



# MELISSA WILK

ALAMEDA COUNTY

AUDITOR-CONTROLLER/CLERK-RECORDER

NEWSLETTER

## Message from Melissa Wilk

Dear Alameda County Communities,

It is my great pleasure to introduce our first-ever community newsletter! Nearly every day, we help thousands of Alameda County's families, businesses and communities carry on with some of life's most important events. My hope, and promise, is that this newsletter will inform you of our many services, and encourage you to engage with us more in the near future.

Although launching this newsletter is very exciting, I can't help but reflect on how challenging it has been for many of us this past year. I've been continually inspired by our communities' strength to help others, the courage to stand up for each other, and the resilience to foster hope in one another. That's why, as we all emerge from this pandemic together, our Agency is more committed than ever to serve you. While we work towards physically reopening our doors to you soon, I want to make clear that we are still up and running virtually, and *We are open for business!*



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As schools re-open, we are here to help you gather necessary documents for your child's enrollment. As our main streets come back to life, we are here to help you file your Fictitious Business Name (FBN) statement and certify your business in our Small, Local and Emerging Business (SLEB) program. If you're buying a home or refinancing your mortgage, we're here to help you get your documents recorded to make it official. If you and your partner are preparing to tie the knot (Congratulations!), we are here to issue your marriage license and even perform your ceremony. These are just some of the many ways that *We are open for business!*

Over the next few months, you can expect us to communicate with you through a variety of new and improved channels -- through this newsletter; social media; revamping our website to make it more customer-friendly; restoring in-person services through innovative, socially-distanced interactions - and even visiting your neighborhoods as restrictions are lifted. As our schools, businesses and communities come back, we're very excited about serving you in new and innovative ways.

Most importantly, as you see us and hear from us, let us know how we're doing and let us know what we can do better. Remember, our most important goal is to serve you! So if you have ideas or questions, don't hesitate to contact me directly via email ([ACCRinfo@acgov.org](mailto:ACCRinfo@acgov.org)) or on Twitter [@MelissaWilkACCR](https://twitter.com/MelissaWilkACCR).

Gratefully yours,

*Melissa Wilk*

# CLERK-RECORDER'S OFFICE ESSENTIAL SERVICES DURING THE PANDEMIC

To protect the health and safety of County employees as well as the public, and to ensure the continuity of government operations throughout the pandemic, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors passed resolution R-2020-120 on March 24, 2020 which restricted public access to many County buildings, including the Clerk-Recorder's Office. The Auditor-Controller/Clerk-Recorder Agency quickly developed and implemented plans to continue providing our essential Clerk-Recorder services through the mail, online, and by utilizing a drop-box outside of our main office at 1106 Madison Street in Oakland.



We provide a comprehensive e-commerce platform for many of our services, and it can be easily accessed through your desktop computer or mobile device. Online services include:

- Ordering Copies of Official Public Records (Recorded Documents)
  - Ordering Copies of Alameda County Vital Records (Birth, Death, and Marriage Certificates)\*
  - Ordering Copies of Fictitious Business Name Statements
  - Applying for Marriage Licenses & Virtual Wedding Ceremonies
  - Viewing California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Filings & Notices
- (\*For births and deaths in the City of Berkeley, please contact the Berkeley Public Health Division at (510) 981-5300)

For those services not available online, such as the filing of new Fictitious Business Name Statements or Real Estate Document Recording, the required forms and payment may be mailed to us at:

Alameda County Clerk-Recorder  
1106 Madison Street  
Oakland, CA 94607

A secure document drop-box is also available at this location Monday through Friday (excluding holidays) from 9:00AM until 4:00PM. More information is available on the Clerk-Recorder's Office Website.

In addition, the Clerk-Recorder's Office was able to fully implement electronic recording ("e-recording") using a secure online portal in May of last year. While California State Department of Justice guidelines preclude us from offering this service to every individual, authorized submitters (such as title companies and financial institutions) may now record documents without physically delivering the hard-copy document to our office. Since the start of 2021, over 80% of recorded documents (e.g. Deeds and Deeds of Trust) in Alameda County were submitted to us electronically, and our overall recording volume has nearly doubled in the last year!

We've also been hard at work preparing our building for the return of in-person services. For example, our general reception area will be relocated to an outdoor, covered patio to ensure continuous fresh air and enhanced social distancing. We collaborated with our County's Information Technology Department to implement a "will-call" system for purchasing Vital Records - you'll soon be able to pre-purchase a birth, death, or marriage certificate online, and then quickly pick it up at our office where it will be printed and waiting for you.

The Auditor-Controller/Clerk-Recorder Agency is looking forward to welcoming everyone back to our offices when it is safe to do so. **Stay tuned for reopening updates!** In the meantime, if you need assistance with Clerk-Recorder services, please e-mail us at [CROCustomerService@acgov.org](mailto:CROCustomerService@acgov.org) or call us at (510) 272-6362.

We serve over  
100,000 in-person  
customers each  
year.



We issue over 60,000  
birth, death and  
marriage certificates  
each year.



We issue over  
3,500 marriage  
licenses each year.





## VIRTUAL NUPTIALS



In response to building closures and social distancing requirements developed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N-58-20 on April 30, 2020 which permitted County Clerks to issue marriage licenses and perform marriage ceremonies online using videoconferencing technology. The Alameda County Auditor-Controller/Clerk-Recorder Agency immediately recognized the need for these services in our community, and within only five days – including the weekend – Alameda County became one of the first counties in the State of California to issue a marriage license online and virtually perform a marriage ceremony.



Since the Clerk-Recorder's Office first implemented its online marriage program, it has further refined the process to more efficiently manage the incredible number of submitted applications. Over the past year, we have issued over 3,500 marriage licenses to couples all over California, using online and videoconferencing technology. Our online marriage program was so successful, it was awarded a Technology Solutions Award by the Computer Technology Industry Association/Public Technology Institute.

The Clerk-Recorder's Office intends to continue issuing online marriage licenses and conducting virtual wedding ceremonies for the entire duration of the Governor's Executive Order. The program remains open to any adult couple currently located within the State of California-there is no requirement that the couple be Alameda County residents. Visit <https://www.acgov.org/auditor/clerk/ml.htm> for more information including links to the required forms.

The Clerk-Recorder's Office has also been serving on the Online Marriage Subcommittee of the California Association of Clerks and Election Officials to support legislation which would extend the authority for our online marriage program beyond the expiration of the Governor's Executive Orders. We are excited that the Subcommittee's hard work led to the recent introduction of Assembly Bill 583 by Assembly Member David Chiu and co-sponsored by Senator Nancy Skinner. We will continue to monitor the status of this bill and support additional efforts to bring accessible and efficient services to the residents of Alameda County.

**FUN FACT:** The Clerk-Recorder has performed over 2,300 virtual marriages over the past year!

That equates to performing a ceremony every 3.5 hours since the first ceremony was performed on May 5, 2020.



## Property Tax Analysis & Refunds

County residents that own property typically receive an annual property tax bill from the Treasurer-Tax Collector's office. The types of tax bills residents may receive include: secured property tax, unsecured property tax, or supplemental tax bills.

The most commonly received bill is related to **secured property taxes**. Secured property tax bills are issued to owners of real property. In other words, it's typically a house, physical business, or other parcel of land. Other residents may receive a bill for **unsecured property taxes**. This type of tax is for things that are not fixed to a location. Unsecured properties that are typically taxed include boats, airplanes, office furniture, and machinery. If you recently bought a home, you are likely to receive a **supplemental tax bill**. This bill is issued when there is a net increase in your assessed property value resulting from a change in ownership or if you recently completed new construction on your property.

At times, the county may need to adjust your previous tax bills. This typically happens after the County Assessor or Assessment Appeals Board (AAB) determines that your property should have been valued lower. If this happens, **you may be entitled to a refund from the county and the Auditor-Controller's Tax Analysis Division will be happy to assist you. This refund service is provided directly to property owners at no cost!**

If you are entitled to a refund after the County Assessor determines a lower value, look out for this notification in the mail from the County Assessor's Office. If your property has been assessed lower after a successful appeal with the AAB, you do not need to take further action and a refund will be mailed to you after the AAB decision is processed. In either instance, the Auditor-Controller's Tax Analysis Division will be happy to assist you! To check on the status of your refund, simply go to our online database for tax refund lookups. This database is publicly accessible and free to use. Just enter your parcel number, property address, or AAB decision number and you can quickly locate your refund status.

If you are interested in learning more about real property tax refunds issued by our Tax Analysis Division, visit our website: <https://www.acgov.org/auditor/tax/>.

For access to the online Refund Status Lookup database, visit our website: <https://www.acgov.org/auditor/tax/refund-status-lookup.htm>.

Tax Analysis Division staff are available Monday through Friday from 8:30AM to 5:00PM at (510) 272-6564 for assistance.



# RAISING LEADERS INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



The Auditor-Controller Agency is pleased to announce our partnership with the **Raising Leaders Internship Program** which provides hands-on work experience for at-promise youth in our County. The program is managed by Davida Scott, Hayward Adult School educator, in partnership with Supervisor Richard Valle's District 2 Youth Initiative and Chief Wendy Still of the Alameda County Probation Department, to bring the Raising Leaders internship program to various local government agencies.

The Raising Leaders program's mission is to provide students who attend alternative education programs in Alameda County the opportunity to learn and gain experience in various fields by offering professional internships. Students are enrolled and participate in a series of eight weekly workshops that focus on employability skills, financial awareness, career exploration and educational opportunities. Students also participate in the Hayward Adopt-A-Block program, picking up trash on the 25 blocks that the program has adopted.

Upon completion of the weekly workshops, students are presented the opportunity to interview for a paid internship position through the Raising Leaders Internship Program. Students selected to participate in the program are provided additional resources to prepare them to succeed in their assignments, such as gift cards to purchase professional attire and passes for public transportation to and from their worksites.

In support of this program, the Auditor-Controller Agency will be hosting three cohorts over the course of several months, May through October. During this time, the student interns will have the opportunity to gain experience by participating in meaningful work that supports the program's vision of preparing our community's future workforce members.



## OTHER INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

### Join Our Team and Make a Difference

Are you looking for a challenging career in the public sector where you can apply your knowledge to a variety of departments while serving your community? If so, the **Auditor-Controller Internship Program** may be the perfect opportunity for you to gain hands-on experience while working in a collaborative work environment. Our Agency offers various job assignments, ranging from conducting audits of County programs to working with local artists and programming the latest technologies.

Part-Time AND Full-Time internships are available offering flexibility for academic schedules.

Qualifications: Students must be current undergraduate juniors, seniors, recent college graduates or enrolled in a Graduate degree program.

To apply, please submit an unofficial transcript, a resume with cover letter telling us about your educational focus, your availability (i.e. seasonal, year round, etc.) and why you are interested in working with the Alameda County Auditor-Controller/Clerk-Recorder Agency.

Applications should be emailed to: [hr.auditor@acgov.org](mailto:hr.auditor@acgov.org)

Learn More: <https://youtu.be/YboEhyZx6zs>



# ARTS & CULTURE



Above images: Through support and shared vision of New Beginnings, Alameda County's Art Commission 100 Families program partnered with the Alameda County Library to conduct family art making workshops at Library locations throughout Alameda County. Images celebrate the diversity of Alameda County and feature local residents. Artwork image designed by Malik Johnson. Photographs by Paul Kuroda.



## Arts & Cultural Grant Awards

The arts are integral to the social, civic, and economic wellbeing and vitality of Alameda County. Like many other segments of our economy, the arts have suffered significant impacts from the effects of COVID-19. Arts and cultural organizations in Alameda County and nationally have been particularly hard hit as these venues were among the first to close and are among the last designated for re-opening.

With the goal of supporting the survival and sustainability of arts and cultural nonprofits throughout Alameda County and the County's unincorporated area, the Board of Supervisors awarded \$900,000 to 157 Alameda County nonprofit arts and cultural organizations through the 2020 Arts Relief Grant Program. This CARES Act-funded grant program was established to assist organizations affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This program is managed by the Office of the Alameda County Arts Commission under the leadership of Alameda County Auditor-Controller Melissa Wilk and the Alameda County Board of Supervisors.

"The County recognizes that arts and cultural organizations are an essential part of our community and an instrumental aspect of our economic recovery," said Melissa Wilk, Alameda County Auditor-Controller.

The grants were awarded in December 2020 to organizations throughout Alameda County and ranged in size from \$3,150 to \$15,750. All qualifying applicants were given a grant award. Award amounts were based on the organization's operating budget size.

To learn more about the programs of the Alameda County Arts Commission, visit the website [www.acgov.org/arts](http://www.acgov.org/arts).





# ALAMEDA COUNTY

# ARTS LEADERSHIP

# AWARDS PROGRAM

**NOMINATION DEADLINE: MAY 14, 2021**

Submit a nomination online at [www.acgov.org/arts/awards](http://www.acgov.org/arts/awards)

**Nomination Deadline  
Friday, May 14, 2021**

Community Members are invited to submit nominations to this annual program!

The Arts Leadership Awards Program is an excellent way to celebrate someone who deserves to be recognized for their important work in the Alameda County arts community!

The Alameda County Arts Commission invites County residents to submit nominations for the 2021 Arts Leadership Awards Program. This annual program enables the Alameda County Arts Commission to recognize five individuals, one from each of the five districts of the Alameda County Board of Supervisors, for their outstanding achievements and contributions impacting the arts community and the residents of Alameda County.

You must be an Alameda County resident to submit a nomination. One nomination per person.



We honor the **2020 Arts Leadership Awards recipients** for their outstanding contributions and for cultivating a culture of creativity and imagination through art expression.



Jean Marie Durant



Ron Lytle



Michael Socrates Moran



Usha Shukla



Anuradha Suresh



Tetiana Taganska and Olga Tymoshchuk (team)

**2020 Arts Leadership Awards Recipients** 6

# ALAMEDA COUNTY AUDITOR-CONTROLLER/CLERK-RECORDER

## OUR VALUES

ACCOUNTABILITY		FISCAL STEWARDSHIP		INNOVATION
	DIVERSITY		TRANSPARENCY	

## OUR MISSION

The Office of the Auditor-Controller shall support Alameda County's Vision through the efforts of its employees by providing the highest degree of fiscal stewardship, transparency, accessibility and service when administering public funds and in the protection of official public records.

## OUR VISION

The Office of the Auditor-Controller provides superior protection and accessibility of public resources and records through advancements in technology and the optimization of employees, and as such, is a model for other public organizations.

## OUR TEAM

The Office of the Auditor-Controller is committed to employing a team as diverse as the community we serve. Eighty-three percent of our staff represent Asian, African American, Hawaiian, Latinx and Multi-Racial ethnicities.

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Oakland, CA 94612  
(510) 272-6565

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Oakland, CA 94607  
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Central Collections Division  
1221 Oak Street, Suite 220  
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(510) 208-9900

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7600 Dublin Boulevard  
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