optimize resources, reduce costs, and drive meaningful cultural change in technology adoption remain unaddressed.

The significant potential savings identified by the Grand Jury including consolidating redundant systems, eliminating duplicative contracts, and unifying the District Attorney's and Sheriff's independent IT operations have not been implemented and merit continued monitoring by future Grand Juries.

**Recommendation 3:** Direct the future [Chief Information Officer] CIO to develop and present comprehensive storage and data center consolidation strategies by May 1, 2026.

**Initial Response received 6/25/25:** The recommendation requires further analysis. As noted in the response to Recommendation #2, the Board hopes to find a permanent leader for the Information Technologies Department by January 1, 2026. The Board would then work with the new department head to identify any needed changes to the departments strategic plan and work to implement those. This will include encouraging discussions with the Sheriff and District Attorney regarding efficiencies.

**Follow-up Response received 4/29/26:** EDSO and County IT are planning a joint data center review in FY 27/28. We will work together to analyze and inventory both systems and identify targets for future storage consolidation. This helps prevent redundant storage purchases. This timeline aligns with the required hardware refresh cycles for both data centers scheduled for FY 28/29. Although the full consolidation strategy will be informed by that review, EDSO and County IT are already collaborating on upcoming initiatives and expiring

contracts to identify opportunities for countywide cost savings and improved operational efficiencies.

**Recommendation 4:** Instruct the future CIO and [Chief Administrative Officer] CAO to reconfigure the [Information Technologies] IT Steering Committee into a collaborative body to evaluate projects, consolidate infrastructure needs, coordinate County-wide IT purchases and report results regularly by May 1, 2026.

**Initial Response received 6/25/25:** The recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future. This recommendation is dependent on recommendations 1 and 2. The IT department has already begun drafting recommended changes to the [Information Technology Steering Committee] ITSC structure, but a firm timeline for full implementation of this recommendation cannot be provided until a new head of the Information Technologies Department has been hired.

**Follow-up Response received 4/29/26:** The ITSC agenda prior to the redesign included Security and Compliance, Project Intakes, Countywide Project Updates, Policy & Procedures, and Overall Communication. The meeting did not include project evaluations or coordination of purchases. After conducting research and consulting with other County CIOs, the following IT Governance Structure has been established for El Dorado County. ITSC remains a component of the Governance Structure, with additional committees added as part of the redesign. Each committee has a distinct role within the overall structure to ensure effective coordination and decision-making. These roles are aligned with the former ITSC agenda, enabling ITSC to function as a decision-making body.

**Recommendation 5:** Establish Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure IT effectiveness and efficiency across county departments by July 1, 2026, and provide quarterly reports to the BOS.

**Initial Response received 6/25/25:** The recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future. This recommendation is dependent on recommendations 1 and 2. The IT Department has started drafting potential KPIs, but a firm timeline for full implementation of this recommendation cannot be provided until a new head of the Information Technologies Department has been hired.

**Follow up response 4/29/26:** IT has started monitoring KPIs in 3 areas: Strategic Plan, Project Management Office, and Operations. IT plans to continue maturing its KPIs for service versus incident management and to refine ticket categories.

*Case #25-06 9-1-1 Central Dispatch*

Report: <https://www.eldoradocounty.ca.gov/files/assets/county/v/1/documents/public-safety-amp-justice/grand-jury/2024-2025/25-06-central-dispatch.pdf>

**Recommendation 4:** [El Dorado County Sheriff's Office] EDSO direct Central Dispatch and their payroll department to produce an annual report by January 1, 2026, including the amount of overtime salary paid, as well as EDSO deputy pay differential for Central Dispatch staffing to determine the additional cost of keeping Central Dispatch 9-1-1 lines answered.

**Initial Response received 4/3/2025:** Has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future. EDSO accepts this recommendation and will establish a reporting process to track the financial impact of dispatch staffing shortages. This report will be prepared for internal review and will be submitted to county leadership upon request. The El Dorado County Sheriff's Office is committed to addressing the challenges identified in the Grand Jury report. We will continue to work with the Board of Supervisors and County Human Resources to advocate for necessary improvements in compensation, working conditions, and staff resource allocation. Our goal is to ensure a fully staffed and effective dispatch center that meets the needs of our community while supporting the well-being of

our dedicated dispatchers and balancing operational feasibility and staff time considerations.

**Follow-up Response received 3/9/26:** Undersheriff: “I have attached a memo detailing the total overtime cost for dispatch in FY 24-25, as well as the overall cost of sworn deputy sheriff pay associated to dispatch.” The report was reviewed by the Civil Grand Jury and was determined to meet the recommendation.

## ADDITIONAL CONTINUITY DISCUSSION

Where prior report responses identified completion dates extending beyond the 2025-2026 Grand Jury term, this Grand Jury did not evaluate implementation status. Continued oversight of those commitments should be undertaken by the succeeding Grand Jury.

This Grand Jury concluded that to continue to act in the best interests of the citizenry of El Dorado County, it is incumbent upon this body to ensure that promises made are promises kept. The only way to do that is to 1) continue to hold accountable those entities making promises, and 2) follow up on the responses that stated more work was going to be done.

If the current investigating jury deems the answers insufficient, another investigation may be warranted.

There are citizen complaints that the 2025-2026 Grand Jury received that may have merit, but the Grand Jury determined it did not have the time to fully evaluate. Those were forwarded to the 2026-2027 Grand Jury for their independent consideration.

All published Grand Jury reports and responses are public and therefore are not deemed confidential.

# APPENDIX A

## MAY 1, 2026, UPDATE TO THE RESPONSE TO THE 2024-25 EL DORADO COUNTY GRAND JURY REPORT

(CASE 25-05: TIME TO REBOOT COUNTY TECHNOLOGY  
LEADERSHIP WITH A CHIEF INFO OFFICER)

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## R3 Data Center Consolidation

**Recommendation:** The Grand Jury Direct the future CIO to develop and present comprehensive storage and data center consolidation strategies by May 1, 2026.

**BOS Response:** The recommendation requires further analysis. As noted in the response to Recommendation #2, the Board hopes to find a permanent leader for the Information Technologies Department by January 1, 2026. The Board would then work with the new department head to identify any needed changes to the department's strategic plan and work to implement those. This will include encouraging discussions with the Sheriff and District Attorney regarding efficiencies.

**May 1, 2026 Update:** EDSO and County IT are planning a joint data center review in FY 27/28. We will work together to analyze and inventory both systems and identify targets for future storage consolidation. This helps prevent redundant storage purchases.

This timeline aligns with the required hardware refresh cycles for both data centers scheduled for FY 28/29. Although the full consolidation strategy will be informed by that review, EDSO and County IT are already collaborating on upcoming initiatives and expiring contracts to identify opportunities for countywide cost savings and improved operational efficiencies. The District Attorney's environment is already primarily cloud-based, so they are not expected to be part of the on-premises data center consolidation efforts. It is important to note that EDSO, the District Attorney's Office, and County IT currently share several enterprise systems and tools, including:

- MUNIS – Enterprise Resource Planning Software
- UKG – Timecard
- Assetas – Asset Management (DA uses an alternate solution)
- Avaya – Telecommunications System
- Legistar – Board Calendar and Agendas
- Open Cities – County Website (DA uses an alternate solution)
- Time Trade – Online Appointments (DA uses an alternate solution)
- Calero VeraSmart – Centralized data circuit invoice tracking service

Additionally, EDSO and County IT utilize the same competitive bid and reseller agreements for M365 licensing. While operating independently of each other, both EDSO and County IT plan to establish and foster a collaborative and closer working relationship. This helps build trust, cooperation, and transparency. We will align future projects collaboratively and establish an IT community or 'chat group' that enables members to exchange ideas and solutions.

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## R4 IT Steering Committee (ITSC) Redesign

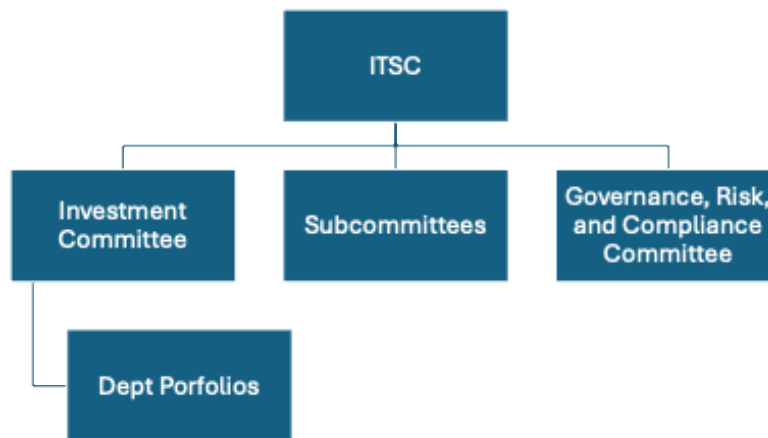
**Recommendation:** The Grand Jury requested the future CIO and CAO to reconfigure the IT Steering Committee (ITSC) into a collaborative body to evaluate projects, consolidate infrastructure needs, coordinate Countywide IT purchases and report results regularly by May 1, 2026.

**BOS Response:** The recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future. This recommendation is dependent on recommendations 1 and 2. The IT department has already begun drafting recommended changes to the ITSC structure, but a firm timeline for full implementation of this recommendation cannot be provided until a new head of the Information Technologies Department has been hired.

**May 1, 2026 Update:** The ITSC agenda prior to the redesign included Security and Compliance, Project Intakes, Countywide Project Updates, Policy & Procedures, and Overall Communication. The meeting did not include project evaluations or coordination of purchases.

After conducting research and consulting with other County CIOs, the following IT Governance Structure has been established for El Dorado County. ITSC remains a component of the Governance Structure, with additional committees added as part of the redesign. Each committee has a distinct role within the overall structure to ensure effective coordination and decision-making. These roles are aligned with the former ITSC agenda, enabling ITSC to function as a decision-making body.

### Committee Structure



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## Information Technologies Steering Committee (ITSC)

**Members:** Senior dept management, CAO staff, and IT management

**Purpose:** Establish the governance framework to support and evaluate the IT Strategic Plan.

**Frequency:** Twice Per Year (Jan/Feb and Aug/Sept)

## Investment Committee

**Members:** CIO, CAO Analysts, and PMO staff

**Purpose:** Responsible for evaluating, prioritizing, and guiding technology investments to ensure alignment with County goals, strategic initiatives, and financial constraints in order to create the IT Strategic Plan.

**Frequency:** Minimum of Three Per Year (Nov, March, and Aug)

## Subcommittees (General, Land, Law, and Health)

**Members:** PMO and Department assigned, to represent their needs and priorities

**Purpose:** Serves as a dedicated forum for monitoring projects, tickets, and issues.

**Frequency:** Monthly

## Governance, Risk, and Compliance (GRC) Committee

**Members:** CAO, HR, Risk, County Council, and IT management

**Purpose:** Oversight and guidance to ensure that governance, risk management, and compliance activities align with regulatory requirements.

**Frequency:** Minimum of Two Per Year (Sept and March)

## Dept Portfolios

**Members:** PMO, CAO Analyst, and Department assigned

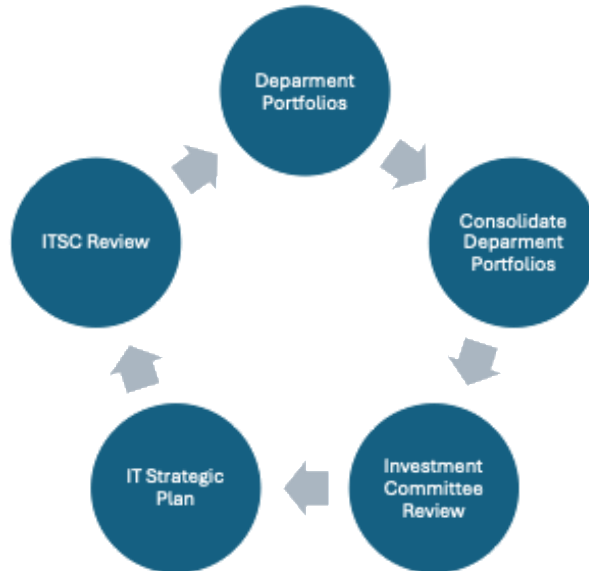
**Purpose:** The first year focused on developing a three-year plan with each department and discussing countywide services to identify new, innovative solutions. Ongoing meetings will be used to review and update each department's three-year plan. The three-year plan is reviewed by the Investment Committee and incorporated into the IT Strategic Plan.

**Frequency:** Annually (Starts in Aug)

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## IT Strategic Plan

The strategic plan defines the County's technical roadmap. The plan combines Countywide initiatives, IT initiatives, GRC initiatives, and all County departments initiatives.



## ITSC Agenda

The format of the ITSC meeting will follow the new IT Governance framework.

1. IT Strategic Plan – Check in on where IT is at in meeting the project goals
2. Project Proposals – Review new project requests and/or request to change a project priority/fiscal year. Discuss impacts on other projects within the plan.
3. Risk and Resource Management – Report from the investment board on staffing and budget items related to the IT projects.
4. Key Performance Measurements (KPIs) – IT will report KPIs to ITSC as discussed in the next section.

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## R5 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

**Recommendation:** The Grand Jury requested the establishment of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure IT effectiveness and efficiency across county departments by July 1, 2026, and provide quarterly reports to the BOS.

**BOS Response:** The recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future. This recommendation is dependent on recommendations 1 and 2. The IT Department has started drafting potential KPIs, but a firm timeline for full implementation of this recommendation cannot be provided until a new head of the Information Technologies Department has been hired.

**May 1, 2026 Update:** IT has started monitoring KPIs in 3 areas: Strategic Plan, Project Management Office, and Operations. IT plans to continue maturing its KPIs for service versus incident management and to refine ticket categories.

### IT Strategic Plan

The IT department is tracking two KPIs for the IT Strategic Plan. The Strategic Focus KPI and the Project Pipeline KPI.

### Strategic Focus KPI

The Strategic Focus KPI demonstrates how effectively our project pipeline aligns with the County's strategic focus areas. By tracking which approved projects directly support our strategic priorities, we gain visibility into how our work advances the County's long-term goals, strengthens service delivery, and improves outcomes for residents.



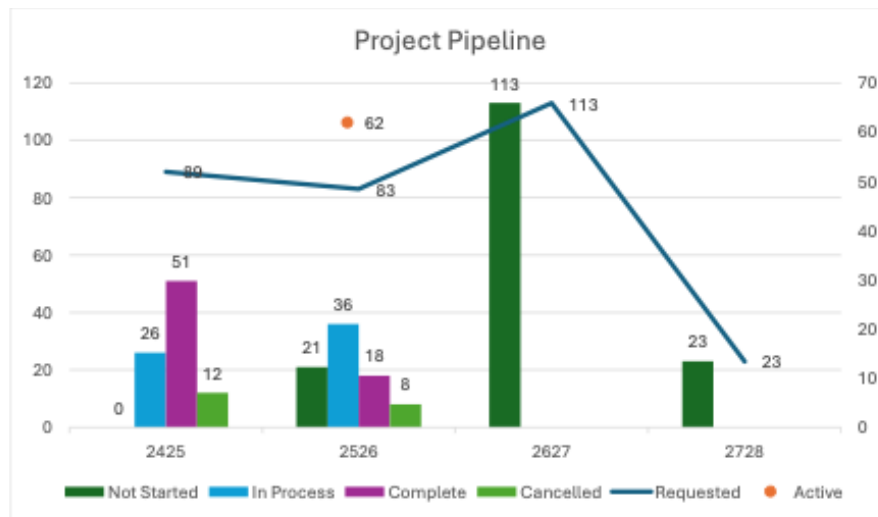
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## Project Pipeline KPI

The Project Pipeline KPI is focused on providing a clear view of how effectively project demand is moving through our project pipeline, from initial request to final completion. By comparing the number of projects requested with those that are started and completed, we can assess our capacity. These metrics help identify bottlenecks, improve prioritization, and ensure that resources are being directed toward the highest-value initiatives in a timely and accountable way.

The blue line represents the total number of projects requested by fiscal year. Our goal is to start all requested projects within the same fiscal year they are submitted. If a project cannot be started within the requested year, an analysis will be conducted with the Investment Board and the results will be shared with ITSC.

Projects may span multiple fiscal years before they are fully completed. The orange dot shows the number of currently active projects, regardless of the fiscal year in which they were requested. Tracking this as a KPI helps us understand our true workload and ensure that active project volume stays aligned with available capacity and strategic priorities.



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## Project Management Office (PMO)

The PMO will track KPIs for countywide projects and, upon request, for department projects. The two KPIs monitored by the PMO are the Project Completion Rate and the Business Impact Score.

**Project Completion Rate** = Working Days Different of Approved GO LIVE vs Actual GO LIVE

**Business Impact Score** = Defined by Stakeholder by Project (what equals success)

### Windows 11

**Project Completion Rate:**

Approved GO LIVE	10/14/2025
Actual GO LIVE	09/30/2025
Working Days Difference	- 10 Working Days

**Business Impact Score:**

Devices Upgraded	92%
------------------	-----

Notes: Kiosk devices are still being upgraded due to custom configurations.

### Kronos (Phase1)

**Project Completion Rate:**

Approved GO LIVE	12/13/2025
Actual GO LIVE	03/21/2026
Working Days Difference	70 Working Days (Vendor Delay)

Note: Vendor was unable to produce a working payroll export which delayed GO LIVE. The vendor extended the legacy system at no additional cost to the County.

**Business Impact Score:**

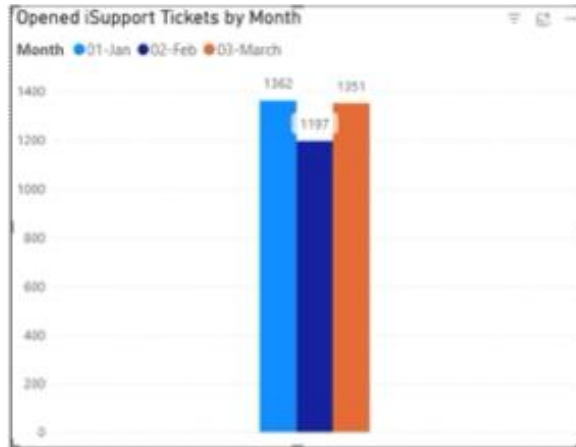
SSO (3 tenants)	100%
Timecard System (Existing Setup)	100%
980 Pay periods	98% (Employee Timecard View)
6 Interfaces	83% (5/6 Payroll Export Failed at GO LIVE)

Note: To meet the December timeline, the project was divided into two phases. Phase 1 focused on implementing the current configuration. Phase 2 will introduce the new features and enhancements for El Dorado County employees.

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## Operations

Operations encompass all divisions and the wide range of services delivered by the IT Department. IT averages over 3000 tickets per quarter.

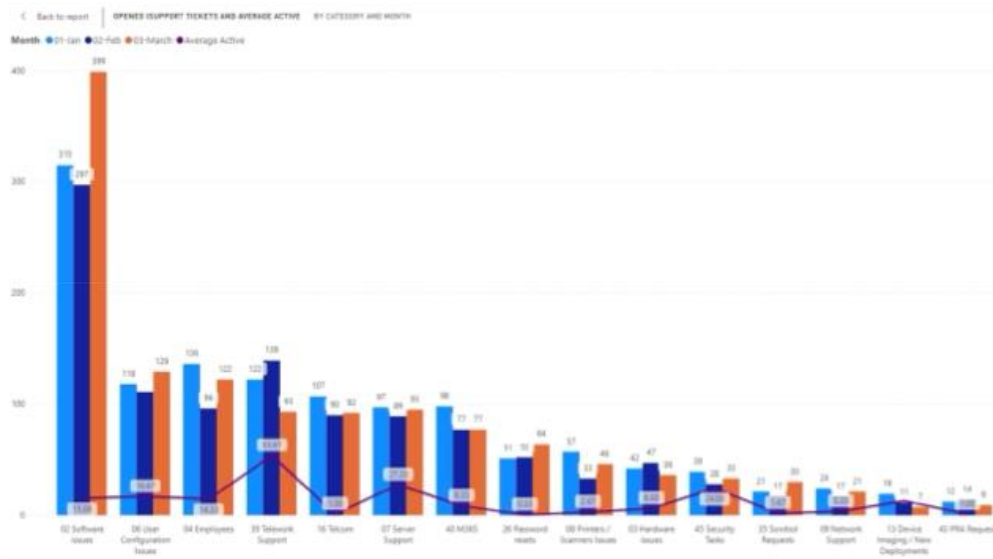


To maintain strong operational performance and start analyzing data for server level agreements, the IT Department is focusing on 2 KPIs Monthly Tickets Opened with Average Active Tickets and Monthly Tickets Closed with Average Days Opened.

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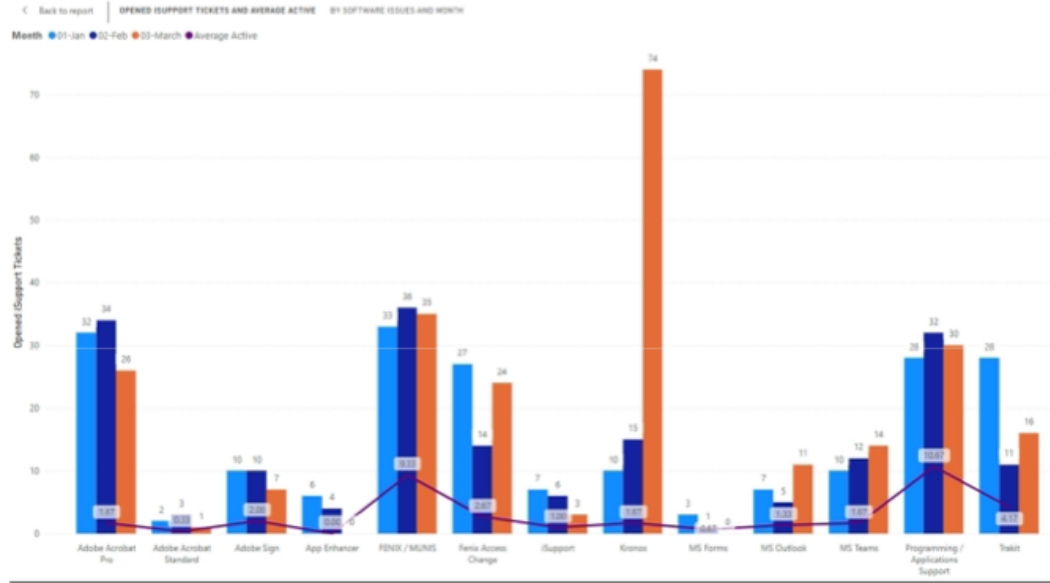
## Monthly Tickets Opened with Average Active Tickets

This KPI is important to understand the service level demands, operational efficiency, and capacity indicators. It shows how often users need IT support and whether the demand is rising, stable, or declining. A growing average active ticket count may signal delays, resource constraints, or recurring issues. Trends help determine staffing needs, process improvements, and opportunities for automation. The average figures for all quarters will be reviewed annually.



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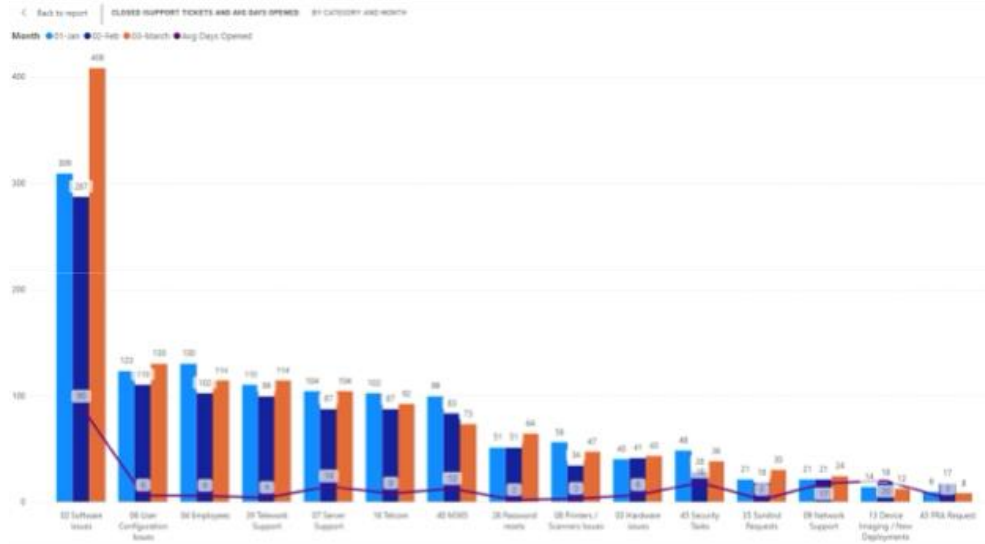
Drilldown into Software Issues (Kronos increase was linked to the new system GO LIVE)



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## Monthly Tickets Closed with Average Days Opened

This KPI shows the work IT operations completes monthly. Rising closures indicate increased capacity or efficiency; falling closures may signal constraints, process friction, or higher complexity work. A decreasing average suggests faster resolution, smoother handoffs, and fewer bottlenecks; an increasing average highlights delays, queues, or approvals that need attention. The average figures for all quarters will be reviewed annually.



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Drilldown into Software Issues (Kronos increase was linked to the new system GO LIVE)

