SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA



ITEM: 2.10 (ID # 23546)

MEETING DATE:

Tuesday, December 05, 2023

FROM: AUDITOR CONTROLLER:

SUBJECT: AUDITOR-CONTROLLER: Internal Audit Report 2024-301: Riverside County

Department of Veteran's Services, Follow-up Audit, All Districts. [\$0]

RECOMMENDED MOTION: That the Board of Supervisors:

 Receive and file Internal Audit Report 2024-301: Riverside County Department of Veteran's Services, Follow-up Audit

ACTION:Consent

Ben J. Benoit

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

On motion of Supervisor Spiegel, seconded by Supervisor Perez and duly carried by unanimous vote, IT WAS ORDERED that the above matter is received and filed as recommended.

Ayes:

Jeffries, Spiegel, Washington and Perez and Gutierrez

Nays: Absent: None None Kimberly A. Rector Clerk of the Board

Date:

December 5, 2023

XC:

Auditor Controller

SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

FINANCIAL DATA	Current Fiscal Year:	Next Fiscal Year:	Total Cost:	Ongoing Cost
COST	\$ 0.0	\$ 0.0	\$ 0.0	\$ 0.0
NET COUNTY COST	\$ 0.0	\$ 0.0	\$ 0.0	\$ 0.0
SOURCE OF FUNDS	Budget Adjus	stment: No		
			For Fiscal Yea	ar: n/a

C.E.O. RECOMMENDATION: Approve

BACKGROUND:

Summary

We completed a follow-up audit of the Riverside County Department of Veteran's Services. Our audit was limited to reviewing actions taken as of June 9, 2023, to correct findings noted in our original audit report 2022-003 dated December 7, 2021. The original audit report contained three recommendations, all of which required implementation to help correct the reported findings.

Based on the results of our audit, that of the three recommendations:

- Two of the recommendations were implemented.
- One of the recommendations was not implemented.

For an in-depth understanding of the original audit, please refer to Internal Audit Report 2022-003 included as an attachment to this follow-up audit report or it can also be found at https://auditorcontroller.org/divisions/internal-audit/reports

Impact on Citizens and Businesses

Provide an assessment of internal controls over the audited areas.

SUPPLEMENTAL:

Additional Fiscal Information

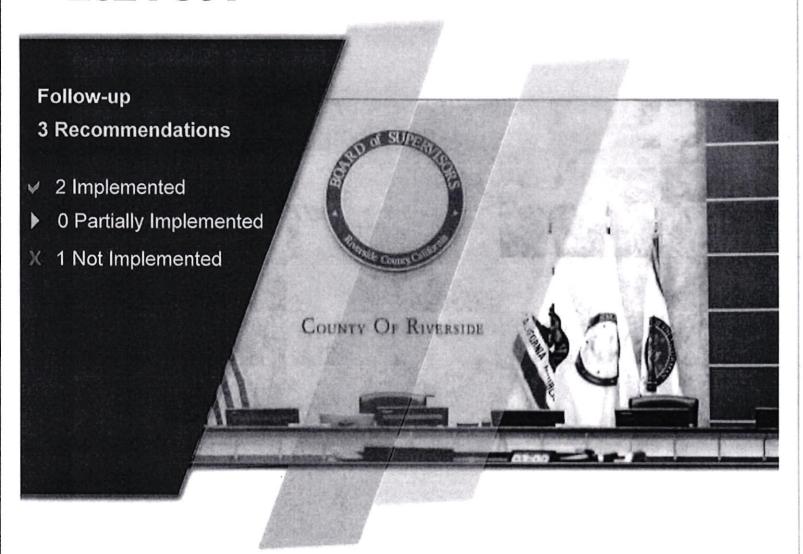
Not applicable

ATTACHMENTS:

A: Riverside County Auditor-Controller - Internal Audit Report 2024-301: Riverside County Department of Veteran's Services, Follow-up Audit.

Office of Ben J. Benoit Riverside County Auditor-Controller

Internal Audit Report 2024-301



Riverside County
Department of Veteran's Services
Follow-up Audit

November 28, 2023



COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

Ben J. Benoit, Auditor-Controller Tanya S. Harris, DPA, CPA, Assistant Auditor-Controller

> 4080 Lemon Street, 11th Floor P.O. Box 1326 Riverside, CA 92502-1326 951-955-3800



November 28, 2023

Gregory Coffos Director Riverside County Department of Veteran's Services 4360 Orange Street Riverside, CA 92501

Subject: Internal Audit Report 2024-301: Riverside County Department of Veteran's Services Follow-up Audit

Dear Mr. Coffos:

We completed the follow-up audit of Veteran's Services. Our audit was limited to reviewing actions taken as of June 9, 2023, to help correct the findings noted in our original audit report 2022-003 dated December 7, 2021.

We conducted our audit in accordance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing. These standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance that our objective, as described in the preceding paragraph, is achieved. Additionally, the standards require that we conduct the audit to provide sufficient, reliable, and relevant evidence to achieve the audit objectives. We believe the audit provides a reasonable basis for our conclusion.

The original audit report contained three recommendations, all of which required implementation to help correct the reported findings. Based on the results of our audit, we found that of the three recommendations:

- Two of the recommendations were implemented.
- One of the recommendations was not implemented.



Summary of the conditions from the original audit and the results of our review on the status of the implementation of the recommendations are provided in this report. For an in-depth understanding of the original audit, please refer to Internal Audit Report 2022-007 included as "Attachment A" of this audit report along with your department status letter as "Attachment B." You can also find the original audit report at https://auditorcontroller.org/divisions/internal-audit/reports

We thank you and your staff for the help and cooperation. The assistance provided contributed significantly to the successful completion of this audit.

Ben J. Benoit Riverside County Auditor-Controller

By: René Casillas, CPA, CRMA Deputy Auditor-Controller

cc: Board of Supervisors

Jeff A. Van Wagenen, Jr., County Executive Officer

Dave Rogers, Chief Administrative Officer

Grand Jury



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Deposits Tracking and Recording

Finding 1: Tracking and Recording of Deposit Transactions

"Deposits for reimbursements from the state are not consistently tracked and recorded to the respective operating fund. We identified three (15%) of 20 transactions totaling \$82,872 which were not accurately tracked and recorded to the respective operating fund. The Standard Practice Manual 1001, Internal Control, states, "In order to achieve the internal control's objectives, departments must follow the methods and procedures to ensure the reasonable assurance on accuracy, reliability and timeliness of financial records and reports." It was noted that the department relies on another department to assist them with the financial reporting duties, who is not involved in the department's daily operations. This impacts management's ability to accurately track the reimbursements received from the state and its ability to accurately record and report financial information."

Recommendation 1.1

"Develop a process for tracking deposits to ensure reimbursements are recorded to the respective operating fund."

Current Status 1.1: Implemented

Recommendation 1.2

"Assign the financial accounting and reporting duties to a staff who is involved in the department's daily operations to ensure consistency in tracking and recording of deposit transactions."

Current Status 1.2: Implemented



Outreach Activities

Finding 2: Compliance with Grant Agreements

"Payments for services provided by Behavioral Health are processed without obtaining complete documentation and information required by the respective grant. We identified three (100%) out of three invoices received did not contain the locations where services were provided or the hourly times of staff providing the services. The State of California – Department of General Services, the standard agreement, Budget Details and Payment Provisions - Exhibit B, states, "all invoices/claims must be completed thoroughly and legibly, with all applicable fields completed. Invoices/claims that are submitted to the appropriate location but have been altered, or are inaccurate, or do not provide all necessary information will not be accepted. Invoices/claims submitted shall include location where services were performed, time in and time out." The County is subject to the examination and audit of the State Auditor in accordance with Government Code section 85467.7. Missing required information and documentation will lead to non-compliance with grant requirements and as stated in the grant agreement, Proposition 63, "The agreement can be immediately terminated for cause. The term "for cause" means that the county fails to meet the terms, conditions, and/or responsibilities of the grant."

Recommendation 2

"Ensure invoices received from Behavioral Health contain the location of services, sign in and out of times staff providing services as well as other requirements outlined in Exbibit B, Budget Details and Payment Provisions, State of California – Department of General Services, grant standard agreement."

Current Status 2: Not Implemented

Based on our review of six invoices, six of them (100%) did not contain the locations where services were provided or the hourly times of staff providing the services.

Management's Response

"The Behavioral Health Services Administrator for RUHS, for which we have an MOU with regarding this position, stated RUHS originally does not currently track the location of services and that there is not a way to go back and track all the locations for services at this point. The position has now been vacant since August of 2022.



Moving forward, The Behavioral Health Services Administrator for RUHS and myself have agreed that location of services will be generated through an active outreach tracker that RUHS will require for their VSL when the position is refilled."

Attachment A

Internal Audit Report 2022-003

Riverside County

Department of

Veterans' Services Audit

Report Date: December 7, 2021



Office of Paul Angulo, CPA, MA
Riverside County Auditor-Controller
4080 Lemon Street, 11th Floor
Riverside, CA 92509
(951) 955-3800

www.auditorcontroller.org



COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE

OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

County Administrative Center 4080 Lemon Street, 11th Floor P.O. Box 1326 Riverside, CA 92502-1326 (951) 955-3800 Fax (951) 955-3802



Paul Angulo, CPA, MA Riverside County Auditor-Controller

> Tanya S. Harris, DPA, CPA Assistant Auditor-Controller

December 7, 2021

Grant Gautsche Director Riverside County Department of Veteran's Services 4360 Orange Street Riverside, CA 92501

Subject: Internal Audit Report 2022-003: Riverside County Department of Veteran's Services Audit

Dear Mr. Gautsche:

In accordance with Board of Supervisors Resolution 83-338, we audited the Riverside County Department of Veteran's Services (Veterans' Services) to provide management and the Board of Supervisors with an independent assessment of internal controls over deposit tracking and recording, and outreach activities.

We conducted our audit in accordance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing. These standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, reliable, relevant, and useful information to provide reasonable assurance that our objective as described above is achieved. An internal audit includes the systematic analysis of information to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of internal controls. We believe this audit provides a reasonable basis for our conclusion.

Internal controls are processes designed to provide management reasonable assurance of achieving efficiency of operations, compliance with laws and regulations, and reliability of financial and non-financial information. Management is responsible for establishing and maintaining adequate internal controls. Our responsibility is to evaluate the internal controls.

Our conclusion and details of our audit are documented in the body of this audit report.



As requested, in accordance with paragraph III.C of the Board of Supervisors Resolution 83-338, management responded to each reported condition and recommendation contained in our report. Management's responses are included in the report. We will follow-up to verify that management implemented the corrective actions.

Paul Angulo, CPA, MA Riverside County Auditor-Controller

By: René Casillas, CPA, CRMA Chief Internal Auditor

cc: Board of Supervisors Jeff A. Van Wagenen, Jr., County Executive Officer Grand Jury



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Executive Summary

Overview

Riverside County Department of Veterans' Services mission is to assist the veterans, their dependents, and respective survivors with obtaining benefits available in educational programs, employment services, healthcare, life insurance, housing, and burial from local, state, and federal agencies. Veterans' Services has an adopted budget of \$2.4 million for FY 2021-22 and has 20 authorized county positions to execute its responsibilities. *County of Riverside, Revised FY 2021-2022 Recommended Budget*, 166.

Audit Objective

Our objective is to provide management and the Board of Supervisors with an independent assessment about the adequacy and effectiveness of internal controls over deposit tracking and recording, and outreach activities. Internal controls are processes designed to provide management reasonable assurance of achieving efficiency of operations, compliance with laws and regulations, and reliability of financial and non-financial information. Reasonable assurance recognizes internal controls have inherent limitations, including cost, mistakes, and intentional efforts to bypass internal controls.

Audit Scope and Methodology

We conducted the audit from May 27, 2021, through August 18, 2021, for operations from July 1, 2019, through August 3, 2021. Following a risk-based approach, our scope initially included the following:

- Deposits Tracking and Recording
- · Outreach Activities
- CARES Act Expenditure Eligibility
- Program Eligibility Requirements

Through inquiry, observations, and limited examination of relevant documentation, it was determined through a risk assessment for CARES Act expenditure's eligibility and program eligibility requirements, that the risk exposure to Veterans' Services Department associated with these processes are well mitigated with internal controls and are functioning as designed. We focused our audit scope to internal controls over deposits tracking and recording, and outreach activities.



Audit Highlights

Summary of Existing Conditions

The current process has not mitigated the following risks:

- Deposits for reimbursements from the state are not consistently tracked and recorded to the respective operating fund. This impacts management's ability to accurately track the reimbursements received from the state and its ability to accurately record and report financial information.
- Payments for services are processed without obtaining complete documentation and information required by the respective grant. This is non-compliant with the grant, and according to the grant's documenting requirements, it can lead to the termination of the agreement.

Summary of Improvement Opportunities

The improvement opportunities are in the following areas:

- Develop a process for tracking deposits to ensure reimbursements are recorded to the respective operating fund.
- Ensure invoices submitted for reimbursement contain all information and documentation required by the grant agreement.

Audit Conclusion

Based upon the results of our audit, we identified opportunities for improvement of internal controls relating to deposit tracking and recording, and outreach activities. Reasonable assurance recognizes internal controls have inherent limitations, including cost, mistakes, and intentional efforts to bypass internal controls.



Deposits Tracking and Recording

Background

Veterans' Services is currently utilizing the modified accrual as a method of accounting. The revenue for Veterans' Services is derived from reimbursements provided by the Federal and State Government. The revenue is categorized into these five accounts: Subvention Account, License Plate Account, Medi-Cal Account, CARES Act Account and Deposit Grants (Prop.63) Account. Veterans' Services established and maintains two funds: the general fund and a sub-fund of the general fund. Department's process is to record deposits based on the nature of expenditures.

Objective

To evaluate the existence and adequacy of internal control over Veterans' Services deposit allocations.

Audit Methodology

To accomplish these objectives, we:

- Obtained an understanding of board policies and applicable standards.
- Interviewed department management and staff to obtain an overview of the deposit allocation process.
- Obtained a list of deposit transactions to perform detailed testing.
- Obtained and tracked treasury deposits to the corresponding operating fund.

Finding 1: Tracking and Recording of Deposit Transactions

• Deposits for reimbursements from the state are not consistently tracked and recorded to the respective operating fund. We identified three (15%) of 20 transactions totaling \$82,872 which were not accurately tracked and recorded to the respective operating fund. The Standard Practice Manual 1001, Internal Control, states, "In order to achieve the internal control's objectives, departments must follow the methods and procedures to ensure the reasonable assurance on accuracy, reliability and timeliness of financial records and reports." It was noted that the department relies on another



department to assist them with the financial reporting duties, who is not involved in the department's daily operations. This impacts management's ability to accurately track the reimbursements received from the state and its ability to accurately record and report financial information.

Recommendation 1.1

Develop a process for tracking deposits to ensure reimbursements are recorded to the respective operating fund.

Management's Response

"Concur. Veterans' Services will be implementing a system of checks and balances to meet the goals set by the ACO's office. This will include assigning one primary staff member to whom all financial transactions will be assigned. One back up member will be assigned in case the primary person is unavailable due to sickness, vacation, or other unforeseen circumstances.

After the deposit has been completed and assigned to a funding string, the primary staff member will notify the Director, Grant Gautsche. Director Gautsche will then check to ensure the transaction was completed properly and within the correct funding string. Veterans' Services has recently requested additional funding to hire an Administrative Services Officer. Upon hiring, this staff member will then become the primary financial analyst for the department and will take on the administrative role for performing this as well as other financial duties."

Actual/Estimated Date of Corrective Action: January 2023

Recommendation 1.2

Assign the financial accounting and reporting duties to a staff who is involved in the department's daily operations to ensure consistency in tracking and recording of deposit transactions.

Management's Response

"Concur. Our response will remain the same as our response for Recommendation 1.1."

Actual/Estimated Date of Corrective Action: January 2023



Outreach Activities

Background

The State of California - Department of General Services represents an agreement between California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) and Riverside County Department of Veterans' Services, in which Veterans' Services would perform mental health outreach service in accordance with the Mental Health Services Act (Proposition 63), on behalf of CalVet. Veterans' Services is responsible to provide CalVet with four periodic progress reports per year. According to the State of California - Department of General Services, the standard agreement, *Budget Details and Payment Provisions*, Exhibit B, states, "the following information is required: invoices/claims submitted should include the following information in order to be considered complete and acceptable for processing, or the invoice/claim will be returned: date of invoice/claim, location where services were performed, date(s) of service, total dollar amount being billed, first and last name of provider performing services, hourly rate, time in and time out and total hours worked." Veterans' Services offers outreach activities for mental health services, mental health group sessions, veteran centered advocacy, and consultations performed by Behavioral Health.

Objective

To evaluate the existence and adequacy of internal controls over Veterans' Services outreach activities.

Audit Methodology

To accomplish these objectives, we:

- Obtained an understanding of the State of California Department of General Services, the standard agreement, Budget Details and Payment Provisions qualifications and requirements.
- Interviewed department management and staff to obtain an understanding over outreach activities, agreement requirements, and claims process.
- Obtained a list of outreach activity events, invoices, claims and periodic progress reports.



 Reviewed and compared the agreement requirements with invoices/claims submitted for reimbursements.

Finding 2: Compliance with Grant Agreements

 Payments for services provided from Behavioral Health are processed without obtaining complete documentation and information required by the respective grant. We identified three (100%) out of three invoices received did not contain the locations where services were provided or the hourly times of staff providing the services. The State of California - Department of General Services, the standard agreement, Budget Details and Payment Provisions - Exhibit B, states, "all invoices/claims must be completed thoroughly and legibly, with all applicable fields completed. Invoices/claims that are submitted to the appropriate location but have been altered, or are inaccurate, or do not provide all necessary information will not be accepted. Invoices/claims submitted shall include location where services were performed, time in and time out." The County is subject to the examination and audit of the State Auditor in accordance with Government Code section 85467.7. Missing required information and documentation will lead to non-compliance with grant requirements and as stated in the grant agreement, Proposition 63, "The agreement can be immediately terminated for cause. The term "for cause" means that the county fails to meet the terms, conditions, and/or responsibilities of the grant."

Recommendation 2

Ensure invoices received from Behavioral Health contain the location of services, sign in and out of times staff providing services as well as other requirements outlined in Exbibit B, *Budget Details and Payment Provisions*, State of California – Department of General Services, grant standard agreement.

Management's Response:

"Concur. Veterans' Services will immediately contact and advise the Veterans Clinical Therapist II from Behavioral Health of the need to provide metrics to include the locations of where services were provided, hourly times of staff providing services to include their time in and time out. This will ensure compliancy with the necessary requirements for the Proposition 63 Grant."

Actual/Estimated Date of Corrective Action: October 27, 2021

Attachment B



COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' SERVICES GRANT A. GAUTSCHE, Director

MAIN OFFICE: 4360 Orange Street Riverside, CA 92501 Telephone: (951) 955-3060 FAX: (951) 955-3063 BRANCH OFFICE: 749 N. State Street Hemet, CA 92548 Telephone: (951) 766-2566 FAX: (951) 766-2567

BRANCH OFFICE: 44-199B Monroe Street Indio, CA 92201 Telephone: (760) 863-8266 FAX: (760) 863-8478

The following are the current status of the reported findings and planned corrective actions contained in Internal Audit Report 2022-003: Riverside County Department of Veterans' Services Audit.

Loud Double	June 9, 2023
Authorized Signature	Date
Finding 1: Tracking and Recording of Deposit Trace. Deposits for reimbursements from the state are not concespective operating fund. We identified three (15%) of were not accurately tracked and recorded to the respective Manual 1001, <i>Internal Control</i> , states, "In or objectives, departments must follow the methods and assurance on accuracy, reliability and timeliness of finant that the department relies on another department to a duties, who is not involved in the department's daily of ability to accurately track the reimbursements received from record and report financial information.	nsistently tracked and recorded to the 20 transactions totaling \$82,872 which pective operating fund. The Standard rder to achieve the internal control's procedures to ensure the reasonable notal records and reports." It was noted assist them with the financial reporting perations. This impacts management's
Current Status	

Current Status

Reported Finding Corrected? X Yes No

The Department has hired an Administrative Services Officer who consistently tracks and ensures the deposits are applied to the respective operating funds.

Recommendation 1.1

Develop a process for tracking deposits to ensure reimbursements are recorded to the respective operating fund.

Management Reply

"Concur. Veterans' Services will be implementing a system of checks and balances to meet the goals set by the ACO's office. This will include assigning one primary staff member to whom all financial transactions will be assigned. One backup member will be assigned in case the primary person is unavailable due to sickness, vacation, or other unforeseen circumstances.

After the deposit has been completed and assigned to a funding string, the primary staff member will notify the Director, Grant Gautsche. Director Gautsche will then check to ensure the transaction was completed properly and within the correct funding string. Veterans'

and will take on the administrative role for performing this as well as other financial duties." Actual/Estimated Date of Corrective Action: January 2023 **Current Status** Corrective Action: | X | Fully Implemented Partially Implemented Not Implemented Description of the corrective action taken (or pending action and estimated date of completion for planned corrective action that is partially or not implemented).

The Department hired an Administrative Services Officer (ASO) in February 2022 who is the primary financial analyst for performing the financial duties and responsibilities. The ASO conducts checks and balances by running Simpler reports to ensure deposits are applied to the correct accounts as reviewed and approved by the Director. Recommendation 1.2 Assign the financial accounting and reporting duties to a staff who is involved in the department's daily operations to ensure consistency in tracking and recording of deposit transactions. Management's Reply "Concur. Our response will remain the same as our response for Recommendation 1.1." Actual/Estimated Date of Corrective Action: January 2023 **Current Status** Corrective Action: X Fully Implemented Partially Implemented Not Implemented Description of the corrective action taken (or pending action and estimated date of completion for planned corrective action that is partially or not implemented). The Department has hired an ASO who is involved in daily operations and is stationed on-site to ensure internal control objectives are met to ensure the accuracy reliability and timeliness of financial deposits, records and reports.

Services has recently requested additional funding to hire an Administrative Services Officer. Upon hiring, this staff member will then become the primary financial analyst for the department

Finding 2: Compliance with Grant Agreements

Payments for services provided by Behavioral Health are processed without obtaining complete documentation and information required by the respective grant. We identified three (100%) out of three invoices received did not contain the locations where services were provided or the hourly times of staff providing the services. The State of California – Department of General Services, the standard agreement, Budget Details and Payment Provisions - Exhibit B, states, "all invoices/claims must be completed thoroughly and legibly, with all applicable fields completed. Invoices/claims that are submitted to the appropriate location but have been altered, or are inaccurate, or do not provide all necessary information will not be accepted. Invoices/claims submitted shall include location where services were performed, time in and time out." The County is

subject to the examination and audit of the State Auditor in accordance with Government Code section 85467.7. Missing required information and documentation will lead to non-compliance with grant requirements and as stated in the grant agreement, *Proposition 63*, "The agreement can be immediately terminated for cause. The term "for cause" means that the county fails to meet the terms, conditions, and/or responsibilities of the grant."