

COMPLIANCE/ CONTINUITY REPORT



2025-2026 Riverside County

Civil Grand Jury

June 2, 2026

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INTRODUCTION

The Riverside County Civil Grand Jury (Grand Jury), a nineteen-member panel, acts as the public's watchdog by investigating and reporting on local government affairs. Its duties include reviewing citizen complaints, evaluating allegations of misconduct against public officials, overseeing county and municipal governments, investigating operations, researching civic matters, reviewing department policies and procedures, and inquiring into public offenses. The Grand Jury aims to improve government by investigating and reporting on government affairs with recommendations for improvement. According to California Penal Code § 933(a), each “Grand Jury shall submit to the presiding judge of the superior court a final report of its findings and recommendations that pertain to county government matters during the fiscal or calendar year.” The public has access to Grand Jury reports on Riverside County’s Civil Grand Jury website.¹

Governmental officials are not mandated to implement Grand Jury recommendations. However, they are legally obligated to respond to the Findings and Recommendations of the Grand Jury reports.

The purpose of this report is twofold: (1) to highlight the responses of government officials to Grand Jury reports and (2) to demonstrate how the Grand Jury monitors the implementation of improvements agreed upon by local governments.

¹ rivco.org/civil-grand-jury, accessed January 1, 2026.

SECTION 1

GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS' RESPONSES TO CIVIL GRAND JURY REPORTS

Response Time Requirements

California Penal Code § 933(c) requires governing bodies (e.g., boards) to respond to Grand Jury reports within ninety days, while elected officials (e.g., county sheriff) have sixty days.²

Did government officials respond to the seven reports published by the 2024–2025 Grand Jury? Grand Jury reports do get the attention of most government officials.

Within those seven reports, eleven legally required responders were identified. Table 1 lists the eleven required responders, the publication dates of the seven reports, and their response deadlines. Of the eleven government officials required to respond, eleven (100%) did so. Of the eleven responders, eight (73%) responded within the legal time requirement and three (27%) did not.

² [leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=PEN§ionNum=933](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=PEN§ionNum=933), accessed January 1, 2026.

Table 1: Compliance Status to 2024–2025 Grand Jury Reports

(Note: Responders marked with [LATE] did not meet the legal response due date).

Required Responders by Report	Report Release Date	Response Due Date	Response Date Received	Responded to Report
City of Banning: Election Non-Compliance				
- City of Banning	5/20/2025	8/23/2025	8/25/2025 [LATE]	YES
March Joint Powers Authority: Mission Accomplished				
- March Joint Powers Authority	4/10/2025	7/15/2025	7/29/2025 [LATE]	YES
- Riverside County	4/10/2025	7/15/2025	7/1/2025	YES
- City of Riverside	4/10/2025	7/15/2025	7/1/2025	YES
- City of Moreno Valley	4/10/2025	7/15/2025	11/21/2025 [LATE]	YES
- City of Perris	4/10/2025	7/15/2025	7/10/2025	YES
Harmony Haven, Who's Watching the Kids?				
- Riverside County	4/29/2025	8/2/2025	7/29/2025	YES
In Custody Homicide at Site B				
- Riverside County Sheriff	4/30/2025	8/5/2025	5/19/2025	YES

Required Responders by Report	Report Release Date	Response Due Date	Response Date Received	Responded to Report
Fraud Detection in Riverside County Grants				
- Riverside County	6/18/2025	9/24/2025	9/22/2025	YES
Riverside County Elections: Pathway to Confidence				
- Riverside County	6/18/2025	9/24/2025	9/22/2025	YES
City of Palm Springs Lacked Proper Procedures				
- City of Palm Springs	6/23/2025	9/26/2025	9/18/2025	YES

Response Option Requirements

The California Penal Code § 933.05 mandates that government officials must respond in writing to Grand Jury report findings and recommendations. The law outlines the specific parameters that these responses must follow.³ The list below summarizes parameters.

Response Options for Findings
The respondent agrees with the finding.
The respondent disagrees partially with the finding with reasons.
The respondent disagrees wholly with the finding with reasons.
Response Options for Recommendations
The recommendation has been implemented with implementation summary.
The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be, with time frame. *
The recommendation requires further analysis with scope, parameters, and time frame. *
The recommendation is not warranted or is not reasonable with explanation.

* The time frame shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the Grand Jury report.

Responses to 2024–2025 Grand Jury Reports

The 2024–2025 Grand Jury released seven reports, listing eleven required responders from county departments, cities, and special districts. These reports contained sixty findings and fifty recommendations requiring responses from officials. Table 2 shows the connections between reports, responders, findings, and recommendations.

³ [leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=933.05](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=933.05). & Law Code, accessed January 1, 2026.

Table 2: Summary of Scope and Required Responses by Topic

Report Topics	Required Responders	Number of Findings	Total Required Finding Responses	Number of Recommendations	Total Required Recommendation Responses
Banning	1	4	4	4	4
MJPA	5	13	13	10	10
Harmony Haven	1	6	6	6	6
Site B	1	10	10	9	9
ROV	1	12	12	7	7
Palm Springs	1	9	9	10	10

2024–2025 Findings

Table 3 illustrates the total of eleven responses to the seven 2024–2025 Grand Jury reports. The table shows that 49% of the governmental entities agreed with the jury's findings, while another 34% partially agreed (i.e., disagreed partially). Overall, 83% of the respondents either fully or partially agreed with the jury's findings.

**Table 3
Total 2024–2025 Responses to Report Findings**

Responses to Findings	Numbers	Percentages
Agreed	32	49%
Disagree Partially	22	34%
Disagree Wholly	11	17%
Total	65	100%

2024–2025 Recommendations

Table 4 illustrates the total of recommendation responses to the seven 2024–2025 Grand Jury reports. The table shows that 40% of the governmental officials replied that they will implement or they have already implemented the jury's recommendations, while 48% of the responses indicated that they will not implement the Grand Jury's recommendations because they are not needed or not warranted.

Table 4
Total 2024–2025 Responses to Report Recommendations

Responses to Recommendations	Numbers	Percentages
Agreed	4	7%
Will Implement	11	20%
Implemented	11	20%
Further Study	3	5%
Will Not Implement	27	48%
Total	56	100%

SECTION 2

HOW THE CIVIL GRAND JURY MONITORS AGREED UPON IMPROVEMENTS

The Grand Jury's term runs from July 1 of one year to June 30 of the following year. Most investigative reports are released between April and June, with required responders submitting their written responses after the jury's term ends.

Government officials are aware that a new Grand Jury begins every July 1. Consequently, they might agree with the Grand Jury report findings and recommendations but take minimal action to implement them. However, successive Grand Juries that follow up with officials on the progress of implementing agreed-upon improvements can have a positive cumulative effect on improving government operations.

Successive Grand Juries can oversee the implementation of agreed-upon improvements through their standard investigative procedures, such as interviews, document reviews, and visits. Special attention should be given to responses that require implementation within specific time

frames. This approach ensures that the dedication and efforts of past and future Grand Juries lead to positive changes for the citizens of Riverside County.

The 2025–2026 Grand Jury reviewed the seven reports from the 2024–2025 Grand Jury for any items that needed follow-up investigations. Table 5 shows the reports and any findings or recommendations that the Grand Jury thought needed follow-up investigation.

Table 5
Table 5: Summary of Findings and Recommendations Needing Follow-up

Report Topics	Total Findings	Findings Needing Follow-up	Total Recommendations	Recommendations Needing Follow-up
Banning	4	0	4	1
MJPA	13	3	10	1
Harmony Haven	6	3	6	2
Site B	10	0	9	1
ROV	12	2	7	2
Palm Springs	9	0	10	5
Fraud	6	0	4	3
Total	60	8	50	15

CONTINUITY INVESTIGATIONS

2024–2025 Follow-Up Grand Jury Continuity Investigations

The 2025–2026 Grand Jury examined the progress made on seven published Grand Jury reports for 2024–2025. The seven follow-up reports are as follows:

1. City of Banning: Election Non-Compliance
2. March Joint Powers Authority: Mission Accomplished, Time to Dissolve
3. Harmony Haven, Who’s Watching the Kids?
4. In Custody Homicide at Site B Blamed on Prisoner Identification Errors 2025
5. Fraud Detection in Riverside County Grants
6. Riverside County Elections: A Pathway to Greater Voter Confidence
7. City of Palm Springs Lacked Proper Procedures for Vetting and Monitoring of Grants

1. City of Banning: Election Non-Compliance

Report Date: May 20, 2025

Response Received: August 25, 2025

Summary of Report:

The Grand Jury asked for responses from the City of Banning (the city) in regard to the report titled: **City of Banning: Election Non-Compliance**.

The 2024–2025 report addressed four findings and four recommendations that the Grand Jury asked the City for responses. The city agreed with three findings and disagreed wholly with one. Concerning the recommendations, they replied that one needed further study and the other three will not be implemented.

The City of Banning was asked to respond to recommendation number two where they said it would be evaluated given staffing and operational considerations. See Table 6 in appendix.

Findings: No findings required follow-up.

Recommendations

R-2: The Riverside County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the City of Banning train additional city employees to manage the Administrative City Clerk’s election duties when the Administrative City Clerk is unavailable to assist the public no later than December 1, 2025.

Response:

Will be evaluated given staffing and operational considerations. Cross-training and additional training can allow City staff to meet needs in the absence of a City employee normally performing a particular function. When possible, the City agrees that cross-training and supplemental training should be supported. There are, however, practical limitations on this concept, including the availability of staff to serve in such roles, with additional limitations arising based on job descriptions and/or collective bargaining agreements that can limit the scope of such opportunities. The City will further investigate available staffing and training opportunities in support of the Administrative City Clerk.

Follow-up:

The Deputy City Clerk was questioned about availability of staff to address election duties and said staff is now trained to assist the Administrative City Clerk. No further follow-up is necessary.

2. 2024–2025 March Joint Powers Authority: Mission Accomplished, Time to Dissolve**Report Date: June 18, 2025****Response Received: July 29, 2025****Summary of Report:**

The Grand Jury asked for responses from the March Joint Powers Authority (MJPA), the County of Riverside, and the cities of Moreno Valley, Perris and Riverside in regard to the report titled: **March Joint Powers Authority: Mission Accomplished, Time to Dissolve.**

The 2024–2025 report addressed thirteen findings and ten recommendations that the Grand Jury asked the MJPA for responses. The MJPA agreed with six findings, partially disagreed with five and disagreed wholly with two. Concerning the recommendations, they replied that one needed further study and the other ten will not be implemented. See Table 7 in appendix.

The County of Riverside was asked to respond to two findings and three recommendations. The County of Riverside agreed with one finding and disagreed partially with the other and would not implement the three recommendations. The three cities were asked to respond to one finding and one recommendation. Moreno Valley disagreed partially, and Perris and Riverside agreed with the one finding and all the cities would not implement the one recommendation. See Table 8 in appendix. The MJPA was asked for follow-up on findings 3,4, and 11 and recommendation 5.

The MJPA responses are as follows:

Findings:

F-3: The March JPA Commission has not complied with its own joint powers agreement by failing to complete annual financial audits within six months following the end of each fiscal year.

The respondent agrees with the finding.

How has this issue been resolved?

Response: The March JPA audit activities for FY24/25 started in August of 2025. Initial audit reports and draft findings will be wrapped up in a few weeks and will be presented to the Authority Finance Subcommittee in a February meeting. We are anticipating that the full audit will be presented to the Commission in March or April.

F-4: For the past four years, auditors have consistently reported internal control issues to the March JPA Commission and management, particularly regarding the segregation of duties. These unresolves issues increase the risk of errors, fraud, and unauthorize transactions. The respondent partially agrees with the finding.

Has this corrective action plan been implemented?

Response: Yes, our organization is following segregation of duties by ensuring that no single individual has control over all critical aspects of a process. Responsibilities such as authorization, execution, recording, and review are assigned to different roles to mitigate the risk of errors, misstatements, or fraud. While the organization experienced challenges in maintaining full segregation during a period of significant structural transition, that phase has concluded. Roles and responsibilities are now more clearly defined as the organization stabilizes, which has reduced the associated risks.

F-11: March JPA can legally transfer its utility authority to the Southern California Gas Company and its Successor Agency to the County of Riverside. The Respondent partially agrees with the finding.

Have gas services been transferred to SoCal Gas?

Response: SoCal Gas has not yet assumed control of the Authority's natural gas system. Authority staff and SoCal Gas are actively collaborating on a transition plan, with initial implementation steps anticipated over the next year.

Follow-up: No additional findings required follow-up.

Recommendations:

R-5: The Riverside County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the March Joint Powers Authority dissolve its Utility Authority no later than July 1, 2028. The recommendation requires further analysis.

Have gas services been transferred to SoCal Gas?

Response: As previously stated, SoCal Gas has not yet assumed control of the Authority's natural gas system. Authority staff and SoCal Gas are actively collaborating on a transition plan, with initial implementation steps anticipated over the next year.

Follow-up:

The FY 24/25 audit report is being presented to the Commission in March or April of 2026. The 2026-2027 Grand Jury should follow-up with the MJPA about the transition of the natural gas system and SoCal Gas.

3. Harmony Haven, Who's Watching the Kids?**Report Date: April 29, 2025****Response Received: July 29, 2025****Summary of Report:**

Due to the shortage of quality housing for foster care children in Riverside County, the Board of Supervisors (the Board) approved the purchase in 2023 of a facility to be used as a short-term transitional housing for children awaiting placement. The sense of urgency to locate a suitable facility was prompted by the evidence of children sleeping in offices or short-term housing while awaiting placements. The 121-acre property formerly known as Childhelp, in Beaumont, was purchased for \$26 million by the County of Riverside to be used as transitional housing for foster children. This facility is now known as Harmony Haven Children and Youth Center (HHCYC). It is a 48-bed residential campus providing short term care and therapeutic support for youth impacted by abuse and neglect.¹ HHCYC is licensed to house children for ten days or less. Unfortunately, some children at HHCYC exceed this time frame due to the inability to quickly place them in a suitable foster home. Since its opening, HHCYC has evolved in its operations to strengthen security, increase staffing, and improve transportation modes for children among other operational procedures. While there have been operational improvements, there is room for more enhancements and efficiencies. The purpose of this report was to address deficiencies in the current operation of HHCYC along with recommendations for improvement.

The Grand Jury asked for responses from the County of Riverside (the County) in regard to the report titled: **Harmony Haven, Who's Watching the Kids?** The 2024–2025 report addressed six findings and six recommendations that the Grand Jury asked the County for responses. The County agreed with three findings, partially disagreed with two and disagreed wholly with one. Concerning the recommendations, they replied that three will be implemented and three will not be implemented.

The County was asked for follow-up on findings and recommendations. See Table 9 in appendix. The County responses are as follow:

Findings:

F-I: There are no regularly scheduled, certified medical professionals on staff at HHCYC. On site behavioral health specialists are on call for emergencies and present less than 24 hours a day.

F-2: RSO deputies are assigned to HHCCYC from 12 p.m. to 12 a.m.

This amount of time is insufficient as the children tend to act out after RSO deputies go off duty at 12 a.m.

F-3: Staff members are unable to enforce basic rules due to guidelines contained in Foster Youth Bill of Rights (FYBR), that were passed in California in 2001.

F-4: Presently, HHCCYC staff transport children to schools throughout the county and pick them up after school. This is an undue burden on staff members, waste of resources, and potential liability to RIVCO.

F-5: Commercial rideshare companies may be picking up underage children in violation of company policies.

F-6: HHCCYC areas such as the gym, farm, and classrooms, are being underutilized for activities.

Follow-up: No findings required follow-up.

Recommendations

R-1: The Riverside County Civil Grand Jury recommends that at least one medical professional be assigned at least part time to HHCCYC. Dedicated, on-site behavioral health support should be expanded to 24-hours daily.

Response: Recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable. HHCCYC does not currently have certified medical staff on-site. However, HHCCYC has established a partnership with Riverside University Health System (RUHS) to ensure necessary medical care is accessible to youth. RUHS Behavioral Health: Behavioral Health services are not on-site 24 hours per day. As of March 2025, a Behavioral Health Specialist III is assigned to the site full-time on a 9/80 schedule (9 a.m.–6:30 p.m., working alternating Fridays), while the Transitional Age Youth Peer Support Specialist is on-site Monday through Thursday from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. A Senior Clinical Therapist and an additional Clinical Therapist are currently in recruitment to expand this team. Prior to March, Behavioral Health provided evening coverage four days per week (Monday through Thursday) with two staff per evening.

R-2: The Riverside County Civil Grand Jury recommends that RSO expand their presence to 24 hours per day, and increase the number of deputies by two for a total of four on rotating shifts.

Response: Recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable. HHCCYC presently contracts with a round-the-clock private security firm for facility monitoring, crisis de-escalation, and staff support in maintaining safety protocols.

R-3: DPSS should contact the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to identify any flexibilities in following the provisions of the Foster Youth Bill of Rights. Providing staff members with the ability to limit the children's use of cell phones, reject their refusal to receive prescribed medications, or attend school, will give them greater influence in preventing disruptive episodes. DPSS should provide all communications between CDSS on this matter to provide evidence that they have pursued this issue.

Response: Recommendation has been implemented. At HHCCYC, staff confers with the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) through regular technical assistance calls

regarding complex-care youth. Examples of topics discussed during these calls include placement preservation, emergency removals, hospital release, 14-day notices soon to expire or expired. When issues arise, CDSS also provides tailored training to HHCYC to assist in developing protocols and harm reduction techniques. As a result of regular consultation with CDSS, HHCYC is expanding implementation of a motivational system to modify behaviors including mitigating the inappropriate use of cell phones, refusing to attend school, AWOLing, medication non-adherence and youth behaviors that present a danger to themselves and others. HHCYC is updating its Standard Operating Procedures to reflect these efforts.

R-4: The Riverside County Civil Grand Jury recommends that DPSS pursue the use of outside transportation services for taking children to school. DPSS should provide documented evidence of contact with at least two transportation services. In the interim, there should be an avoidance in using personal vehicles for transporting children.

Response: Recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable. HHCYC ensures a well-structured staffing schedule that allows staff to transport youth to school and offsite appointments while maintaining appropriate on-site staffing ratios and supervision.

R-5: The Riverside County Civil Grand Jury recommends that DPSS issue letters to the major rideshare companies notifying them that there are unaccompanied underage children at foster care facilities thereby suggesting drivers screen the riders before accepting the fare at these locations.

Response: Recommendation has been implemented. Letters were issued to the major rideshare companies, (Uber and Lyft) on August 21, 2025 reminding them of their obligation to have drivers properly verify that riders are over 18 when picking up prospective clients.

R-6: The Riverside County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the following activities be considered at HHCYC: • Gym – offer children various sports such as basketball, volleyball, and table tennis as well as dance, exercise, movies, lectures, and guest speakers. • Classrooms – offer instruction on computer use, art, and music, as well as life fundamentals such as, how to create a resume, present oneself at a job interview, and develop proper speaking skills. • Pool (once refurbished) – offer swimming lessons, water polo, exercise classes. • Farm – place animals such as sheep, goats, therapy horses, chickens, and ducks on the property to teach children about the responsibility of feeding, grooming, and basic care of animals. Invite animal rescue organizations to bring in their animals for the day. • Occupations – Invite guests who can speak about different trades that the children can pursue. • Assign murals throughout the grounds that children can design and paint.

Response: Recommendation has been implemented. HHCYC organizes a range of structured, engaging activities to keep youth active, stimulated, and socially connected. Youth participate in programming both on-site and off-site, with a focus on holistic development.

Follow-up:

No further action is necessary.

4. In Custody Homicide at Site B Blamed on Prisoner Identification Errors

Report Date: April 30, 2025

Response Received: May 19, 2025

Summary of Report:

The Riverside County Sheriff is responsible for the safety and security of inmates, staff, and the community. The Sheriff's Department and Riverside County Board members may hear from citizens who believe the system fails to assure protection. In a recent gathering, protesters were seen carrying signs: "Under Bianco: Record In-Custody Deaths!" Various media reports since 2022 have highlighted the numbers and problems with in-custody deaths in Riverside County jails. Therefore, the California Attorney General has an ongoing civil rights investigation. According to one report, an inmate death in Riverside County, which occurred at the Larry D. Smith facility in Banning, California, while in the custody of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department brought the total in-custody deaths to six (6) during 2024. Riverside County's Sheriff said in a recent interview, "RSO (Riverside Sheriff's Office) personnel.... do a commendable job taking care of our inmates and protecting them from themselves. We do an industry-leading fantastic job in our corrections division and are not responsible for any of these deaths."

On the contrary, the Riverside County Civil Grand Jury (Grand Jury) became aware of an incident that resulted in an in-custody homicide, which could have been prevented if the Sheriff's Correctional staff at the Robert Presley Detention Center had been more diligent in performing their duties and had followed the applicable policies and procedures.

This report will explain what mistakes were committed during the booking and processing of a certain arrestee. That person later caused fatal injuries to another inmate at the SITE-B facility and has since been charged with murder. The investigation of that murder is "on-going." The Grand Jury's investigation was limited to the booking and processing procedures at the Robert Presley Detention Center (RPDC), specifically how arrestees are identified and classified for housing. Subsequently, the Grand Jury also reviewed the clearance and enrollment process at SITE-B, which apparently relied on the identification and classification information completed at RPDC.

Findings:

The Riverside County Sheriff's Office was asked to respond to ten findings. They agreed with findings one and six through ten, they wholly disagreed with findings three, four and five. They partially disagreed with finding two.

Follow-up:

No follow-up on these findings is necessary. See Table 10 in appendix.

Recommendations

The Riverside County Sheriff's Office was asked to respond to nine recommendations. Recommendations one, two, six, seven and eight were implemented. Recommendations three, four and five will not be implemented. Recommendation nine will be implemented by 2027.

Follow-up:

Recommendation nine response by Sheriff Department is that it has been finalized with a vendor selected. It is on track for a 2027 implementation. The 2026–2027 Grand Jury may want to follow up on this matter.

5. Fraud Detection in Riverside County Grants

Report Date: June 18, 2025

Response Received: September 22, 2025

Summary of Report:

- In March 2023, irregularities were found in a Palm Springs subrecipient's grant claim.
- A deeper review revealed issues, leading to referral to the Auditor Controller, County Counsel, and District Attorney.
- By October 2024, the subrecipient was indicted on fifty-three felony counts (fraud, theft, misappropriation, insurance fraud, perjury, money laundering), involving over \$940,000 in funds.

Civil Grand Jury Investigation

- The Civil Grand Jury examined Riverside County's grant administration for misconduct or malfeasance.

Findings:

- No evidence of misconduct by County employees.
- Prior issues with the subrecipient could have triggered earlier investigation.
- Reviewers raised concerns, but claims were still paid.
- Political pressure during COVID-19 influenced claim approvals.
- Fraud indicators became clear only when multiple claims were reviewed together.
- HWS staff lacked formal fraud detection training.

Follow up: No follow-up on these findings is necessary

Recommendations:

1. Strict enforcement of policies to prevent unclear or undocumented claims (By Nov 1, 2025).
2. Management must address reviewers' concerns more seriously (by Nov 1, 2025).

3. Review prior months' claims when processing new ones (by Jan 1, 2026).
4. Mandatory fraud detection training for all grant claim staff (by Jan 1, 2026).

Board of Supervisors' Responses

- Finding 1: Agreed – staff acted ethically under County policy.
- Finding 2: Partially disagreed – HUD consultants (ICF) are reviewing processes.
- Finding3: Agreed – concerns were followed up, but payments continued until evidence was conclusive.
- Finding 4: Disagreed – HWS followed federal/state guidance appropriately.
- Finding 5: Agreed – action taken once evidence was clear.
- Finding 6: Partially disagreed – staff trained in compliance, but specialized fraud training is being added.
- Recommendation 1: Will implement; mandatory training sessions by Oct 31, 2025.
- Recommendation 2: Already implemented; staff concerns escalated to management.
- Recommendation 3: Will implement; HUD consultants assisting, completion by Jan 1, 2026.
- Recommendation 4: Will implement; fraud analytics certification training scheduled by Jan 1, 2026.

See Table 11 in appendix.

HWS Response to Grand Jury Status Inquiry

R-1: The Civil Grand Jury recommends that HWS strictly enforce existing policies that prevent the distribution of grant funds based on claims that lack the required clarity and documentation no later than November 1, 2025. Based on Findings 2, 3, and 4.

Response: The respondent disagrees partially with finding #2, agrees with finding #3, and disagrees wholly with finding #4. The recommendation will be implemented. HWS will conduct mandatory training sessions for both managers and grant reviewers by October 31, 2025, emphasizing communication, documentation requirements and accountability.

Has this training been implemented?

Response: Yes ~ the HWS executive leadership team has met with staff and highlighted the importance of complete and timely communication amongst all team members, discussed requirements for thorough documentation related to claimed expenditures, and clarified authority and accountability for each role within related business processes. These concepts were also emphasized during the mandatory 2-day fraud training in December 2025.

R-3: The Civil Grand Jury recommends that HWS implement a policy requiring a brief review of the previous months' claims from a subrecipient as part of processing grant claims no later than January 1, 2026. Based on Finding 5.

Response: The respondent agrees with finding. HWS took action as soon as a pattern was established and evidence was available. The recommendation will be implemented. The Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has provided HWS with access to a specialized consulting firm, to perform a full assessment of our current business process for grant

subrecipient contracts, administration, and claims processing. They will be closely with our team to streamline current forms and procedures, create a process for aggregating and reviewing historical claim and subrecipient data, and develop useful benchmarks and metrics for better monitoring of program performance and early detection of potential problem areas. The project timeline to complete is January 1, 2026.

Has this project been completed?

Response: Yes ~ The HUD consultants performed an assessment of our current business processes for contract and claims administration and concluded they are already more robust than most other agencies they have worked with. The consultants did identify opportunities to further enhance our existing processes, and our team created three new sub-projects that are currently in process with the consultants' guidance and input:

Project #1 – Create Structure

Objective: Create an efficient structure supported by technological solutions to collect and review claims from our subrecipients which will be easy to understand and follow for subrecipients and County staff.

Status: Researching possible vendors for technology solutions.

Project #2 – Mutual Understanding

Objective: Ensure that subrecipients and County staff share a mutual understanding of the purpose and importance of proper, adequate, and organized backup documentation.

Status: Developing a survey to gauge subrecipients' current understanding of program and claim requirements.

Project #3 – Maintain Accountability

Objective: Maintain accountability for all costs to be eligible, be reasonable, and serve the CoC's clients

Status: Finalizing a detailed list of requirements for eligibility and reasonability.

R-4 The Civil Grand Jury recommends that Riverside County implement mandatory fraud detection training for new employees processing grant claims and require annual fraud detection training for all current employees in this role no later than January 1, 2026. Based on Finding 6. The respondent disagrees partially with finding. HWS team members are trained in grant and program compliance and administration according to the guidelines provided by HUD and the Federal Office of Management and Budget. In strengthening the teams' ability to detect ineligible costs of potentially fraudulent activity, our team members will attend a specialized fraud data analytics training course that will result in their earning the designation of Certified Fraud Data Analyst. Recommendation will be implemented. HWS is working with the Institute of Internal Auditors

(IIA) to schedule and complete a group training of the 16-hour instructor-led Certification course on Fraud Data Analytics by January 1, 2026.

Has this training been completed?

Response: Yes ~ The 2-day in-person instructor-led training took place on December 2-3, 2025. Total HWS participant count was 18, and included executive, management/supervisor, and staff-level positions from both the fiscal and programs teams in HWS.

Follow-up: No further follow-up is necessary.

6. 2024–2025 Grand Jury

Report: Riverside County Elections: A Pathway to Greater Voter Confidence

Report Date: April 10, 2025

Response Received: September 22, 2025

Summary of Report:

The Grand Jury asked for responses from the Riverside County Board of Supervisors (the Board) in regard to the 2024–2025 Grand Jury Report:

Riverside County Elections: A Pathway to Greater Voter Confidence.

The report addressed twelve findings and seven recommendations. The Registrar of Voters (ROV) responded on behalf of the Board and agreed with six findings, disagreed partially with five and disagreed wholly with one. The ROV would implement three recommendations, would need further study on one and would not implement two.

Findings:

The Registrar of Voters (ROV) was asked to follow-up on two findings and two recommendations. The ROV agreed with finding four and disagreed partially with finding eleven. Of the two recommendations needing follow-up, recommendations three and seven would be implemented, and recommendation four needed further study.

The ROV was asked for follow-up on findings 4, and 11, and recommendations 3. See Table 12 in appendix. The ROV's responses are as follow:

F-4: Riverside County contracted for a procedural audit of ROV's procedures to improve its election processes.

Response:

To assess the feasibility of implementing an electronic ballot chain-of-custody system, Registrar of Voters staff consulted with elections officials from other counties and election vendors that

provide election-related supply products or services to determine whether such a system has been developed or implemented. Based on these discussions, none of the individuals consulted were aware of an existing digitized electronic ballot chain-of-custody system currently in use.

As part of the ROV's exploratory process, staff is conducting a survey of neighboring ROV's to assess if this method has been created or implemented.

F-11: ROV does not conduct emergency drills with temporary employees.

Response: Emergency preparedness enhancements have been completed. Emergency drills for temporary

employees were introduced in advance of the November 4, 2025, Statewide Special Election.

ROV unit supervisors are responsible for conducting and overseeing drills throughout the election period.

While annual emergency drills continue to be conducted, additional morning and evening drills have been scheduled during active election periods to ensure alignment with the presence of temporary staff. This approach ensures all team members, including temporary employees, are fully trained and prepared to respond effectively to emergency situations.

Follow-up: No further follow-up is necessary.

Recommendations:

R-3: The Riverside County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Riverside County Registrar of Voters explore the use of an automated signature verification process no later than the next Primary Election on June 2, 2026.

Response: The Registrar of Voters has completed coordination with the County Purchasing department and the auto signature verification vendor to implement the new software. The system was successfully piloted during the November 4, 2025, Statewide Special Election.

R-7: The Riverside County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Riverside County Board of Supervisors establish an election security task force to enhance a unified security environment surrounding elections no later than March 1, 2026.

Response: The Registrar of Voters established an Elections Security Task Force in late 2025. Representatives from local, state, and federal agencies, as well as relevant County departments comprise the Task Force membership and will continue to convene in advance of election cycles.

Recommendations: No further follow-up is necessary.

7. City of Palm Springs Lacked Proper Procedures for Vetting and Monitoring of Grants

Report Date: June 23, 2025

Response Received: September 18, 2025

Summary of Report:

The Grand Jury asked for responses from the City of Palm Springs (the city) in regards to the 2024–2025 Grand Jury Report: City of Palm Springs Lacked Proper Procedures for Vetting and Monitoring of Grants.

Findings: The report addressed nine findings and ten recommendations. The city responded and agreed with findings one, two and six and disagreed wholly with three, four, five, seven, eight and nine. See Table 13 in appendix.

Recommendations:

The city has implemented recommendations one, three, four and five. They will implement recommendations six and seven by June 30, 2026 and recommendations two, eight and nine by December 31, 2026. Recommendation 10 will not be implemented.

Follow up:

The city was asked for follow-up on recommendations two, six, seven, eight and nine.

Response:

R-2: The Riverside County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the City mandate annual fraud detection training for City employees who monitor grants and contracts no later than December 31, 2025.

Response: This recommendation is in the process of being implemented by the city. The City is currently working with the City Attorney’s office to schedule formal fraud prevention training to City staff, which will be implemented by December 31, 2025.

Has annual fraud detection training been implemented for City employees who monitor grants and contracts?

Response: Yes, the first training was conducted on December 11, 2026, and will be conducted annually thereafter.

R-6: The Riverside County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the city hire an independent auditing firm to conduct an internal operational audit (key processes, procedures, and internal controls) and provide improvement suggestions to the City by June 30, 2026.

Response: The City agrees with this recommendation and will work to engage an auditing firm to initiate this engagement by the requested date.

Has an independent auditing firm conducted an internal operational audit and provided suggestions for improvements to the city?

Response: Yes, the city has engaged an auditing firm, and the audit is expected to be complete by June 30, 2026.

Recommendations:

No further follow-up is necessary.

Concluding Statement

Each Civil Grand Jury establishes standing and ad hoc committees to fulfill its responsibilities. One of the ad hoc committees is traditionally tasked with investigating the progress made on previously agreed-upon government improvements. Over the years, this ad hoc committee has been known by various names, most notably the Compliance/Continuity Committee.

The 2025–2026 Civil Grand Jury decided to address the seven reports from the 2024–2025 Civil Grand Jury. The Committee has addressed the findings and recommendations on these reports and have reported on issues that needed to be followed-up.

The 2025–2026 Civil Grand Jury recommends that future Civil Grand Juries follow up in the areas listed below:

Recommended Continuity Follow-Up

Reports	Follow-Up Recommendations
1. City of Banning-Election Non-Compliance	No further follow-up needed.
2. March Joint Powers Authority: Mission Accomplished, Time to Dissolve	1. Transition of natural gas. 2. Audit report
3. Harmony Haven, Who’s Watching the Kids?	No further follow-up needed.
4. In Custody Homicide at Site B Blamed on Prisoner Identification Errors 2025	May want to follow up on vendor.
5. Fraud Detection in Riverside County Grants	No further follow-up needed.
6. Grand Jury Report: Riverside County Elections: A Pathway to Greater Voter Confidence	No further follow-up needed.
7. City of Palm Springs Lacked Proper Procedures for Vetting and Monitoring of Grants	Follow-up on audit.

Appendix

Table 6

RCCGJ 2024-2025													
Reports 7 Total Findings	Findings				Total Recommendations	Recommendations							
RCCGJ 2024-2025 Reports: Findings	AGREE	DISAGREE PARTIALLY	DISAGREE WHOLLY	DID NOT RESPOND	RCCGJ 2024-2025 Reports: Recommendations	AGREE	WILL IMPLEMENT	IMPLEMENTED	FURTHER STUDY NEEDED	FUNDING NEEDED	DO NOT AGREE	WILL NOT IMPLEMENT	Notes on Responses
RCCGJ 2024-2025 City of Banning: Election Non-Compliance													
Report Public 5/56/25 Rersponse Due 8/23/25 a) Findings 4 Recommendations 4													
F1) The City violated State Election Code 13313 by failing to ensure that its staff were prepared to provide voters with candidate statements	X				R1) Establish and implement a policy that nabdates compliance will all provisions of State election code							X	
F2) The City processed candidate documents inconsistently		X			R2) City train additional staff to mange the Admin City Clerk's election duties when City Clerk is unavailable				X				
F3) The City "Date-stamped" candidate docunebts inconsistently	X				R3) The City establish a policy requiring personnel to process candidate documents consistently							X	
F4) The City has not updated its election ordinances to align with current State election laws.			X		R4) City to review and revise all election ordinances.							X	

Table 7

RCCGJ 2024-2025												
Reports 7 Total Findings	Findings				Total Recommendations	Recommendations						
RCCGJ 2024-2025 Reports: Findings	AGREE	DISAGREE PARTIALLY	DISAGREE WHOLLY	DID NOT RESPOND	RCCGJ 2024-2025 Reports: Recommendations	AGREE	WILL IMPLEMENT	IMPLEMENTED	FURTHER STUDY NEEDED	FUNDING NEEDED	DO NOT AGREE	WILL NOT IMPLEMENT
RCCGJ 2024-2025. March Joint Powers Authority												
Report Public: 4/10/25; Response Due 7/15/25: Finding 13 Recommendation10 March JPA												
F1) In violation of State Code 6505.6 and own authority has not appointed a treasurer		X			R1) The RCCGJ recommends the MJPA comply with CAL Gov, Code 6505.6 and its own charter by appointing a qualified commissioner or install as treasurer							X
F2) Ther MJPA did not perform monthly bank reconciliations for the 2022-2023 fiscal year	X				R2) The MJPA Commission require its CEO to prepare, sign and dste a quarterly agenda item confirming that internal controls comply with GAAP							X
F3) The MJPA Commission has not complied with its powers agreement by failing to cpmplete annual financial audits within 6 months of the end of the fiscal year	X				R3) The MJPA Commission mandate it staff complete the annual financial statement audits within 6 months of fiscal year end							X
F4) For the past 4 years auditor have consistently reported internal control issues		X			R4) The MJPA transfer MIPPA to the County							X
F5) Persistent inresolved intenal control issues create uncertainty of JPA financial records.		X			R5) The MJPA dissolve its Utility Authority				X			MJPA is actively working with SC Gas to transfer services.
F6) THE MJPA onersees an airport authority the consistently operates at a loss		X			R6) The MJPA transfer its Successor Agency to the County							X
F7) The MJPA was not intended to be permanent, stand-alone airport authority governed by non-elected officials that rely on staff			X		R7) The MJPA Dissolves itself by 12/31/28							X
F8) MJPA Commioners are appointed to serve and are not accountable			X		R8) If the MJPA does not dissolve itself commissiones should be elected not appointed							X
F9) MJPA Commioners' votes may sometimes conflict with position of the city or county	X				R9) The MJPA hire hire an indepement firm to conduct a forensic audit to review financial recoords from 2021-2023							X
F10) The County of Riverside has departments and personnel to manger and operate the airport		X			10) The MJPA develop and aoorive a succssion plan							X
F11) The MJPA can legally transfer it untility authority to the California Gas Co. and its Successor Agency to the County	X											
12) The MJPA does not have a succession plan for upper management	X											
F13) The MJPA has over \$40 million in unrestricted funds	X											

Table 8

RCCGJ 2024-2025												
Reports 7 Total Findings	Findings				Total Recommendations	Recommendations						
RCCGJ 2024-2025 Reports: Findings	AGREE	DISAGREE PARTIALLY	DISAGREE WHOLLY	DID NOT RESPOND	RCCGJ 2024-2025 Reports: Recommendations	AGREE	WILL IMPLEMENT	IMPLEMENTED	FURTHER STUDY NEEDED	FUNDING NEEDED	DO NOT AGREE	WILL NOT IMPLEMENT
Notes on Responses												
Report Public: 410/25; Response Due 7/15/25a) : Finding 2, Recommendations 3 BOS												
F10) The County of Riverside has departments and personnel to manger and operate the airport	X				R4) The MJPA transfer MIPPA to the County							X
F11) The MJPA can legally transfer it untility authority to the Califoria Gas Co. and its Successor Agency to the County		X			R6) The MJPA transfer its Successor Agency to the County							X
					R8) If the MJPA does not dissolve itself commisiones should be elected not appointed							X
Report Public: 410/25; Response Due 7/15/25a) : Finding 1, Recommendations 1 City of Moreno Valley												
F9) MJPA Commioners' votes may sometimes conflict with position of the city or county		X			R8) If the MJPA does not dissolve itself commisiones should be elected not appointed							X
Report Public: 410/25; Response Due 7/15/25a) : Finding 1, Recommendations 1 City of Perris												
F9) MJPA Commioners' votes may sometimes conflict with position of the city or county	X				R8) If the MJPA does not dissolve itself commisiones should be elected not appointed							X
Report Public: 410/25; Response Due 7/15/25a) : Finding 1, Recommendations 1 City of Riverside												
F9) MJPA Commioners' votes may sometimes conflict with position of the city or county	X				R8) If the MJPA does not dissolve itself commisiones should be elected not appointed							X

Table 9

RCCGJ 2024-2025												
Reports 7 Total Findings	Findings				Total Recommendations	Recommendations						
RCCGJ 2024-2025 Reports: Findings	AGREE	DISAGREE PARTIALLY	DISAGREE WHOLLY	DID NOT RESPOND	RCCGJ 2024-2025 Reports: Recommendations	AGREE	WILL IMPLEMENT	IMPLEMENTED	FURTHER STUDY NEEDED	FUNDING NEEDED	DO NOT AGREE	WILL NOT IMPLEMENT
Notes on Responses												
2024-2025: Harmony Haven, Who's Watching the Kids?												
Report Public 5/2/25	Response Due 8/2/25	Findings 6			Recommendations 6	Respondant: BOS						
R1) No regularly scheduled medical professional on staff- On site behavioral health specialists are called for emergencies	X				R1) At Least one medical professional be assigned at least part time							X
R2) RSO deputies assigned to Harmony Haven from 12pm to 12 am, is insufficient		X			R2) RSO expend their presence to 24 hours and increase number of deputies for 4 on rotating shifts							X
R3) Staff members are unable to enforce basic rules due to guidelines contained in Foster Youth Bill of Rights	X				R3) DPSS should contact CDSS to identify any flexibilities in following the provision of the Foster Youth Bill of Rights to limit use of cell phones, providing medication, or attend school		X					
F4) Presently staff transport children to school;Is			X		R4) DPSS pursue the use of outside transportation services for taking children to school							X
F5) Commercial rideshare companies may well be picking up underage children in violation of company policies	X				R5) The DPSS issue letters to the major rideshare companies notifying them that there are unaccompanied, underage children at foster care suggesting drivers screen riders		X					
F6) Facility is underutilized for activities		X			R6) Activities		X					

Table 10

RCCGJ 2024-2025												
Reports 7 Total Findings	Findings				Total Recommendations	Recommendations						
RCCGJ 2024-2025 Reports: Findings	AGREE	DISAGREE PARTIALLY	DISAGREE WHOLLY	DID NOT RESPOND	RCCGJ 2024-2025 Reports: Recommendations	AGREE	WILL IMPLEMENT	IMPLEMENTED	FURTHER STUDY NEEDED	FUNDING NEEDED	DO NOT AGREE	WILL NOT IMPLEMENT
RCCGJ 2024-2025. Site - B												
Report Public: 6/10/24; Response Due 9/10/24 a) : Finding 10, Recommendations 9 Sheriff												
F1) The Business Office failed to update the system with accurate information from Cal ID Livescan	X				R1) by 2025, install instructions and procedure for validation of Livescan report, including cross-referencing aliases.			X				
F2) COMPAS Assessment is not used as required by SOP #3		X			R2) By end 2025 either eliminate required completion of COMPAS Assessment or implement it as intended for inmates prior to being cleared and enrolled in SITE-B Programs			X				SOP does not state COMPASS Assessment tool is to be utilized for placement.
F3) Training for the clearance & enrollment procedures at SITE-B is done informally and by trainees			X		R3) By 2025 organize and implement mandatory training programs for SITE-B staff responsible for clearance and enrollment						X	Staff assigned to Site-B are required to attend training.
F4) Training for booking & business office procedures is done by trainees only			X		R4) By 2025 organize and implement mandatory training programs, including annual re-certification for staff members involved in booking, business office and classification procedures						X	All Correctional Deputies learn business office procedures during academy training.
F5) Subjectivity in decision making for housing classification resulted in miss placement of inmate			X		R5) To reduce subjectivity in classification process, include in the Intake and Release policy written procedures to require classification						X	Classification assessment was correct based on information deputy had, not a result of subjectivity.
F6) Due to delays in receiving Livescan, inmates may be classified for housing prior to Business Office validation	X				F6) Perform a detailed review of P&Ps for Booking & Business Office, specifically 504.10 and 504.26			X				
F7) Vaguely worded policies and procedures allow for too much discretion in booking and processing	X				R7) Repair and require use of the current IBIS System, or acquire a different system to accurately identify an arrestee			X				
F8) IBIS was not used in booking process for subject inmate due to malfunctioning	X				R8) Develop & implement an electronic database to record all booking and processing errors identified by workstation			X				
F9) There is no continuous improvement process in place to track and correct these types of mistakes	X				R9) Finalize negotiations with selected vendors and initiate contracts to implement jail management system upgrades		X					
F10) Some operating systems at RPDC were reported to be over 34 years old,	X											

Table 11

RCCGJ 2024-2025												
Reports 7 Total Findings	Findings				Total Recommendations	Recommendations						
RCCGJ 2024-2025 Reports: Findings	AGREE	DISAGREE PARTIALLY	DISAGREE WHOLLY	DID NOT RESPOND	RCCGJ 2024-2025 Reports: Recommendations	AGREE	WILL IMPLEMENT	IMPLEMENTED	FURTHER STUDY NEEDED	FUNDING NEEDED	DO NOT AGREE	WILL NOT IMPLEMENT
Notes on Responses												
RCCGJ 2024-2025. Fraud Detection												
Report Public: 6/18/25; Response Due 9/24/25: Finding #6 Recommendation #4 Board of Supervisors												
F1) No evidence of malfeasance or misconduct.	X				R1) HWS strictly enforce existing policies.	X						
F2) Previous issues with claims by subrecipient.		X			R2) HWS upper management address lower-level reviewers' concerns.		X					
F3) Reviewers expressed concerns to supervisors.	X				R3) HWS implement policy to review previous months claims.	X						
F4) HWS experienced political pressure to settle claims.			X		R4) Implement fraud detection training.	X						
F5) Issues with claims became apparent after review.	X											
F6) HWS employees lack fraud training.		X										

Table 12

RCCGJ 2024-2025												
Reports 7 Total Findings	Findings				Total Recommendations	Recommendations						
RCCGJ 2024-2025 Reports: Findings	AGREE	DISAGREE PARTIALLY	DISAGREE WHOLLY	DID NOT RESPOND	RCCGJ 2024-2025 Reports: Recommendations	AGREE	WILL IMPLEMENT	IMPLEMENTED	FURTHER STUDY NEEDED	FUNDING NEEDED	DO NOT AGREE	WILL NOT IMPLEMENT
RCCGJ 2024-2025. ROV Greater Voter Confidence												
Report Public: 6/18/25; Response Due 9/24/25: Finding 12 Recommendation 7 Board of Supervisors												
F1) Security and ballot processing improvements were made.	X				R1) Have a third-party conduct a performance audit of ROV election processes.						X	
F2) ROV is cooperating with community group interested in elections.	X				R2) Make voter rolls as accurate as possible.			X				
F3) Community group unable to verify certified election results.		X			R3) Explore automated signature verification.		X					
F4) Procedural audit of ROV's election processes contracted by Riverside County.	X				R4) Explore automating chain of custody processes.			X				
F5) Comprehensive independent performance audits		X			R5) Establish and practice emergency drills for all employees.		X					
F6) ROV exceeded legal requirements for voter roll maintenance.	X				R6) Obtain high-definition cameras for all ballot processing areas, record and keep for 12 months.						X	
F7) ROV complies with state laws for signature verification.	X				R7) Establish an election security task force.		X					
F8) Temporary employees conduct signature verification.	X											
F9) ROV doesn't do an audit trail for challenged ballots.			X									
F10) Chain of custody documents are not legible.		X										
F11) ROV doesn't conduct emergency drills with temporary employees.		X										
F12) Cameras didn't record during emergency evacuations.		X										

Table 13

RCCGJ 2024-2025												
Reports 7 Total Findings	Findings				Total Recommendations	Recommendations						
RCCGJ 2024-2025 Reports: Findings	AGREE	DISAGREE PARTIALLY	DISAGREE WHOLLY	DID NOT RESPOND	RCCGJ 2024-2025 Reports: Recommendations	AGREE	WILL IMPLEMENT	IMPLEMENTED	FURTHER STUDY NEEDED	FUNDING NEEDED	DO NOT AGREE	WILL NOT IMPLEMENT
Notes on Responses												
RCCGJ 2024-2025 Palm Springs Lacked Proper Procedures for Vetting and Monitoring of Grants												
Report Public: 6/23/2025; Response Due: 9/26/2025 Finds 9 Recommendations 10 Palm Springs City Council												
F1) Palm Springs lacked guidelines and procedures to monitor grants and contracts	X				R1) PSCC develop guidelines and procedures for processing and monitoring grants and contracts.			X				
F2) No formal training in fraud prevention or detection.	X											
F3) P.S. didn't request monthly reports and invoices.			X		R2) PSCC mandate fraud detection training for employees.		X					
F4) MOU allowed two lump sums payments.			X		R3) PSCC ensure all NGO receiving funds above \$50,000 given in multiple installments.			X				
F5) P.S. lacked auditing procedures, reviews and monthly updates from NGO.			X		R4) Establish defined vetting process for evaluating NGO.			X				
F6) Relied on the endorsement by DAP to approve Queer Works grant.	X				F5) Assess risks to lump sum payments to NGO.			X				
F7) City Council member had suspicion of Q.W.			X		F6) Hire an auditing firm to conduct an internal operational audit.	X						
F8) Q.W. submitted statements that were inconsistent.			X		F7) Mandate an auditing firm to conduct an internal operational audit.	X						
F9) Inadequate oversight resulted in loss over \$700,000.			X		F8) Review and update policy, regulations and procedures to fraud.	X						
					F9) Advertise the Whistleblower Hotline.	X						
					F10) Conduct a forensic audit of all city departments monitoring contracts and grants.						X	