



# MELISSA WILK

## ALAMEDA COUNTY

### AUDITOR-CONTROLLER/CLERK-RECORDER

## *July 2022 Newsletter*

### *Message from Melissa*

Dear Alameda County,

I hope everyone is enjoying a wonderful summer! July continues to be a month filled with celebrations and opportunities to participate in community events. Many of our communities celebrated July 4th with parades, picnics and other outdoor events. July also brought us the Alameda County Fair in Pleasanton, the Oakland Chinatown Summer Festival, and the iconic Art & Soul Special 20th Anniversary celebration providing vibrant cultural festivities for our residents and visitors. These are just a few examples of the many diverse community events and celebrations offered in our County that make it such an exceptional place to be in the summer and all year round.



July was also the month of love! I am so honored that my office has been able to play such a special role in so many weddings this summer – we have conducted over 450 marriage ceremonies. Congratulations to all of our newlyweds and their families! More information about how to obtain a marriage license and conduct a wedding ceremony either with our office or at another location special to you, is provided below in this month's Newsletter.

I am also incredibly proud to announce that this month, Standard and Poor's (S&P) Global Ratings, Moody's Investor Services, and Fitch Ratings all reaffirmed Alameda County's current AAA credit ratings citing the County's prudent financial management policies and practices; consistent positive budgetary performance; and strong stable management team. Alameda County is only one of three other counties in California to hold this "triple crown" designation, alongside Marin and San Diego. Reaffirmation of the County's AAA ratings will continue to reduce our cost of borrowing, maintain our positive standing in the financial community, and allow us to continue to provide essential services that are so critical to our communities.

July also marks the first month of Alameda County's Fiscal Year, and I invite you to continue reading to learn more about the recently approved Alameda County Budget for Fiscal Year 2022-2023.

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For those of you planning a visit to our offices, this Newsletter also includes information about the many health and safety procedures in place in accordance with federal, state, and county guidelines. For more detailed information about our services, please visit our [website](#). We look forward to seeing you soon!

I hope you enjoy reading the July 2022 issue of my Newsletter, and I look forward to sharing more news, updates and information in the Fall of 2022, as we move to a quarterly schedule. In the meantime, I wish you all a safe and healthy, fun-filled rest of Summer 2022 – be well and enjoy!

Best,

*Melissa Wilk*

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## **Board of Supervisors Approve a Balanced \$3.8 Billion Budget**

On June 30th, the [Board of Supervisors](#) approved Alameda County's budget for Fiscal Year 2022-2023. The Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Budget is a balanced \$3.8 billion spending plan for County programs and services that closes a \$49.1 million funding gap and illustrates how the County leadership works effectively to best serve the community.

In the last two and a half years, the County has had to contend with the health, economic, and social impacts of the public health emergency due to COVID-19. The County was able to continue to administer vital County programs without cuts to service levels or staffing during this period as a result of Alameda County's prestigious history of longstanding prudent fiscal and budgeting policies. This also allowed the County to utilize state and federal COVID-19 emergency aid to directly address the impacts of the public health emergency.

As the state and federal governments transition from pandemic response to endemic management we recognize that there may be new issues to address at the local level. Alameda County's strategic vision will continue to guide the County through challenges that might arise as we strive to achieve our goals of a Healthy Environment, a Prosperous and Vibrant Economy, Safe & Livable Communities, and a Thriving & Resilient Population.



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# Getting Married

It has truly been our pleasure and an honor to perform both in-person and virtual [marriage ceremonies](#) for so many happy couples at the Alameda County Clerk-Recorder's Office! As a reminder, we also provide marriage licenses and marriage certificates. All marriage ceremonies are by appointment only, and we have an [online reservation system](#) – or you can make an appointment by calling [\(510\) 272-6362](#). You can also have a friend, family member or loved one marry you once they legally become an officiant. To learn more about how to become an officiant, please visit our [webpage](#).



If you would like to get married at the Alameda County Clerk-Recorder's Office, please schedule an appointment, and for in-person ceremonies:

- Complete the marriage license application online prior to your arrival;
- Ensure that there is a maximum of eight guests plus the couple attending the wedding (due to occupancy limitations);
- Arrive at least twenty minutes prior to your appointment to allow time to check in;
- Ensure that everyone in your wedding party is present at your appointed time (if the ceremony cannot commence on time, you may lose your reservation); and
- Plan transportation needs accordingly as parking is limited in the area.



For a virtual marriage ceremony, you can make an appointment online. Requirements for virtual marriage services include:

- Reliable, high-speed internet access;
- Web Conference software Microsoft Teams (including audio AND visual capabilities with microphone, speakers, webcam); and
- The individuals who are getting married must be physically located within the State of California during the video conference.

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## Tips for Visiting the Clerk-Recorder's Office

The Alameda County Clerk-Recorder's Office is located at 1106 Madison Street in Oakland. For a list of our in-person services currently available please visit our [website](#). When you arrive, please proceed from the front door, around the corner, to the side entrance of the building located on 11th Street. There, you will see a sign directing you to a covered patio area to obtain a service ticket.

When visiting us in-person:

- Consider commuting by bus, BART, bike or getting dropped off and picked up. We are a five minute walk from the Lake Merritt BART station, and served by ten AC Transit bus lines.
- Parking is limited in this area; there is some metered street parking. You can also park at the Oakland Museum (entry on Oak Street between 10th and 12th Street) for a discounted fee with Clerk-Recorder validation.
- Tell the Clerk-Recorder representative everything you need done during your visit; your visit may require multiple tickets.
- Ask about our mobile ticketing system; our system can send text alerts to your phone.
- Enjoy waiting in the outside covered patio area until your number is called.
- We're here to help – please let us know what we can do for you. We have forms and services available in multiple languages; restrooms are available while you wait; and we even have facemasks in case you left yours at home.
- Please pay with cash, checks or debit card; we do not accept credit cards.
- Note that our busiest times are 11:00am-2:30pm, especially on Mondays and Fridays. If you have any questions prior to your planned visit, please give us a call us at [\(510\) 272-6362](tel:5102726362).

Visiting us online:

- Use our online system to obtain a birth, death, or marriage certificate, or copies of an official record.
- Once you've submitted your online order, you can check the status of your request online. You can then request the document be mailed to you, or you can pick it up from our Office. [Click here to get started](#).

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## Internship Opportunities at the Auditor-Controller/Clerk-Recorder Agency



Are you or anyone you know about to graduate from college and wondering what to do with your degree? Are you interested in learning more about the public sector, and how you can apply your knowledge to a variety of departments, while serving your community? If so, our Internship Program may be the perfect opportunity for you to gain hands-on work experience in a collaborative environment. Our Agency offers a wide range of job assignments, from conducting audits of County programs to working on arts related projects, and assisting the local community in obtaining their public records. To learn more about the Internship Program watch this [short video](#).

Full-time, part-time and short-term internships are available with flexibility for current students. To apply, please submit your resume with a cover letter telling us about your educational focus 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).

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# Meet our Recording Team



The Recording Team is one of several units within the Clerk-Recorder's Office, which in turn is part of the Auditor-Controller/Clerk-Recorder Agency. The employees in this Unit are primarily responsible for examining a variety of documents related to real property to ensure that they meet the legal requirements for recording and then collecting the associated recording fees. In addition, employees in the Recording Unit calculate and collect Documentary Transfer Tax on behalf of both Alameda County and its various cities. If you purchase a new home or refinance an existing mortgage, the Recording Unit plays a role in ensuring there is an accurate public record of that transaction maintained into perpetuity.

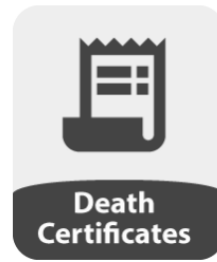
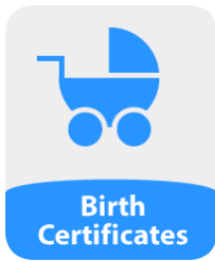
In a typical day, our employees will examine and record approximately 1,000 documents. That changed during the early stages of the pandemic when requests for service dramatically increased, and staff processed twice as many documents per day. "The COVID pandemic brought unique challenges and an increased workload for the Clerk-Recorder's Office. Every member of the Recording Unit team stepped up to ensure the continuity of our essential services to the public," said Assistant Controller Matt Yankee.

Historically, a hard copy of every recordable document was required to be delivered to the Clerk-Recorder's Office for official review by our staff. However, the need for social distancing during the pandemic accelerated our efforts to implement electronic recording ("e-recording"), which has been an incredible success. While state law continues to prevent e-recording to be an option in all circumstances, the Recording Unit now processes approximately 80% of its documents as secure, digital submissions. "Not only has e-recording made the recording process more efficient for title companies, but it has also saved County taxpayer funds by eliminating approximately \$200,000 in annual postage charges previously incurred when mailing thousands of recorded documents back to their submitters each week," added Matt Yankee.

For more information on the Clerk-Recorder's Office, recording fees, and Documentary Transfer Tax, please visit our [website](#).

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**SAVE TIME AND ORDER ONLINE**

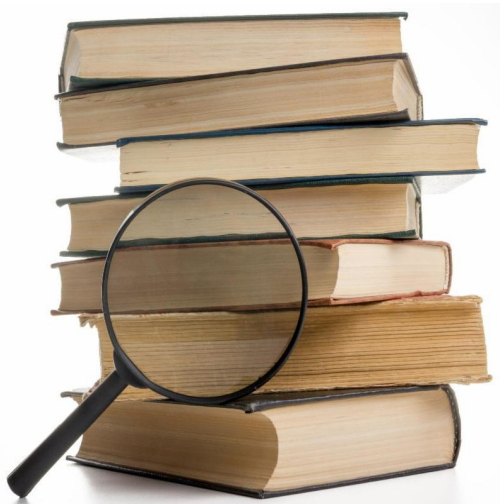


Need a birth, marriage, or death certificate? Save yourself time and order online! Select our pick-up option and we can typically turn around your order within a few days.

Once you've submitted your order, you can check the status of your request online. You can then request the document be mailed to you, or you can pick it up from our Office. It's just that easy!

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## Removing Discriminatory Language



Earlier this year, I updated you about the California State Legislature's passage of Assembly Bill (AB) 1466, which directed all County Recorders in the State of California to establish a program to assist with locating and redacting unlawfully restrictive covenants found in historical property records. Restrictive covenants are essentially a set of rules or restrictions for a particular property, and some may contain language that discriminates against specific groups of people. This bill was signed into law by Governor Gavin Newsom in 2021, and our [implementation plan](#) was completed by July 1, 2022.

Despite these discriminatory restrictive covenants being declared illegal by both the federal and state governments over 70 years ago, the language can sometimes be found in prior recorded documents which may still be included in a chain of title. AB 1466 authorizes a County Recorder to redact discriminatory language which restricts housing based on age, race, color, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, familial status, marital status, disability, veteran or military status, genetic information, national origin, source of income as defined in subdivision (p) of Government Code Section 12955, or ancestry.

The Alameda County Clerk-Recorder's Office plans to leverage our existing land records software system, acquire additional vendor tools and services, and utilize industry best practices to meet all requirements for our Restrictive Covenant Modification Program. Program objectives will be met through a multi-phase approach to digitize records which currently exist exclusively on film. We will then make use of Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software and machine learning tools to process these images and identify language indicative of unlawfully restrictive covenants for subsequent review and administration. Documents with formats incompatible to OCR technology, such as handwritten documents, will be manually reviewed.

We are also working with our existing land records software system vendor to create new functionality which would allow members of the public to easily flag images in our public files that may contain an unlawfully restrictive covenant. We anticipate that this feature will be implemented in early 2023. In addition, unlawfully restrictive covenants can be reported to our office by sending an email to [CROCustomerService@acgov.org](mailto:CROCustomerService@acgov.org) for staff review and potential redaction under AB 1466. We invite you to read our full [implementation plan](#).

*The Auditor-Controller/Clerk-Recorder Agency is proud to be a leader in this important effort to remove discriminatory language in County documents . —Melissa Wilk*

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## Alameda County Arts Relief Grants

On July 19th, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors awarded grants to 182 nonprofit arts and cultural organizations in Alameda County through the Alameda County Arts Relief Grant Program. The complete list of grantees and the award amounts can be found at this [link](#).

The Alameda County Arts Relief Grant Program was established in 2020 with the goal of providing funding assistance to nonprofit arts and cultural organizations that have been negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This program is managed by the Office of the Alameda County Arts Commission under the leadership of Melissa Wilk, Alameda County Auditor-Controller/Clerk-Recorder, and the Alameda County Board of Supervisors.



Alameda County recognizes that arts and cultural organizations are essential to our community and an instrumental aspect of our economic recovery. The organizations provide arts and cultural programs and services in the areas of visual art, dance, theater, music, literature, poetry, cultural events and traditions, and other related forms.

We acknowledge and thank the Alameda County arts and cultural community for their commitment and dedication in finding creative solutions that have provided hope and inspiration for so many.

*Artwork image created by Hilda Robinson, In the Neighborhood, 2019. Alameda County Public Art Collection.*

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## In the Community: Every Month is Pride Month!

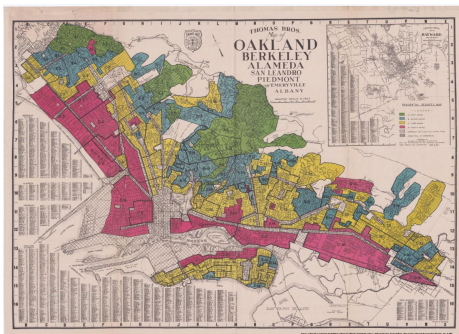
The [San Lorenzo Library](#) has started a new monthly series called "Every Month is Pride Month."



The San Lorenzo Library will be presenting events, exhibitions and activities. LGBTQ+ organizations and community group leaders interested in partnering on the "Every Month is Pride Month" series, may contact Alameda County Supervisor Brown's office and Sarah Oddie, Senior Policy Advisor, via an email to [sarah.oddie@acgov.org](mailto:sarah.oddie@acgov.org) or call [510-272-6693](tel:510-272-6693).

## In the Community: Learning about the History of Redlining and Housing Discrimination

The San Leandro Public Library is displaying a historical exhibit titled Redlining & Housing Discrimination. The Opening Event on July 28 was hosted by San Leandro City Council Member Corina Lopez, who is sponsoring this exhibit as her Sesquicentennial focus. Other speakers at the event included San Leandro Mayor Pauline Russo Cutter, San Leandro Library Director Brian Simons, and Alameda County Assistant Controller Matt Yankee. Matt spoke about the Alameda County Clerk-Recorder's role in redacting unlawful and discriminatory language from historical property records since the passage of AB 1466 by the California State Legislature.



This is the library's first exhibit illuminating the history of federally sponsored housing segregation policies that were reinforced at state and local levels including in San Leandro. Decades of discriminatory practices on national, state, and local levels impacted the ability for people of color to own homes – resulting in long-term segregation and loss of generational wealth. The effects of housing discrimination continue to permeate our country's landscape with very real impacts on people today.

Managing a path forward begins with acknowledgement and learning about this very complex and multi-faceted history.

This historical exhibit is meant to spark conversations within the community to better understand this difficult and sensitive subject. To learn more about the exhibit, please visit the [San Leandro Library](#) or call [510-577-3971](tel:510-577-3971).

## QUESTIONS FOR OUR AGENCY?

Are there upcoming community events that you would like us to



attend? Do you have a specific question you would like to ask? Is your community or organization interested in a presentation about the services provided by the County and the Auditor-Controller/Clerk-Recorder Agency?



Email Melissa Wilk at [ACCR.info@acgov.org](mailto:ACCR.info@acgov.org) to let her know what questions we can answer and how we can support your efforts. We look forward to sharing upcoming news with you in the Fall as we move to a quarterly schedule for our newsletter.

## STAY IN TOUCH

If this email was forwarded to you, subscribe to our newsletter by emailing us at [ACCR.info@acgov.org](mailto:ACCR.info@acgov.org).

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