

**A REPORT BY  
THE 2013-2014 CONTRA COSTA COUNTY GRAND JURY**  
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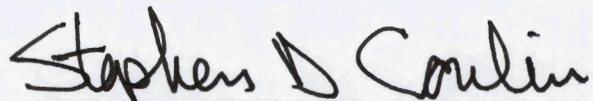
**Report 1406**

# **COUNTY EMPLOYEE EVALUATIONS**

*Say What You Mean and Do What You Say*

APPROVED BY THE GRAND JURY:

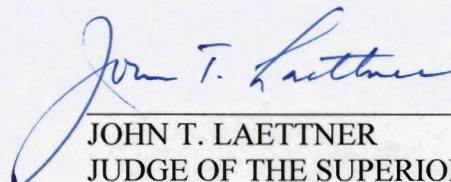
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Contra Costa County Grand Jury Report

**COUNTY EMPLOYEE EVALUATIONS**

*Say What You Mean and Do What You Say*

**TO:** Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors  
**COPY TO:** County Administrator

**SUMMARY**

Annual evaluations of all County employees has been the subject of three previous Grand Jury reports. Each of these reports emphasized the importance of employee evaluations as a best practice to improve operational efficiency, performance and/or provide employee recognition.

The Board of Supervisors has consistently agreed with the Grand Jury recommendations to provide annual evaluations for all County employees and committed to that policy. The County Administrator implements the Board's policy. The Administrator, in turn, delegated responsibility to each department head to track and complete annual evaluations of employees in their respective departments. While a few departments have shown improvement, approximately half the employees (4,000 of the 8,000) working for the County still do not receive annual evaluations. The Board of Supervisors should immediately enforce the policy they have previously agreed to that requires every department to provide annual evaluations of each of its employees.

**METHODOLOGY**

- Review of past Grand Jury Reports
- Survey of all County Departments
- Interviews with Department Heads
- Interview with County Officials

**BACKGROUND**

The Grand Jury has written numerous reports focused on the importance and need for employee evaluations (2011-2012 Report No. 1214; 2006-2007 Report No. 0709; 2001-2002 Report No. 0206).

Responding to the most recent reports in 2007 and 2012, the Board of Supervisors committed to “annual performance reviews for all county employees.” It also authorized the County Administrator to oversee the policy. The County Administrator has, in turn, delegated the responsibility of implementing annual reviews to department heads.

However, a follow-up survey conducted by the Grand Jury at the end of 2013 shows the policy is not being uniformly followed and enforced. The data for fiscal year (FY) 2012-2013 allowed for a full year of evaluations following the last Grand Jury report in 2011-2012. Overall countywide statistics show a mere 3% improvement in annual evaluations over the previous year. Over 4,000 employees did not receive evaluations, in contravention of the Board’s stated policy. The results are as follows:

**County Employee Evaluations Summary Chart FY2012/2013**

DEPARTMENT	Evaluations Completed	# Employees June 30, 2013	% Complete	3 Year Trend B= Better W=Worse NC=No Change
1 Agricultural	22	54	41	W
2 Animal Services	3	66	5	W
3 Assessor	86	90	96	NC
4 Auditor-Controller	30	44	68	W
5 Child Support Services	121	150	81	B
6 Clerk-Recorder*	58	58	100+	B
7 Conservation and Development	25	133	19	B
8 County Administrator	8	12	66	W
9 County Counsel	36	43	84	B
10 Contra Costa County Fire Protection District	135	288	47	B
11 District Attorney	182	182	100	B
12 Employment and Human Services	372	1451	26	W
13 Health Services	1004	2942	34	W
14 Human Resources	1	37	3	NC
15 Chief Information Officer	47	61	77	NC
16 Library	135	245	55	Unknown
17 Probation	130	334	39	Unknown
18 Public Defender	20	86	23	NC
19 Public Works	449	594	76	B
20 Risk Management	9	32	28	B
21 Sherriff-Coroner*	1044	1044	100+	NC
22 Treasurer-Tax Collector	19	26	73	B
23 Veterans Service	6	6	100	B
24 Board of Supervisors (All Districts)	0	28	0	W
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3942</b>	<b>8006</b>	<b>49</b>	

\* Number of completed evaluations adjusted not to exceed 100% of employees for purpose of calculating % employees evaluated.

Some departments, such as the Assessor, Clerk-Recorder, District Attorney, and Sheriff-Coroner do an excellent job of completing evaluations for their employees and have instituted robust employee evaluation programs. Two departments, the Sherriff-Coroner and the Clerk-Recorder, reported performing more than one evaluation each year for their employees and exceed the annual evaluation baseline.

For other departments the completion rates are abysmal – less than 25%. Those departments include Animal Services, Conservation and Development, Employment and Human Services, Human Resources, Public Defender, and Risk Management.

Certain very large departments with over half the total County employees notably Health Services and Employment and Human Services have completed only 26 % and 34% respectively. Also, there are departments such as the Human Resources Department that have no annual evaluation program and no plan to implement one.

When asked if anything precludes a department from completion of evaluations for all employees, most departments reported no impediments while a few departments responded that reductions in staff and workload burden were the primary issues. Implementing annual employee evaluations may be subject to further discussion with certain unions in a process called “meet and confer”. Although this process can be time consuming, it does not prohibit the implementation of annual evaluations.

All departments reported having a policy for conducting evaluations for probationary and merit/step increases as required county-wide for permanent employment and for promotions. Only half of the departments had a written policy about conducting annual employee evaluations. In many departments, once an employee is at the top step of their salary range, annual evaluations are not conducted. For long-term employees this could amount to decades of work without a written performance evaluation. This is counter to what has been agreed to by the Board of Supervisors.

The County Administrator has delegated responsibility for annual evaluations to department heads. Although the County Administrator has agreed to add completion of employee evaluations to the department head evaluations, this has not yet been done. Department heads also have not provided this data to the County Administrator.

## **FINDINGS**

1. In response to previous Grand Jury reports concerning annual employee evaluations, the Board of Supervisors and the County Administrator have stated that “departments are required to conduct annual performance reviews on all employees.”
2. Approximately half the employees (over 4,000 employees) in the County do not receive annual evaluations.
3. The two largest departments, Health Services and Employment and Human Services accounted for over 3,000 incomplete evaluations last year (FY 2012-2013).
4. Responsibility for tracking performance reviews by department heads has not improved completion rates.
5. While most departments have an internal function to track employee evaluations, many of these departments track only probationary and merit/step increases as required by the County for pay increases.

6. Merit/step increases can term out as quickly (typically 5 years for most job classifications) resulting in long-term employees not receiving performance evaluations for years or even decades.
7. There is no formal written county-wide policy on completing annual evaluations for all employees except for the response to past Grand Jury reports by the Board of Supervisors.
8. Only half of the departments in the County have a written policy concerning conducting annual employee evaluations.
9. Departments are not reporting annual evaluation completion rates to the County Administrator or the Board of Supervisors.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The County should provide annual performance evaluations to each county employee as agreed to in past Grand Jury reports.
2. Departments with less than 100% annual performance evaluation completion rates should consider implementing policies and plans with timelines to develop and conduct annual evaluations, and identifying funds to do so.
3. The Board of Supervisors should consider requiring the County Administrator to report yearly on annual employee evaluation completion rates by department.

### **REQUIRED RESPONSES**

	<b><u>Findings</u></b>	<b><u>Recommendations</u></b>
Board of Supervisors	1-9	1-3