

# CLERK-RECORDER-ELECTIONS DEPARTMENT 2018 PERFORMANCE REPORT

## I. DEPARTMENT MISSION

### A. ELECTIONS DIVISION MISSION

Provide the highest level of Voter Registration and Election Services to the citizens of the County by:

1. Processing all voter transactions timely and accurately to ensure each voter is fully enfranchised.
2. Employing accessible, safe and adequate locations for voting.
3. Providing greater vote-by-mail capacity, as a convenient and secure method of voting.
4. Accurately preparing, tabulating and reporting timely election results.
5. Eliminating obstacles to civic participation and voting; meeting the needs of all voters.
6. Managing all operations effectively and with respect for our fiduciary responsibility to the taxpayers.

### B. CLERK-RECORDER DIVISION MISSION

With integrity, respect, and commitment to customer service:

1. Accurately maintain and preserve official records and indices relating to real property and vital records in Contra Costa County.
2. Issue marriage licenses, perform marriage ceremonies, register confidential marriages, file Fictitious Business Name Statements, register professional agents, file notary bonds, administer notary and other oaths, and accept filings, as provided by California code.
3. Explore and implement new technologies to increase access to public records.
4. Provide certified copies of real property and vital records.

## II. MAJOR PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

### A. ELECTIONS DIVISION

The Elections Division responsibilities include the conduct of elections in an accurate and timely manner; promotion of voter registration and conduct of voter registration outreach; verification of signatures on initiative, referendum, and recall petitions; maintenance of voter registration records (including participation in vigorous voter list maintenance programs); filing and certification of nomination papers and campaign finance documents; preparation and mailing of sample ballots, candidate statements, measures, arguments, and vote-by-mail ballots.

This budget includes the Administration Division, which provides administration for fiscal issues, facility issues, personnel, payroll, employee performance management and development, division clerical supervision, overall department oversight, other department and county-wide issues, as well as special projects.

BUDGET:               \$11,839,975  
FTE:                    32.5

## B. CLERK-RECORDER DIVISION

The County Clerk-Recorder Division provides County Clerk and County Recorder functions.

The County Clerk responsibilities include the issuance of marriage licenses, performance of marriage ceremonies, registration of confidential marriage licenses, filing of Fictitious Business Name Statements and Notary Bonds, as well as registration of professional agents. The County Clerk provides copies of official records, and provides public notice of all filed environmental documents, for a fee.

The County Recorder responsibilities include examination and recording of documents relating to real property located in the County; preservation and archiving all official real property records including subdivision, assessment districts, and records of survey maps offered for filing; ,creation and maintenance of an index for the public to search and locate recorded documents; registration of all public marriages, and issuance of certified copies of all vital records (births and deaths) for the County. The County Recorder also collects Documentary Transfer Tax on property transfers.

BUDGET:               \$4,191,102  
FTE:                    39

## C. RECORDER-DEDICATED PROJECT BUDGETS

Recorder Micrographics  
Recorder Modernization  
Vital Records Improvement Program (VRIP)  
Recorder Redaction Program  
Recorder Electronic Recording Program

The Clerk-Recorder Micrographics dedicated project responsibilities include digitization and conversion of all Clerk-Recorder documents into electronic and archival format (microfilm for emergency backup purposes).

The Clerk-Recorder Modernization dedicated project responsibilities include to provide for the development of procedures to efficiently identify and locate documents for the public and other County users, to upgrade and support modernized systems for recording, indexing, cashiering, customer service and related duties.

The Clerk-Recorder Vital Records Improvement Program (VRIP) dedicated project responsibilities include improving vital record processes and system enhancements.

The Clerk-Recorder Redaction Program dedicated project responsibilities include the redaction of Social Security Numbers from documents as required by law to address privacy issues and enhance security.

The Clerk-Recorder Electronic Recording Program dedicated project responsibilities include maintaining the electronic recording system in compliance with DOJ regulations.

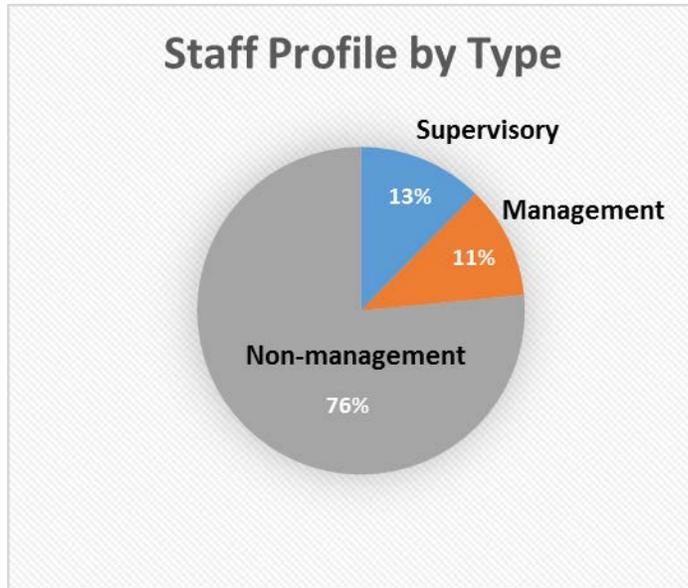
BUDGET: \$11,084,475  
 FTE: 11

**D. TOTAL DEPARTMENT DATA**

BUDGET: \$16,031,092 General Fund  
 \$11,084,475 Dedicated Funds  
 FTE: 82.5

**Department Classifications**

CLASSIFICATION	FTE
County Clerk-Recorder	1
Deputy County Clerk-Recorder	1
Assistant County Clerk-Recorder/Assistant Registrar	2
Executive Secretary	1
Network Administrator II	1
Clerk-Recorder Services Manager	2
Election Services Manager	2
Voter Education and Engagement Assistant	.5
Voter Education and Engagement Specialist	1
Clerk-Recorder Services Supervisor	4
Election Processing Supervisor	5
Outreach Coordinator	1
Information Systems Specialist I	1
Information Systems Technician I	3
Elections Services Specialist	9
Clerk-Recorder Services Specialist	13
Elections Services Technician	9
Clerk-Recorder Services Technician	13
Clerical (Experience 5, Specialist 3)	8
Information Systems Assistant II	5
Total	82.5



Staff Profile by Type		
Management	9	10.9%
Supervisory	11	13.3%
Non-management	62.5	75.8%
Total	82.5	100.0%

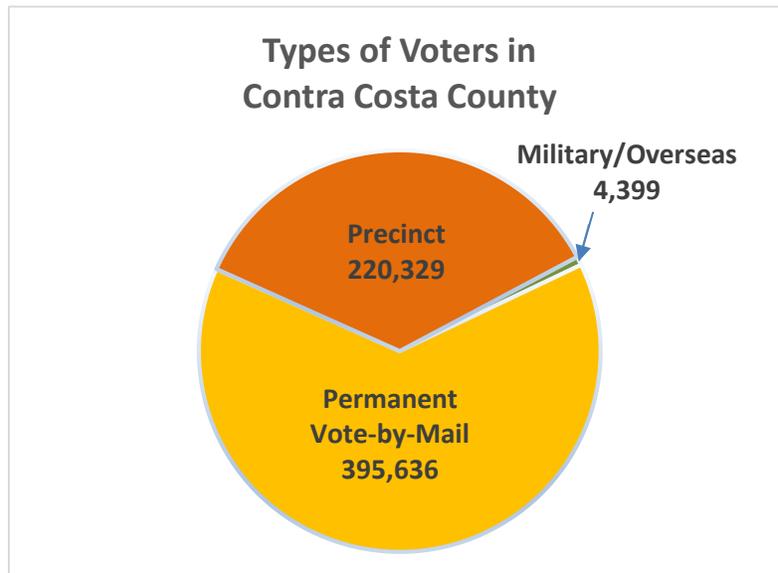
### III. DEPARTMENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

#### A. DEPARTMENT-WIDE

1. Contra Costa County was the first Clerk-Recorder Department in California to become digital. While most paper based documents have been removed from our day-to-day operations, invaluable old records remain in their paper form for historic and legal purposes after they are digitized. The Clerk-Recorder's charge is to maintain all recorded documents in perpetuity – many dating from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century. Our ongoing program archives, indexes and assesses the condition of all documents for preservation and long-term management. The old book collection contains 4,583 volumes and 2,672 maps.
2. The Clerk-Recorder and Elections Divisions continually document procedures and make them available to the public. In addition to the transparency of documenting processes applied in our day-to-day operations, the procedures are useful when we are called upon as expert witnesses in court proceedings.
3. The Department created Division-specific employee classifications in both Divisions with comparable levels of expertise and salary between the two divisions. A five-year transition program to the new classifications is now complete and the Department is designing a program to provide employees the opportunity to flex between the two divisions. From a management standpoint, this will provide another level of flexibility to meet periodic peaks that occur in both divisions and provide staff opportunities to gain new skills.

## B. ELECTIONS

1. The County's previous voting system exceeded its anticipated lifespan. The department conducted a thorough review of systems certified by the Secretary of State and selected Dominion Voting's Democracy Suite. The cost of the new system was wholly covered by Capital Replacement surcharge funds, which are collected from the agencies we conduct elections for. The Elections Division successfully implemented the new voting system in time for the June Primary Election. Efficiencies and process improvements allowed for certification of the June Primary Election 10 days earlier than the deadline.
2. The Elections Division's new training class—Accessible Polling Place Locations and Equipment (APPLE)—helps poll workers better understand accessibility issues, provide quality service to voters, and proactively monitor and correct any accessibility issues at their polling place. Training classes began in January 2018 and in the first year, over 800 poll workers attended. In August 2018, the Elections Division was awarded a prestigious Professional Practices Program Award for APPLE from the National Election Center, acknowledging innovation in voter accessibility.
3. Voting by mail continues to grow in California and in Contra Costa County. At the 1996 Presidential General Election, 93,428 vote-by-mail ballots were cast, or 34% of the total vote cast. At the November General Election in 2018, 290,417 vote-by-mail ballots were cast or 69% of the total vote cast. Vote-by-mail logistics mean that we effectively conduct two separate elections simultaneously: a vote-by-mail election and a polling place election.
4. At the November 2018 General Election, Contra Costa had a record 619,963 registered voters. Of the total registered voters, 395,636 were permanent vote-by-mail voters and another 4,399 were military and civilian overseas voters. 3,998 voters voted at one of our Regional Early Voting sites.



5. The Elections Division continued to pursue ways to better communicate with and manage poll workers. The Division purchased and implemented a new poll worker management system, which gives every poll worker an account to manage their information, indicate availability, and respond to assignments.
6. On May 12, 2018 the Elections Division held its first Candidate Workshop for Contra Costa residents interested in running for office. The workshop was designed to demystify what it takes to run for office and expert panels covered subjects such as how to file and appear on the ballot, campaign finance disclosure requirements, and messaging strategies. More than 60 potential candidates participated.
7. Under a new Election Law, Conditional Voter Registration allows a prospective voter to register and cast a ballot after the registration deadline. In the November 2018 General Election, 1,158 voters registered and cast a ballot under this law.
8. The Elections Division partnered with local chapters of the League of Women Voters, Contra Costa Library, and Contra Costa Television (CCTV) to host televised candidate forums for key local races. The forums were moderated by professional Bay Area television and radio personalities and aired on local cable stations. The 39 videos for the November 2018 election were posted on YouTube and were watched 7,978 times.
9. The Voter Outreach and Education Program promotes voter and citizen education and engagement. It provides information, engages the public, seeks to connect residents with resources to be empowered to become involved in their ever-expanding community, and encourages involvement, particularly from those that may be left out or underrepresented. The program targets schools and colleges to reach out to members of the younger generation, who as a whole are underrepresented. The program leverages resources that are already in place, including groups like the Contra Costa's two League of Women Voters chapters, AAUW (American Association of University Women), APAPA (Asian Pacific American Political Association), the ACLU, Hispanic Chamber, Chambers of Commerce, Rotary and Kiwanis groups, etc. The program has expanded the use of social media, videos, and technology to promote civic engagement and provide valuable information to Contra Costa residents.
10. The Elections Division participated in National Voter Registration Day for the fourth year, by providing registration kits to participating schools and community organizations who registered 679 voters on Tuesday, September 25. Since 2015, over 2,500 Contra Costa students from 25 high schools have registered or pre-registered to vote through this annual event.
11. Ambrose Community Center is the hub of activities and services for Bay Point residents and has served as a central polling place for decades. Recognizing the importance of continuing to use this community institution as a polling place, the Elections Division partnered with the Ambrose Recreation and Park District Board to make physical improvements to Center to correct several accessibility issues and make it fully accessible on both Election Day and year-round. The project

renovated the accessible path of travel to the building and the accessible parking spaces, making the location available to all voters and community members. The work was funded in part with a grant from the Keller Canyon Mitigation Fund

12. To provide quality service to all voters, we work closely with community members to share information, better understand voting needs, and gather feedback. Our Planning for Elections and Engagement Panel meets regularly to provide feedback and suggestions for future elections and civic engagement programs and policies; participates in planning for elections operations and engagement activities, and promotes the activities of the Elections Division and civic engagement work within the community.
13. In 2018 the Elections Division debuted a new Ballot Translation Guide to assist voters with limited English proficiency in casting a ballot independently. The Ballot Translation Guide contains a translation of every contest, candidate, and measure on every ballot type in the same sequence as they appear on the official ballot. Unlike the precinct-specific facsimile ballots used in the past, the Ballot Translation Guide is available to all voters at every polling place. The Guide is available in state-mandated languages—currently Korean, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.
14. Under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act, Contra Costa is required to provide official voting information in English, Spanish, and Chinese. The 2018 elections were the first under the new Chinese requirement, and the Elections Division successfully updated the Official Ballot, Voter Information Guide, and other materials to meet this requirement. This required change resulted in a substantial budget consequence as we added a third language to the Election materials.
15. Ahead of the 2018 elections, all 268 polling places were surveyed for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. After analyzing the collected data, the division created plans to mitigate any potential accessibility issues.
16. The Elections Division launched a new website in February 2018, expanding the available information and making it easier to find. The website includes voter information in both Chinese and Spanish.

### C. CLERK-RECORDER

1. 240,299 real property documents were recorded in 2018, an average of 20,025 documents per month – which was a 16% decrease from 2017.
2. Contra Costa implemented electronic recording in 2012 - a process that Contra Costa was a leader in advocating for in the late 1990's. (Contra Costa legislators carried two enabling bills.) Fifty-six (56) percent of documents were submitted and recorded electronically in 2018. Contra Costa has been in the forefront of government-to-government (G2G) electronic recording, collaborating with government agencies such as the County Treasurer/Tax Collector, the Department of Child Support Services, and the California Franchise Tax Board to process their recordable documents electronically.

3. A 2017 biennial inspection audit by Department of Justice (DOJ) confirmed that the Division's Electronic Recording Delivery System (ERDS) is in compliance with all State-mandated regulations and all policy and security requirements are being adhered to.
4. The Clerk-Recorder Division continually pursues opportunities to offer its services to the public outside the office. 2018 marked the second year the Division participated in Operation Documentation, offering Veterans the opportunity to record honorable discharge documents. Our Records Within Reach Program partners with events throughout the county to issue certified vital records at different locations.
5. The Clerk-Recorder Division created a "Destination Wedding" Program to highlight historic and/or remarkable locations throughout Contra Costa County. The events are offered on a quarterly basis and ceremonies are officiated by Division staff. In 2018, couples were married at the John Muir House in Martinez, the Summit at the top of Mount Diablo, and the waterfront in Richmond. These events have been well received and provide a unique option for couples that wish to be married.
6. Our Real Estate Fraud Notification Program, in partnership with the District Attorney and County Assessor, continues to be instrumental in identifying and prosecuting incidents of fraud. Since its 2012 inception, the DA has prosecuted 32 cases – the first perpetrators were identified within the first two weeks of the implementation of this program.
7. The Clerk-Recorder Division has an active customer service feedback program that includes customer survey/comment cards in our lobby and at customer service windows, a website survey process, and a YELP page. The division carefully monitors feedback. In 2018, 938 customer survey/comment cards were received. Of the cards received, 98.5% were favorable. The division provides feedback from customers to staff, letting them know how their service was received.
8. In 2016, the Clerk-Recorder Division implemented Language Line that provides translation services in over 200 languages. The service is a direct phone line to certified translators. Staff utilize this service, as needed, when answering the phones as well as in-person interactions. The service was used to assist in the conduct of two wedding ceremonies – one in Spanish and one in Vietnamese. This service is an invaluable addition to our customer service.
9. The Clerk-Recorder Division is able to process orders for copies of vital records and real property documents online, providing customers the ability to get copies of their important documents without having to travel to Martinez. The Division added online customer authentication as an alternate to notary authentication, allowing a customer to complete their order without leaving their home.

10. Marriage ceremonies conducted by the County Clerk continue to be a popular service. In 2018, the division conducted 2,006 marriage ceremonies, a 12% increase over 2013. Ceremony rooms with stained glass, adding vow renewal services, Destination Weddings, and extending evening hours during summer months contributes to the popularity and convenience of this service.
11. An online ceremony appointment system was introduced in 2016/17. All ceremony appointments are now made online and allow couples to request special accommodations such as language preference, number of guests, room selection, etc. The couples receive an email confirmation of their appointment and a reminder before the scheduled ceremony date. The new system has substantially reduced “no shows.”
12. Customers continue to embrace the division’s paperless application process. The Clerk-Recorder Division added iPad touchscreen technology to its complement of kiosks to modernize the electronic application process for copies of vital documents.
13. The Clerk-Recorder Division extended County Clerk services by an additional three hours, remaining open until 7:30 every Thursday during the months of July and August 2018. The Division served a total of 201 customers, a 13% increase over 2017. A total of 227 products and services were purchased by the public.
14. The Clerk-Recorder Division, along with the Martinez Public Library, the Martinez History Museum, and the Contra Costa County Historical Society, hosted the first Martinez Archive Crawl on September 29, 2018. The event highlighted historical archives available in Martinez and surrounding areas. Participants “crawled” to the four locations, were provided an overview of the collections and challenged to locate items. This is a biannual event the Division looks forward to participating again in 2019.

#### D. CLERK-RECORDER-DEDICATED PROJECT BUDGETS

- Recorder Micrographics
- Recorder Modernization
- Vital Records Improvement Program (VRIP)
- Recorder Redaction Program
- Recorder Electronic Recording Program

The five dedicated funds listed above support specific functions and are not general fund accounts.

Note: A large portion of the Clerk-Recorder Division’s duties are designed to facilitate commerce. Therefore, private interests have advocated special funding for Clerks and Recorders to assure that offices are open during regular business hours, indices are produced and verified within set timelines, documents are recorded, certified copies are produced in a timely manner, and that images and the index are readily available to the public.

1. Microfilm is no longer our primary media for document storage and retrieval; therefore, we no longer collect the fee for this program. We continue to utilize microfilm as redundant storage medium in the event of a disaster.
2. Map and Document Restoration Program: The department implemented a phased program to restore old maps, books, and vital records in the Clerk-Recorder Division. Many of these reference materials and records date back to the 1800's and early 1900's. Currently, the Clerk-Recorder Division is developing a long-range plan to identify records in the most critical need of restoration and preservation. Complete preservation of all records is estimated at over fourteen million dollars. Our challenge is to prioritize which documents merit preservation and at what level (actual preservation or imaging and warehousing). The department will identify documents with historical significance that merit true museum-quality restoration treatment to preserve them for future generations. The department plans to pay for most of this project with dedicated funding, which preserves the General Fund appropriations for operations.
3. The Clerk-Recorder Division continues to use a queuing system implemented using Modernization funds. After a customer checks in at the customer service desk, staff assess their needs, the customer completes the appropriate form(s), then they are entered into a "virtual line" that assigns them to a customer service window, where a clerk processes the customer's request. Digital image storage facilitates the efficient processing of customer requests without sending the customer back to a previous point in the process.
4. The Clerk-Recorder Division uses Vital Records Improvement Program (VRIP) funds to purchase security enhanced bank note paper required to authenticate copies of birth, death and marriage certificates to reduce the incidence of fraudulent or forged documents.

#### **IV. DEPARTMENT CHALLENGES**

##### **A. ELECTIONS**

1. There are currently several election reform initiatives and bills which may dramatically change the way voting is conducted in California, and neither the financial impacts nor voter participation and acceptance have been fully considered. The Elections Division will continue to watch as these reforms are implemented before deciding to change from a process that has been very successful for the last two major elections.

The model promised reduced costs and increased turnout by moving to vote centers as opposed to individual voting precincts. Five counties adopted the new voter model in 2018. However, participating counties did not realize the anticipated cost savings and Contra Costa County saw the same increase in voter turnout as the counties using the new model.

2. The addition of Chinese to official voting materials has increased both translation and printing costs of Official Ballots and Voter Information Guides. The current budget and finance system compares departments on a year to year basis, rather than the actual 2- and 4-year budget cycles in which the department operates.
3. Automatic voter registration went live at the DMV in April 2018. This has led to an increase in the number of voter registration records to process. Currently, records are held and then released in large batches, making it difficult to anticipate the workload.
4. A number of jurisdictions in the County are moving from at-large to district elections. Once a jurisdiction creates new boundaries, our office must then redraw precinct lines and regroup voters according to their new associations. This becomes challenging when jurisdictions disregard existing precinct boundaries and the new lines conflict with other existing boundaries. There are only two staff members who can make precinct changes and we have no control over when a jurisdiction submits boundaries.
5. The department continues to seek ways to utilize technology to improve our workflows, increase file accuracy, and improve services.

#### B. CLERK-RECORDER

1. The Clerk-Recorder Division has reclassified positions to accurately reflect duties and tasks required, in response to emerging technologies. An ongoing program to train/cross-train staff enhances office operations and customer service.
2. The Clerk-Recorder Division workload fluctuates with the real estate market, which impacts the demand for recording. The Division is experiencing a decline in the volume of recordings. The California Association of Realtors cite that tight supply and low housing affordability is hindering market growth and putting upward pressure on home prices.
3. Electronic recording of documents will continue to transform our business practices in the future. Clerk-Recorder Division staff embrace this technology and are cross-training and contributing ideas for continuous system improvement.
4. The Clerk-Recorder Division is developing a program to collect Documentary Transfer Tax (DDT) on unrecorded transfers of ownership among legal entities. In 2017, the Supreme Court affirmed counties can impose DDT in cases where beneficial interest is transferred among legal entities and is accompanied by consideration. In 2018, \$515,000 was paid voluntarily to the County by multiple entities. The Clerk-Recorder Division will pursue collection of DDT when such transfers occur. This income is realized by the General Fund, but does not pass through the Clerk-Recorder Division budget.
5. The Clerk-Recorder Division is in the process of replacing its County Clerk and Recorder system. The legacy system implemented in 1998 has had few updates

throughout the years. The new system will modernize processes and improve efficiencies. The system will *Go Live* in the first half of FY 2019-20.

## V. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

### A. Elections Office

1. Objective: Provide sufficient vote-by-mail capacity.

a. Indicator: Percentage of votes cast by mail

2018 General Election: 69%

b. Indicator: Number of ballots and ballot cards processed, counted, and reported on Election Night and as a percent of ballots cast

2018 General Election: 233,575 ballots  
1,401,450 ballot cards  
55%

2. Objective: Maintain a high level of voter registration and accurate rolls.

a. Indicator: Number of active, registered voters (Report of Registration for the November 2018 General Election)

619,963

3. Objective: Conduct timely, accurate, and cost-effective elections.

a. Indicator: Total cost per registered voter

2018 General Election: \$8.56

b. Indicator: Time final unofficial Election Night results printed

2018 General Election: 1:00 am

c. Indicator: Election Day Internet web site usage (November 2018)

36,710 visits and 12,373 unique visitors

### B. Clerk-Recorder and Recorder Micrographics/Modernization

1. Objective: Maintain or increase productivity without reducing accuracy.

a. Indicator: Annual recording volume

240,299 documents were recorded in 2018, a 16% decrease from 2017, when 286,107 were recorded

b. Indicator: Percentage of time in compliance with statutory mandate.

100% in compliance in 2018

2. Objective: Maintain or increase productivity through use of automation.
- a. Indicator: Website “visits” to the Recorder’s Office website  
 250,794, an increase of 21.27% from 2015, with 206,807

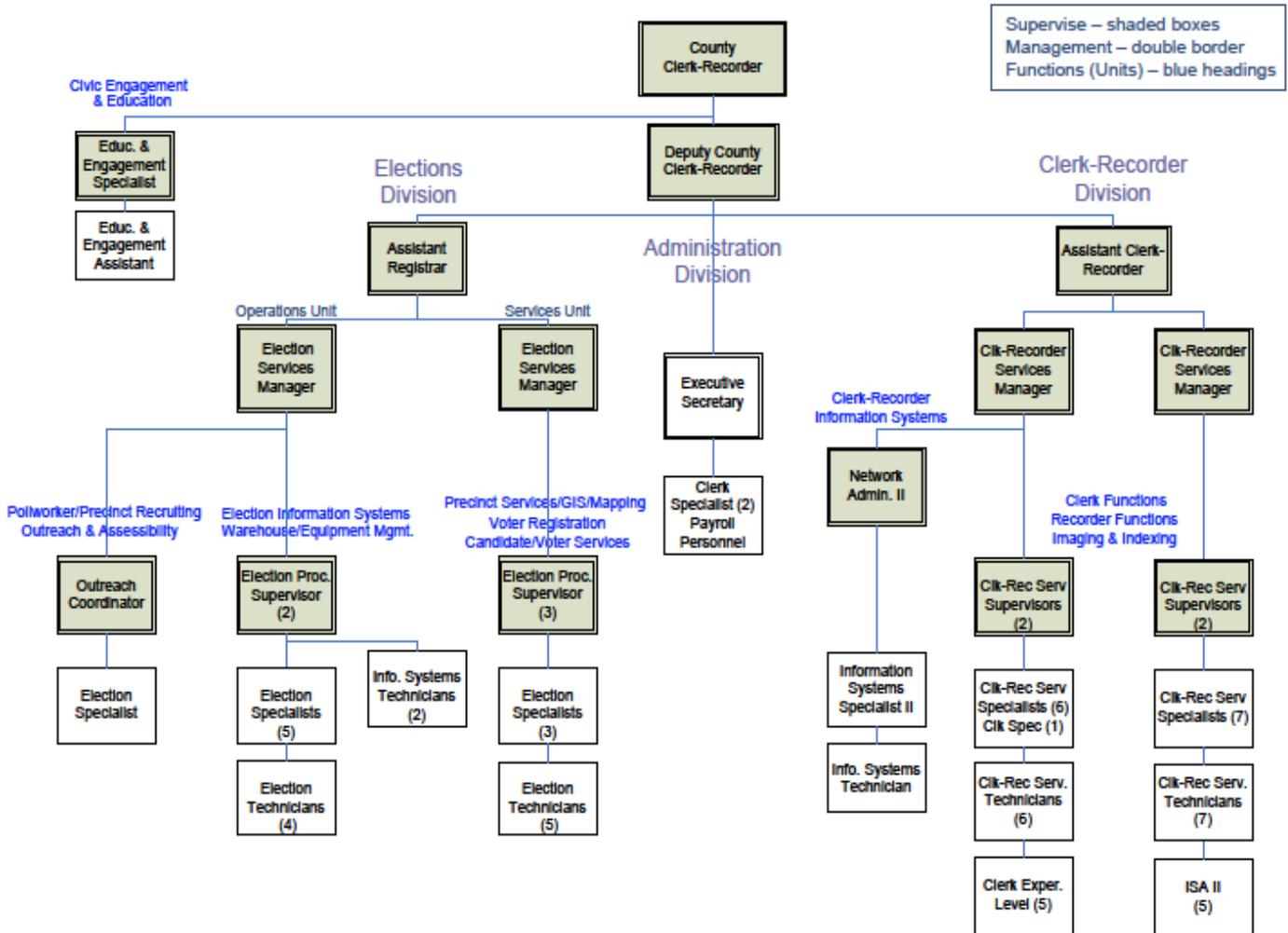
Clerk-Recorder Performance Measures

Workload Indicator	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Difference from 2017	% change from 2017 to 2018
Marriage Licenses	5,004	4,806	5,011	5,058	4799	-259	-5%
Marriage Ceremonies	1,791	1,848	2,092	2,134	2006	-128	-6%
FBN Filings	7,886	7,905	7,590	7,607	7651	44	.6%
Notaries	1,181	1,158	1,121	1,393	1335	-58	-4.2%
Birth Certificates	21,376	20,704	21,277	23,495	24,046	551	2%
Death Certificates	5,439	5,848	5,584	5,912	5,672	-240	-4%
Marriage Certificates	10,302	9,172	9,724	10,793	11,249	456	4%
Recorded documents	262,425	310,805	328,743	286,107	240,251	-45,856	-16%
Recorded documents per staff	43,738	51,801	54,791	52,019			%

# VI. DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

## Clerk-Recorder-Elections Department

February 2019



For additional information regarding the Clerk-Recorder-Elections Department, please contact Administration at 925-335-7899 or visit our web site at [www.contracostacore.us](http://www.contracostacore.us).