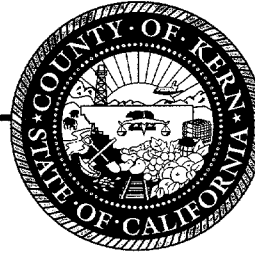


Kern County Administrative Office



County Administrative Center

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RONALD M. ERREA
County Administrative Officer

January 29, 2008

Board of Supervisors
Kern County Administrative Center
1115 Truxtun Avenue
Bakersfield, CA 93301

RESPONSE TO REFERRALS REGARDING DEPARTMENTAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMPLIANCE MEASURES

Fiscal Impact: None

In December, your Board made several referrals to the Auditor-Controller-County Clerk and this office regarding departmental oversight, accountability, and compliance issues. One referral requested an evaluation of providing independent oversight and accountability controls with enforcement ability to include provision for a government accountability officer. Several other referrals dealt with the Auditor's internal audit function and this office's follow-up related to resultant audit findings.

The attached briefing paper (Attachment A) provides an overview of other counties' "government accountability officer" (GAO) functions that have been identified to date. Four counties, Orange, San Bernardino, San Diego, and San Francisco, have implemented discerningly distinct positions/departments with functions similar to the characteristics of the GAO function discussed in December. The heads of these departments range from being appointed by and reporting to the governing body to being appointed by and reporting to the county's chief administrative officer.


As your Board has expressed an interest in this office having a greater role than currently exists in ensuring that departments are complying and meeting audit recommendations, the range of compliance monitoring that this office could pursue is broad, as discussed in Attachment A. At a minimum, this office could follow up with departments through a departmental self-certification process to inquire to the status of the audit findings and recommendations on an exception basis. This could be done within the existing staff resources in the County Administrative Office. At the other end of the spectrum, this office could become an active participant in recommending and implementing measures to strengthen internal controls or other corrective measures identified in departmental audits. This expanded role into departmental oversight and accountability would require additional staff resources. An initial annual cost estimate of staffing needs is \$410,000 for three additional positions.

Under separate cover, the Auditor is presenting her proposal on increasing staff resources in her department to meet her statutory requirement for biennial audits of all County departments. Additionally, the Auditor will be providing her thoughts on audit follow up and future departmental training to strengthen compliance and accountability. This office has met and discussed the proposal with the Auditor.

At this time, we are not providing a proposal on this office's role until your Board has had an opportunity to review and discuss the Auditor's proposal and the attached information and provide direction to our offices. Pending your Board's discussion and direction, we will return with a proposed plan to move forward.

Therefore, **IT IS RECOMMENDED** that your Board receive and file this report.

Sincerely,


Ronald M. Errea
County Administrative Officer

RME:EDL:ADMGENAccountability

Attachment

cc: Auditor-Controller-County Clerk