



**COUNTY OF ALAMEDA RESPONSE
TO THE
2023-2024 GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT**

**PREPARED BY:
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

**APPROVED BY:
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

ALAMEDA COUNTY RESPONSE TO THE 2023-2024 GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT

Alameda County's Staffing Vacancy Rate Causes Concern

Findings 24-15, 24-23, and 24-24

Finding 24-15:

The Alameda County Board of Supervisors has no policy regarding how long a budgeted employee position can remain vacant.

Response to Finding 24-15:

The Board of Supervisors ("Board") agrees with this finding. Vacancy rates are reviewed as part of the budget development process and salary savings budget adjustments have been and can continue to be made based upon historical data. This approach affords County of Alameda ("County") agencies and departments much-needed operational flexibility to fill vacancies.

Finding 24-23:

Overall county salaries have not kept pace with Alameda County's goal of remaining at least in the median salary range of surrounding counties.

Response to Finding 24-23:

The Board partially disagrees with this finding. In accordance with the Meyers-Milias-Brown Act ("MMBA"), the County is required to meet and confer in good faith regarding wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment with representatives of recognized employee organizations (i.e., unions). In this context, employee wages are determined based on surveys of either the County's Bay Area comparator counties or other survey methodologies as outlined in an existing Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") or driven by negotiations on a successor MOU or meet and confer. Moreover, if the County is experiencing a recruitment or retention issue with a specific classification, the County conducts salary reviews with the intent of ensuring a competitive salary. And, as part of MOU negotiations, the County also considers special salary adjustments, in addition to general wage increases, for classifications that fall below the median of the County's Bay Area comparator agencies (or MOU-driven agencies).

Finding 24-24:

The Alameda County Board of Supervisors has not conducted an annual salary survey per the requirements of the county charter.

Response to Finding 24-24:

The Board partially disagrees with this finding. Employee wages are determined based on surveys of either the County's Bay Area comparator counties or other survey methodologies as outlined in an existing MOU or driven by negotiations on a successor MOU as required under the MMBA. Moreover, if the County is experiencing a recruitment or retention issue with a specific classification, the County conducts salary reviews with the intent of ensuring a competitive salary. And, as part of MOU negotiations, the County also considers special salary adjustments, in addition to general wage increases, for classifications that fall below the median of the County's Bay Area comparator agencies (or MOU-driven agencies).

ALAMEDA COUNTY RESPONSE TO THE 2023-2024 GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT

Recommendations 24-13, 24-14, 24-16, 24-18, and 24-20

Recommendation 24-13:

The Alameda County Board of Supervisors should establish a policy to review the amount of time a position can remain vacant in individual departments.

Response to Recommendation 24-13:

The Board will not implement this recommendation because it is not warranted. Vacancy rates are reviewed as part of the budget development process and salary savings budget adjustments have been and can continue to be made based upon historical data. This practice affords agencies and departments much-needed operational flexibility to fill vacancies.

Recommendation 24-14:

The Alameda County Board of Supervisors should increase staffing in the Alameda County Human Resource Services department to enable recruitments to be processed more quickly and eliminate the backlog of recruitments.

Response to Recommendation 24-14:

This recommendation requires further analysis. Human Resource Services has identified that increasing dedicated staff in the Personnel Services Division will allow the County to expand its recruitment efforts. By the end of the calendar year, Human Resource Services will work with the County Administrator's Office to review existing vacancies and budget projections to determine whether adjustments can be made within current resources or if alternative options can be explored.

Recommendation 24-16:

The Alameda County Board of Supervisors should conduct a comprehensive analysis of the hiring and recruitment process from beginning to end, both in the Alameda County Human Resource Services department and the individual departments, to identify ways to improve and streamline the hiring process.

Response to Recommendation 24-16:

This recommendation has been partially implemented. In January of 2023, the County formed the Recruitment Task Force ("Task Force") to spearhead the Recruitment Enhancement Project. The Task Force identified high-priority initiatives that involve enhancements/changes with the goal of implementing a variety of new programs, processes, enhancements, and changes in current policies, procedures, and practices to address the recruitment challenges facing the County and speed up the recruitment and selection process. Staff has also implemented the voter-approved shortening of the recruitment posting period from 25- to 14-days, enabling the County to speed up the recruitment process and enhance the County's ability to compete for and hire top-tier talent.

Additionally, significant progress has been made on streamlining the business processes of the recruitment/selection process and to implement a wide array of technological improvements. Collectively, these efforts will make a significant impact on improving the County's recruitment/selection process.

ALAMEDA COUNTY RESPONSE TO THE 2023-2024 GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT

Recommendation 24-18:

The Alameda County Board of Supervisors should expand the hiring list “Rule of 5” to the “Rule of 8.”

Response to Recommendation 24-18:

This recommendation has not been implemented. Previously, on August 8, 2023, the County issued to all the County’s employee organizations an offer to meet and confer and the County proposed to move from the Rule of 5 to the Rule of 8. After several meetings with the County’s employee organizations, the County was not successful in implementing the Rule of 8. As a result, the County tabled the discussion. The County will again approach our employee organizations and endeavor to reach agreement on an alternative to the Rule of 5 that allows the County greater hiring flexibility.

Recommendation 24-20:

The Alameda County Board of Supervisors needs to conduct a comprehensive salary survey per the requirements of the county charter.

Response to Recommendation 24-20:

This recommendation has been partially implemented and the County is in substantial compliance with the charter. Employee wages are determined based on surveys of either the County’s Bay Area comparator counties or other survey methodologies as outlined in an existing MOU or driven by negotiations or meet and confer. As part of MOU negotiations, the County also considers special salary adjustments, in addition to general wage increases.